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**Leading Through The Use Of Productive Conflict:**  
*A Professional Development That Teaches Principals To Use Productive Conflict  
Among Teachers For Organizational Learning And Growth.*

By  
Brandee Louise Stewart

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
in the  
Graduate Division  
of the  
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Committee in charge:

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair  
Professor Bruce C. Fuller  
Professor Julian Chow

Fall 2015

**Leading Through the Use of Productive Conflict:**

A Professional Development That Teaches Principals To Use Productive Conflict Among  
Teachers For Organizational Learning And Growth.

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by

Brandee Louise Stewart

## **Abstract**

### **Leading Through the Use of Productive Conflict:**

A Professional Development that teaches Principals to Use Productive Conflict among  
Teachers for Organizational Learning and Growth

By

Brandee Louise Stewart

Doctor of Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Heinrich Mintrop, Chair

In recent years, models for school leadership encourage shared or distributive leadership. In a shared leadership model the principal and teachers collaborate and share responsibility for improving the quality of the school. The Principal is encouraged to focus on instruction over day to day operations; and the teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for more than just their classrooms. This model has become common practice in many districts. A popular model for this type of teacher leadership and collaboration is Professional Learning Communities. In these structures the principal facilitates teacher collaboration around student data, sharing ideas, and instructional practices. These models are generally based on consensus and cohesion among the adults involved. But what the research and experts in the field often overlook with these models is adult conflict. When teachers who have previously been allowed to work alone, in the confines of their classrooms, are asked to work together and agree on practices related to their teaching and the school there will inevitably be some disagreement. However, none of the research or principal training related to PLC's or shared leadership offers principals support for how to manage these conflicts. As a result principals often struggle to ignore or stop conflict. However, not all conflict is the same. Some conflict can actually support the growth and development of the PLC and their ideas. This study focuses on supporting principals with managing teacher conflict. The purpose of this study is to teach principals how to identify and manage productive conflict.

For this design study I drew from literature on adult learning, the historical role of the principal, types of workplace conflict, and conflict mediation. I used this literature to develop a theory of action to guide the design and implementation of my intervention. The theory of action is based on three key principles. In order to effectively manage productive conflict principals must 1) know the difference between productive and unproductive conflict 2) be able to identify productive conflicts in schools 3) have a

process to manage productive conflict for a positive outcome. Based on this theory of action I developed a five session professional development that aimed at helping principals identify and manage productive conflict.

In this design development study I collected both impact and process data. The impact data was based on a pre and post interview with the principals. Each principal's answers were mapped onto a four point rubric to determine their pre and post scores. For the process data I recorded and transcribed each professional development session. The transcripts, and written documents from each session were used as data to analyze the effectiveness of the professional development and facilitation. Three currently practicing principals participated in the professional development. The design was originally five sessions but was reduced to four sessions after the principals were not able to complete the on site mediations. Overall the principals showed an increase in their basic knowledge about conflict, but they were not able to apply their learning to their scenarios or real life. This study provides a skeleton for a professional development for principals on managing productive conflict, however further iterations are required.

## **Dedication**

For Camryn and Avery, I love you more, more, more, more..... It's a tie!

For Patrick, the best husband and friend I could ever have. Thank you for your unconditional support.

For my village: Mommy, Daddy, Gena, Grandma Gloria, Andrew, and Pat thank you for loving my children and ensuring that I could be a mommy and a student.

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## Chapter 1 Introducing the Problem of Practice

Over the last decade the roles of principals and teachers in schools has changed. Historically the principal has been seen as the leader of the school who was responsible for making all of the decisions at the administrative level. The teacher's domain was their classroom. However, in recent years the role of both the principal and the teacher have changed. School districts now expect the principal to take a distributive leadership approach in which they share decision-making and curricular decisions with the teachers. Teachers are no longer allowed to hide in the confines of their own classroom. The "teacher-leader" contributes to the school's vision, participates on the school leadership team, and is collaborative. One of the primary structures for these collaborative relationships is Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Little (2006) describes learning communities as "close relationships among teachers as professional colleagues, usually with the implication that these relationships are oriented toward teacher learning and professional development" (p. 15). Little characterizes teachers in productive learning communities as having shared values, shared beliefs, and a collective focus that enables them to engage in collaborative and coordinated efforts, collective action, and giving advice to each other (2006). Dufour (2004) has used the research on professional learning communities to develop leadership practices that help principals develop PLC's with their teachers. These leadership practices orient principals towards community, cohesion and compromise when they want to implement PLC's. PLC's have a strong emphasis on collegiality and shared commitment.

However, PLC literature commonly neglects an important aspect of teacher relationships: adult interactions can also involve disagreement and conflict. Adults who previously worked and made decisions in isolation now have to share ideas and make decisions that are binding for everybody. It is inevitable that people will disagree, argue, become angry, and feel resentment. This is a natural human response, however it is not addressed in most PLC literature. This design study will address this gap in the literature. The focus of this research will be to develop a professional development that trains principals to manage conflicts between teachers.

Achinstein (2002) and Avila de Lima (2001) have both explored the role of conflict in Professional Learning Communities among teachers. They both posit that in the research on teacher collaboration and collegiality the role of conflict has been "underexplored." Achinstein states that "active engagement in conflict, a dialogue of differences, is a normal and essential dimension of a functioning teacher community" (2002, p.422). Avila de Lima states that, "Given the recent push towards developing collegiality and teamwork in schools, it is only natural that conflict will increase, not disappear in these organizations" (Avila de Lima, 2001, p.111). Both of these researchers claim this conflict can be beneficial. "Counter to consensus based literature on teacher community, teachers engaged in collaboration generate and at times thrive on conflict" (Achinstein, 2002, p.450). In the words of Avila de Lima, "the challenge is to find positive ways of dealing with this conflict and taking profit from a change perspective, rather than trying to avoid and suppress it" (Avila de Lima, 2001, p.111). In order for conflict to have a positive impact on Professional Learning Communities, principals and teachers must first understand the difference between productive and unproductive conflict. **The focus of the design development study that is proposed**

**here will be to build principals' efficacy around responding to productive conflict. The proposed design aims to help principals understand the differing types of conflict, give them tools to diagnose and analyze productive conflict among teachers, and offer processes and intervention strategies to effectively manage productive conflict in the schools' various work teams.**

## **Chapter 2 Consulting the Knowledge Base and Theory of Action**

The purpose of this knowledge base is to consult pertinent research to inform the components of this design study. This literature will support the development of a research based process to reframe a principal's thinking about their role in understanding conflict, responding to conflict, and providing strategies to deal with it productively. There are few sources in the knowledge base on Professional Learning Communities that deal with the issue of productive conflict. So, in addition to consulting these scant sources, I have also consulted literature on the role of the principal, adult learning, types of workplace conflict, and conflict mediation. The literature on adult learning helps me understand the developmental and emotional needs of the principal. This literature will be the basis for the professional development and activities within the design. The literature on the role of the principal gives an overview of the expectations of the principal, and helps me understand a principal's beliefs about their role around intervening or managing adult conflict. The literature on types of conflict helps me understand the conditions that lead to work place conflict, and how to determine if a conflict is productive or unproductive. This literature is the content for my design. Conflict mediation literature helps me understand the process for dissecting conflict and provides strategies for resolving conflict productively. Conflict management literature provides the framework for my design intervention. As stated earlier, there is limited literature on conflict in Professional Learning Communities. The literature outlined above was selected because it addresses my problem of practice and my design challenge.

### **Adult Learning**

This design involves principals learning about conflict and how to manage it. The structure of the design will be principals' professional learning, therefore it is important that the design is built from principles of adult learning. Mezirow (1997) describes the goal of adult education as learning "to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purpose, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others" (p. 5). Adult learning differs from that of children (Smith, Aker, and Kidd, 1970). The five assumptions of adult learning include: adult learners need a sense of self-directedness; they learn through experience; they learn to improve their circumstances; and they learn to increase their competence (Merriam, 2001; Smith, Aker, & Kidd, 1970). For the principals "education is a process of improving their ability to cope with life problems they face now" (Smith, Aker, & Kidd, 1970, p.53). When teaching the principals in this study it is important that the information be presented in a way that is interactive and offers choices. The principals also need information presented in ways that are relevant and beneficial to their lives.

Mezirow outlines similar "domains" of adult learning that will inform the principal professional development. He refers to them as the technical, practical, and emancipatory. The technical domain is similar to "self-directedness." It posits that the

principals as learners must have some sense of control over their environment. They must be allowed to assess alternatives and make choices. The practical domain states that adults need interaction and communication to learn. This is related to adults need for experience and interactive learning.

Mezirow states that the most important and most overlooked domain is the emancipatory. He refers to it as “perspective transformation.” Perspective transformation is “the learning process by which adults come to recognize their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them” (Mezirow, 1981, p.7). Mezirow refers to this as the main function of adult education (Mezirow, 1981). Mezirow (1981) outlines the process of perspective transformation as: (1) a disorienting dilemma; (2) self examination; (3) a critical assessment of personally internalized role assumptions and a sense of alienation from traditional and social expectations; (4) relating ones discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issue – recognizing that ones problem is shared and not exclusively private matter; (5) exploring options for new ways of acting; (6) building confidence and self confidence in new roles; (7) planning a course of action; (8) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing ones plan; (9) provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback; (10) a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective (p. 7).

Perspective change can also be viewed as changing the principal’s schema (Lau and Woodman, 1995; Harris, 1994 ). A person’s schema is a personal roadmap for navigating new situations. Lau and Woodman (1995) state that “schemata, so defined, help people to simplify, effectively manage, and make sense of information in their surrounding environment; and guide cognition, interpretation, and ways of understanding events or objects” (p. 538). Mezirow refers to a person’s schema as a process of “typification.” The principals create categories in their mind based on previous experiences. As we encounter new information, we use these categories to help us understand it (Mezirow, 1981). To change a schema or perspective the professional development must attempt to understand the principal’s way of categorizing; then use these categories to create “new critical sense of ‘agency’ and personal responsibility” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 9). Researchers have identified several key levers for creating this sense of agency or responsibility. These levers include locus of control, valence, commitment, and efficacy (Judge, et.al, 1999; Lau and Woodman, 1995). When thinking about principal professional learning, it is important to consider how the information will be received and understood through their current perceptions of capacity, power, self-esteem, etc.

When developing principal professional development, the learning experience should be both knowledge centered and learner centered (National Academy of the Sciences, 2004). Mezirow (1997) states that “new information is only a resource in the adult learning process. To become meaningful, learning requires that new information be incorporated by the learner into an already well developed symbolic frame of reference, an active process involving thought, feelings, and disposition” (p.10). This means professional learning should provide both new content, as well as, opportunities for interaction and practice. Smtih, Aker, and Kidd (1970) and Harris and Cole (2007) characterize the ideal learning experience as:

- Exposes the learners to new possibilities for self fulfillment.

- Helps the learners clarify their own aspirations for improved behavior.
- Helps the learners diagnose the gap between their aspirations and their present levels of performance.
- Helps the learners identify the life problems they experience and the need for change.
- Helps create a sense of excitement for change.
- Seeks to build relationships of mutual trust and helpfulness among the learners by encouraging cooperative activities and refraining from inducing competitiveness and judgment.
- Helps the learners to organize themselves to share responsibility in the process of mutual inquiry.
- Helps the learners exploit their own experiences as resources for learning through the use of such techniques as discussions, role playing, case methods.
- Helps the learners apply new learning to their experience, and thus to make the learning more integrated.

In order to facilitate principal learning we must be mindful that “change processes are covert and overt activities and experiences that individuals engage in when they attempt to modify problem behaviors” (Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross, 1992, p. 1109). We must, therefore, attempt to understand the principal’s way of thinking, and design a variety of strategies to change their schema or perspective. Activities that support perspective change and principal learning include: learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies, simulation, critical incidents, metaphor analysis, concept mapping, consciousness raising, life histories, repertory grids, participation in social actions, contrasting pictures, comic strips or stories posing hypothetical dilemmas with contradicting rules and assumptions rooted in areas of crucial concerns to learners, problem posing, giving and receiving feedback, and discourse around text (Smith, Aker, & Kidd, 1970; Mezirow, 1981; Mezirow, 1997; Merriam, 2001, National Academy of the Sciences, 2004). These type of activities help “adults construe experiences in a way in which they may more clearly understand the reasons for their problems and understand the options open to them so they may assume responsibility for decisions making” (Mezirow, 1981, p.20). This is the ultimate goal of principal learning.

Principal learning is an important component of this design. Principals will be exposed to new information and practices that they will be asked to implement at their site. Adult learning theory will be used to develop the theory of learning and theory of intervention for this design. The design will consider the unique needs of the principals and incorporate activities that facilitate self-directedness, interaction, choice, and perspective transformation.

### **Role of the Principal**

The role of the school principal has evolved over time, and it continues to change and expand. As beliefs about how children learn, the role of teachers and parents, and community involvement continues to change, so does the role and expectations of the principal. These changing expectations require the principal to interact with and support teachers differently. One of the expectations is to manage teacher conflict. The early role of the principal included duties such as maintaining safe schools, overseeing the

budget, completing and submitting reports, complying with regulations and mandates, coping with teacher and student behavior issues, and dealing with parents (Portin, Shen, and Williams, 1998). In the early 1980's research on effective schools led to a focus on the principal's role in the academic success of the students and schools. (Walker, 2009; Hallinger, 2005; Marks and Printy, 2003). Principals were now expected to be the "primary source of educational expertise" (Marks and Printy, 2003, p. 372). The principal was the "Instructional Leader" and the "principals' impact on student learning came mainly through influencing contextual factors such as policy formation, goal development, and teachers' practices" (2003, p.6). Instructional Leader defined the relationship between the principal and the teacher. The principal's role was to improve teacher quality through professional development, observation, and feedback.

The role of the principal as the instructional leader was further intensified by the national education reform enshrined in the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB). This reform created a high stakes accountability system that created extreme pressure for schools and principals to increase student academic performance (Fullan, 2001; O'Donnell and White, 2005). As a result of NCLB and high stakes accountability many principals have turned the role of the instructional leader into a managerial function. Instructional leadership was not about improving teacher quality, it became about students getting high test scores. To ensure this outcome principals saw their role as maintaining conformity and group thinking among teachers. Principals implemented scripted curriculum, made top down decisions, and implemented school site accountability structures to encourage teachers to think and act the same. The principal's role was to ensure that teachers did not diverge from the way of the group. If a teacher did disrupt the harmony, the principal would often work to stop them through disciplinary actions. The role of the principal as an instructional leader became ensuring teacher conformity. Any type of conflict was considered unacceptable. Therefore, principals never had to develop any skills around managing conflict.

Many "critics regard models of instructional leadership as paternalistic, archaic, and dependent on docile followers"(Marks and Printy, 2003, p.373). In light of the criticisms of the principal as the instructional leader, alternative roles have also been proposed. The "shared leadership" model acknowledges that the principal cannot be solely responsible for leading the instructional program. Walker states that "in knowledge-intensive environments, there is no way to perform the many complex tasks without distributing the leadership responsibilities" (2003, p.222). The principal should share the responsibility for leadership with other stakeholders, including teachers. There are several different names and models for this type of leadership. They include shared leadership, distributive leadership, transformational leadership (Marks and Printy, 2003; Hale and Moorman, 2003). The shared leadership model "empower[s] and support[s] teachers in decision making" (Marks and Printy,2003, p.371). In this model principals facilitate the leadership of others and hold "people accountable to a common goal"(Walker, 2003, p.222). This role has different implications than the instructional leader. This model encourages multiple leaders. This dynamic will undoubtedly produce some conflict. The role of the principal as a facilitator will require them to understand the conflicts that arise; and have the skills to facilitate a process that will allow teachers to remain focused on their common goal.

Another school of thought is that the role of the principal should be that of a moral leader. School leaders need to focus on the “moral implications of their role and the decisions that they make” (Cambrone-McCabe and Cunningham, 2002, p. 291). Fullan describes this role as the “Cultural Change Principal.” Fullan believes that there is a moral imperative in education and that principals must act with a moral purpose. The concept of “moral purpose” also implies a connection to the group’s beliefs, values, cultures, religions, and histories. A principal that acts with a moral purpose must have the skills to understand and respond to the potential conflict that can arise from such personal topics. As a “Cultural Change Principal” principals are concerned with the academic success of students; but they also have concern for the entire school system (Fullan, 2002). If a principal is engaging with and showing concern for an entire school system, it is inevitable they will encounter conflict as they engage with different groups, communities, cultures, etc. This is why it is important that they understand the conditions that lead to conflict, as well as, how to react to and manage the conflict as it arises.

As society evolves, so must our educational system. The role of the principal must reflect the needs of a constantly changing system. The role of the Cultural Change Principal includes understanding change (Fullan, 2002). The role of the transformational leader emphasizes “problem finding, problem solving, and collaboration” (Marks and Printy, 2003, P. 372). Both of these roles reflect the needs of our current educational system. In order to effectively manage change and problem solving, principals will need processes and tools to manage conflict that may arise between adults. This design will help principals reframe their role from manager and instructional leader, to a cultural change or transformational leader. This design will improve principals’ sense of efficacy in these areas, and help them feel competent and confident in shifting their leadership from authoritative to facilitative.

### **Types of Conflict**

Workplace conflict is defined as tension or dissonance between individuals, or groups based on real or perceived differences or incompatibilities (Deutsch 1994, Jehn 1995, Rahim 2002, De Dreu and Weignart 2003). Rahim (2002) expands this definition, describing conflict as an interactive process. He offers conditions under which work place conflict may occur. They include:

- A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.
- A party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person’s implementation of his or her preferences.
- A party wants some mutually desirable resources that is in short supply, such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully.
- A party possess attitudes, values, skills and goals that are salient in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills and goals held by other(s).
- Two parties have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint actions
- Two parties are independent in the performance of functions or activities.

There are two types of work place conflict. A conflict can be personal or work related. Literature describes these conflicts as relationship vs. task or affective vs. substantive (Jehn 1995, Rahim 2002, De Dreu and Weignart 2003). Relationship or affective conflict involves “personal taste, political preferences, values, and interpersonal styles” (De Dreu and Weignart, 2003, p. 741). Task or substantive conflict include issues such as “distribution of resources, procedures and policies, and judgment and interpretation of facts” (De Dreu and Weignart, 2003, p.741). In a work environment relationship conflict is unproductive (Jehn 1995, Rahim 2002, De Dreu and Weignart 2003). In “A Multimethod Examination of the Benefits and Detriments of Intragroup Conflict” Jehn examined 105 work groups and management teams. She found that relationship conflict led to distress, dissatisfaction, and decreased intent to stay. She concluded that “relationship conflict was detrimental regardless of the type of task the group was performing” (1995, p.276).

Unlike relationship conflict, task conflict can be productive or unproductive. There are two types of task conflict: routine and non-routine. A routine task is carried out when a group “consistently performs the same activities in the same way everyday” (Jehn, 1995, p. 261). De Dreu and Weingart (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the connection between conflict and team performance. They described routine tasks as less complex; and routine tasks were more commonly planning and production tasks. Non-routine tasks were generally decision making or project tasks and often more complex. (p.744). Conflicts around routine tasks were not beneficial to the organization. However, some level of conflict in non-routine tasks could be beneficial (Deutsch 1994, Jehn 1995, Achinstein 2002, Rahim 2002, De Dreu and Weignart 2003, A). Conflict in decision making or projects can lead to creativity, deeper analysis of situations, and evaluation of the organization.

There are several factors that affect the benefits of task conflicts. The amount and intensity of conflict can all impact the productive nature of conflict. Too much conflict or too little conflict can both have a negative impact on tasks. Jehn (1995) states that “there is an optimal level of task conflict beyond or below which individual and group performance diminishes” (p.261). If a team never has conflict, they may become stagnant. If no one ever questions or pushes back on decisions, then it is possible that the team will miss important opportunities for change and growth. However, a conflict that is escalating may have a detrimental effect on the group (Deutsch 1994, Avila De Lima 2001). De Dreu and Weingart’s (2003) meta-analysis suggests that task-related conflict can only be productive for group functioning when group members have the ability to process information and organize themselves around tasks. Some level of disagreement or varying opinions can help individuals or groups better analyze and process information. They find that “a little conflict may be beneficial, such positive effects quickly break down as conflict becomes more intense, cognitive load increases, information processing is impeded, and team performance suffers” (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003, p.746). Therefore, it is important for leaders who want to support teams through experiences of conflict to be cognizant of the amount and intensity of conflict and respond appropriately.



## **Conflict Mediation**

There are two responses to workplace conflict: conflict resolution or conflict management. The most common response to conflict by leaders is conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is characterized by “reduction, elimination, or termination of conflict” (Rahim, 2002, p.207). Organizations hire mediators, arbitrators, or negotiators and have policies all aimed at eliminating the presence of any conflict. However, conflict resolution does not allow for growth or productivity. The goal of resolution is to end the conflict. Another approach to conflict is conflict management. Conflict management requires “strategies to minimize the dysfunction of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization” (Rahim, 2002, p.208). Conflict management strategies allow leaders to use productive conflict for growth. In order to do this, leaders and teams need to understand the different types of conflicts and the various ways people respond to conflict.

Deutsch (1994), whose work laid the groundwork for research on group conflict, states that “there are so many positive functions of conflict. The social and scientific issue is not how to eliminate or prevent conflict but rather to develop knowledge that would enable us to answer the question, What are the conditions that give rise to lively controversy rather than deadly quarrel” (pp. 13-14). The key to productive conflict is to have a systematic process to respond to it. A process for managing conflict can restore fairness, lead to group efficacy, increase group efficiency, improve working relationships, and increase group satisfaction (Behfar and Peterson, 2008; Alper, Tjosvold, and Law, 2000). The process should define the problem, apply strategies that respond to the problem, and agree on an outcome that is acceptable to all parties involved (Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Alper, Tjosvold, and Law 1998; Moore, 1996; Deutsch 1994; ). Mediation serves as this process. Mediation is a “dialogue or negotiation with the involvement of a third party” (Moore, 1996, p. 16). The role of the third party is to facilitate a process that allows the disputants to discuss and develop action steps that both parties can agree to.

In schools a variety of issues can lead to conflict among teachers. Teachers may disagree about pedagogy, discipline, procedures, etc. To address teacher conflict, the principal must have the skills to recognize productive conflict and effectively manage the problem. These skills include the ability to establish trust, change peoples’ attitudes toward conflict, problem solve, be knowledgeable about different types of conflict, the ability to gather and make meaning of information, and the ability to understand multiple perspectives (Behfar and Peterson, 2008; Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006; Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Moore, 1996; Deutsch, 1994). This also includes understanding the mediation process and its different stages; and being able to apply this knowledge to school site examples. Although a principal-mediator may take on different roles, the process in a conflict mediation remains similar.

1. Gather information about the conflict
2. Identify the nature or source of the problem
3. Identify multiple interventions for the problem
4. Choose an intervention that optimizes the situation
5. Develop action steps to implement the intervention
6. Monitor the implementation

(Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006; Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Moore,1996; Deutsch, 1994). Folger, Pool, and Stutman (2001) divide the mediation process into two stages: Differentiation and Integration. During Differentiation the individuals “raise the conflict issues and spend sufficient time and energy clarifying positions, pursuing the reasons behind these issues, and acknowledging the severity of their differences” (p. 18). In the Integration stage “parties begin to acknowledge common ground, explore possible options, and move toward some solution” (p. 18). Although the ultimate goal is a solution, the differentiation stage is just as important as the Integration stage of the mediation. The mediator and participants in the mediation must all fully understand the problem in order to choose the appropriate solution.

Deutsch (1994) developed a theory regarding moving from Differentiation to Integration. He focuses on the concept of competition versus cooperation. He describes them as motivational orientations to conflict. A person with a competitive orientation “has an interest in doing better than the other as well as doing as well as it can for itself”(Deutsch, 1994, p.13). A person with a cooperative orientation “has a positive interest in the welfare of the other as well as its own” (Deutsch, 1994, p.13). Most schools have vision statements that promote cooperation, however most of the actual structures, policies, and procedures of school systems lead to isolation and self preservation. Teachers are primarily concerned about themselves and their individual classrooms. However, in order for a mediation to be effective the teachers involved must have a cooperative orientation. A cooperative orientation is described as “ a perceived similarity in beliefs and attitudes, a readiness to be helpful, openness in communication, trusting and friendly attitudes, sensitivity to common interest and de-emphasis of opposed interest”( Deutsch, 1994, p. 15). A cooperative stance requires the mediator to reframe the conflict so the parties involved see it as a problem they all need to solve (Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Alper , Tjosvold, and Law 1998; Moore,1996; Deutsch 1994; ).

One strategy the mediator can use is setting cooperative goals. Setting a cooperative goal contributes to a sense of shared commitment to the problem solving process. Having a cooperative goal will also help ensure that parties are “sufficiently motivated to deal with the problem”(Folger, Poole, and Stutman, 2001, p.18). In addition to the cooperative goal, the mediator should be prepared with facilitation questions and processes that allow the individuals involved to share personal histories, engage in discourse, and recognize common experiences.

Once the parties involved have agreed to participate productively in the mediation, they must identify the problem. Moore (1996) refers to this process as conflict mapping. He states, “To work effectively on conflicts, the intervener needs a conceptual road map or ‘conflict map’ that details why a conflict is occurring, identifies barriers to settlement, and indicates procedures to manage or resolve the dispute” (Moore,1996, p.58). In order to do this, “It is important to ensure that differences have been surfaced as completely as possible. If parties feel that they have not stated their cases completely, they are likely to return to them later on” (Folger, Poole, and Stutman, 2001, p.22). If parties are not allowed to fully state their positions, the mediation could become unproductive. Participants may feel the process is unfair.

Once the mediator and individuals have identified the core of the problem, the goal is to find the optimal solution. Folger, Poole, and Stutman (2001) refer to this as moving from the differentiation stage to the integration stage. The intervention may evolve from

conversation among the individuals that are involved in the conflict, or it may be assigned by the mediator. Interventions may focus on or include:

- Effective communication strategies
- Giving clear feedback to the person you are in conflict with
- Understanding or being empathetic to socio/cultural differences
- Active listening
- Taking the other persons perspective
- Reframing issues to find common ground
- Establishing norms of behavior

(Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006; Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Moore,1996; Deutsch, 1994). The mediator must ensure that the intervention matches the problem. However, the mediator's role does not end after the meeting. The mediator must monitor the assigned action steps and provide the individuals involved in conflict with feedback about their progress. If the intervention is not successful, then parties need to return to mediation to determine a different intervention (Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006; Folger, Pool and Stutman 2001; Moore,1996; Deutsch, 1994).

In summary, this professional knowledge base provides the foundation for my theory of action, theory of change, and interventions. Literature on the role of the principal provides insight into how principals currently perceive their role. It also provides insight into the gap between their current perceptions and the mindset they will need to actively manage adult conflict. Literature on adult learning provides me with a deeper understanding of how to close this gap, by outlining the processes that support adult development. Since the focus of the design is managing productive adult conflict the literature on types of conflict and conflict mediation were used to develop the content and the activities embedded in the professional development. Overall, this knowledge base has provided a number of salient features that serve as key elements of this professional development design.

### **Theory of Action**

I conducted a needs assessment and drew from my own experience as a principal to analyze the literature and identify the core practices I used in my intervention. My literature review suggests that the best way to address workplace conflict is for principals to understand the different types of conflict; and have the skills to choose the appropriate response. The theory of action for this study builds on this concept. The following theory of action will outline a series of steps to help principals identify and manage productive conflict. A theory of action provides the rationale for why a series of actions or practices create a desired outcome (Argyris and Schon, 1978). The theory of action for this design outlines the learning (content and process) needed in order to change a principal's mindset and actions towards responding to productive conflict. In this section, I describe the theory of action behind the professional development proposed to teach principals to identify and manage productive conflict. First, I describe the problem and its causes; next, I discuss the intended outcome of the design; then, I provide a theory of change to describe the learning that will take place in the design; last, I explain the proposed intervention. My theory of action was developed based on research, as well as practice.

Figure 1: Theory of Action

<p><b>Overarching Problem</b></p>	<p>In any school conflict among adults is inevitable. However, all conflict is not negative. There are some professional conflicts that if managed correctly, can help move a school forward. Sometimes conflict can encourage alternative or new ideas that keep a school from becoming stagnant. Unfortunately, this is not how principals are trained to view conflict among their teachers. Principals are trained to focus on cohesion and harmony among the staff. Since conflict is viewed as a threat to school harmony, principals are taught to ignore or end conflict, as opposed to use it as a learning opportunity. As a result principals are often unable to do anything productive with adult conflict in their schools.</p>
<p><b>Problematic Practice</b></p>	<p>Principals do not make distinctions between productive and unproductive conflict. They respond to all conflict as if it is unproductive. Principals often ignore or suppress conflict at their sites. If they do confront the conflict they generally take an authoritative stance and the individuals involved are reprimanded and ordered to stop.</p>
<p><b>Explaining the problematic behavior</b></p> <p><i>What underlying causes contribute to the problem?</i></p>	<p>Principals believe that it is their role to maintain a positive, cohesive school environment. They view conflict among adults as a threat to their learning communities. In an attempt to keep peace they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore conflict</li> <li>• Attempt to resolve conflict</li> <li>• Take an authoritative stance against conflict</li> </ul> <p>Principals employ these responses because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many elementary principals have a non-confrontational disposition. Thus, they have a predisposition for maintaining harmony even though some kind of conflict might be necessary for productive professional change.</li> <li>• Professional literature and practice is biased towards consensus and cooperation.</li> <li>• Principals don't understand the nature of conflict and don't understand that it can be productive. Principals believe conflict should be resolved from an authoritative stand point.</li> <li>• Principals do not have the tools or strategies to diagnose and manage productive conflicts through constructive group processes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why conflict can be beneficial.</li> <li>• Name different types of conflict and explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflict.</li> <li>• Name the characteristics of productive conflict.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give school based examples of productive conflict.</li> <li>• Analyze a conflict scenario to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why.</li> <li>• Conduct a mediation between teachers on site.</li> </ul>
<b>Design Challenge</b>	<p>Develop a principal professional development that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches principals about different types of conflict.</li> <li>• Teaches principals the characteristics of a productive conflict.</li> <li>• Helps principals identify what productive conflict looks like at a school.</li> <li>• Teaches principals a process for managing productive conflict.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theory of Change</b></p> <p><i>What Learning needs to occur to enact the design</i></p>	<p>In order for principals to change their practices they need to engage in a developmental process for learning. This process involves an inquiry group facilitated by a knowledgeable mediator to support the principals through the process of learning. The learning that needs to take place includes.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn that some conflict is necessary and useful for deeper thinking and collaboration.</li> <li>• Learn about their personal dispositions regarding conflict and that the culture of elementary school tends to reward harmony.</li> <li>• Learn the benefits of managing productive conflict and their role in this management.</li> <li>• Practice the strategies for conflict management in their schools and receive feedback from an inquiry group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theory of Intervention</b></p> <p><i>What activities will lead to the design elements being enacted?</i></p>	<p>Principals will participate in a series of professional developments aimed at developing their efficacy around diagnosing and responding to adult conflict.</p> <p>Knowledge of different kinds of conflict:</p> <p><i>If</i> principals learn their own dispositions towards conflict and share them with their colleagues, <i>then</i> they will become more aware of their patterns of suppressing, eradicating, and ignoring conflict.</p> <p><i>If</i> principals read relevant literature and gain new knowledge and skills, <i>then</i> when presented with conflict they will use this information to guide their thinking and responses.</p> <p><i>If</i> principals study scenarios with their colleagues and deconstruct</p>

	<p>them to understand what types of conflict they represent, <i>then</i> they will build efficacy around understanding real life conflict.</p> <p>Recognizing productive conflicts:</p> <p><i>If</i> principals use scenarios to learn situations and observable behaviors that signal conflict, <i>then</i> they will improve their skills for recognizing and responding to real conflict.</p> <p><i>If</i> principals deconstruct scenarios of productive conflict with colleagues, <i>then</i> they will learn to identify indicators of productive conflict.</p> <p><i>If</i> principals share examples and test application of their learning with productive conflicts from their own schools, <i>then</i> they will reduce their anxiety about responding to conflict, and increase their efficacy around managing productive conflict.</p> <p><i>If</i> principals engage in inquiry to test the application of their learning, <i>then</i> the process of learning, application, and reflection will help change their beliefs about how to create harmony and cohesion at their schools.</p>
<p><b>Pre-Conditions for Implementation and feasibility</b></p> <p><i>What are the minimal conditions necessary for implementation of the design?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elementary principals that are willing to participate in the professional development.</li> <li>• A school site that has conflict.</li> </ul>

### **Defining the Problematic Behavior Addressed with the Design**

Often principals believe that conflicts are harmful to their school community and its cohesion. As a result of this belief, they have not developed their skill set around identifying and managing productive conflict. Productive conflict can be beneficial to the growth of a school. In order for this to happen, the principal must learn the difference between a productive and an unproductive conflict; learn how to identify a productive conflict when they see or hear it; and learn a process to mediate the productive conflict so that it is beneficial to the school or teachers involved.

### **Explaining the problem**

Drawing from the knowledge base, I presume two main factors underlying observed problematic behavior; one is related to attitudes and cultural orientations; the other is related to competence.

*Attitudes and cultural assumptions.* In an era when school reform is focused on professional learning communities and teacher collaboration, principals are trained and encouraged to develop cohesion and consensus among school staff. Conflict is viewed as a threat to school harmony. Therefore, principals take a conflict resolution stance,

ignore, suppress, or end conflict. As a result, principals miss opportunities to use conflict for learning. The principals' assumptions about school culture and their role in it encourage "group think" among teachers. Principals believe that everyone in the organization should hold the same beliefs about teaching. Often these beliefs are driven by external accountability demands. School professional development and practices are usually aligned to these beliefs. When dealing with dissenting voices, the role of the principal tends to become authoritative. Dissenters are seen as resistant. When disagreement cannot be ironed out, the dissenters are encouraged to leave.

*Competence.* Most ordinary principals are taught to resolve conflict. Conflict resolution is based on the premise of stopping the problem. As a result, most principals use their authority or disciplinary measures to stop conflict. This includes actions such as writing directives, making rules, or meeting with teachers and telling them to stop. In extreme cases it may result in disciplinary action toward the teacher. Another approach a principal may take is to ignore conflict. Although they may have knowledge of conflicts, they either don't believe it is their responsibility or they don't have the skills to address it. Overall, principals do not know how to manage conflict vs. resolving it. As a result, principals are often unable to do anything productive with adult conflict in their schools.

### **Local Assessment of Needs**

In addition to the ongoing PLC work, the current climate in the district is characterized by a transition to National Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards outline the academic content that students should know and be able to do at each grade level. This transition requires principals and teachers to engage in extensive PLC work to understand and implement the expectations outlined by the district. The district has implemented new structures such as teacher leaders, district wide professional development for teachers, and mandated leadership teams. The purpose of these structures is to support mandated changes in instruction. These mandates include moving away from scripted curriculum, such as open court, and engaging in authentic lesson planning and unit development. These cultural shifts will undoubtedly lead to distress, consternation, and outright protest from teachers. All of these factors point to the need for principals to have a clear process to mitigate the conflict and push back that will arise.

As a current principal in the district, I have experienced adult conflict first hand. I believed that adults should manage their own problems. I established norms of behavior and published written expectations for adult interactions. However, when adults broke these norms and engaged in conflict I never knew what to do. I treated all conflict the same. I assumed it would have a negative impact on the school and attempted to stop it. I did not engage teachers in dialogue or make any attempt to determine if it was productive conflict.

Recently, I spoke with a male principal in the district about my proposed design. He was interested in learning more about the literature I was reading. He stated that he avoids conflict. He stated that as a newer principal he already feels overwhelmed. He cannot handle the emotions involved with intervening in a conflict. He referenced an adult conflict that is occurring at his school that he is ignoring. He felt that having a clear process to use with his teachers would make him feel more open and confident in addressing the conflict at his site. I also interviewed an area superintendent for the same

district and they stated that approximately 75% of disciplinary actions conducted by the principals they supervise involved conflict between teachers.

Thus far, all of the district training for principals has focused on the “how to” of implementing the Common Core curriculum. However, there has been no support or training to address the shift in culture that must occur. Teachers and principals will have to reframe the way they think about student learning and teaching. With no clear guidance from the district, principals will need processes to encourage sharing ideas, as well as, a process to mediate conflict that may arise from competing ideas.

### **Outcome of proposed design**

The outcome of this study is to design a principal professional development that will change a principal’s schema around their role in responding to conflict. The outcome of a design study should be a defined belief, attitude or practice. In a design study the outcome of the design must be realistic; although much may be desired, it is important to drill down to achievable measures. The activities embedded within this professional development will increase a principal’s willingness to respond to adult conflict. At the end of the professional development principals will be able to:

- explain why conflict can be beneficial.
- name different types of conflict and explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflict.
- name the indicators of productive conflict.
- give school based examples of productive conflict.
- analyze a conflict scenario to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why.
- Identify a current conflict at their site and conduct a mediation.

I will use a 4 point rubric to assess the outcome of my design implementation. The rubric is based on the dimensions described above. Principals will be given a pre and post semi-structured interview to determine their placement on each dimension of the rubric. Through participation in this design principals will increase their score on the rubric.

As principals engage in the professional development they will have an increased sense of efficacy around understanding and responding to productive conflict. As a result they will increase their willingness to engage with teacher conflict. The final outcome of the design will be that principals will be willing to identify and mediate a productive conflict at their site.

### **Design challenge**

As discussed earlier, principals do not have the knowledge or skills to effectively respond to conflict so that it is productive. Principals believe that positive school reform and progress are connected to harmony, consensus, and cohesion. But, when conflict is ignored or suppressed it is often destructive to school culture and academic reform. It is within this context that I have formulated my design challenge. **Design challenge: to develop a research based principal professional development that helps a principal understand that conflict can be productive and the importance of their role in responding to productive conflict. The design will 1) increases a principal’s**



**knowledge and understanding of different types of conflict 2) Help the principal identify productive conflict in schools 3) provide a conflict management process and strategy that maximizes the outcome of productive conflict in schools.**

### **Theory of Change**

A theory of change clearly explains what learning, processes, or actions need to happen in order for a principal to change their mindset and actions around productive conflict. To inform my theory of change I consulted professional literature on adult learning. Additionally, I drew from literature on conflict and conflict management. I have identified three main areas for my design challenge that help reframe the principal's attitudes and beliefs about productive conflict: 1) Increase the principal's knowledge of different types of conflict, 2) building the principal's skill and ability to identify productive conflict in their schools and 3) give the principal a clear process to manage productive conflict. In my theory of change I explain how and what learning will take place to address the three main areas above.

At the most basic level principals need to know what productive conflict is, what it looks like, and what to do when they see it. As principals engage in this design they will learn about the different types of conflict; however, the bulk of this design will focus on productive conflict. Therefore, defining and understanding productive conflict will be emphasized. A productive conflict is a disagreement or difference of views related to a non-routine work task.

Figure 2: Types of Conflict

<b>Type of conflict</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Productive</b>	<b>Unproductive</b>
Relationship <i>Personal</i>	Personal tastes Political preferences Communication styles Interpersonal styles Personal values		Can lead to distress dissatisfaction, and decrease intent to stay
Routine Task <i>Consistently performs the same task in the same way everyday.</i>	-Less complex -planning and production tasks -Policies and procedures -Distribution of resources		Constant disagreement with everyday practices can impede a schools ability to carry out its daily functions.
Non- Routine task <i>Requires a deeper analysis of a situation</i>	- Decision Making -projects -group has the ability to process information - group has the ability to organize themselves around a task	<i>When</i> -Some level of disagreement can help groups process information - It helps to weigh multiple options before making a decision. -Keeps the team from becoming stagnant	<i>When</i> -Conflict becomes too intense - cognitive load increases - information processing is impeded -Performance appears to suffer

Once principals have learned about the types of conflict, they will learn to identify productive conflict at their schools. A conflict may be productive on two levels 1) The content of the conflict supports growth and change in the organization 2) the people involved in the conflict need each others' ideas or skills to move forward. When principals analyze a conflict they should consider the following questions. If the answer is yes, then the principal should attempt to manage it for a productive outcome.

Figure 3: Indicators For Productive Conflict

Needs of the Organization	Needs of the Individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the conflict improve group performance through better understanding of various viewpoints?</li> <li>• Does the conflict stimulate discussion and debate that stimulates higher performance?</li> <li>• Is synthesis of ideas needed to come up with better solution to a problem?</li> <li>• Does the outcome of the conflict impact the organization's objectives and long range planning?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the parties involved need each other in order to get work done?</li> <li>• Does the work require the different skills of the people involved?</li> <li>• Is commitment needed from multiple parties for implementation of a solution?</li> </ul>

In addition to understanding types of conflict, the principal must learn how to identify the potential for productive conflicts at their sites. This includes being cognizant of actions and situations that contribute to conflict. Some workplace conditions that elicit conflict include:

Figure 4: Conditions That Create Teacher Conflict

Conditions that lead to workplace conflict (Drawn from Lit Review)	School Examples
A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs of interests	- Veteran teachers are asked to stop their old practices and use a new curriculum
A party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences	- Teachers implement student discipline practices that are not in line with the schools policies - Teachers are asked to collaborate on lesson plans, however they have different teaching styles
A party wants some mutually desirable resources that is in short supply, such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully	- The leadership team must determine how to use categorical funding.
A party possess attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are salient in directing his or her	- The school hires a well trained, new staff member that is making decisions that are not aligned with the schools culture and vision.

behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitude, values, or skills, of the organization	
Two parties have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint actions	- Teacher collaborations or teams that cannot agree on the needed product.
Two parties are independent in the performance of functions or activities.	- When teachers need to collaborate with another department on an activity or event.

Participants in the conflict may engage in a set of behaviors that range from avoidance to full aggression. A principal may detect a conflict through observation and listening to interactions between teachers. When observing an interaction a principal should be aware of bodily indicators of conflict. Examples include: a teacher is visibly disengaged, emotional reactions such as crying or anger, a teacher walks out or does not attend meetings, eye rolling, and other facial expressions that indicate displeasure, tone of voice, etc. Principals must be open to acknowledging conflicts, and then assess them to determine if the outcome would benefit the school.

The information outlined above is essential to a principal understanding and responding to productive conflict. However, this knowledge alone is superficial. It may support changing surface level actions, but alone it will not lead to the change in beliefs that are required to make this process successful. Therefore, I have created a professional development structure based on the developmental needs of the adult learner. The literature on adult learning and adult schema posits several key components of adult learning and change. These concepts include: adults wanting to contribute to the learning process and structures, adults learn through experience, the information needs to be related to their real life, and it needs to be applicable to their current situation. All of these pedagogical concepts were used to develop this design. The overall format of the design is a series of professional development meetings. The information that will be taught will be relevant and presented in a manner that is conducive to adult learning.

This process must also support the learning and unlearning of deeply engrained beliefs about what it means to be a school principal, and the need for school harmony and coherence. The current belief is that conflict is harmful to both of these constructs. The process and content will need to challenge the principal's previous understanding of and experience with conflict; and provide support to help them understand their previous experience with conflict positively. The literature on changing schemas identifies important aspects related to a person's willingness to accept change. They include foci such as locus of control, valence, commitment, and efficacy (Judge et.al, 1999; Lau and Woodman, 1995; Armenakis et.al, 1993). I have drawn on this literature to develop content that will help change a principal's beliefs, values, and assumptions about adult conflict. The learning in the design will address the following:

- Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict- most principals believe that all conflict is counter productive. (locus of control)

- Reduce Fear -there is a deeply engrained disposition towards harmony. This means that most principal's natural response is to avoid or squash any conflict to ensure this harmony. (efficacy)
- Acknowledge their needs- the principals need to see that managing productive conflicts can still result in a harmonious outcome. (locus of control, commitment)
- Connect the design to their real lives- in order for principals to be open to trying something new they must see the relevance to their work and believe that this process will have a positive impact on their lives. (valence)

Smith (1970) states that adult learning starts with “the problems and concerns that the adults have on their minds as they enter” (p. 54). Within these meetings a group of three principals share their experiences and work together in an inquiry group to learn and apply information about productive conflict. This new information will serve as a resource for principals to make meaning of their experiences and identify how they can be productive.

During the professional development, principals will be asked to bring examples of conflict from their own schools. I will facilitate protocols that use the principal's real experiences and scenarios to 1) help principals identify productive conflict, 2) teach principals the mediation process for managing productive conflict and, 3) develop their skills around assigning appropriate interventions for the productive conflict.

### **Theory of intervention**

In the theory of intervention I will discuss the activities, tools, and protocols that will be used in this design to help the principals identify and manage productive conflict. I will explain how these interventions will lead to the learning discussed in the theory of change. The professional knowledge base indicates that when given new information, the principal needs to understand how that new knowledge is relevant and beneficial to their previous experiences and current reality. When the principals are able to make these connections they are more likely to retain and implement the new knowledge they have learned (Mezirow, 1997; Smith, Aker, and Kidd, 1970). Principal inquiry groups provide a structure for principals to learn new content, then work with other principals to analyze and apply this information to their work experience. The principal inquiry group will be the professional development structure because it supports the input and application of new learning.

### **Build principals knowledge of conflict**

The basic assumption of this design is that when dealing with productive conflict the principal needs to know what it is, what it looks like, and what to do when they see it. Therefore, the theory of intervention will focus on activities that build the principal's knowledge, skill, and efficacy around identifying and managing conflict. When planning an adult learning experience, it is important that “new concepts or broad generalizations [are] illustrated by life experiences drawn from the learner (Smith, Aker, and Kidd, 1970, p.50). Therefore, the professional development will begin with a group of principals sharing their experiences with conflicts in their schools. I will facilitate a discussion using questions and prompts to elicit the principals experiences with different types of conflict, how they handled the conflict, and the impact the conflict had on the school or school culture. Once the principals have shared their stories, they will engage in readings to offer

them new information about types of conflict; and use this knowledge to reveal a new meaning of their experiences.

The use of graphic organizers and protocols will help document each principals' learning and categorize their experiences. One protocol I will use is Kilmann's "conflict handling instrument." This activity helps a person determine their natural disposition towards handling conflict. The diagnostic determines if a person is more likely to respond to conflict through competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, or accommodating. Supporting readings will be used to explain what the response styles mean and the circumstances when they should be used. The use of this protocol supports creating an awareness for the need to change, and reducing their fear of a new process. Principals must first acknowledge and understand how they currently address conflict in order to move forward. After identifying their primary style, the principals will use the results of the diagnostic, along with the new information they read to reflect and discuss the experiences they previously presented. The goal is to analyze and understand their experiences differently, and determine if any of the conflicts they presented had the potential to be productive.

By starting with each principal's real experiences I will address the content learning that is required for this design. The principal's story build a foundation to create an awareness of the need for conflict management, reduce their fear of change, acknowledge their need for cohesion, and connect the design to their real lives. Sharing the stories within the group will create a sense of camaraderie. Often times a principal believes that acknowledging that conflict exists in their schools is a negative reflection on their leadership capacity. Acknowledging shared or similar experiences with conflict allows principals to see they do not have to feel ashamed of having conflict in their school. Once the principals get past the need to have the illusion of harmony and cohesion they can acknowledge the positive aspects of conflict and how they can address the principals' current needs.

**Help the principal identify productive conflict at their school:**

The overall outcome of this design is that each principal will identify a productive conflict at their site and conduct a mediation. In order to get to this outcome we must create an awareness for the need to address productive conflict, acknowledge the need for harmony and collaboration at the site, and show them how addressing productive conflict will support harmony and collaboration at their sites. The change in the principals' attitudes and beliefs will come through creating a desire to master a problem that they have previously ignored or tried to confront but did not have a solution. This will be done through the use of scenarios. It is important for adult learners to "plan and rehearse how they are going to apply their learning to their day to day lives" (Smtih, Aker, and Kidd, 1970, p.50). The principals will engage in discussions about scenarios that are provided, as well as, their personal experiences to help deconstruct conflicts and better understand how they can positively impact the school. I will use discussion questions and create specific scenarios that help the principals identify productive conflicts and the potential for positive growth from common productive conflicts in schools. Principals will work together to use their new knowledge to analyze conflict, and discuss strategies to manage the conflict productively. This will help them practice moving away from their authoritative practices that squash all conflict, to a facilitative stance that uses

productive conflict. At the end of the session the principals will be asked to reflect on the content and the process.

**Build efficacy around responding to conflict:**

Although all of the sessions help build the principal's efficacy, the last sessions in the professional development will provide strategies and opportunities for the principals to practice managing productive conflict in their schools. Until now principals have gained knowledge related to defining and classifying conflict. Now we will engage in readings related to the actual mediation process. The readings will explain the stages of the mediation process, as well as, use examples to help principals learn strategies and appropriate interventions to make conflict productive.

Once principals understand the mediation process, we will apply it to conflicts at their schools. The structure of our discussions about school conflicts and mediations will be drawn from work by Rahim (2002) and Moore (1996). This includes problem recognition, recommending solutions to the problem, preparing plans for an intervention, putting plans into action, and reviewing the outcome and taking corrective action. This cycle of inquiry will be facilitated through a protocol called a "problem solving consultancy." This is a structure commonly used in the educational setting. The consultancy provides a structure for each principal to present a problem they are wrestling with, and get feedback and suggestions from their colleagues on how to handle it. The consultancy is based on the premise that people have the capacity to solve their own problems. This process allows each principal to clarify their thinking and hear ideas before they make a decision. The consultancy is aligned with adult learning theory because adults "tend to feel committed to a decision or an activity to the extent that they have participated in making or planning it" (Smith, 1970, p.48). The design requires the principals to conduct a mediation of a current conflict at their site. During the professional development sessions the consultancies provide a format for principals to contribute and make decisions about elements of the mediation. This will help reduce anxiety about confronting conflict and help them commit to facilitating an actual mediation at their site.

Often principals avoid conflict because they are troubled by their lack of mastery around facilitation or feel an inability to actually address it effectively. The scenarios and consultancies will support changing the principals' overall attitudes towards conflict by increasing their sense of efficacy and valence towards managing conflict. Through the use of specific school related scenarios and the principals' real experiences, this design will lead to the learning outlined above.

In addition to the consultancy, the principals in the design will be given support to conduct a mediation. During the professional development meetings principals will learn and practice the steps for conducting an adult mediation. This process includes 1) interviewing teachers involved in the conflict, 2) establish a shared goal, 3) identify the root of the problem and possible interventions, 4) and create an action plan. This structure addresses all the key elements of adult learning. The participants contribute to the structures of learning; it's based in experience; and it's applicable to real life. This structure also builds a sense of competence, efficacy and valence around implementing the mediation process. These are key components of changing the principals' schema and ultimately shifting their frame of thinking about their role in managing conflict. Throughout the professional development the principals will be asked to reflect on the

content and the process of the design. This information will be used to assess their learning, as well as, inform the design.

### Intervention design

The intervention design explains the activities that I will do with principals. Through these activities the principals will gain skills, knowledge, and competency around managing teacher conflict productively. This design includes five professional development sessions and a three part site based mediation conducted by the principal participants. My goal will be to develop a professional development that offers the principals a clear research based process to respond to productive conflict. The plans below detail the activities for each professional development session.

### Session One: Three hours

Outcomes:

Session One outcomes

- Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.
- Challenge the principals’ previous understanding of and experience with conflict .
- Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experience with conflict.

Figure 5: Session One Agenda

Time	Activity/ Task	Facilitator	Participants	Learning
10 mins	Introduction		<p>Each principal will have 2-3 mins to introduce themselves to the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are you the principal</li> <li>• Your experience as a principal</li> <li>• One thing you love about being a principal</li> </ul>	Participant will become familiar with the research design/ professional development
5 mins	Design study overview	<p>Give an overview of the professional development and the process of the research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 sessions</li> <li>• Conduct a mediation</li> <li>• Use scenarios, role play, and</li> </ul>		

		consultancies to understand conflict differently		
5 mins	<p>Student researcher shares personal story:</p> <p>What experiences led me to want to do this design?</p>			<p>Establish a common experience among participants.</p> <p>Communicate the motivation behind the design.</p>
30 mins	Discussion: Going in depth with one conflict	<p>Prompt: Describe a conflict in which you didn't know what to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would you be willing to talk about this in more detail?</li> </ul> <p>Closing questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have principals share their stories.</li> <li>- What was similar about the experience?</li> <li>-What was different?</li> <li>- What resonated with you from this discussion?</li> </ul>	<p>Describe a conflict in which you didn't know what to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did you learn about the conflict?</li> <li>-Who was involved?</li> <li>- What was the disagreement all about? What was the topic of the conflict</li> <li>- What was your response to the conflict?</li> <li>- How did you handle the conflict?</li> <li>- What was the outcome?</li> <li>- What impact did the conflict have on the school or school culture?</li> </ul>	<p>Make the connection between their personal experiences and the need for the research design.</p> <p>Gain buy in for the process.</p>
20 mins	Building background knowledge	Supplies: Poster paper, colored markers	<p><u>BBK</u>:</p> <p>Step 1: Access prior knowledge: <i>What do you already know</i></p>	Input: Provide information on the different types of conflict (Task, Relationship, productive,



		<p>Readings –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain the process</li> <li>- Model the graphic organizers</li> <li>- Pass out the readings and keep time</li> </ul>	<p><i>about the types?</i></p> <p>Step 2. Group reading about types of conflict.</p> <p>Scribe key concepts</p> <p>Discuss</p> <p>Step 3. Expert Reading about types of conflict.</p> <p>Scribe key concepts</p> <p>Discuss</p>	<p>unproductive)</p>
40 mins	<p>Applying the reading: Choose one of the Conflicts described above.</p> <p>(Conflict you didn't know what to do with)</p> <p>Apply the concepts from the reading</p>	<p>Supplies: Chart paper, pens</p> <p>Lead the discussion of the readings and chart key findings .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key findings/ information from the reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The readings will define productive and unproductive conflict</li> <li>• Task vs. relationship</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Use the new information to analyze the personal conflict described above by each principal.</li> <li>- Was the example productive or unproductive conflict?</li> <li>- How do we know?</li> <li>- If it was productive</li> </ul>	<p>Apply the definitions to the conflict you didn't know what to do with.</p> <p>(Choose one for the whole group to discuss)</p>	<p>Participants will learn how difficult it is to classify productive vs. unproductive conflict.</p> <p>Learn a process to help guide their thinking around determining if a conflict is productive.</p>

		<p>how did/could the principal have managed it to be beneficial?</p> <p>Pass out the productive conflict check list.</p>		
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### Session Two: Three hours

#### Outcomes

- Analyze conflict scenarios to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why.
- Give school based examples of productive conflict.
- Reduce principals' fear of managing conflict.

Figure 6: Session Two Agenda

Time	Activity/ Task	Facilitator	Participants	
30 mins	Group discussion: Analyze the school conflict diagnostic	Use the method from Jehn to analyze and categorize conflicts	Use the guide provided to categorize your conflicts	Identify and categorize adult conflict at their school site.
30 mins	Productive conflict checklist	Facilitate Discussion: Use the productive conflict checklist to walk through some of the pending conflicts.	<p>Each person will share out the conflicts from their diagnostic.</p> <p>As a group use the checklist to determine which conflicts are productive.</p> <p>As each person presents fill in your productive/ unproductive graphic organizer.</p>	Learn a process for identifying and analyzing productive conflict.
5min	Choose "Focus conflict" that you will attempt to mediate		Based on the conflicts you just reviewed, choose one of the productive conflicts as your focus conflict.	Identify a productive conflict that they will attempt to manage.
20 mins	Conflict mapping	Materials: Conflict mapping graphic	Map your "Focus conflict" Based on	Learn to deconstruct

		organizer	what you know so far.	and analyze conflict.
2mins	Introduction to strategies for managing conflict: Mediation Process	Explain to participants we are going to switch gears. We have been working on how to identify productive conflicts. Now we are going to practice a process you can use once you have identified it		Principals will learn a process for managing productive conflict.
10 mins	Reading: Mediation process	Readings: Integration / Differentiation stages  Copy of mediation cycle.	Independently: read the mediation process	Principals will learn a process for managing productive conflict.
10 mins	Discussion: Moving from emotion to task		How do we use this process to move from emotion to task?	Principals will learn how to reframe teachers thinking about conflict.
45 mins	Role play the first stage of the mediation for their focus conflict.	Differentiation stage : Gathering as much info as possible for the mediation.  -Discuss differences  - State positions  -Identify needs  - identify common goals	Each principal will present their focus conflict.  The two other participants will be characters in their conflict.  The principal will role play mediating the conflict.	Principals will learn how to surface the issues within a conflict.  Principals will learn to reframe teachers thinking about a conflict.  Principals will build their skill set around mediating a conflict for a productive outcome.
5 mins	Reflection	Lead discussion	How did this process make you	Principals will identify any support they

			<p>feel?</p> <p>How was it aligned or not aligned with your natural conflict handling response?</p> <p>What support would you need to try this at your site?</p>	<p>need to conduct a mediation and manage a conflict for a productive outcome.</p>
20 mins	Develop guiding questions for the mediation	Based on role plays, help principals develop facilitation questions they could use for each stage of the process.		Principals will build their skill set around mediating a conflict for a productive outcome.
	Closing/ Reflection			
	Homework: Conduct stage two and three of the mediation with the teachers at their site			
20 mins	Long Scenarios	<p>Pass out scenario</p> <p>Facilitate the discussion</p>	<p>Independently:</p> <p>Read the scenario and respond to the following prompts: (10 mins)</p> <p>- What would be your spontaneous reaction?</p> <p>- How did that scenario make you feel?</p> <p>Group discussion (10min)</p>	<p>Illicit principals emotional responses to conflict, so we can begin to address them.</p> <p>Uncover natural responses to conflict.</p>

### Session Three: Two hours

#### Outcomes

- Principal can explain and apply a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict.
- Principal’s actions, attitude and responses show a reduced sense of fear towards managing conflict.
- Principal can connect the design to their real lives.

Figure 7: Session Three Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity/ Task</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>Participants</b>	
10 mins	Discussion	Facilitate discussion about stage 1 of the mediation	How did the first part of the mediation go?  What were the strengths of the process?  What were the weaknesses of the process?	Principals will identify their strengths during the mediation and identify further areas for support.
10 mins	Conflict mapping	Materials: Copies of the conflict maps	Based on stage 1 of the mediation update the conflict map.	Learn how to deconstruct and analyze a conflict.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.
90 mins		Each Principal: (30 mins each)  2. Present the details of their focus conflict to the group (5mins.)  3. The group asks the presenter probing and clarifying questions about the conflict (5 mins).  4. The group brainstorms while the		Principals will build their skill set around mediating a conflict for a productive outcome.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.

		<p>presenter listens: (15 mins).</p> <p>- What is the source of the problem?</p> <p>-What is the task within this conflict?</p> <p>- What are some possible interventions for this conflict?</p> <p>5. Presenter reflects on the ideas given by the group (5mins).</p>		
	Intervention Action plan	Complete part 1		Learn strategies for managing task related problems.
	Closing/ Reflection			
	Homework: Conduct stages three and four of the mediation. Take teachers through the process of identifying the process, and choosing an intervention that the teachers will implement			

#### Session Four: Two hours

##### Outcomes

- Give school based examples of productive conflict.
- Conduct a mediation between teachers on site.
- Analyze a real principal conflict to identify the root cause, develop a common task, and apply an intervention strategy.

Figure 8: Session Four Agenda.

Time	Activity/ Task	Facilitator	Participants	
10 mins	Discussion: Check in on stages three and four of the mediation		How did the second stage of the	Principals will identify their strengths

			<p>mediation go?</p> <p>What were the strengths of the process?</p> <p>What were the weaknesses of the process?</p>	<p>during the mediation and identify further areas for support.</p>
90 mins	Consultancy protocol	<p>Materials: copies of the intervention action plans</p> <p>Facilitate consultancy</p> <p>Each Principal: (30 mins each)</p> <p>1. Present the details of the second stage of their mediation (5mins).</p> <p>2. Group asks the presenter probing and clarifying questions about the conflict (5 mins).</p> <p>3. The group brainstorms while the presenter listens (15 mins).</p> <p>- Work as a group to offer ideas for the intervention plan action plan.</p> <p>- Discuss questions that principals can use to facilitate their mediations.</p> <p>5. Presenter reflects on the ideas given by the</p>	<p>Principals present their mediation and the intervention teachers will work on.</p>	<p>Learn strategies for managing task related problems.</p>

		group. (5mins)		
	Intervention action plan	Second part		
	Closing/ Reflection			
	Homework: Conduct stage five of the mediation			

### Session Five: 45 mins

#### Outcomes

- Give school based examples of productive conflict.
- Conduct a mediation between teachers on site.
- Analyze a real principal conflict to identify the root cause, develop a common task, and apply an intervention strategy.

Figure 9: Session Five Agenda

Time	Activity/ Task	Facilitator	Participants	
		<p><i>* Note: The final meeting will be held 1 week after the previous meeting. This will give principals time to monitor the implementation of the intervention plan and the mediation process.</i></p>		
10 mins	Journaling:		<p>How did the Final stage of the mediation go?</p> <p>What were the strengths of the process?</p> <p>What were the weaknesses of the process?</p>	
30 mins	Discussion	<p>Facilitate discussion</p> <p>How did the mediation process impact the</p>		



		<p>interactions between the teachers?</p> <p>Have teachers used/ implemented the intervention action plan.</p> <p>How did the mediation process impact the interactions between the teachers?</p> <p>Have teachers used/ implemented the intervention action plan.</p>		
5mins	Appreciations			
	Closing/ Reflections			

### Chapter 3 Research Design and Methods

I have presented my theory of action and my proposed intervention for principals to identify and manage productive conflict. In this section I outline my research design. The purpose of the research is to use real life experiments to determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the activities and processes within the proposed professional development. In this research design principals will participate in a series of activities and processes to help increase their knowledge and skills around identifying and managing productive conflict. First I discuss my methodology. Then I identify the unit of ‘treatment’ and analysis and the selection of participants. Next, I explain my strategies for data collection and analysis. I conclude with issues of validity, rigor, bias and transferability.

#### Methodology

This is a study that combined design and action research methodologies. The data collected are mostly qualitative though an effort was made to quantify design impact. The design study differed from other research approaches because it tried to make both practical and scientific contributions. In a design study there is a “two fold purpose: (i) supporting the development of prototypical products (including providing empirical evidence for their effectiveness), and (ii) generating methodological directions for the design and evaluation of such products. In this approach, the scientific contribution (knowledge growth) is seen as equally important as the practical contribution (product improvement)” (Van den Akker, 1999 ,p4). The study focused on both the product and the process. While the outcome was important, so was the evaluation and understanding of the process that led to the outcome. This methodological approach was chosen over more traditional approaches because it allowed me to design a remedy for a practical problem in education; and allowed me to monitor the design through reflection and feedback to adjust and adapt the design as needed.

Van Den Akker (1999) pointed to two important aspects of design studies they 1) provide empirical evidence for a product and 2) provide practical contributions for product improvement through reflection, analysis, and documentation of the process. I embedded both of these elements within my design. The activities in the professional development were designed to address very specific outcomes related to principal's managing adult conflict. In addition to the professional development activities, reflection, and discussion were embedded throughout the professional development to monitor the design development. Van Den Akker (1999) further described design studies as consisting of preliminary investigation, theoretical embedding, empirical testing, and documentation, analysis and reflection on the process. All of these characteristics were present in this design study. My preliminary investigation involved consulting the professional knowledge base, as well as, my experience as a principal. Theoretical embedding included using the findings from my knowledge base to provide rationale for and develop my design intervention. My theory of action explicitly outlined the connection between the research and my interventions. The empirical testing was the process I used to collect my data. This included pre and post surveys and interviews, as well as, the use of a rubric to document growth towards my intended outcomes. The final step was reflection on the process. This was done throughout my design. The principals provided both written and verbal reflections on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the proposed process.

My study also lended itself to an Action Research approach. Coghlan and Brannick (2010) state that "action researchers work on the epistemological assumption that the purpose of academic research and discourse is not just to describe, understand, and explain the world but also to change it"(p.6). In my design I not only identified a problem of practice to research, I proposed an intervention or "action" to address the problem. Action research is also about the positionality of the researcher. Coghlan and Brannick (2007) characterized it as "insider action research"(p.65). Although I conducted the research, I also facilitated the professional development sessions. As I facilitated the sessions, I collaborated with the principal participants through feedback and reflection to make adjustments to the design as needed. This process was aligned with the action research cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry, 2002; Coghlan and Brannick, 2010 ). It involved constant reflection and evaluation about what was learned as a result of the action research cycle

### **Setting**

The setting for this design study was a small focus group of 3 principals. The principals all worked at schools in an urban district in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the 2013-2014 school year the district hired 26 new principals. In this district professional learning communities, teacher collaboration, and distribution of leadership were viewed as best practices, and were expected to be implemented by all principals. This design was increasingly relevant at this time. The district had used scripted Math and Reading curriculum for the last decade. Now the district was moving to teacher developed units. Every school site had been mandated to select teacher leaders to support this transition. With so many newly mandated changes there were questions, push back, disagreement, and ultimately conflict.

### **Unit of Treatment and Analysis and Case Selection**

The proximal outcome of this design was to provide a professional development for principals that helped them understand and respond to productive conflict. Productive conflict was a topic that was not addressed in the current research related to Professional Learning Communities in schools. This design provided training, diagnostic tools, a mediation process, and conflict management strategies through professional development for principals. Therefore, my unit of analysis was the principals. I focused on 3 elementary school principals. Although part of the design implementation involved teachers, due to time and resource constraints this study did not address their involvement. Future studies may focus on other stakeholders, such as teachers.

I collaborated with the district Assistant Superintendents and my colleagues to identify 3 willing participants. The principals were open to shifting their thinking about conflict among teachers. The principals also were willing to participate in five 2 hour sessions, as well as, attempt to conduct a conflict mediation at their site. Additionally, the schools chosen for this design were currently struggling with conflict among their staff. This design targeted urban schools because they traditionally struggled with conflict and instability.

### **Data Collection Strategies**

The data in this design study consists of process data and impact data. The process data gives specific details about what happened in each professional development session. Then provides an analysis of each session to determine if the activities and facilitation led to the intended learning. The impact data is drawn from a pre and post interview that each principal took. Each principal's answers in the pre and post interview were mapped onto a rubric for a score. The rubric scores were used in the impact data analysis. The follow sections detail the impact and process data.

#### **Design Impact Data**

For the impact data, I conducted a pre and post semi-structured interview with each principal. I used a developmental rubric to score both the pre and post interviews. I drew from the research on conflict to create interview questions related to the three focus areas: knowledge about types of conflict, ability to identify productive conflict, and efficacy around managing productive conflict. The questions ranged from open-ended questions to questions that required principals to respond to a likert scale with varying degrees of agreement and disagreement. The pre interview was administered to principals before the first professional development session. The pre interview served as the baseline data. The post interview was administered after the last session. The answers for both the pre and post interview were mapped onto a 4 point rubric. I compared the responses and rubric scores from the pre and post interview for the outcome data.

The indicators on the rubric reflected the intended outcome of the intervention. The rubric indicators included: beliefs about conflict, define types of conflict, explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflict, identify productive conflict in a real setting, and effectively respond to conflict. The descriptors in the rubric were drawn directly from the research. The rubric was a 4 point scale. The descriptors ranged from "1" which represents "little" or "no" knowledge about the area, to a "4" which

represented deep understanding of an area. It was possible to have a different score in each indicator of the rubric. During the analysis each indicator was analyzed separately.

**Process Data**

The purpose of the process data was to capture the change that occurred throughout the design. Qualitative data was most appropriate to capture this change. I observed and documented participants’ natural response to this design; and observed and documented any changes in behavior over the course of the study. I observed the principals’ interactions, reactions, and responses during each stage of the cycle of inquiry. I also collected all of the written artifacts from each session. Since I facilitated the process, I audiotaped each session. I used my audiotapes and artifacts to code and to identify key responses and interaction. I developed my codes from the focus areas in the rubric. This helped narrow my process data to the overall outcome of the design.

The first form of process data was observations. I took notes and audio taped the professional development sessions while the principals engaged in readings, structured discussions, diagnostics, and reflection. Because this was an action research design, I facilitated most of the process. The audiotapes allowed me to capture things I missed while I was facilitating. After each professional development session I reviewed the audiotapes and observation notes to inform any changes or adjustments that needed to happen in the design process.

The other form of process data was the principals’ written activities. This included graphic organizers and the principals’ reflections. Throughout the professional development principals used protocols and graphic organizers to help document their learning. This data also helped document the evolution of their thinking. At the beginning and end of every session the principals were asked to complete written reflection on a topic or a process. This data was reviewed weekly to inform the design process. After, I collected all the data from the design, I reexamined the process data from each week. I used this information to evaluate the effectiveness, or lack of for the design.

**Summary Data Collection**

In the previous section I outlined my impact and process data. The figures below provide a summary of my data collection process during the implementation of the design.

Figure 10: Data Collection Methods

<b>Design outcome</b>	<b>Impact Data Source</b>	<b>Process Data Sources</b>
Principals have knowledge of different types of conflict	Pre and Post <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal interviews</li> <li>• Rubric Scores</li> </ul>	Field notes Audiotapes Observations Principal reflections Graphic organizers Participation in discussion about readings
Principals can identify productive conflicts	Pre and Post <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal Interviews</li> <li>• Rubric Scores</li> </ul>	Field notes Audiotapes Observations Principal written reflections

		Participation in analyzing scenarios. Identifying conflict at their school sites and completing the graphic organizer. Conflict mapping process
Principals know a process to manage productive conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with the principals</li> <li>• Rubric Score</li> </ul>	Field notes Audiotapes Observations Principal reflections Discussion Responses to Scenarios Discussion and participation in the “consultancy protocol”

Figure 11: Data Collection Administration

<b>Data Collection strategies</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Concurrent Data</b>	<b>Culminating Data</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Interviews	Pre Semi-Structured interview with each principal		Post semi structured interview with each principal	Two rounds of interviews
Observations		Each professional development session will be audio taped.  Observation notes		Five observations
Surveys	Kilmann’s conflict response instrument			One round of the conflict response instrument
Documents		Principal’s mediation facilitation questions  Conflict maps  Graphic Organizers  Principal’s written reflections		Three sets of principals mediation notes  Two rounds of conflict maps  Five Rounds of principal reflections.

Researcher audiotapes and documents		-Researcher field notes -Researcher reflection journal		-Five Field notes -Five researcher reflections
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## **Validity, Reliability, Transferability**

### **Validity**

The research ensured that the design study and action research had validity. Creswell sees validation as one of the strengths of qualitative research. In qualitative research validity referred to the procedural steps taken to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2009). Creswell stated “Proposal developers need to convey the steps they will take in their studies to check for the accuracy and credibility of their findings ” (Creswell, 2009,p. 15). In a design study validity is proven in two ways: the design shows an impact (i.e. the theory of action proves to be valid); the process data shows that the impact was produced by the design and not by chance. I identified specific outcomes for my design, and my theory of intervention detailed the steps I took towards these outcomes. This study attempted to establish a relationship between the interventions and principals change in attitude toward conflict. By documenting the procedures for my qualitative research the reader can see the authenticity or credibility of the research. Validity is also established by collecting multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). In my study I collected multiple sources of process and impact data. This included pre and post interviews, rubric scores, graphic organizers, written reflections, and observation notes. At the end of each session I reviewed my data to begin to analyze and organize the data.

### **Reliability**

In qualitative research reliability is obtained through careful planning of the intervention and activities. The activities were connected directly to the outcomes of the design. This was captured in my professional development agendas, as well as, clearly documented procedures for each intervention activity. Any changes to the design were documented and analyzed. For reliability careful documentation is important. If another researcher attempts to duplicate the design they should be able to follow the methods and analysis and obtain similar results (Creswell, 2007, p.204). To increase the reliability of the study I had clear protocols for data collection. This included semi-structured interview questions, observation notes, and collecting written documents from the participants.

### **Transferability**

Transferability in a design study refers to the extent to which an intervention can be transferred to a different setting or context and yield similar results (van den Akker, 1999). Although duplicated design studies may not yield identical results, a reader should be able to look at both research studies and clearly see how the results were obtained and how they were similar and different. Transferability may be limited due to the unique context of my design. However, I have detailed descriptions of the roles of the facilitator, the participants, and clear procedures for each activity.

### **Avoiding Bias, Ensuring Rigor**

In this study I collected data from the pre and post survey, interviews, written artifacts, written reflections, and observations. For the impact data I constructed instruments that were as low-inference as possible. For the process data I constructed observation instruments that clearly defined what I was looking for and captured principal's responses to the professional development. As I analyzed the data I conducted member checks. During the analysis stage, a member check required the researcher to go back to the participants in the study and confirm the interpretation of the actions or events. Rigor in action research "refers to how data are generated, gathered, explored and evaluated, how events are questioned and interpreted through multiple action research cycles" (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010, p.14). This is mainly to control biases as a researcher.

In addition to explicitly documenting participant behaviors, I also constantly reflected on the quality and rigor of the questions for action research posed by Coghlan and Brannick (2010). These questions lead the researcher to focus on issues such as the relationship between the action researcher and the participants, the level of reflection that has occurred, the methodological appropriateness, and the significance of the project. To address these questions I engaged in continual self-reflection on my role as the researcher versus the facilitator. Clear research procedures were established before implementation of the intervention. I referred to research to help guide the process when changes were made.

### **Bias**

In the design study I played multiple roles. I was the product designer, the researcher, and a participant/observer. People who read this study may believe that a potential bias exist in the fact that I was both creating the design and researching its impact. The potential existed for advocacy bias (Stake, 2006). In my attempt to study the impact of the design I have created, I may have noticed details that support the positive impact of the design, while not giving as much emphasis to data that indicates that the design is not effective. Some examples of advocacy bias include the researcher's hope of finding the program or phenomena that is working, the desire to draw conclusions that are useful to others, and the desire to document findings that will lead to action (Stake, 2006). To avoid advocacy bias van den Akker suggests "that in early stages of formative research, progress is helped by a dominance of the creative designers' perspective, while at later stages a shift to a stronger voice for the more critical researchers' position is preferable" (1999, p.11). To avoid bias I kept the creation of the design and the research/analysis of the design separate. I established research procedures before the design is implemented. These procedures included using colleagues to review observation notes for potential bias; and I reviewed data periodically throughout the study to identify inconsistencies in the data.

## **Chapter 4 Findings**

### **Introduction**

This design study was developed from my experience as a school principal, as well as my interactions and conversations with other principals who had similar struggles with adult conflict. Prior to implementing this design I spoke to principals and principal

supervisors about the need for a process to manage adult conflict. Both the principals and their supervisors identified teacher conflict as an ongoing issue. The principal supervisor named adult-based conflict as one of the most common issues that they are called in to act upon. Based on experience, the needs assessment, and related research, I developed the research design and a structured interview that would be used to measure the impact of the design.

Two female principals and one male principal participated in the research study (see Figure 12). The three principals ranged in experience from one year to nine years. Prior to the study, I met with each principal and explained my research. All of the principals willingly agreed to participate in the study. The original design involved five two-hour professional development sessions, as well as the principals conducting mediations at their site. Once the design began, the principals became uncomfortable with conducting the mediations at their site. This impacted the last session. As a result the design was four two-hour sessions that occurred once per week; there were no mediations.

Figure 12: Principal Demographics

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Years experience</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
<b>Principal One</b>	Elementary	5	Male	African American
<b>Principal Two</b>	Elementary	1	Female	White
<b>Principal Three</b>	Elementary	9	Female	African American

I collected both impact and process data. The impact data was used to assess the principals' growth in three areas: knowledge of different types of conflict, identifying productive conflict, and managing productive conflict. To collect impact data I conducted pre- and post-study interviews. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded using themes from the rubric. The coded transcriptions were analyzed using a rubric to determine whether attitudes or skills had changed over the course of the intervention.

The second form of impact data was based on the principals' attempt to manage a real life conflict at their site. Ultimately, if the processes and content of the intervention were effective the principals would be able to use their new knowledge to manage a conflict at their site. At the end of each professional development session the principals were asked to return to their school and conduct part of the mediation. At the next professional development session they would report out about what occurred. The professional development sessions were recorded and transcribed. These transcripts were used to gather data about how they managed real conflicts at their school site. These data were used to give each principal a rubric score.

I also collected process data. The process data that were collected during the professional development sessions included transcripts of the sessions, principal reflections, and responses to written activities. I used the process data to better understand the role of the intervention in producing outcomes and my role as the designer and action researcher. Immediately after each session, I reviewed all data collected during the sessions, wrote memos analyzing the process, made conjectures about why the



course of the intervention differed from my expectations, and made adjustments to the intervention plans. In the following sections I analyze my impact data and present my findings. Then I analyze my process data and make connections to my impact data to help understand the design outcomes.

### **Impact data**

I used a structured interview to collect impact data. I met with each principal before the research was conducted to collect baseline data. I conducted a second interview using the same questions after the study was complete. The structured interview consisted of three parts: principals defining and describing productive and unproductive conflict in their own words and based on their own experiences; principals responding to a checklist of statements about their beliefs related to adult conflict; and conflict laden scenarios that principals were asked to analyze and manage.

There were three scenarios that the principals were asked to read. For each scenario they were asked “How would you describe the conflict in this scenario?” “Would you intervene? Why or why not?” and “How would you manage the problem?” All three scenarios presented real school based problems. However, they were purposefully dramatic and filled with things that could be distracting. Principals were expected to sift through the dramatic situation to identify the problem and determine whether it was a productive or unproductive conflict. The first scenario was intended to be productive. The scenario was based on a conflict about teachers struggling to collaborate around pedagogy. The second scenario was intended to be unproductive. The conflict involved teachers who were not following supervision procedures. The last scenario was more ambiguous. The conflict involved teachers who did not want to follow a mandated teaching strategy and professional development because they did not feel it met the needs of their English Language Learner population. This could be analyzed as teachers resisting standard policies and procedures, which is not a productive conflict. It could also be viewed as a pedagogical conflict. The source of the conflict could be a debate over whether the strategy met the needs of all student populations. With all of the scenarios I looked to see how principals analyzed the “root” of the problem, what process they used to determine if it was productive or unproductive, and what steps they took to manage the conflict once they made a decision about its productivity.

The principal’s responses to the structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded and the principals’ answers to the pre- and post-interviews were mapped onto a four point rubric, which was used to measure the quality of their answers. The rubric outlined the expectations for a high quality answer, which would score a “4”. The rubric also outlined a progression of answers that would lead to a “4”. The content of the rubric was developed based on the theory of action and literature that was consulted when the professional development was designed. The categories that were scored in the rubric were: beliefs about conflict; defining types of conflict; explaining the difference between productive and unproductive conflicts in school; processes for determining productive or unproductive conflict; and effectively responding to a productive conflict.

There was a sixth rubric category that was not based on the pre and post interview. This category was: the principal will manage a site based productive conflict.

This rubric indicator was connected to a task that each principal was given to complete. During the professional development each principal was given a process and tools to help them manage a productive conflict at their site. Between each professional development meeting they were asked to conduct a portion of the mediation. During the following professional development they would report out on how well the process worked. These professional development meetings were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were coded and mapped onto a four point rubric. The rubric descriptors outlined a progression of responses from a one to four. A one represented an unwillingness to manage the conflict and progressed to a four which represented successfully using the process to manage a real conflict.

All of the rubric indicators were directly connected to the professional development which aimed to 1) increase a principal’s knowledge and understanding of different types of conflict, 2) help the principal identify productive conflict in schools 3) provide a conflict management process and strategies that maximize the outcome of productive conflict in schools.

The resulting rubric scores for the pre- and post-interviews were compared to define the impact of the intervention, in other words, to determine if the principals demonstrated increased knowledge and skills related to the three areas outlined in the design challenge. The baseline and impact score for each participant is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Rubric Scores

<b>Rubric Indicators</b>	<b>PST111 Baseline</b>	<b>PST111 Impact</b>	<b>PST222 Baseline</b>	<b>PST222 Impact</b>	<b>PST333 Baseline</b>	<b>PST333 Impact</b>
<b>Beliefs about conflict</b>	3	4	2	3	2	3
<b>Principal can define types of conflict</b>	2	4*	2	2	2	2
<b>The principal can explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflict in schools</b>	4	4	3	2	3	2
<b>Principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive</b>	2	4	1	2	2	2
<b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive conflict.</b>	2	2	2	2	3	3
<b>Principal manages a school based productive conflict</b>	1	1	1	2	1	1
<b>Overall Average</b>	2.3	3.2	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.2

The scores from each rubric indicator were averaged to give an overall rubric score. The baseline average score and the impact average score were compared for each principal. Overall two out of three principals showed an increased average rubric score. Principal One increased his score by 0.9 points. Principal Two increased her average score by 0.4. The increase in the overall score from the pre interview to the post interview represented a change in the way the principal responded to one or more of the questions on the interview. A higher rubric score indicated their post interview answer was more aligned with the ideas about productive conflict that they learned in the professional development. Principal Three's score remained the same between the baseline and outcome

Overall two out of three principals moved up on at least two of the rubric indicators. One out of three principals moved up on four of the six indicators. Two out of three principals regressed on one of the indicators. Three out of three principals showed no movement on at least two of the indicators. The "\*" next to this score indicates that increased knowledge beyond the dimension of 4, however "4" was the highest score available. This is explained in further detail in a later section. Principal Two showed no change on two out of six indicators. Principal Three had no change on four out of six indicators.

When looking at each indicator, three out of three principals showed an increased rubric score under beliefs about conflict. One out of three principals moved on the rubric, demonstrating increased skill in defining conflict. Principal One's score increased by two levels, while the other two principals did not demonstrate an increase in their skills at all. The third indicator required principals to explain the difference between a productive and an unproductive conflict. One out of three principals demonstrated a better understanding of the concepts in this section. Due to the parameters of the rubric only one principal increased their actual score. Two principal's scores decreased. On the fourth indicator, whether the principal had a clear process for determining productive conflict, two out of three principals increased in score by at least one level; and one out of three principals received the same score on both baseline and impact. The fifth indicator was that the principal could effectively respond to productive conflict, for this indicator none of the three principals increased their score. All of the principals received the same score on the baseline and the impact. The final indicator was that the principals would manage a school based productive conflict. Two out of three principals received the same baseline and impact score. One principal's score increased one level.

Overall there was inconsistency in the principals' rubric scores. The only rubric indicator that they all had an increased score was "beliefs about conflict." This indicator was primarily scored based on a list of statements that the principals agreed or disagreed with. Once the principals were asked to identify and apply concepts on their own they all struggled. Some of the rubric scores actually decreased between the pre and post interview. This implied that the principals struggled and were more confused after they participated in the professional development. The core findings from the impact data were:

- The principals could recite vocabulary, but that did not signify true understanding of productive and unproductive conflict.
- The principals were affected by both productive and unproductive conflict and had a difficult time drawing clear distinctions between the two.

- The principals could not apply the concepts or processes from the professional development to the interview scenarios with consistency.
- The principals could not apply the concepts or processes from the professional development in real life.

In the next section I discuss the rubric indicators in relationship to the intended professional development outcomes.

**Professional Development Outcome One: Increase the principal’s knowledge and understanding of different types of conflict**

The principal’s knowledge and understanding of different types of conflict were rated using the first two rubric indicators: “beliefs about conflict” and “principal can define types of conflict.” The descriptors for these indicators included:

Figure 14: Sample Rubric Descriptors

Rubric Score “1”	Rubric Score “3”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believes all conflict are harmful for the school</li> <li>• The principal believes that all conflicts are the same</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believes that there are some conflicts that can be beneficial to the progress of the school.</li> <li>• The principal can explain why/ how conflict can be beneficial</li> <li>• The principal can provide a detailed definition of each type of conflict</li> </ul>

I analyzed each principal’s responses to the interview questions to determine a rubric score. One of the interview questions required the principals to respond to a list of statements about conflict. Some of the statements were aligned with the belief that conflict can be productive and others were more aligned with the belief that conflict is a problem. The principal’s agreement and disagreement with the statements helped understand their mindset around conflict in their schools. A check next to a statement represented agreement with the statement. An empty box represented disagreement with the statement.

Figure 15: Beliefs About Conflict

	PST111 Baseline	PST111 Impact	PST222 Baseline	PST222 Impact	PST333 Baseline	PST333 Impact
I believe that teachers/ adults should handle their own conflicts		X			X	X
I believe conflict is harmful to school culture			X	X	X	X
If I see a conflict between adults I always get involved						
I do not deal with adult conflict unless I am asked	X-	X	X	X	X	
I always address conflicts related to instruction	X	X	X	X	X	X

I believe conflict is important to school growth	X	X -	X	X	X	X
There is no place for adult conflict at my school				X		
Adult conflict helps me recognize potential problems with the school	X	X	X	X	X	X
I avoid conflict at all costs	X					
I end teacher conflict as soon as it starts						
I am willing to sit with teachers, hear their concerns, and help them solve their conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X
I am frustrated by teacher/ adult conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adult conflict is a natural part of organizational growth	X	X	X	X	X	X

In addition to the checklist, I looked at principal’s responses to the questions “How would you define conflicts among adults?” and “Have you experienced teacher or adult conflict at your site? If so can you give some examples?” In the baseline interview all three principals responded to the question “How would you define conflict” with terms that sounded as if they believed all conflicts were the same. The responses included “anytime you have a disagreement,” “anytime communication gets in the way,” “anytime two people have conflict.” In the post interview, Principal One removed the reference to “anytime” and stated “when two or more people or multiple parties have competing desires.” In the post interview Principal Three started to define conflict by stating “there are different levels.” This statement implied that she understood that there were different types of conflict. Principal Two said, “any disagreement in practice or policy that affects operations.” Although she still used the term “any” she does reference terms that were discussed during the professional development such as practice vs. procedures. Additionally, in the post interview all three of the principals provided answers later that indicated that they did not believe all conflicts were the same. Although it was not mentioned in the answer for defining conflict, later in the interview Principal One referenced conflicts being relational vs. task based. This indicated he had a more in depth understanding of conflict than his first answer showed.

The last question asked the principals about their responses to conflict. This was related to defining types of conflict, because a principal who had a deep understanding of conflict would understand that different types of conflict required different responses. All three principals received a rubric score of two in the pre-interview. Two of the principals described approaches that showed that they avoided or ignored conflict. Principal Two stated “If its something I think will just go away, I don’t address it at all. Which is really bad.” Principal Three stated that she used to be collaborative, but had more recently adopted the approach of just making a decision. On the rubric, this would be described as giving a directive. In the post-interview all three principals acknowledged that participating in the professional development helped them “see the

light.” They all stated that they now felt like they should be more “proactive” and engage around the conflict instead of ignoring it.

**Professional Development Outcome Two: Help the principal identify productive conflict in schools**

The principal’s ability to identify productive conflict was rated using two different approaches. First the principals were asked to give examples of productive and unproductive conflicts based on their own experience. They were also asked to respond to three different scenarios. The first two questions for each scenario were related to this indicator. They were “How would you describe the conflict in this scenario?” and “Would you intervene in this conflict? Why or why not?” The answers to these questions were analyzed using rubric indicator 3: The principal can explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflict in schools. Examples of the descriptors are in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Sample Rubric Descriptors

Rubric Score “1”	Rubric Score 4
The principal cannot give an example of a productive conflict in a school	The principal can provide multiple examples of a school based productive conflict.
When given a scenario the principal has no process for assessing a conflict	- When given a scenario the principal uses all the indicators from the conflict checklist to determine if a conflict is productive

An analysis of the responses from each principal provided further detail about the impact of the professional development on the way principals’ thought about managing adult conflict. As part of the professional development the principals read research-based articles that defined both productive and unproductive conflict. After participating in the professional development the goal was for principals to understand that not all conflict were the same. When asked to give examples of productive conflict they would describe task-related examples that had an impact on instruction, school vision, specific equity issues, or overall school goals. When they described an unproductive conflict the goal was for the principals to refer to conflicts around basic policies and procedures. The charts below summarize the way each principal described productive versus unproductive conflict in the pre- and post-interview.

**Principal One**

Figure 17: Principal One’s Descriptions Of Conflict

	Principal One Pre	Principal One Post
Productive Conflict	Pedagogy/Policies	Task
Unproductive Conflict	Personal	Relationship

When asked to describe examples of productive and unproductive conflicts, Principal One used appropriate examples in both the pre and post interview. On the rubric for this section the principal received a “4” on the pre interview rubric because he gave very specific examples that represented personal versus pedagogical conflicts. In

the post interview Principal One appropriately explained a productive conflict versus an unproductive conflict, but this time he specifically used language drawn from the professional development such as “relational” and “challenging each other around the work.” Due to the parameters of the rubric his score did not change, however there was evidence of growth in his thinking. Therefore an asterisk sign was placed next to the “4” in the post rubric score.

## Principal Two

Figure 18: Principal Two’s Descriptions Of Conflict

	<b>Principal Two Pre</b>	<b>Principal Two Post</b>
Productive Conflict	Uncovering bias or access for kids	Both parties felt heard Built up your school culture.
Unproductive Conflict	Teaching styles	Imminently effects teaching and learning Time consuming

Principal Two received a higher score on the pre interview than the post interview. In her pre interview she received a rubric score of a 3 because she could describe at least one school-based example of a productive/ unproductive conflict. In her description of a productive conflict she stated that “surfacing the conflict would open up a layer of understanding.” She went on to describe how this could help change a teacher’s mindset around student learning. In her description of an unproductive conflict she described an argument over the implementation of a lesson plan template. This would fall into the policies and procedures area because it was about the template structure versus actual academic content. Based on the readings from the professional development conflict around basic policies and procedures are unproductive.

In the post interview Principal Two received a lower score than in her pre interview. Her rubric score was a “2” because her answers were vague and some of them did not fit the definition of productive versus unproductive conflict. For example she described productive conflict as “both parties being heard”. However, just because all the parties involved feel heard does not make it productive. It is possible to engage a group in discussions that are personal or non productive to school growth. She also described an unproductive conflict as “imminently affecting teaching and learning,” but there are conflicts around pedagogy that are helpful to school growth. If something appears to be having a negative impact on teaching and learning then it is a conflict that may be worth exploring. Based on this analysis she was given a rubric score of “2” in this area, which indicated that the principal has little to no knowledge of what a productive conflict would look like in a school.

## Principal Three

Figure 19: Principal Three’s Descriptions Of Conflict

	Principal Three Pre	Principal Three Post
Productive Conflict	Pedagogy	Pedagogy
Unproductive Conflict	Prioritizing adult needs	Policies

In the pre interview Principal Three scored a rubric score of “3.” For a productive conflict she gave an in-depth example of a pedagogical dilemma that her instructional leadership team was facing. They were engaged in a debate about the appropriate strategies or programs to use in order to accelerate the learning of their English Language Learner population. When she described an unproductive conflict her initial answer was vague she stated that any conflict about “adult needs” was unproductive. When probed further she stated conflict about “the person themselves and ego.” Her example was personal not task based, therefore it would be an appropriate response.

In the post interview for a productive conflict she used the description from her pre-interview. For her description of an unproductive conflict she described a conflict about how teachers are assigned classes and grade level. Based on the readings from the professional development this was a productive conflict. Additionally we discussed this specific scenario in detail during the professional development sessions. During the professional development meetings she identified this type of conflict as productive. This showed that the principal had not internalized the concepts or the processes from the professional development. This resulted in her post interview score of “2” because she was able to give an appropriate productive conflict, but was not able to do so for an unproductive conflict

### **Professional Development Outcome Three: Provide a conflict management process and strategies that maximize the outcome of productive conflict in schools.**

For this goal, the principals were given a series of scenarios to analyze and respond to. The goal of the scenarios was to assess the principals’ process for identifying productive versus unproductive conflict, as well as understand their process for managing a conflict. These were two skills that were specifically taught during the professional development. Ideally in the post interview the principals would demonstrate that they internalized the processes from the professional development. For this outcome each principal’s rubric score also took into account how they managed their real conflicts during the professional development sessions. The learning connected to this rubric indicator was not just about if the principal could talk about how they managed a conflict, but if they could actually use the process to demonstrate their understanding.

During the professional development the principals were given a “Productive Conflict Checklist”. The purpose of this tool was to guide the principals’ thinking as they analyzed and made decisions about intervening in conflicts. The guiding questions from the checklist included:

- Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?
- Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task? What is the level of intensity?



- Is the task worth your time and effort?

After they learned a process for identifying productive conflict, the principals were given a step-by-step process that they could use to facilitate turning the conflict into something that could productively contribute to their school community. This process was:

- Surface the problem
- Reframe the issue
- Identify the task
- Identify an intervention related to the task
- Create an action plan

When the principals' pre and post interview answers were analyzed, I looked for examples of the processes above. In the pre interview, although they did not know the specific processes, all of the principals used parts of the processes from the professional development. In the post interview I looked for principals to be more purposeful in the way they used part or all of the processes outlined above.

The principals were given three in-depth scenarios. Each scenario provided an overview of the conflict, then provided the dialogue between teachers based on the overview. The principal used the dialogue to answer questions about what they thought the problem was, if they would intervene, and how they would manage the problem.

The first scenario involved a productive conflict, based on the new teacher vs veteran teacher dichotomy. In the scenario the veteran teachers wanted to leave the larger team of primarily new teachers. The district had adopted a new set of academic standards for students. The veteran teachers felt they could adapt some of their old practices to the new standards, while the newer teachers felt that the older lesson plans no longer worked. The principal was asked to step in when the veteran teachers came and stated they no longer wanted to work with the group.

Scenario two was an unproductive conflict. In this scenario a group of teachers were upset that several other teachers did not follow the policy to monitor the hallways during student breaks. Again in this scenario the principal had to read through a hostile conversation between multiple teachers to determine the problem and how they would react. The goal was for the principal to identify the scenario as unproductive. As an unproductive conflict the principal should not engage in a full process, they should simply make a decision and remind faculty on agreed-upon policies

The last scenario was intended to be ambiguous. In this scenario the district had mandated a new set of teaching strategies and required teachers to video tape themselves for professional development purposes. When it was time for the teachers to present their videos, the English Language Learner teachers stated that they did not complete the assignment. They felt that the strategies did not serve the needs of their student population. This scenario could be viewed as a mandated policy that the principal should make a decision around; or it could be viewed as a productive conflict about the pedagogical needs of the English Language Learners. The goal was that the principals would use a clear process to analyze this scenario. Then intervene in a way that matched their analysis.

The following section is an analysis of each principal's response to the three scenarios as they related to sections of the rubric and the principal's scores. The tables below highlight each principal's response to the questions in both the pre- and post-interviews. Key points from the principals' responses were drawn from the transcripts.

## Principal One

Figure 20: Principal One's Scenario One Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	Lack of norms around how to collaborate.	Work related, not relational. I think there are some real serious paradigm conflicts that are occurring.
Would you intervene? Why or why not	Absolutely. We are investing time and energy into it.  If they are not participating they are missing out on some big learning  Expectation of collaboration	Yes I need them to collaborate and to plan.  I'm investing time, school time to allow for this and the expectation is being broken.
How would you manage the conflict?	Identify what do we have in common.  What is the purpose of this that we are even talking about  Getting comfortable as a leader saying this is what we are doing.  Finding the attributes in the team and understand where they are in the development of a team.  There should be conflict at this stage of team development.  How do you get both of the groups to acknowledge where they are as a team and commit.  Develop norms to maintain professionalism in their meetings.	Meet with each one and get a preliminary understanding of where they are and what the issue actually is.  Get all 5 together and create a list of the barriers that are stopping them from working together.  List the opportunities that each one of these barriers brings.  Help them see the value in new teachers and veteran teachers.  Create agreements  Leadership needs to clarify the school vision.

In scenario one Principal One chose to intervene and manage the conflict in both the pre and post interview. However, post interview reflected deeper learning from the professional development. In the pre interview he stated that the problem was about lack of norms. In the pre interview he named some of the components from the professional development, but it appeared to be a random list of things he could possibly do. When he described the conflict in the post interview he reasoned through whether he thought the conflict was work related or relational. In the post interview he had a clear process or succession of steps he would take.

Figure 21: Principal One’s Scenario Two Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	<p>It seems like some folks feel like there are equity issues.</p> <p>People think that the administration is allowing some people to get out of their responsibilities.</p>	<p>I think its work related.</p> <p>I think it’s not a personal issue necessarily.</p> <p>There is a question around equality.</p>
Would you intervene? Why or why not	<p>Absolutely</p> <p>Because it is very public</p> <p>Need some way to come to a closure.</p> <p>Want to find out where it is stemming from.</p> <p>Try to get to the root cause, because it could just like it did in this brief moment explode.</p>	<p>I think I would intervene because its public.</p> <p>At this point I think it just needs to be tabled.</p> <p>We need to say at some point we will address this but right now we have other business.</p>
How would you manage the conflict?	<p>Have everyone freeze</p> <p>State what I’m seeing</p> <p>Acknowledge that we are all feeling emotionally trapped</p> <p>Schedule a time to have these conversations</p> <p>I need to figure out a solution right away.</p> <p>I always go structural. Structures to support checking who is on hallway duty.</p> <p>Getting them all to a table and share their feelings.</p>	<p>I’m wondering what the barrier is. Like what is the problem? Why is she not coming out and doing the work in the hall and what seems to be the barrier there. And why conversely why are the other two feeling that strongly that it is a big enough issue that it needs to be brought up in public</p> <p>How do we get those guys to understand that if something does come up like this that there is an appropriate channel for it. So how do you create channels that will allow for folks to bring out these issues?</p>

In both the pre and post interview Principal One wanted to know more about why the teachers were not following the policies. In the pre interview Principal One wanted to bring everyone to the table and have them share their feelings. In the post interview Principal One wanted to “table” the discussion and find other ways for teachers to express their concern. The post interview answer was aligned with the idea that this conflict was unproductive and the principal should make a decision about the next steps for teachers following policies and procedures.

Figure 22: Principal One’s Scenario Three Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	<p>I don’t know</p> <p>EL teachers are upset because they don’t feel like academic language protocols serve the needs of EL students.</p>	<p>I don’t think this one is interpersonal either.</p> <p>I think this is very much a problem of work and alignment of what the work is.</p> <p>Its not pedagogical but it does seem to be equity of resources like classrooms.</p>
Would you intervene? Why or why not	<p>Yes</p> <p>I have a conflict currently in my school around PLCs that is very similar</p> <p>You need to interrupt some of the pieces of this.</p> <p>Once trust is lost during the PLC then it makes the whole system crumble.</p>	<p>I think so because you’re investing time and you’re talking about instruction.</p> <p>There is a place to learn from this conflict because you have some folks that are questioning some big things such as equity around classrooms.</p> <p>I think there are things they can both learn from each other.</p>
How would you manage the conflict?	<p>Get them together and have them share their grievances.</p> <p>Chart out what’s the problem? What are your issues.</p> <p>Chart out what is wrong with the lesson planning template</p> <p>We need to go explore this and figure out how do we solve the problem that we think is happening.</p>	<p>Everyone needs to be called out on this one, so they can see that part of the process of the PLC is to have conflict.</p> <p>There needs to be some norms for the group to explicitly state this is what we need to be able to work together.</p> <p>I would probably need to sit in with the group to help not just monitor but manage and to mediate in case the issues do come back up.</p>

In the ambiguous scenario Principal One chose to manage the conflict in both the pre and post interview. His answers in the pre interview were similar to the second scenario. He said that he did not know what the problem was, but he managed the conflict using some of the strategies learned during the professional development. In the post interview he used specific processes from the professional development. He reasoned through whether it was task or relationship oriented. When asked if he would intervene he thought about the time investment and stated that there was “learning” within this conflict. He also stated that he would sit with the group to “manage” the problem and have the group “explicitly state” what they needed to move forward. This was all drawn from the professional development sessions.

Principal One’s post interview answers in all three scenarios used processes drawn from the professional development sessions. He used terms and processes in an appropriate manner. As a result Principal One’s rubric scores increased. Under rubric indicator four: the principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive in the pre interview he received a “2” because there was some evidence of reasoning, but no clear process. In the post interview he received a “4” because he used the process from the intervention to analyze and explain his answers.

Under rubric indicator five: “The principal can effectively respond to productive conflict;” Principal One’s pre interview score was a “2.” In the pre-interview he was already aware of some of the steps that were taught in the professional development. However, he applied the same strategies to every situation. There was no evidence that he would respond to a productive conflict differently than to an unproductive conflict. His approach was to sit down and meet with the parties and talk it out in every scenario. In the post interview he managed the productive conflict and the unproductive conflict differently and appropriately for both. However, he was not able to manage the conflict at his site. Although he could articulate how to handle the conflicts, he was not able to demonstrate this knowledge in practice. His post score was “2.”

## Principal Two

Figure 23: Principal Two’s Scenario One Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	A lack of respect for one another as professionals.	The conflict is about who is right. I don’t think any of them are listening to each other.
Would you intervene? Why or why not	I would absolutely intervene. They are more and more antagonistic towards one another. It looks like its just getting worse.	I would absolutely intervene. I would try to them some kind of protocol for planning. They need to have some sense of community.
How would you manage the conflict?	Assess whether or not they actually knew one another, if they had anything in common. What their commitment was and what their fears were working with one another. I would seek to get basically some kind of resolution that acknowledges that they may not agree with the way other people are doing it, but the expectation is that they are doing this work together. Each has to have an equal voice in the outcome.	I would just tell them that they had to stop. I think they need a planning protocol that completely avoided the personal stuff. I would take a older and one newer and see if I could brainstorm with them on something that would build community among five people

Scenario one was the productive conflict scenario. Principal Two’s response in the pre interview was more appropriate than her post interview. In the first two questions

her answers were similar. Her descriptions of the conflict were general statements “lack of respect” and “people are not listening.” When she described how she would manage the conflict in her pre interview she described a process where she would sit with the group, ensure everyone had an equal voice, and discuss their commitments. All of these things were elements that were also discussed in the professional development. However, in the post interview she took an approach that was more appropriate for an unproductive conflict. She did not employ any of the strategies from the professional development. Instead she stated she would tell them “they had to stop” and “give them a protocol” which was an approach where the principal would not engage around the potentially productive conflict. She would have issued mandates and directives, thereby stopping potential for a productive conversation.

Figure 24: Principal Two’s Scenario Two Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	All hell breaking loose A lot of people wanting to be right.	Management of time and resources
Would you intervene? Why or why not	I think that if it doesn’t get intervened in then your entire staff could completely fall apart.	I would intervene in the name calling but I’m not sure I would intervene in the problem itself.
How would you manage the conflict?	I would address that and name that. I’d ask for people to step up and form a little committee and get some ideas.	I would look for some type of space to give them to see if they could come up with some solution on their own.

In scenario two Principal Two’s responses did show slight growth between her thinking in the pre and post interview. In the pre interview her description of the conflict was “all hell breaking loose.” This whimsical description was vague and made it difficult for the principal to appropriately decide why and how they would intervene or manage the conflict. In the post interview her description of the conflict as “management of time and resources” was more closely aligned with the conflict in the scenario; and it was something that she could actually provide a specific intervention for. As an unproductive conflict, her naming that she was not sure that she would intervene and giving the people involved a space to come up with a solution without her would be an appropriate response.

Figure 25: Principal Two’s Scenario Three Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	It doesn’t really have anything to do with data, again its about who is right. A lot of personal stuff.	Four or five people who are completely out of control, and one person that is trying to maintain some sort of civility. The root of the problem seems to be marginalization that is felt by the ELD teacher.
Would you intervene? Why or why not	I would try to intervene before it got that far. If I wasn’t present and heard about it I would absolutely intervene.	I would let it play out a while. I would wait to see if the teacher that is trying to handle it needed someone to step in.

How would you manage the conflict?	<p>I would start with the three and see if I could just get that part solve first.</p> <p>I would include the other group after speaking with the first three. Ask to respect their point of view Let them explain what they are feeling.</p> <p>I was going to make an executive decision.</p>	<p>I would leave it up to the teachers. If she couldn't resolve it, then I might step in.</p> <p>I would try to get the teacher that was resolving the problem on board with a long term solution.</p> <p>I would make sure the ELD teachers felt listened to.</p>
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In the last scenario Principal Two does show more sophistication and depth in her description of the conflict between the pre and post interview. In the pre interview she stated it was about who is right, but in the post interview she stated the “root of the problem seems to be marginalization of the ELD teacher.” However, similar to scenario one her pre-interview responses were more aligned with the professional development than her post interview answers. If she believed that the conflict is about the marginalization of a subgroup of teachers that was a productive conflict. Engaging around this conflict could lead to an improved school culture. However, her approach in the post interview was to not intervene and let the teachers handle it themselves.

Based on the responses for the three scenarios under rubric indicator four: “the principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive” she received a rubric score of “1” on the pre interview. She described the conflicts as “all hell breaking loose” and “people wanting to be right” and as a result there was no clear reasoning about if she should intervene or how to manage the conflict. In her post-interview she was given a rubric score of “2” because in two of the three scenarios her description of the conflicts were more specific.

Under rubric indicator five: “The principal can effectively respond to productive conflict;” her pre and post interview rubric scores were both “2.”. A rubric score of “2” represented that the principal did not respond to productive and unproductive conflict differently. In the two productive conflicts her initial reaction was to avoid the conflict and let the teachers handle it themselves. But she did state that she will step in if needed. She was also the only principal that attempted to try the process from the intervention with her teachers. The fact that she was willing to engage represented a “2” not a “1,” which would be ignoring the conflict all together.

### Principal Three

Figure 26: Principal Three’s Scenario One Answers

	Pre- interview	Post- Interview
Describe the conflict	How do they as a group want to approach these new standards.	There is a conflict between the more senior teachers and the new teachers about how to approach applying the new standards.
Would you intervene? Why or why not	<p>I would because I think you could waste an entire year allowing you grade level to split off.</p> <p>I think to not intervene would really</p>	<p>I would because I want grade level teams to really be able to work together and be productive.</p> <p>It would concern me if two people</p>

	hurt your kids, it would be a really ineffective year.	wanted to splinter off. I feel like that could potentially spread.
How would you manage the conflict?	I need to attend more of the meetings. We would need to have some agreements about how we would work together. Have some private conversations with teachers to see where they are with things.	I would have them go back and create norms and a purpose for their groups. I would sit with them the first couple of times they met to ensure everyone was following the norms. I would meet with some of the teachers privately and let them know they should try to clean up some of their comments.

For the first scenario Principal Three responded similarly in the pre and post interview to all of her questions. In both the pre and post interview she had some of the components from the professional development. This included a common purpose, meeting with individuals, and the principal getting involved. All of these would be an appropriate response to a productive conflict.

Figure 27: Principal Three’s Scenario Two Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	I guess the conflict is around the staff not doing what they are supposed to for various reasons.	I guess doing hallway duty.
Would you intervene? Why or why not	I would intervene because you need to be consistent if you are putting out a policy.	Yes I would intervene. Because its student safety Because things need to be consistent.
How would you manage the conflict?	I would say everybody needs to be there and start double checking. Talking to those folks that aren’t showing up.	If it’s a written policy somewhere or some sort of memo I would just remind everybody that that’s what we do. I would probably be more present the next two weeks to ensure everybody was out there.

Similar to the first scenario there was not much change between Principal Three’s responses to the pre and post interview. Her decision to enforce the school policy was appropriate for this scenario.

Figure 28: Principal Three’s Scenario Three Answers

	<b>Pre- interview</b>	<b>Post- Interview</b>
Describe the conflict	The conflict is around whether or not they are going to use the new strategies. Specifically the EL students.	All the teachers were asked to video tape themselves using these new strategies. Three teachers that work with EL students didn’t do the video because they felt that the work was above their students.



Would you intervene? Why or why not	I would intervene. Trying to figure out how do the students get language, get involved, be able to have opportunities.	I would intervene because there are a couple of things going on. Concern of people not doing PLC work. Thinking about EL students in particular.
How would you manage the conflict?	Acknowledge that the working with EL students and gate students is different. The people working with EL students probably need a little bit more support when thinking about how to apply those same strategies.	I would still say that they needed to do it after we created a plan. I probably would meet privately with the EL teachers and walk them through it a little more. How could they roll out the strategies over the next couple of months?

For the third scenario in the pre interview, Principal Three described a conflict that would be productive. She stated that she would intervene because they were trying to figure out “how do the students get language, get involved, and be able to have opportunities.” However, her responses to managing this conflict were more aligned with a response to an unproductive conflict. She only discussed supporting the EL teachers but did not discuss working through the problem with all the parties involved. In her post interview response she offered two rationales for intervening. The first was concerned with people not doing PLC work, which was more policy and procedure driven; and the second reason was related to student’s academic needs. As with previous scenarios, her answers for her pre and post interview did not vary much. Her responses to managing the conflict were aligned with implementing the PLC. But her approach was still specific to ensuring that the dissenting English Language Learner teachers get support to follow the policy.

Since there was little change in her responses to the three scenarios from the pre to post interview the rubric scores did not change. For rubric indicator four: “The principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive;” Principal Three received a “2.” Although her responses to the scenarios were appropriate, it is not clear that she had a process for deciding whether to intervene or not.

Under rubric indicator Five: “The principal can effectively respond to productive conflict;” her pre and post rubric scores were “3”. For all of the scenarios she responded appropriately. She did not receive a rubric score of “4” because there was no evidence of a conflict management process aligned with the professional development.

### **On Site Mediation**

One of the major impacts of the professional development was that principals would manage a real site-based productive conflict. This was the one indicator on the rubric that was not measured by the pre and post interview. It was measured throughout the course of the professional development. At the end of professional development Sessions Two through Session Four the principals were asked to go back to their schools and conduct a part of the process with their teachers. The rubric indicators for this portion of the intervention are below:

Figure 29: Rubric Indicator Six Descriptors

<b>Rubric Indicators</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Principal manages a school based productive conflict</b>	-Does not attempt to conduct a mediation with teachers at the site.	- The principal attempts to implement the mediation cycle to resolve the conflict. But skips or is unsuccessful at completing the process.	- The principal conducts a full mediation cycle with teachers, but is not sure that the action plan will lead to a productive outcome.	- The principal conducts a full mediation cycle with teachers and develops an action plan that they believe will lead to a productive outcome.

The Rubric above was used to create a baseline score for the indicator: Principal manages a school based productive conflict. The baseline score was based on discussions during the professional development and pre-interview about how the participants had handled conflict in the past. For this rubric indicator the baseline score for Principal Two and Principal Three was a 1. Neither of them had used any process to manage a school based conflict. The baseline score for Principal One was a “2.” During the professional development session Principal One described an attempt to mediate a conflict between a teacher and a group of parents.

The principals’ baseline and impact scores are listed in the table below. For the impact score Principal One and Principal Three received a rubric score of “1.” Neither of them attempted to conduct a school based conflict. Principal Two received an impact score of “2.” She did attempt to start the mediation process, but was unsuccessful in getting her teachers to participate.

Figure 30: Indicator Six Rubric Scores

<b>Rubric Indicators</b>	<b>PST111</b>	<b>PST111</b>	<b>PST222</b>	<b>PST222</b>	<b>PST333</b>	<b>PST333</b>
	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>Principal manages a school based productive conflict</b>	2	1	1	2	1	1

The Impact score was based on the principal’s use of the process they learned in the intervention to manage a site based productive conflict. As part of the professional development the principals were given a process to manage productive conflict, which was broken into three different stages. The principal was asked to meet with the teachers involved in the conflict three times to cover each stage. For each meeting they were given a graphic organizer and other tools to help facilitate the mediation. The table below indicates the degree to which each principal engaged with each stage of the mediation.

## Principal One

Figure 31: Principal One's Mediation Rubric

	<b>Did not attempt to conduct this section of the mediation</b>	<b>Attempted to conduct this section of the mediation but was not successful</b>	<b>Conducted this portion of the mediation but it did not help make progress towards a productive outcome</b>	<b>Conducted this section and made progress towards a productive outcome.</b>
Surface the problem	x			
Reframe the issue	x			
Identify the task	x			
Create an intervention	x			

## Principal Two

Figure 32: Principal Two's Mediation Rubric

	<b>Did not attempt to conduct this section of the mediation</b>	<b>Attempted to conduct this section of the mediation but was not successful</b>	<b>Conducted this portion of the mediation but it did not help make progress towards a productive outcome</b>	<b>Conducted this section and made progress towards a productive outcome.</b>
Surface the problem		x		
Reframe the issue		x		
Identify the task	x			
Create an intervention	x			

## Principal Three

Figure 33: Principal Three's Mediation Rubric

	<b>Did not attempt to conduct this section of the mediation</b>	<b>Attempted to conduct this section of the mediation but was not successful</b>	<b>Conducted this portion of the mediation but it did not help make progress towards a productive outcome</b>	<b>Conducted this section and made progress towards a productive outcome.</b>

Surface the problem	x			
Reframe the issue	x			
Identify the task	x			
Create an intervention	x			

### **Impact Data Conclusion**

The goal of this research was to build the principal’s knowledge of conflict, help the principal identify productive conflict at the school, and build efficacy around responding to conflict. In order to achieve these goals I designed a series of five two-hour professional development workshops. I believed that participation in these sessions and completing the activities embedded in them would increase the principal’s understanding of productive conflict and lead them to manage a productive conflict at their schools.

Overall “beliefs about conflict” was the only rubric dimension where all three principals increased their score. Two out of three principals showed growth on rubric dimension “process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive.” On every rubric dimension at least one principal increased their rubric score. Most of the rubric scores went up by one point. Principal One was the only principal who had two of his rubric scores increase by two points. Two out of three principals increased their total average rubric score.

The evidence suggested that the principals understood some of the concepts they learned in the intervention and were able to apply some of the concepts to posed conflicts during the post interview. However, Principal One was the only principal who made a conscious effort to use specific vocabulary and walk through the steps of the processes as taught in the professional development sessions during his post interview answers. Based on the increased scores in the areas of beliefs about conflict and process for determining if a conflict it productive it appeared that the participants did gain knowledge about productive conflict.

Unfortunately, the principals did not succeed at the last two outcomes: Identify a productive conflict at their site and build efficacy around responding to a conflict. During the post interview questions all of the principals verbally acknowledged that their thinking about conflict had changed and that they knew they needed to take a more proactive approach to productive conflict. Application of the understanding of conflict and the strategies for managing productive conflict were not evident in practice. For Principals Two and Three, this was shown in their responses to the scenarios during the post interview.

This lack of efficacy was further illustrated in the fact that none of the principals conducted a mediation. They were offered support in every session, as well as, a step by step process. This combined with their new knowledge was still not enough for Principal One or Principal Three to feel confident engaging with their teachers around the conflict. Principal Two was willing to make an attempt, but did not have the facilitation skills to gain teacher’s buy-in around the process.

### Process Data

In this section I analyze process data and provide details about each professional development session. I provide further details about the principals' inability to fully commit to the professional development. Through my analysis of the process data I show how the principals' participation in the professional development activities led to their overall learning and ultimately affected the impact data and core findings:

- The principals demonstrated an increase in knowledge around basic vocabulary, but that did not signify true understanding of productive and unproductive conflict.
- The principals were affected by both productive and unproductive conflict and had a difficult time drawing clear distinctions between the two.
- The principals could not apply the concepts or processes from the professional development to the pre or post interview scenarios with consistency.
- The principals could not apply the concepts or processes from the professional development in real life.

I also take a look at the strengths and challenges with the overall professional development, and how my role as a research participant affected the process.

### Session One

Session One outcomes

- Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.
- Challenge the principals' previous understanding of and experience with conflict.
- Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experience with conflict.

Figure 34: Session One Learning Process

Rubric Indicators	Session Outcomes	Activity	Intended Learning
<b>Beliefs about conflict</b>	-Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.	- Share and discuss real conflicts that the principals are struggling to handle.	-Establish a common experience among participants. -Make the connection between their personal experiences and the need for the research design.
<b>Principal can define types of conflict</b>	- Challenge the principals' previous understanding of and experience with conflict .	Apply concepts from a reading to their real life scenarios.	-Input: Provide information on the different types of conflict (Task, Relationship, productive, unproductive). -Participants will learn how difficult it is to classify productive vs.

			unproductive conflict. -Learn a process to help guide their thinking around determining if a conflict is productive.
<b>Principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive</b>	Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experience with conflict.	-Apply conflict checklist to real life conflict. - Identifying conflict handling modes.	-Learn a process to help guide their thinking around determining if a conflict is productive. - Principals will identify/name their conflict response style. -Principals will understand different responses to conflict, and when each is appropriate.

There were three specific activities that were intended to achieve the Session One outcomes. In the beginning of the session principals were asked to discuss a conflict they did not know how to handle and were given a reading to teach them new concepts about conflict. The culmination of these two smaller tasks was for the principals to apply what they learned from the reading to the scenarios they shared. The purpose of starting with conflicts that the principals felt they couldn't handle was intended to create an awareness for the need to manage conflict. The theory of action was that applying new concepts from the reading to their real life conflicts would challenge their previous thoughts about the conflict and develop a new framework for thinking about the conflict. We began session one with each principal describing a conflict that they struggled to resolve.

### **Principal One**

The first grade team had a data meeting. When the bilingual teacher presented her data her students had poor scores on the listening and speaking section of their test. The team used this as an opportunity to tell the teacher that they did not think she should be a bilingual teacher because her own Spanish was very poor. The team believed that the children's scores were a reflection of the teacher's improper Spanish grammar. The teacher-leader that facilitated the meeting defended the bilingual teacher and an argument ensued. Later, the teacher-leader and a teacher that were involved approached the principal to meet with him about what occurred during the meeting. When they arrived the teacher-leader and the teacher told him they had already discussed and resolved their conflict. They told the principal they just wanted to make him aware that the conflict had occurred. The principal did not ask them any follow up questions about the conflict.

### **Principal Two**

During a fourth grade Professional Learning Community meeting a male and female teacher had a disagreement that turned into them yelling and screaming at each other. It

escalated to the point that the other teachers had to separate the two teachers into different rooms. Some of the teachers that were present called the principal. When she came out of her office the male teacher was standing in the main office talking negatively about the female teacher to everyone that was in the office. The principal asked him to go wait in her office because she would like to speak to him about what happened. She went to the restroom and when she returned to speak to him he was gone. When she went to look for him she found him at the female teacher's classroom. He was screaming at her because he believed that she was the person that told the principal about the previous incident. The principal told both of them that it needed to stop. On other occasions the principal found both the female and male teacher upset about something the other person had done. Their conflict is having an impact on their work and participation in team planning.

### **Principal Three**

This conflict was between the principal and teachers. She said that she had a veteran staff that had a history of getting along. In the past she had structures for group decision making. With the recent budget cuts she lost some teaching positions. So she had to make tough decisions alone. The most recent decision that she faced was deciding what grade level each teacher will have for next year. After she lost some of her staff she had to move teachers around to cover all the grade levels. When she announced the changes her leadership team disagreed with her choice for the new first grade teacher. Her instructional team believed that she should move a teacher with stronger phonics instruction. She followed the team's advice. She went to the teacher that she originally placed in the position and told her that she would not be moved. Then she approached the male teacher that the team recommended and told him he would be moved. Ever since that day the male teacher has come to her office crying and saying that the move was making him have a nervous breakdown. As a result she decided not to move him. Word got back to the staff that she allowed the male teacher to stay where he was, and now the staff has said it is not fair that all he had to do was cry to get his way.

During session one as part of the discussion the principals asked each other questions and offered each other suggestions. They also pointed out things that they had in common. For example, Principal Three stated that although she had not talked about it she also struggled with conflicts between teachers over the strategies the school should use to support English Language Learners similar to Principal One's conflict.

After the principals discussed their stories, they were given a reading that explained productive and unproductive conflicts. As they read they wrote down key points and discussed them. Then I explained that this reading was drawn from research on work teams. I highlighted a few key points including research that found that relationship tasks were always considered unproductive. This was not to suggest one shouldn't do anything about it; one may just put an end to it. But one wouldn't fully engage in a mediation around it unless one could identify a task-related core in the midst of personal strife. I asked Principal One for permission to share a story he shared with me previously. It was about roommates that would come to work and argue about the dishes. This was not a productive conflict that would have a positive impact on instruction. The figure below gives the definitions of productive and unproductive conflict that the principals were given.

Figure 35: Defining Conflict

Type of Conflict	Definition	Example
Unproductive	Relationship or personal conflict. Less complex routine tasks	Personal tastes, political preferences, basic policies and procedures.
Productive	Positively impacts the academic achievement or the school culture. Non-routine tasks that require meaningful discussion and thinking.	Some level of disagreement can help group's process information. It helps to weigh multiple options before making a decision. Keeps the team from becoming stagnant.

The principals were asked to apply the information from the reading to the conflict they had just described. In this activity the principals were specifically asked, “Was your example a productive or unproductive conflict?” and “If it was productive how did/could you have managed it to be beneficial?” These discussion prompts were intended to provide a different way for principals to think about the conflict they had presented. Initially they presented a “problem” but applying the reading was an attempt to move them away from viewing conflicts as problem and introduced the productive versus unproductive dichotomy.

The principals struggled to apply the concepts from the readings to their conflicts. I anticipated this potential problem, so I synthesized the information into a “productive conflict checklist.” This tool provided a set of guiding questions/statements to help principals decide if the conflict was productive. I was originally going to give them a long scenario to read and have them apply the checklist. But since there was such a struggle to classify their own real-life conflicts, we applied the checklist to their conflicts. For each conflict we asked the following questions to guide their decision:

- Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?
- Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task? What is the level of intensity?
- Is the task worth your time and effort?

At the end Principal One expressed a concern. He stated:

Here is where I struggle. I feel like I should hear out the relationship conflict also. I feel like if I don't hear them out then they turn into something bigger and still affect the school. What structure do we have to support relational issues?

I told him that relationship issues did not have to be ignored but would be handled differently. This process focused on what to do with productive conflicts; not conflicts such as relationship issues. To answer his question I referenced a document from a later session that outlined stages of a mediation. The goal of this document was to show him a structured process for looking at conflict. The stages of the mediation included:

- Collect data about the dispute



- Surface the problem
- Reframe the issue
- Identify the task
- Create a plan

Principal One’s response to the conflict check list and the mediation stages was that in order to accurately assess the root cause of a conflict, the principals may always have to meet with the people involved in the conflict and hear the entire story. He thought that applying the checklist without hearing the teachers involved in the conflict out would only provide a surface level analysis which was not always sufficient. I agreed with him and stated that this may be an adjustment we need to make in the process. We ended our discussion on this point and moved on to the next activity.

I introduced the next activity by opening up a discussion about the way principals responded to conflict. I explained that it was just as important how the principal approached the conflict, as what is happened with the people in the conflict. To help the principals reflect on how they respond in situations of conflict, the principals were given “Thomas and Kilmann’s conflict response survey”. The purpose of this survey was to identify each principal’s conflict handling style. The styles may be being:

- Accommodating - smoothing
- Avoiding- withdrawal
- Competing – forcing
- Compromising - sharing
- Collaborative – problem solving

Each principal went through a series of questions about conflict. Then they mapped their responses onto an answer key. Their results are documented in the chart below:

Figure 36: Principal Conflict Handling Styles

	Style	Description
Principal One	Accommodating	Characterized as a “teddy bear” Cooperative and unassertive Go out of their way to satisfy others
Principal Two	Avoiding	Does not address conflict Goes out of their way to not deal with their own concerns or the concerns of others
Principal Three	Avoiding and Compromising	Does not address conflict Goes out of their way to not deal with their own concerns or the concerns of others <i>Compromising</i> Looks for a mutually acceptable solution

After we read about the conflict handling styles, I asked them to go back to their real life scenarios and discuss which conflict handling mode matched the needs of their

conflict. After looking at the five different approaches, both Principal Two and Principal Three agreed that they should take a different approach than their normal style. They both agreed that they should use a competing style first, because they believed authoritative or forceful leadership was required when conflicts involved adult behaviors that were unacceptable for the work place such as yelling and arguing. The principals were concerned that if they didn't stop these conflicts other teachers would get involved or engage in similar conduct. Once they were able to stop the egregious actions, then they would use one of the other styles such as collaborating or compromising.

At the end of the session the principals were given a closing reflection. They were also given an assignment to complete before the next session. They were asked to administer a conflict survey to their teachers. The purpose of the survey was to collect data from their staff about current conflicts at the site. The principals would use this data in the next session to pick a focus conflict.

### **Session One Analysis**

The process data that were collected during the professional development sessions included transcripts of the sessions, principal reflections, and responses to written activities. I used the process data to better understand how the professional development activities and protocols produced the outcomes and my role as the designer and action researcher.

The opening activity was intended to help create an awareness for the need to manage conflicts. This was done by giving time for principals to reflect, write, and discuss a conflict that they struggled to manage. Through the discussion the principals asked each other questions and dove deeper into their conflicts. All of the principals agreed to participate because they were interested in learning more about how to resolve adult conflicts, but this activity helped point out that they had immediate issues that this process could support. All three principals identified complicated conflicts that they were currently struggled to manage. As they discussed their conflicts the other principals asked questions to help clarify the issue; or made connections to their own work. This process helped the principals acknowledge reasons for needing a process to help them with conflict; it also begun the process of building a sense of trust between the principals involved in the professional development. They could feel comfortable knowing that they faced similar challenges that they could work together on.

The next activity was aimed at challenging each principal's previous understanding and experience with conflict. This was done through a reading that described workplace conflict and defined productive and unproductive conflict. They applied the concepts from the reading to their real life conflicts. Applying the definitions from the readings was not as simple as it seemed. The group struggled to use the definitions from the reading to determine if their conflict was productive or unproductive. None of the principals used the terms from the reading such as task, relationship, routine or non-routine as part of their description. Although I had summarized the readings with specific definitions, the principals struggled to accurately identify the conflict they described. The chart below shows how they labeled their conflicts after the readings.

Figure 37: Real World Scenarios

	Real life scenario	Productive Or Unproductive	Rationale	How would you manage the conflict?
Principal One	The Spanish teacher with poor data.	P	It resolved itself	Do nothing
Principal Two	Fighting PLC members.	U	No rationale given	-I would intervene because it would fester over. - Im not sure what I would do.
Principal Three	Leadership team disagrees with the principal about grade level assignments.	U	Because it has dragged on for a month (duration)	- Not sure how to manage because the problem is directed at her.

As we analyzed the real world scenarios with the new information it was apparent that the use of the readings did not facilitate the intended learning. The principals were provided definitions, but this did not help clarify their thinking around productive and unproductive conflict. The two conflicts that were narrated could be seen as productive. They inferred a work related task that could have been identified and focused on. Additionally, for the principals who believed that their conflict was unproductive, they still chose to intervene. However, this process was supposed to focus on identifying tasks that could be managed for a productive outcome, so intervening implied that one was going to actively manage it. Based on the reading, if the principal believed a conflict was unproductive then they should have taken a different approach to ending the conflict. An unproductive conflict should not be given the same care and energy as a productive conflict. Based on the reading an unproductive conflict should not be mediated at work. Instead, the principals should take an authoritative stance or use workplace disciplinary measures. However, from their responses this distinction was not clear to the principals. For example when asked if the conflict was productive or unproductive Principal One paused, thought, then stated:

I think it can be productive. But there is a friendship involved. My coach is good about critiquing everyone on the staff except this one teacher that is her friend. She is usually on the mark with everyone else. But with her friend she is really off.

In this case he named that part of this conflict was about the relationship the coach has with the teacher. In the reading a relationship based conflict was unproductive. Principal Two also struggled to apply the definition to her conflict. She stated that she was “unsure.” Then she stated “This is unproductive, but I would still intervene.” Principal Three agreed with her. The learning for this activity was aimed at helping the principals understand productive conflict and want to manage it. However, the learning

in this activity did not rise to the level of understanding. The principals could recite the definitions, but their struggle to apply the terms to real scenarios showed that the activity had not led to skills such as application, analysis, or synthesis of the information which would have been indicative of true understanding.

Based on the reading the principals should not attempt to manage or mediate a conflict that they believed was unproductive. Unproductive conflicts required a more authoritative approach and that was not the focus of this professional development. In my facilitation I continually attempted to steer the principals away from conflict that was considered unproductive and focus them on productive conflict. The principals came to the professional development hoping to get help with immediate conflicts in their schools but the productive versus unproductive classification scheme essentially asked the principals to ignore them. The professional development did not focus on unproductive conflict because the theory of action presumed that principals already had authoritative measures, such as disciplinary action, that could be used to resolve unproductive conflicts. Ignoring unproductive conflict caused some level of tension in the professional development process. Principal Two and Principal Three both believed that unproductive conflicts had to be dealt with because if not, it would “fester over.” The discussion during this activity was the first indicator of a flaw in the theory of action and the focus of the professional development. The problem of practice presumed that if principals could distinguish between productive and unproductive conflict, they would prioritize learning how to handle the productive conflict. It also presumed that the only reason principals didn’t focus on productive conflict was because they didn’t know enough about it. However, what the theory of action did not consider was that every conflict whether productive or unproductive had an emotional impact on principals. In this professional development the activities ignored a set of conflicts that were relevant and pressing to principals. As a result some of the activities and processes left principals frustrated.

One of the major concerns that Principal Two and Three brought up was that loud egregious conflicts could have a negative impact on the larger school environment. The professional development attempted to support this concern by helping the principals determine if the “dramatics” such as yelling and arguing could have masked a common task that the team could focus on. They were given a conflict checklist to help them reframe the way they thought through a conflict.

Each principal applied the conflict checklist to the conflict they narrated. On the checklist the second step in determining if the conflict was productive asked “Does the level of emotions require the principal to step in and take action immediately?” For principal Two and Three they believed that the level of intensity required them the step in and take immediate action. Principal One disagreed with the first step in the checklist. The first question asked if the conflict is relationship or task based. If it is relationship based then it is considered unproductive and the principal should not engage in a full mediation. Principal one disagreed by saying:

“I feel like I should hear out the relationship conflict also. I feel like if I don’t hear them out then it turns into something bigger and it still effects the school”. The checklist is supposed to help the principals so they didn’t have to fully engage in every conflict. But again the professional development lessons and tools missed that the principals wanted support around both productive and unproductive conflict. Principal

One asked “what tools do we have to support relational issues?” This was one of the biggest missed opportunities in this process. The principals stated exactly what they needed, but as a participant researcher I did not see this, so no adjustments were made to the professional development to meet their needs. Instead we moved forward with the professional development plan as it was already designed. My belief was still that if the principals were exposed to more information about the difference between productive and unproductive conflict their needs would change.

My instructional approach during the professional development also affected my ability to see the principals’ needs. In my facilitation of the new material my strategy was direct instruction. I told the principals the information I wanted them to know. Although I provided opportunities for them to have discussion, my questions did not lead to inquiry or analysis of the material. My questions were lower level thinking questions focused on who, what, where, why. I did not ask probing questions that would have facilitated reflection and deeper understanding of the conflict. An example of my direct instruction was during one of the readings. When the principals read new content I asked them to identify and explain the key ideas from the reading. But, I had already developed the key points that I wanted them to know. After they shared their ideas I gave them any ideas that I felt were key concepts that they missed. I did not offer them any opportunity to challenge my thinking. I did not realize that the use of direct instruction was setting a tone for the learning. Instead of this being a professional development where principals came to learn and understand conflict together, I was portraying myself as an expert that was there to impart knowledge. However, my knowledge was limited to my focus on productive conflict. Therefore, this style was not effective as the principals pushed back about not addressing unproductive conflict.

The next tool that the principals engaged with was the conflict handling survey. This tool was also intended to change the way the principals thought about conflict. The survey provided a framework that allowed the principals and myself to reflect on how they currently handled conflict, and when those approaches were effective or ineffective. The principals seemed very receptive to the conflict handling styles. They agreed with the descriptions of their styles for handling conflict. We used the descriptors to discuss approaches for handling the scenarios they narrated. The principals grappled with how to apply the new information to their scenarios. Ultimately the facilitation again did not lead to more than recall of information. The quotes below illustrate this point.

“I feel like I would take two approaches. I would start with competing. Under competing it says when it is an emergency and something has to be stopped. I think we have reached an emergency state. Then once I have gotten it to stop, I would go with one of the other styles”.

Principal Three also believed that she would take a similar approach. She would stop the rumors. Then she would choose a collaborating or compromising approach. Principal one believed that since the people in his conflict resolved it themselves that he did not need to choose a different approach. He believed it was useful for him to choose a hands-off approach. Each of these examples show a basic understanding of the definitions, there is no evidence that the activities led to a deeper application of the information.

The principals came to the professional development with current conflicts, but already in Session One the narrowness of the professional development was creating a barrier to them having some of their needs met. As a facilitator and participant I misread this dynamic. I also did not have the skills or knowledge to offer a meaningful process for unproductive conflict. I was the facilitator, but I was also a principal in the same district as the principal participants. I had been trained in the same methods of stopping conflict as my peers that participated in the design. So instead of adjusting the activities, we moved forward based on what I had researched and formed the theory of action around. I led them to move towards focusing on other conflicts that were “productive”.

### Session Two

#### Outcomes

- Analyze conflict scenarios to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why.
- Give school based examples of productive conflict.
- Reduce principals’ fear of managing conflict

Figure 38: Session Two Learning Process.

Rubric Indicators	Session Outcomes	Activity	Intended Learning
<b>Principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive</b>	- Analyze conflict scenarios to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why (Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict).	Use the “conflict checklist” to determine if the conflict in a scripted scenario is productive or unproductive.	Learn a process for identifying and analyzing productive conflict.
<b>Principal can define types of conflict</b>	- Give school based examples of productive conflict (Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict).	-Written explanation of productive and unproductive conflict. -Explaining if their real life scenario from session one was productive or unproductive. - Analyze teacher surveys of impeding school site conflicts. - Choose a “focus conflict” from their site.	Identify a productive conflict that they will attempt to manage.
<b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive</b>	-Reduce the principals’ fear of managing conflict.	-Practice Scenarios - Facilitator will walk the principals through	-Learn to deconstruct and analyze conflict. - Principals will learn

<b>conflict</b>		a conflict mapping activity. - Reading about the first stage of the mediation process.	a process for managing productive conflict.
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There were three activities that aimed at achieving these outcomes. The first two were carried over from reflection and adjustments during Session One. The first activity was a written reflection I called a “recap.” I asked two questions to activate prior knowledge from the previous session. The second activity was the long scenario. This activity was originally planned for session one, however after talking about the principals real time conflicts, the scenario felt like it would be repetitive in Session One. The last activity was a conflict mapping activity. In this activity the principals identified a focus conflict and used a graphic organizer called a “conflict map” to help them analyze the situation.

An hour before Session Two was scheduled to start Principal Three informed me she could not attend the meeting because her child was ill. Session Two was Principal One, Principal Two, and myself. At the end of Session One I realized I needed a way to recap the information that was covered at the previous session. I created a written check-in sheet that asked questions about the previous session. Principals were asked to “define/describe productive vs. unproductive conflict” and “Was the scenario you presented in the first session productive or unproductive?”

The next activity was based on the adult learning principles: reduce the principal’s fear of conflict and connect to their real lives. For this activity I created a one-page scenario. The scenario was intended to be a non-threatening way to begin thinking about complex conflicts. Since the scenario was not real the principals had no emotional or professional investment in the outcome. This would help reduce their fear of discussing their ideas because the outcome ultimately had not real impact on their schools. This scenario also highlighted the way the principals currently dealt with conflict, and why a conflict management process would be helpful.

In the scenario the staff is at a professional development on cultural competence. The topic leads to a heated debate between a White female teacher and an African American male teacher over the behavior of African American boys; and the White teacher’s inability to connect with African American boys. The conversation quickly escalates and multiple staff members give opinions. The meeting ends abruptly with multiple teachers walking out. After reading the scenario the principals were asked:

- What are your overall thoughts about the conflict?
- What was your initial reaction to the conflict?
- How do you think you might approach or deal with this conflict?

Principal One and Principal Two agreed that the topic was a healthy conversation.

Principal One stated:

I think it’s really putting out there an issue that folks find taboo but it’s affecting the bottom line of educating children. So I think it’s a healthy conversation. But I think the tone could be changed.

Principal Two agreed and said, “Yeah I think the last thing you want to do is have people feel like they can’t say what they need to say.” Next they were asked how they would approach the conflict. Principal One said he would acknowledge the

strong feelings involved and establish some norms around race. Then he would frame it as an inquiry question. He would ask, “Are black boys learning?” Principal Two added that the character in the long scenario that is accused of being racist may not be open to discussing her issues publicly among her colleagues. She thought having a private conversation would be a more effective approach.

After the conversation about their initial responses I passed out the productive conflict checklist from Session One to analyze the conflict. The checklist asks:

- Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?
- Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task?
- What is the level of intensity?
- Is the task worth your time and effort?

After the principals responded to the first set of questions, we used the Conflict Checklist to continue our discussion about the scenario. We engaged in extended discussion about each question. Both principals stated that it was work related because it was about student achievement. Principal Two attempted to identify a task. First he gave the example of the work related task as identifying a strategy to close the achievement gap for African American males. Then he stated that there would also need to be a task that increased the teacher’s levels of cultural competency. I followed up and asked about the emotion and anger in the conflict. Principal One and Two believed that the conflict was resolvable. Principal One believed that there needed to be some norms established around the relationships between the staff. He believed that this would resolve the anger and the inappropriate interactions between the staff. Principal Two agreed with Principal One’s assessment of the conflict. After we determined that the conflict had a work related task and was productive, then we discussed the conflict handling style. The principals used the information on Conflict Handling Styles from Session One to discuss how to interact with the teachers in the scenario. The principals believed that while the conflict was still escalated they should use a competing style. This was a more direct, assertive approach. Once they had diffused the anger and name calling among the teachers the principals would take on a more collaborative approach. As we discussed the different characters in the story and how the principals would interact with them Principal One mentioned that it would be helpful to map out all of the key players in the conflict. At the end of the activity the principals decided that the scenario was productive and that they should attempt to manage it for a productive outcome.

Principal One’s comment about mapping the problem was the perfect segue to the next activity. The “Conflict Mapping” graphic organizer synthesized everything that we had just discussed into a step-by-step process. I gave them each a copy of a graphic organizer called “Conflict Mapping”. The Conflict Map provided scaffolds for:

- Collecting data about the dispute
- Surfacing the problem
- Getting participants perspectives
- Reframing the problem
- Identifying a task

The purpose of the task was to walk them through a very specific step by step process to help them understand and manage a productive conflict. As we applied the Conflict Checklist and the Conflict Handling Styles to the long scenario, we discussed many of



the components of the Conflict Map. So that the process was not redundant we moved on and applied the Conflict Map to their real life scenarios. The plan was to use this activity to help them think through and manage a conflict that was currently happening at their school site. At the end of the first session the principals were given a homework assignment. They were asked to distribute a teacher survey. The purpose of the survey was to uncover any current teacher conflicts that may exist. Neither of the principals administered the survey. They both said they got too busy. Since the principals did not have their surveys I asked them to identify a conflict that they were already aware of. Each principal completed the Conflict Map individually then they shared their stories through the answers on the map. When they were done each principal presented their conflict. The conflicts they selected were:

### **Principal One**

There was a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who had a conflict with multiple members of the community. The teacher was an experienced teacher who moved to his school this year. The teacher had been in the district for a long time and was heavily involved in the union. She knew the terms of her teacher contract well. However, at this school the teachers had already decided to forgo some of their union contract and operate under rules that they created as a team. For example they agreed to supervise during duty free times to support students behavior; and they worked beyond their contractual hours in order to have time to lesson plan together. The new teacher refused to do these things. Her classroom and availability to students and parents was noticeably different from the other teachers. As a result, parents viewed her as an incompetent teacher and other teachers are frustrated with her. The principal was also frustrated because he constantly received complaints about her. He had already held a “mediation” between the teacher and a group of parents; and the teacher’s grade level partner teacher had decided to quit because she could not work with her. The teacher’s conflict with the parents and her partner teacher were spreading to the other teachers in the school, and teachers were beginning to take sides and insist the principal do something about it.

### **Principal Two**

Principal Two decided to stay with the conflict she described in the first session as it was ongoing. A male and female teacher from one of the grade level teams were having an ongoing conflict. Their conflict was effecting student achievement because they cannot plan together and align their grade level instruction. They were at the point where they refused to attend meetings because the other would be there. When they were in the same meeting they often argued and yelled until they had to be separated. The principal was not sure why they had a conflict and said that the arguments range from instructional strategies to personal topics.

To better understand the Conflict Map I gave them a reading about the first stages of the mediation process. In the first stages the mediator helps the participants identify a task related to the conflict. This was called moving from differentiation to integration. During differentiation the individuals “raise the conflict issues and spend sufficient time and energy clarifying positions, pursuing the reasons behind these issues, and acknowledging the severity of their differences.” In the Integration stage, “Parties begin to acknowledge common ground, explore possible options, and move toward some

solution” (Folger, Pool, and Stutman, 2001, p. 18). After the reading, Principal One explained the definitions from the reading. Then Principal Two stated that moving between differentiation and integration can be like a “loop.” That you may think you have gotten to integration, but then something new comes up and you have to go back and start over. She stated that she felt that’s where her teachers get to, “they get to a place where they are going to kind of start acknowledging [the source of the conflict], then wham they go right back to a whole new set of ridiculousness.” Principal One added “Yeah, I’m wondering what this looks like? What if one person doesn’t feel there is a conflict, like my teachers?” I responded to this question by going back to the model. I told them that not all conflict was productive and not all conflict will be handled the same. Principal One’s real scenario was similar to the scripted scenario we started the session with, in that it had lots of participants and perspectives about the problem.

The conflict map helped the principals dissect their conflicts using stages of the mediation process. Each stage was broken down into questions that helped the principals think about the conflict.

- Surface the problem
  - Overview of the conflict
- Reframe the issue
  - Rewrite the conflict from the perspective of everyone involved.
  - What are the perceived needs of each person
  - Can you identify a common interest, goal, or commitment between the people involved in the conflict.

We spent a large portion of our time working through the details of Principal One’s conflict. What was interesting about his conflict was that at first he was not sure that it was an actual conflict. He described it as a difficult conversation he needed to have. I told him to try mapping it onto the Conflict Map. When he finished the conflict map he realized that there were multiple conflicts with one teacher at his school. There were conflicts between the teacher and other teachers, parents, and the principal. He believed that the root of the problem was that the teacher’s expectations for teaching and planning did not match the expectations of the school community. The school community had established their own set of norms around instruction and teacher collaboration that she did not agree with. These conflicting expectations caused conflict between her and multiple members of the school community, including the principal.

As we went deeper into analyzing Principal One’s problem we were still struggling with whether this was productive or unproductive. The focus on student learning made it seem productive. But the actions and attitudes of the adults made it difficult to determine if he could get a productive outcome. As we discussed the Conflict Map we realized that Principal One was already involved in the conflict. He had already intervened in this conflict and made the decision that the teacher involved was wrong and needed to change. He had already engaged in a conversation with her in which he had expressed his concern about her behavior.

The group told him that he should resolve his conflict with the teacher before he attempted to mediate the conflict between her and others. The interactions between Principal One and the teacher had been authoritative and he told the teacher what he wanted. This included formal disciplinary write-ups. However, he never asked her perspective. He had made assumptions about why she was not performing to standard.

Instead of identifying a task related to the conflict, he personalized the conflict and blamed it on her having a new boyfriend. As he thought through the problem he questioned if he should be more assertive. But the point of the productive conflict process is to hear each person's perspective and come to a common goal. Principal Two referred back to the reading and the conflict map and suggested he try to reframe the conflict by appealing to her commitment. I asked if there were some questions we could ask to help surface the problem because we still didn't understand her perspective. Principal Two also suggested an outside mediator. At this point we had proposed so many approaches to the problem that we didn't know what to do next. With each suggestion Principal One posed another question. At the end of the discussion he still seemed to be firm in his belief that he needed to be more assertive with her. I had relied on the readings and tools in the professional development to help guide the principals from emotion to task. But the tools and my facilitation lacked the deep personal, self critical, reflection that the principals needed to address their own emotional investment in the conflicts.

Principal Two began to discuss her focus conflict. She decided to use the conflict she discussed at the first session. There were partner teachers at her school who refused to work together. A third teacher, who was not involved in the conflict, told Principal Two that she believed that the male teacher engaged in conflict as an avoidance strategy. If he changed the focus from lesson planning it meant he did not have to change his overall teaching. This led Principal Two to believe that the problem may not be personal. She stated that she believed she could get the two teachers in the conflict to come together and talk about it. She had already spoken to the female teacher alone. She told this teacher that they needed to come up with a plan for the two working together. The female teacher said she would think about it. I suggested that Principal Two was still at the stage of getting both participants' perspectives. Principal Two stated that she hoped she could get to a place where she and her two teachers could reframe the conflict to be about the needs of their English Learner students. We did not analyze this conflict with the same intensity as the first. The session ended with both principals being asked to meet with the teachers involved in the conflict to complete stage one of the mediation cycle, moving from differentiation to integration. This meant they needed to talk to the teachers to:

- Surface the problem
- Gain each teacher's perspective and
- Attempt to find a common commitment or goal the teachers could refocus their energy on.

### **Principal Three**

A few days later I met with Principal Three. Due to her time constraints we held an abbreviated version of the session. She read and analyzed the scenario that the other two principals discussed about the teacher that was accused of being racist and the conflict that erupted among the teachers about the issue. Her response to the conflict was to meet with the grade level team, but to also have some individual discussions with the teachers that had the biggest role in the problem. I asked her if she thought the conflict was productive or unproductive. She stated that it started productive but due to the way the conflict escalated it became unproductive. The last question about the scenario was

what conflict handling style she would use. Principal Three said “She didn’t know” multiple times. She stated, “This is kind of hard, how do you collaborate around race and deep beliefs?” Eventually she chose collaborating and stated “If you think of it as trying to learn from each others’ insights, but a way they can hear what’s at the heart of it for the other person.” After the scenario I asked her if she had her teacher surveys. She stated that she had not done them because there was too much conflict at her site. She did not want to surface conflicts that she was not ready to deal with. We ended with her identifying a focus conflict. She decided to continue to work on the conflict she presented at session one.

Principal Three’s conflict was based on recent budget cuts and the loss of teaching positions. The main decision that led to conflict was deciding what grade level each teacher would teach for the following year. After she lost some of her staff she had to move teachers around to cover all the grade levels. When she announced the changes her leadership team disagreed with her choice for the new first grade teacher. As a result she went back and forth between different teachers, assigning grade levels then retracting them. This caused conflict among the teachers who had different opinions about who should be teaching which grade. This left Principal Three to sort through multiple conflicts that had arisen and still address the issue of teachers’ grade level assignments.

Principal Three did not have time to complete the Conflict Map during the session. I asked her to use the conflict she described to complete as many sections of the Conflict Map as she could for homework. I asked her to do this on her own prior to our next session.

### Session Two Analysis

I reviewed transcripts, recordings, and the written work by the principals to inform my analysis of the learning and facilitation during the professional development. The outcomes for this session included:

- Analyze conflict scenarios to identify the problem, determine if it is productive or unproductive, and explain why
- Give school based examples of productive conflict
- Reduce principals’ fear of managing conflict

The first activity exemplified the problem with my facilitation in Session One. I was unable to see the principals’ real needs and adjust. My adjustments were in service of getting the principals to understand my line of thinking. I was not adjusting to support their thinking. My adjustment to the professional development was a written reflection which I called a recap. In the recap the principals had to define productive conflict and explain if the real life conflict they described in session one was productive or not. The following chart gives each principal’s answer for those two questions.

Figure 39: Principal’s Definitions for Conflict

	Define productive conflict	Define unproductive conflict	Was the scenario you presented in the first session productive or unproductive
Principal One	Conflict that could have a positive outcome on your	Tend to be more relational and not based on factors	Productive because it was about staffing the

	organizations mission	relevant to the org.	bilingual program.
Principal Two	Influences work related decisions. The resolution of the conflict enhances the work	Impedes work.  Resolution to the conflict will not necessarily move the work forward.	Unproductive. It was extremely personal.
Principal Three	Lends itself to working to create a better product	Fighting with no purpose	Unproductive  People are just putting up all kind of conflicts.

The structure of the task and the questions were not analytical. They simply asked the principals to apply the information from the reading to their real scenarios. The last question of the recap focused on the principals determining if their conflict was productive. Principal One identified his example as productive and explained his reasoning. But Principal Two and Principal Three struggled with the process. Principal Two believed that she didn't have enough information to determine if it was productive or not. But she thought it was worth learning more about the conflict because it is impeding the team's ability to plan lessons and effectively serve students. Principal Three was not able to use the concepts to determine if her conflict was productive and why. But as a facilitator I didn't know how to effectively address that struggle. My teaching method continued to be direct instruction as opposed to deeper inquiry. I believe that after years of training as a principal in an era of scripted learning, I lacked intuition around how the principals were making sense of the information I was delivering through their real experiences. As a result, I inadvertently separated the principals' answers as "right" or "wrong" and responded from that frame of mind. When the principals struggled to accept the information I was providing or disagreed I moved forward as if the goal was to move them from what I believed was wrong to what I believed was right. I did this by pushing the principals to identify and ignore unproductive conflicts that my professional development was not prepared to address.

One of the session outcomes was that principals would be able to analyze conflict scenarios to determine if they were productive or unproductive and why. The principals were given a long scenario which gave them an overview of the setting, then gave them a scripted conversation between multiple people. In the script the conflict escalated to claims of racism and people walking out of the room. The principals were asked to read the scenario, discuss what happened, the root cause of the conflict, if it was productive or not, and how they would manage it. The chart below captures their responses:

Figure 40: Scenario Responses

	Productive or unproductive	Explanation
Principal One	Productive	"I think it could be solved. I think there is a task. The work related task is educating

		African American males. And I would assume there is an achievement gap that is occurring so like your job is to ensure that all kids are learning”
Principal Two	Productive	“Its definitely a work related task. They can’t get through the discussion about student not achieving.”
Principal Three	Started productive Ended Unproductive	It started productive but escalated to a point it may not be productive because it’s hard to talk about race. Kids “come to us as they are. We need to figure out how to deal with what’s in our control” “How can we support teachers to build a relationship and set a tone within their classrooms”

At the end of Session One I was concerned that the principals could not apply some of the concepts from the readings, but based on this activity the principals did remember some of the material from Session One and were able to make some connections during the activity in Session Two. The chart shows that all three of the principals provided a rationale for why they believed the conflict was productive. They used the content from the readings to explain that there was a work related task within the scenario. Principal Three did believe that the task was escalating to a point where it may be becoming unproductive. Within the conflict checklist one of the questions was: Can the people involved get past the anger and animosity to discuss the issue. Even though Principal Three questioned whether the conflict was productive due to the level of anger, she discussed this with criteria that made sense. Based on the principals’ answers the work and facilitation simply asked them to engage in surface level thinking. They were able to regurgitate the terms and mildly applied them to their scenarios. But, I did not have the knowledge or expertise to recognize this or that allowed me to adjust and push the principals to challenge their thinking in the moment. As a result I continued to reference the tools from and steps from the professional development because that was where my knowledge base was.

Since none of the principals completed the homework between Session One and Session Two I had to adjust the assignment. In order to move on with the activities for the session the principals would have to have had to have a “focus conflict.” This was a conflict that they were going to attempt to manage using this process. So that we could move forward, each principal was asked to choose a conflict they already knew about. Principal Two and Principal Three decided to move forward with the conflicts they had narrated in Session One. Both of the principals had originally identified their conflicts as unproductive because of how public the conflicts were. But after using the Conflict Checklist and discussing the conflict with the group they came to believe that they could identify a work related task from the conflict. The ability to find a work related task made it worth exploring as a productive conflict.

Figure 41: Conflict Checklist Items

Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?

Stop	Proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal- personal tastes, political preferences, communication styles, interpersonal styles, personal values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behind the anger, animosity, or language being used there is a work related task.</li> </ul>

2. Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task? What is the level of intensity?

Stop	Proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does the level of emotions require the principal to step in and take action immediately?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conflict is quickly escalating.</li> <li>- anger and emotions are currently impacting students.</li> <li>- the parties involved are engaging in hate speech or racial slurs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can the principal facilitate a discussion?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can the teachers control their anger and engage in conversation?</li> <li>- Is it possible to move away from the personal animosity?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Once the principals chose a focus conflict the next learning activity was called a Conflict Map. The purpose of this process was to help the principals think through a productive conflict in depth. The principals completed a graphic organizer that asked them to identify the people involved in the conflict, explain each person’s perspective on the conflict, other important information, and a possible task related to the conflict. For this activity Principal One gave a conflict that was productive, however he was not sure how to classify the conflict when he gave it. He had to be coached through the conflict to see it as productive. Principal One introduced his “focus conflict” with confusion about if it was a conflict we should address. He said “It is a difficult conversation I need to have with a teacher. But it’s not a conflict between her and another person. It’s just actually like her performance. So I don’t know if that would that go on here.” I told him to map the conflict onto the graphic organizer to help him determine if he thought there was a productive conflict involved. The Conflict Mapping tool had him write down the people involved, the perspectives of the different people involved and what Principal One believed the problem was. When he completed the map he stated “She is actually in conflict with lots of people.” He explained the entire conflict with the group by sharing the conflict map. I asked him “based on this process do you think you can have a conversation with her and potentially identify a way to get her aligned with other people?” He responded with “One quick question. Should I be included in this Conflict Map?” This led to another issue that the professional development was not prepared to address. The process for managing productive conflict that the principals were learning was based on them being an impartial mediator. But what I learned through this process was that none of the principals were impartial. Principal One and Principal Three were directly involved. But Principal Two also had already had interactions with the two teachers in her conflict, which made one of the teachers mistrust her impartiality. But again, since I as the facilitator was not prepared for this issue we continued moving through the process and believed that process would support the principals to be

impartial. Principal One seemed to be taking the teachers actions personally. He referenced her “new boyfriend” and her “not caring.” Below is an excerpt from the conversation we has as we reasoned through the conflict.

**Facilitator:** *“Going through the criteria do you think you could help her identify a next step or a way to get her aligned with the other people?”*

**Principal One:** *“Yeah. I’m wondering what this looks like? What if one person doesn’t feel there is a conflict? Like my teacher.”*

**Facilitator:** *“Is she saying that after hearing the other peoples perspective? Or just kind of in general she has the attitude of its not a big deal.”*

**Principal One:** *“She knows of all these things. She doesn’t really care”. He goes on to say “ I don’t know if there’s any solution for the problem.”*

**Principal Two** asked *“do you feel she’s lazy and she just not going to do it”*

**Principal One:** *“she has the skill to do it she doesn’t really have the will. The first month or two she was great.”*

Principal Two looked back at the readings and the Conflict Map. She thought that Principal One should try de-personalize the way he was thinking about the conflict by reframing the issue. She thought he should try to appeal to the teachers self interest around being a teacher.

**Principal Two:** *“Be really honest and say do you see yourself as an educator and do you realize what this is doing to your reputation?”*

**Facilitator:** *“Maybe that will appeal to her commitment”*

**Principal One:** *“Yeah appeal to mutual commitment, I think that’s the biggest one”*

In the end Principal Two and I suggested he move forward with meeting with the teacher to understand her perspective on the conflict. Principal One agreed to try. Although his conflict was complicated it led to a long discussion and we all struggled to apply the concepts from the readings on productive conflict to his scenario. But, this type of discussion and reasoning was the type of experience that this professional development intended.

Principal Two had already begun talking to one of the teachers involved in the conflict and had gathered some information from other teachers that knew about the conflict. As she used the conflict map and the conflict checklist to reason through her teachers’ conflict she decided that it could be productive Her conflict involved a male and female teacher on a grade level PLC who argued at each meeting. When Principal Two completed the Conflict Map she included the other members of the PLC. Members of the PLC believed that the male teacher initiated arguments as a tactic to avoid feedback that would make him change his teaching practices. Principal Two believed this was a plausible explanation. Principal Two also expressed her concern that if the conflict was not resolved it would have an impact on student learning. She therefore decided she would manage the conflict. The discussions that Principal One, Principal Two and I had during this session were examples of the type of adult learning that this professional development intended. The goal was to provide scaffolds that would help the principals discuss and think through conflicts before they addressed them. However, the learning from Session One was that that the readings and definitions about conflict did not offer clear cut definitions of productive and unproductive conflict, In Session Two we continued to struggle to concretely categorize the conflicts as productive or unproductive.



Principal Three also struggled with showing that she understood why a conflict would be considered productive. She chose her “focus conflict” because she was currently dealing with it and was in immediate need of a solution. When she named the conflict she did not reference any terms or concepts from the reading. Due to the time constraints I was not able to probe deeper into why she chose that conflict and she did not complete the conflict map.

Access to a guided process and tools to manage the conflict were intended to help principals think through productive conflicts. I expected the process to lead to more clear cut answers about their conflicts. But although it did not, the process still offered the principals an opportunity to think about conflict differently and deeper than they had previously.

### Session Three

#### Outcomes

- Principal can explain and apply a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict.
- Principal’s actions, attitude and responses show a reduced sense of fear towards managing conflict.
- Principal can connect the learning to their real lives.

Figure 42: Session Three Learning Process

Rubric Indicators	Session Outcomes	Activity	Intended Learning
<b>Principal has a clear process for determining if a conflict is productive or unproductive</b>	Principal can explain and apply a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict.	Conduct the first stage of the mediation. Discuss what occurred during the first stage of the mediation	Learn how to deconstruct and analyze a conflict.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.
<b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive conflict</b>	Principal’s actions, attitude and responses show a reduced sense of fear towards managing conflict	Consultancy protocol	Principals will build their skill set around mediating a conflict for a productive outcome.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.
<b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive conflict</b>	Principal can connect the design to their real lives.	Develop an intervention action plan.	Learn strategies for managing task related problems.

For session three there were three major activities. The activities were to update the conflict map, conduct a consultancy protocol, and they were introduced to a new tool called the Intervention Action Plan. However, we were unable to complete these

activities in the manner that I had planned. The professional development was based on the idea that principals would engage around a “focus conflict.” The focus conflict was an attempt to connect the learning from the professional development to the principal’s real life and make the professional development useful to their current context. For homework from Session Two the principals were asked to conduct the first stages of the mediation process. This meant they would meet with the teachers involved in the conflict, get their perspective about the conflict and then work with them to reframe the conflict to be task oriented. None of the principals completed this task.

Principal Two discussed her conflict first. Her “focus conflict” involved two teachers who taught the same grade level, and were expected to plan lessons together; Instead they spent most of their meeting time arguing. She met with both of the teachers in her conflict separately. The male teacher refused to participate. He became angry and thought she was setting him up to be reprimanded in the future. She also spoke to the female teacher involved in the conflict. It turned out that Principal Two had not asked the female teacher what her perspective was on the conflict. Instead Principal Two told the female teacher her own thoughts about the conflict. Principal Two told her that she believed that when the female teacher was new, the male teacher could act as a mentor. But, now that the female teacher had experience, she made suggestions that challenged his teaching style. Principal Two came to this conclusion based on what other teachers told her and her own observations. Principal Two said that the female teacher responded with “that’s interesting.” Ultimately, Principal Two was not able to complete the first stages of the mediation.

Principal Three talked about her conflict next. She stated that her conflict resolved itself. The “focus conflict” was teachers being in conflict with the principal and each other over who should teach which grade levels. Principal Three avoided the discussions with her teachers long enough for them to figure it out among themselves. She described her approach that an “organic process was more aligned with her leadership style.”

Principal One did not have the conversation with his teacher. His conflict was complicated. It involved a teacher who was not meeting “expectations”; this was causing her to be in conflict with other teachers, parents, and the principal. When I asked him if it was the timing or if he was avoiding the conversation, he said it was a little bit of both. He stated that at the end of our last session he was angry. He felt that his “Teddy Bear” conflict handling style was not working. He needed to shed that persona and be forceful and authoritative. He said:

“When we left the last session I wanted to sit with her and have a ‘come to Jesus.’ Then I had to sit and reflect and I came to that place where I need to hear it out. I need to trust that she is an adult that cares about the job and the kids.”

He had not spoken to anyone involved, but was able to get himself mentally prepared to hear her side of the story. He now felt like he was in a mental space to speak with them.

The next part of the planned intervention was a consultancy. In a consultancy the principal presents an issue that he or she is struggling to resolve. But, I abandoned the consultancy process because the principals had not done the homework and did not have new information to consult about. In the professional development the principals were

going to present what they had learned in the first part of their mediation and consult with the other principals about the next steps. The other principals were going to ask probing questions, then brainstorm ideas to help the presenter. After the group discussed possible solutions, the presenter would have reflected and decided about some next steps.

However, the consultancy became an unstructured conversation that took place as each principal did their check-in. While each principal talked about their conflicts described in the previous paragraphs, we asked questions and offered suggestions. For example, Principal Three suggested that Principal Two continue to follow up with her male teacher. Although the male teacher was mad, Principal Three also felt that was his way of avoiding conflict and work. Principal Two agreed that she thought it was a good idea to approach him again. For Principal One he was still debating what to say to the teacher involved in the conflict. Principal Three and Principal Two helped him talk through what may happen if he approached her collaboratively versus if he was authoritative.

The next activity in the session was intended to be the intervention action plan. The purpose of the intervention action plan was to help the principals think through possible solutions for the task-based conflict. But, since none of the principals had gotten to a place where they had identified a task, I had to modify the process. Instead I showed them an intervention action plan and explained how the tool worked.

I ended by asking how the group wanted to proceed. All of them seemed to have reached an impasse with their conflict. They all agreed that they wanted to meet again as a group. They still faced conflicts that needed solutions. There were still hopeful that this process could somehow help them. Principal One agreed to talk to his teacher. Principal Two was going to meet with the male teacher again and try to get him to participate in the mediation. Principal Three felt that the resolution to her conflict was “shaky.” There was still the possibility that over the next week teachers may disagree with some of the decisions that were made.

### **Session Three Analysis**

The first outcome for this session was that the principals could explain and apply a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict. In session two the principals were introduced to the new framework for a mediation process:

- Surface the problem
  - Overview of the conflict
- Reframe the issue
  - Rewrite the conflict from the perspective of everyone involved.
  - What are the perceived needs of each person
  - Can you identify a common interest, goal, or commitment between the people involved in the conflict.

During session two the group began to use these steps to dissect their “focus conflicts.” After Session Two Principal One’s reaction was anger. After thinking through his conflict, he felt that his previous response to the teacher had allowed conflict to continue. He still perceived the conflict as a problem as opposed to an opportunity for growth. He needed more time to process his feelings. The conflict management process was emotionally taxing for the principal. Principal One did not leave Session Two emotionally prepared to manage the conflict. He needed time to reflect and make sense of the process for himself. Therefore, he did not complete the first stage of the

mediation. As a result, he was not able to properly participate in the activities for Session Three.

Although Principal Two made an attempt to conduct the first stage of the mediation, the relationship she already had with the teachers stopped her. The male teacher involved in the conflict expressed both anger and mistrust towards the principal. The teacher did not perceive Principal Two as an ally to help him resolve the conflict. Instead he believed that she would use the meeting to take disciplinary action against him. The relationship that the principal had with the teacher impacted the productive conflict process. As a result she was not able to conduct the first stage of the mediation either.

Principal Three avoided her conflict. As a result the teachers involved came to a solution for themselves. Her avoidance showed an unwillingness to try the first stage of the mediation. This was a further example that showed that the activities in the professional development did not meet the principals needs. Offering a framework or a set of steps for how to manage productive conflict was not enough to make the principals comfortable with conflict. The professional development was developed using readings about adult learning and changing schema. But there seemed to be a disconnect between what the research suggested and the way the activities were designed and facilitated. Although there were good discussions in Session One and Session Two the facilitation did not challenge or support the principals in a way that changed the way they viewed conflict.

The second outcome was to reduce the principal's fear of managing conflict. This was inferred based on their actions, attitude, and responses during the discussions about their mediations with teachers. The three principals differed in their responses. Principal Two was not able to get teachers to participate in a mediation, however she did make an attempt. She met with both teachers separately and talked to them about meeting with her and the other teacher. Although she was unsuccessful she still expressed a willingness to try. As she was discussing what occurred she stated "Maybe I'll try again." Principal Two seemed less reluctant and showed a reduced sense of fear as compared to the other principals.

Principal One did not meet with the teacher involved. He acknowledged that part of the reason was because he had avoided the situation. He stated "Im just hoping karma happens". In this he was referencing his hope that the teacher would decide to leave the school. Principal Three also avoided the conversation she stated that "I just like when it bubbles up and happens." This statement was related to the idea of solutions to problems developing without any prompting or intervention from the principal. In her "focus conflict" she explained that one of her teachers asked her to "just make a decision," but even this request did not encourage her to mediate the conflict. Eventually the teachers met and resolved the problem without inviting her. These examples showed that Principal One and Principal Three did not have a reduced sense of fear around engaging in around conflict.

The principals' lack of follow through on managing their conflicts was a result of my poor facilitation in Session One and Session Two. Unfortunately, while I was in the midst of the professional development I did not see this. I started to believe that the problems with the professional development were because the principals were not willing to use the materials. When I designed the professional development I thought that the

principals would benefit from tools and readings that would help guide their thinking. But, what I had inadvertently done was recreate a very popular model for teaching and learning, a scripted program. My facilitation was based on a script. When the principals expressed needs that deviated from the script I was not prepared to support these differentiated needs. I missed opportunities in Session One and Session Two to model my thinking; to probe the principals' thinking and gain deeper understanding about why they wanted to address unproductive conflict; and to challenge the conventional notions of how principals' deal with conflict. These missed steps during the earlier sessions were reflected in the principals' actions by Session Three.

### Session Four

#### Outcomes

- Conduct a mediation between teachers on site.
- Analyze a real principal conflict to identify the root cause, develop a common task, and apply an intervention strategy.

Figure 43: Session Four Learning Process

Rubric Indicators	Session Outcomes	Activity	Intended Learning
<b>Principal conducts a mediation</b>	Conduct a mediation between teachers on site	Conduct the first stages of their mediation	Principals will build their skill set around mediating a conflict for a productive outcome.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.
<b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive conflict</b>	Analyze a real principal conflict to identify the root cause, develop a common task, and apply an intervention strategy	Consultancy around focus conflict.  Intervention action plan.	Learn how to deconstruct and analyze a conflict.  Learn to reframe a conflict from emotion to task.

By session four the original design of the professional development was not going as I had anticipated. Much of the professional development work was based on the principals conducting mediations at their sites. However, during session three none of them had completed the pre-mediation process. As a result I had to make changes to session four. It did not appear that we would have five full sessions, so I combined the agendas for session four and five. Since it did not appear that the principals would conduct a mediation, I decided to use their scenarios and still walk through the process for productively managing the conflict.

- Step 1: Surface the problem
- Step 2: Reframe the issue
- Step 3: Identify a task

- Step 4: Create an intervention plan

For each principal I planned to use their description of their “focus conflict” to identify a task from the conflict. Then as a group we would use one of the graphic organizers (Intervention Action Plan) from the session to discuss possible solutions based on the task. Although the original plan for the professional development was for the teachers to work with the principals to develop the action plan, this would still give them an idea of the process.

We discussed Principal Two’s focus conflict first. At the end of the last session she agreed to meet with the male teacher again. To recall, in her “focus conflict” a male and female teacher frequently engaged in loud, verbal disagreements. These conflicts prevented their professional learning team from collaborating around instruction. Unfortunately, before she was able to meet with him he was injured and would be out for an extended amount of time. She did meet with the female teacher again. The female teacher planned to change her role at the school and thought that would be a way to escape the conflict. Principal Two told her she would still need to interact with the male teacher, even if it was not as partners. The female teacher thought that one solution was for her to always have a third person with her when she spoke to him.

After Principal Two explained what happened I gave all of the principals a copy of the steps for managing a productive conflict. I asked them to look at step two: reframing the issue which consists of a number of strategies:

- Appeal to self interest
- Appeal to mutual commitments
- Develop a common goal
- Use of evidence
- Agree to disagree

Then I asked Principal Two what approach she used to get the female teacher to engage in the process. Principal Two said that all of them came into play, but the most persuasive would be appeal to self-interest. Principal Two knew that the female teacher aspired to be a principal and so Principal Two attempted to get her to think about working with everyone.

All three principals were asked to think about step 3: identifying a task for Principal Two’s conflict. I gave them an example of a potential task for Principal Two’s conflict. The example was:

*Task:* Create a guide that details the progression of skills and concepts that an English Language Learner student would need to master the English language over time.

After the example there was a long pause. None of the principals seemed able to identify a task. When Principal One responded he said that Principal Two should meet with the antagonists to define their roles. Principal Three agreed and added that she should set norms with the group. I had given them the example of creating a guide, but I had not guided them through my thinking. I had not taught them how to develop a task from the information in the conflict. As a result the recommendations did not develop into a task for teachers to work together on. Instead the recommendation was for Principal Two to meet with the two teachers to state her expectations.

I tried to reframe the conversation that led to this recommendation. I told them that with their approach the focus would be on the principal. Based on this process there should be a task for the teachers in the conflict to agree to work on. I went back to my original example of creating a continuum of skills for ELL students and asked their thoughts. Principal One referenced the conflict checklist:

- Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?
- Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task? What is the level of intensity?
- Is the task worth your time and effort?

He was not convinced that Principal Two meeting with the teachers was worth her time. Both Principal One and Three believed that the behavior of the male teacher was unchangeable. From this comment the other principals wanted to know if Principal Two planned to keep the male teacher or try to “push” him out of her school. They thought that if Principal Two was trying to encourage him to leave her school then she should be authoritative with him. At that time Principal Two was not sure if she wanted to encourage the male teacher to leave. This question led Principal Two to reflect on the male teacher’s behavior and whether this conflict could have a productive outcome. Since the discussion digressed into a conversation about whether this conflict was worth the principal’s time and effort, we never developed an actual task.

Principal One presented next. His focus conflict was a teacher who was involved in multiple conflicts, including one with him. He felt his conflict “resolved” itself because the teacher decided to move to a different school. When he found out she was leaving he decided not to meet with her. But he was considering conducting what he called an “exit interview”. During this interview his plan was to give the teacher feedback that she could take with her to the next school. I asked if he thought any of the tools or processes we discussed would have helped when the conflict first began. He did not engage with this prompt and instead he seemed insistent on making sure the teacher was clear about his expectations. He said that he had facilitated a mediation between the teacher and a group of parents when the conflict first began. During this meeting the parents expressed their concerns, the teacher responded defensively, and the meeting ended with the teacher being given a set of expectations. I asked him if the teacher had been allowed to give her perspective and if the parents were given any expectations or next steps. He said no. I told him that in this process everyone should have an opportunity to share their perspective on the conflict and their needs. I suggested that perhaps the teacher did not meet his expectations because her needs were not met. I turned the discussion back to the exit interview. I told him that he should consider using the time to hear the teacher’s perspective and what it was like for her to be a new teacher entering an already established teaching team. I told him that this problem could resurface with any new teacher entering his school. She may give him perspective on what he could do differently to support an entering teacher.

The focus conflict for Principal Three had not changed from the last session. However, she did speak about a teacher leader that she was “bumping heads” with. She felt this was a strong teacher, but also a very vocal teacher. When this teacher disagreed with a decision made by Principal Three she would let the principal and other staff members know. The teacher was upset about the budget decisions Principal Three made without consulting the leadership team. I asked her if there was a way for the two of

them to come back to the table and attempt step one: reframe the issue. I did not continue through with the steps in the conflict management process for this conflict because Principal Three did not have enough information from the teacher's perspective to decide the best way to reframe the problem or identify a task.

#### **Session Four Analysis**

In the original plan for the professional development by session four the principals should have been in the process of conducting a mediation between teachers at their site. However, none of the principals had begun the process. Principal Two had attempted the pre work of talking to the teachers. But, she nor the other principals arranged a meeting between the teachers involved and had not gone through the process outlined in the professional development.

By this point I envisioned that the principals would analyze a real principal conflict to identify the root cause, develop a common task, and apply an intervention strategy. The revised professional development had them apply the steps in the process to the focus scenario. We attempted to do this based on the information that the principals already had. Unfortunately none of the principals said they were able to gather any more information between Session Three and Session Four. This is further indication that participation in the professional development had not provided the emotional or professional support that the principals needed to even begin to engage with the people involved in the conflict. There was a two week span between Session Three and Session Four. During that time the teacher in Principal One's conflict decided to accept a job at another site. When I attempted to have Principal One reflect on parts of the process that could still be beneficial or could have been beneficial when this first started, he was not able to articulate how this process could have helped. He still believed that the problem was that he had not been authoritative enough with the teacher.

We attempted to walk through some of the next steps in the process with Principal Two's focus conflict. During this time it was clear that the principals still struggled to apply the concepts from the readings and professional development. A step in making a conflict productive is taking what could appear to be personal or relationship conflict and identifying a work related task. The reason for this was to redirect the negative energy by giving the teachers a common goal to rally around. All three principals were asked to do this for Principal Two's focus conflict; they were also given an example. But the process stalled. Instead they offered generic tasks for the principal to end the conflict, such as setting norms with the group or defining the teacher's roles for them.

Principal Three's focus conflict had "resolved itself" in the previous session. Nothing new had resurfaced before the next session. She mentioned a new conflict that was emerging, however she had not applied any of the strategies or concepts from the session to this new conflict and she did not have enough information for us to apply the protocol. The fact that as a new conflict arose Principal Three did not attempt to implement any of the strategies is further evidence that the professional development had not led to internalization of the learning and she could not apply it to real life.

Based on the analysis of the process data the professional development did not go as planned. As a result it did not lead to the learning and thinking about conflict that was intended. Through this process principals were supposed to internalize the difference between productive and unproductive conflict, actively choose to manage productive



conflicts, and have a clear process for managing the conflicts. However, the conflicts that the principals were dealing with were not easily sorted into two categories. They were complicated and involved the principals in ways that I had not been anticipated during the design of the professional development. The professional development relied on graphic organizers, readings, and discussion protocols to help facilitate conversation and thinking. But, there was nothing in the professional development that adequately addressed the principals' emotions such as anger, fear, and mistrust. The professional development's failure to address these emotions seemed to prevent the principals from moving forward in the process. The facilitator also was not prepared to adjust to meet the principals' emotional or professional needs. As a result the professional development stalled.

### **Impact and Process Data**

Overall the professional development did not lead to the intended outcome. Ultimately, the principals were expected to manage a conflict at their sites, which none of them completed. The professional development began to fall apart rather early in its implementation. Session one seemed to go well, but by Session Two the intended outcomes for the session were not being accomplished. The principals seemed to do well in Session One which involved digesting and analyzing basic input. For example, the principals understood the readings and were able to define most terms. Principal One often referred back to readings in our activities and discussions. The Principals were able to give an accurate definition of productive conflict versus unproductive conflict. This is reflected in the impact data. On the pre and post interview all of the principals improved their rubric score related to "beliefs about conflict." This section of the interview gave the principals a list of statements to agree or disagree with. When given direct information the principals were able to make basic connection back to the readings and learning in the professional development. .

However, in the process data the principals struggled to apply this knowledge to the scenarios and real life, which were the foci of Sessions Two through Session Four. This struggle was also reflected in impact data. In the post interview when the principals were asked to give their own definitions and examples of productive conflict they struggled to accurately communicate the difference between productive and unproductive conflict. This is consistent with the process data. By the last two sessions we all seemed to struggle to apply the concepts and categorize the conflicts. Interestingly, Principal One posed the most questions and opposition to the materials in the professional development, but he received the highest rubric scores on the post interview. Perhaps the way he challenged and wrestled with the concepts led to a deeper level of understanding than the principals who simply accepted the readings and process as is.

Although they were not able to directly apply the concepts they did seem to think through the conflicts differently than when they began. In session one the principals were asked to discuss a conflict that they struggled to resolve. The conflicts they described and the discussion about the conflict were one-dimensional. They approached conflict as if all conflict was bad and needed to be stopped. However, as we progressed through the sessions the principals began to struggle with the idea of productive versus unproductive conflicts. In session three and four the principals questioned how they should approach and resolve their conflicts. While the principals' actions may not have

changed, there is some evidence that they were thinking about the conflicts differently than they had been. In the last sessions of the intervention they appeared to analyze and reflect on the conflicts. They debated how to deal with the conflict and what approach to use to handle it. As opposed to first session where the mindset seemed to be stop this “problem” immediately. This struggle showed that the principals understood that not all conflicts were the same. They knew the conflict could be productive or unproductive even if they struggled to figure out where their conflict fell.

The principals’ struggle to understand their conflicts was seen in the post interview responses. Since none of the principals managed a real life conflict, we never completed the process. In the post interview the principals were given a set a scenarios and asked how they would respond. There was inconsistency in the way they responded to the different scenarios. But some of their answers were aligned with the rubric and Principal One and Three did received high rubric scores under the indicators “Has a process to manage conflict” and “ Can effectively respond to a conflict.” But overall there was inconsistency in the way the principals responded to scenarios and ultimately their overall rubric scores did not increase by very much. This is an indicator that their overall thinking and approach to managing conflict did not change much as a result of their participation in the professional development.

## **Chapter 5                      Discussion**

### **Problem of Practice**

The purpose of this research was to provide principals with a process to address conflicts that may arise from teacher collaboration. Professional Learning Communities are a structure commonly used in schools. PLC’s are a teacher professional development model that matches teachers with similar work assignments such as grade level or content area to plan together, give feedback, and offer ideas and support in a group. Teaching is viewed as an isolating profession in which teachers are only responsible for their own classrooms. PLC’s are a popular model because it is believed they foster relationships between the teachers. PLC’s are believed to promote harmony, consensus, and cohesion among teachers. But, what should a principal do when instead of collaboration and cohesion the teachers at the school are in conflict? Most districts and graduate schools teach principals how to organize and facilitate teachers in a PLC structure, but they are not given direction on how to address conflict. Conflict is a common occurrence in work groups. However, most principals are not trained and do not have the skills to deal with work group conflict. Principals generally believe that conflict will have a negative impact on the PLC so they simply try to stop it. However, conflict is a natural part of group development. In fact, some conflict can be beneficial to a group. If conflict is facilitated correctly it can generate new ideas, prevent stagnancy, and lead growth within a group. The goal of this professional development was to give the principals the training, support and tools they needed to effectively manage conflict among their teachers.

### **Design Challenge**

The goal of this research was to change the principal’s perspective about adult conflict and give them knowledge and skills to effectively manage conflict. This change

would happen by challenging their current beliefs, attitudes and practices around conflict. The format for the research was a professional development that would 1) build the principals knowledge of conflict 2) help the principal identify productive conflict at their school 3) build efficacy around responding to conflict. Essentially principals would learn what conflict was, what it looked like, and what to do with it.

### **Theory of Action**

The theory of action was based on research about the historical role of the principal, types of workplace conflict, conflict mediation, and adult learning theories. The theory of action was that the principals would be open to new learning if the professional development: created an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict; reduced their fear of addressing conflict; acknowledged their needs around managing conflict; and was connected to their real lives. The activities, readings, and tools were designed and organized based on these principles. The content of the professional development was focused on identifying productive and unproductive conflict, and strategies for managing productive conflict.

Unfortunately, the problem of practice and theory of action were based off of a faulty needs assessment. I had misjudged the role of both productive and unproductive conflict in principal's work. As a result the professional development did not meet the principals' overall needs related to conflict. The problem of practice was two fold. First it posited that principals did not know how to manage conflict; but it also posited that if principals knew the difference between productive and unproductive conflict they would prioritize managing productive conflict. Therefore, the theory of action was limited to helping principals recognize and manage productive conflict. However, once the professional development began the distinction between productive and unproductive conflict did not change the intensity and emotional toil that both types of conflict presented for principals. The principals presented complicated, emotionally intense conflicts that they were struggling to understand and manage. But, instead of giving them a process to deal with what they were facing, I gave them a process that asked them to categorize and ignore much of what they were facing. I asked them to set aside what appeared to be unproductive such as emotional intensity, relationships, and anger. As a result I essentially recreated the same strategies that this professional development was intended to alleviate.

Overall there were so many missed opportunities during the facilitation of the professional development that it was difficult to pinpoint how to effectively revise the theory of action. Additionally since we did not complete the professional development I was not able to test the second part of the theory of action. However, my initial reflection was to de-emphasize the focus on productive conflict. The theory should be based on the idea that all conflicts within a school have some level of impact on the school's culture and potentially student learning. Therefore, the theory of change should involve categorizing the conflicts to help the principals choose the appropriate management strategies to match the conflict, as opposed to ignoring some of them. The other important concept missed in the theory of action was related to how to facilitate adult learning. The theory of action posited that reduced fear, real life connections, and raised awareness around the need for this process were key levers in adult learning. But, the theory of action also needed to consider the principal's affective filter, or the negative

emotional feelings that impacted their ability to receive input. The principals that participated in this design brought intense conflicts that involved anger, trust, and pride. These emotions often consumed the principals and influenced the way they viewed their conflicts. As a result, it was difficult for them to be an impartial mediator for the teachers in their schools. The theory of action needed to account for the possibility of a range of emotions and involve ways to acknowledge, affirm, and help principals to reconcile these emotions.

### **Facilitation**

A large barrier to this professional development was my facilitation. I had created a narrow focus for my professional development. I had bought into the idea that the principals needed to focus their energy on conflicts that would be beneficial to their schools. As we moved through the sessions, the conflicts that the principals presented were messy and intense. They did not always fit my narrow focus. But as a facilitator, I was not prepared with the skills and knowledge to address the unexpected aspects of their conflicts. For example, I was not prepared to address the significant role that the principals already played in their conflicts. Instead of adjusting the design, I stuck to my planned intervention. I still operated under the assumption that if the principals knew more about productive conflict, they would actively choose to manage it over unproductive conflict. But the reality was that the principals wanted support managing the conflicts that were currently having the greatest impact on them; they were less concerned about the conflict being productive or unproductive. Overall the professional development led to more confusion and exacerbated the principals' sense of helplessness regarding their conflicts.

During the professional development my teaching style was very directive. I synthesized most of the learning through graphic organizers and checklists that I presented to the principals. If I had not already synthesized the information on paper I always made an attempt to summarize or synthesize the information verbally. It was important for the principals to get the input, but I lacked an effective process for helping the principals digest and analyze this new knowledge. I believed that offering frequent opportunities for discussion made this a more collaborative learning process. But, even in my facilitation of the discussion I steered the principals towards the key points and concepts that I had pre-identified. There was little to no space for organic learning or flexibility in the process that I presented. In the next iteration of this design I would suggest more opportunities for authentic inquiry. There would still be a need for input, but, the role of the principals involved would be to learn, discuss, question, and debate the input for the purpose of adapting them to best fit their needs.

### **Further Iterations**

In further iterations of this design research I would begin with redesigning the needs assessment. The original needs assessment was based on discussions with principals and principal supervisors. It focused on the existence of conflicts and if they desired a process to address these conflicts. I ascertained that the principals wanted my intervention, but I skipped a very important step: what were the conflicts they were dealing with, and what were practices that existed in real life. Only knowing about existing practices could I have understood their real learning needs. Thus, the needs

assessment was not explicit and did not garner enough details to truly tailor the professional development to meet the principals' needs. There were many factors that had not been assessed during the original needs assessment including the nature of the conflicts, the level of intensity, and the principals involvement in the conflicts. All of these things should be taken into consideration for a revision to the needs assessment.

In the literature on adult learning reframing a person's thinking included "building confidence and self confidence in new roles" and giving "provisional efforts to try new roles and assess feedback" (Mezirow, 1981, p.7). I attempted to do this with the consultancies and having the principals conduct a mediation. The theory was that consultancies and ongoing support with a current conflict would build the skills to handle conflicts on their own in the future. But for future iterations managing a real conflict seems to be too much too soon. Especially given that the tools and strategies in the professional development were not meeting the learning needs of participants. The activities were not actually building the skills and capacity to make principals feel comfortable managing the real crisis level conflicts they were presenting. I would suggest more opportunities for responding to scenarios in a safe space. I would suggest starting with their examples for the consultancies and actually role-playing their conflicts with the participants acting out parts of the conflict and the principal responding to the actors. From their conflicts I would develop mock scenarios that were similar to the issues they were directly facing. The scenarios should be rich and provide opportunity for the facilitator to model analysis and time for them to practice. Then move forward with asking them to manage a real conflict. This may help reduce fear and build confidence around responding to the teachers at their site.

Another content area that the design missed was supporting principals with their own emotional responses to conflict. In the design, I presumed that the teachers would be emotional. Activities were designed to teach the principal how to move the teachers from the emotional aspects of the conflict to develop a task. I had also presumed that the principals would avoid dealing with conflicts. I thought this was because they did not want to deal with other people's emotions. But I had not taken into account the emotional impact this would have on the principals. Emotional intelligence "is described as a set of abilities that refer in part to how effectively one deals with emotions both within oneself and others" (Palmer et.al, 2000, p. 2). Emotional intelligence has four domains which are aligned with the research on adult learning. These domains include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Palmer, 2000; Coleman, 2001). As I developed activities it would have been helpful to also consider ways to help principals acknowledge and gain awareness around their personal emotional triggers; and consider how their emotions impacted their ability to fully engage in the design as an impartial mediator.

This study is a first step into a very difficult territory. Principals are laden with a variety of conflicts in their school. From this study we can see that these conflicts bear an emotional toll that many principals do not have outlets to express. This study offered the principals support in this area. Although the principals did not manage a productive conflict, they expressed appreciation for being able to discuss their conflicts with their peers. This process provided a skeleton to develop a more effective way to support principals with conflict. Due to my teaching style, the materials in the professional development led to a prescriptive experience. But, with a more inquiry based approach

these tools could still offer support for principals to think through and develop next steps for managing teacher conflict. For example, the Conflict Checklist was intended to help the principals determine if a conflict was productive or unproductive. The use of a checklist or set of questions to classify or categorize conflicts could still be useful. The way this information is used could change. Instead of ignoring one of the conflicts this checklist could be used to identify a type of conflict and match an appropriate set of strategies to manage it. Additionally, the use of the narrated scenarios could be used similarly. The principals could reflect on a variety of scenarios and work together to develop different processes that would match the conflict. This initial study provided a wealth of information and learning for a researcher. One thing that was evident was that this was an urgent issue for the principals. Further iterations of this study would be beneficial for educational leaders.

### **Study Limitations**

As with any developmental design study one must consider the feasibility of the study. In this design study the principals participated voluntarily. They did this outside of their normal work hours, and in addition to the professional development that was already required by their district. This model required principals to give additional time in a professional learning setting, as well as, the time involved with managing a real life conflict. Another limitation that was not considered in this study was the teachers' willingness to work with the principals. The model assumed that the teachers would be open to allowing the principals to help them with their conflicts. But in this study there were teachers who did not trust the principal's intentions and were unwilling to participate in the mediations. This of course impacted the ability to carry out the process and the overall study.

### **Closing thoughts**

Work place conflict among adults is a common occurrence. Schools are not exempt from this phenomena. We often focus our attention on students and the interpersonal and socio-emotional skills they need in order to be successful. But, we neglect the fact that many adults still struggle with these skills. Often times adult conflicts are about issues that impact the school. Unfortunately, the adults' inability to work together and resolve conflict usually negatively impact the students. Therefore, just like teachers have processes to mediate conflicts among children, the principal needs a process to manage conflicts among adults. Principals need clear processes and procedures for determining if a conflict is productive, and ways to manage these productive outcomes to benefit the school. This design attempted to offer this for principals. Although the overall outcomes of this design intervention were not met, this design provides a skeleton for further iterations of this research.

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Appendix A: Conflict Management Rubric

**Rubric**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Beliefs about conflict</b>	- Believes all conflict are harmful for the school	-Believes that conflict is inappropriate - Believes conflict may or may not be harmful to the school	- Believes that that not all conflicts are inappropriate or harmful. But cannot articulate why	-Believes that there are some conflicts that can be beneficial to the progress of the school
<b>Principal can define types of conflict</b>	-The principal believes that all conflict are the same	- The principal recognizes that not all conflicts are the same. But, cannot explain what the differences are	- The principal knows that conflict can be task or relationship based. - The principal can provide a limited explanation of each type of conflict - The principal cannot or provides limited examples of each type of conflict.	-The principal knows that conflict can be task or relationship based - The principal can provide a detailed definition of each type of conflict. - The principal can provide examples of each type of conflict
<b>The principal can explain the difference between productive and unproductive conflicts in schools</b>	- The principal does not know the difference between productive and unproductive conflict	- The principal struggles to explain the concept - The principal can use low level terms to describe the difference between productive and unproductive conflict (ex. unproductive is not good for the team)	- The principal may struggle a little to define the concept. -The principal uses 1 or 2 characteristics of productive conflict to explain the concepts (see attached list)	- The principal does not struggle to define the concept. - The principal uses several characteristics of productive conflict to explain the concept (See attached)
<b>Principals can diagnose if a teacher conflict is productive</b>	- The principal cannot give an example of a productive	- The principal has little to no knowledge of what a	- The principal can give a school based example of productive	-The principal can provide multiple examples of a

	<p>conflict in a school.</p> <p>- When given a scenario the principal cannot identify the problem.</p>	<p>productive conflict would look like in the school</p> <p>- When given a scenario the principal can identify the problem but is unsure if it is productive or unproductive</p>	<p>conflict. (See attached)</p> <p>- When given a scenario the principal can identify a problem, determine if it is productive, and may or may not be able to explain why.</p>	<p>school based conflict. (See attached)</p> <p>- When given a scenario the principal can identify a problem, determine if it is productive, and can explain why.</p>
<p><b>Principal can effectively respond to a productive conflict</b></p>	<p>- The principal attempts to ignore, avoid, or suppress all conflicts</p> <p>- The principal does not use any processes to manage productive conflict.</p>	<p>- The principal sometimes ignores, avoids, or suppresses conflict.</p> <p>-The principal does not distinguish between productive and unproductive conflict. Responds to all conflicts in a similar manner.</p> <p>-The principal tries to manage some conflicts but does not have a clear process</p>	<p>- Most times the principal responds to productive and unproductive conflict differently.</p>	<p>- The principal responds to productive and unproductive conflict differently.</p>
<p><b>Principal manages a school based productive conflict</b></p>	<p>Does not attempt to conduct a mediation with teachers at the site</p>	<p>- The principal attempts to implement the mediation cycle to resolve the conflict. But skips or is unsuccessful at completing the process</p>	<p>- The principal conducts a full mediation cycle with teachers, but is not sure that the action plan will lead to a productive outcome.</p>	<p>- The principal conducts a full mediation cycle with teachers and develops an action plan that they believe will lead to a productive outcome.</p>

Appendix B: Professional Development Agendas

**Professional Development Agendas**

**Session 1 (3 hours)**

Activity	Facilitators Notes
Introduction to the topic and process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions between the principals involved.</li> <li>• Overview of what the professional development and process will consist of</li> <li>• Expectations from the group and individuals</li> </ul>
Design study overview	
Personal connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator shares personal story</li> <li>• What experiences led me to want to do this design</li> </ul>
<p>Discussion: <b>Describe a conflict in which you didn't know what to do.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did you learn about the conflict?</li> <li>-Who was involved?</li> <li>- What were the details of the conflict?</li> <li>- What was your response to the conflict?</li> <li>- How did you handle the conflict?</li> <li>- What was the outcome?</li> <li>- What impact did the conflict have on the school or school culture?</li> </ul>	
<p>Building Back Ground Knowledge</p> <p><u>BBK:</u></p> <p>Step 1: Access prior knowledge: <i>What do you already know about the types?</i></p> <p>Step 2. Group reading about types of conflict. Scribe key concepts Discuss</p> <p>Step 3. Expert Reading about types of conflict. Scribe key concepts Discuss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create poster organizer for the group</li> <li>• Group reading – everyone reads the same text</li> <li>• Expert reading – Everyone reads a different text about the same topic.</li> </ul>
<p>Applying the reading: <b>Apply the information from the reading to the conflict that you did not know how to handle.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Was the example productive or unproductive conflict?</li> <li>- How do we know?</li> </ul>	<p>Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key findings/ information from the reading</li> <li>• Use the new information to analyze the scenarios from the quick write.</li> </ul>
<p>Productive conflict Checklist:</p> <p>Apply to conflict above</p>	<p>Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass out the productive conflict checklist</li> <li>• Walk principals through the tool</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply it to a conflict above</li> </ul>
<p>Scenario:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read an example of a productive conflict.</li> <li>Quick write- What would be your response?</li> <li>Principals discuss their ideas.</li> </ul>	
<p>Thomas and Kilmann conflict response survey Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you surprised by your conflict handling mode?</li> <li>How has your conflict handling mode influenced/ effected your role as a principal?</li> <li>Has there ever been a time when your conflict handling mode has not been effective?</li> <li>What mode do you feel least comfortable with? Why?</li> <li>What support would you need to change your conflict handling mode?</li> </ul>	
<p>Discussion of conflict response modes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply the conflict response reading to the conflict you did not know how to handle.</li> </ul> <p>How would you change your response based on what you have learned?</p>	
Reflection	

**Session 2 (3 hours)**

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.</li> <li>Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict</li> <li>Reduce fear/Acknowledge their needs- the principals need to see that managing productive conflicts can still result in a harmonious outcome.</li> </ul>

Activity	Facilitators Notes
<p>Group Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on content from session 1</li> </ul>	
<p>Productive conflict checklist</p> <p>Review the conflicts presented by principal's in session 1.</p> <p>Use the productive conflict checklist to determine if conflicts were productive.</p>	
<p>Focus Conflict:</p> <p>Choose one conflict that you will attempt to mediate</p>	

Conflict Mapping: Based on what you know so far, map your focus conflict	
Reading: Strategies for managing conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation process</li> </ul>	•
Discussion: Moving from emotion to task	•
Role play: Act out the first stage of the mediation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface the problem</li> <li>• Select a strategy to reframe the issue</li> </ul>	
Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was it aligned or not aligned with your natural conflict handling mode?</li> <li>- What support would you need to try this at your site?</li> </ul>	
Develop guiding questions for stage 1 and 2 of the mediation	
Reflection	

**Session 3 (2 hours)**

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.</li> <li>• Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict</li> <li>• Reduce fear/Acknowledge their needs- the principals need to see that managing productive conflicts can still result in a harmonious outcome. (locus of control, commitment)</li> <li>• Connect the design to their real lives- in order for principals to be open to trying something new they must see the relevance to their work and believe that this process will have a positive impact on their lives.</li> </ul>

Activity	Facilitators Notes
Role play the first stages of a mediation process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the strengths of the process?</li> <li>• What were the weaknesses of the process?</li> </ul>	
Conflict Mapping: Based on stage 1 of the mediation, update your conflict map.	
Consultancy Protocol: <i>Using a consultancy protocol</i>  Each Principal: (30 mins each)	

<p>1. Present the details of their focus conflict to the group (5mins)</p> <p>2. Group asks the presenter probing and clarifying questions about the conflict (5 mins)</p> <p>3. The group brainstorms while the presenter listens: (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the source of the problem?</li> <li>-What is the task within this conflict?</li> <li>- What are some possible interventions for this conflict?</li> </ul> <p>5. Presenter reflects on the ideas given by the group. (5mins)</p> <p>Use the information gathered from the first part of the mediation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the root of the problem</li> <li>-Identify possible interventions to the conflict</li> </ul>	
<p>Intervention action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete part of the intervention action plan</li> </ul>	
Reflection	

**Session 4 (2 hours)**

Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an awareness for the need to manage productive conflict.</li> <li>• Provide a new framework for understanding their previous experiences with conflict</li> <li>• Reduce fear/Acknowledge their needs- the principals need to see that managing productive conflicts can still result in a harmonious outcome.</li> <li>• Connect the design to their real lives- in order for principals to be open to trying something new they must see the relevance to their work and believe that this process will have a positive impact on their lives</li> </ul>

Activity	Facilitators Notes
<p>Role play stage 3 and 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the strengths of the process?</li> <li>• What were the weaknesses of the process?</li> </ul>	
<p>Consultancy Protocol: <i>Using a consultancy protocol</i></p> <p>Each Principal: (30 mins each)</p> <p>1. Present the details of their focus conflict to the group (5mins)</p> <p>2. Group asks the presenter probing and clarifying</p>	

<p>questions about the conflict (5 mins)</p> <p>3. The group brainstorms while the presenter listens: (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the source of the problem?</li> <li>-What is the task within this conflict?</li> <li>- What are some possible interventions for this conflict?</li> </ul> <p>5. Presenter reflects on the ideas given by the group. (5mins)</p> <p>Use the information gathered from the first part of the mediation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the root of the problem</li> <li>-Identify possible interventions to the conflict</li> </ul>	
Intervention action plan	
Reflection	

**Session 5 (1 hour)**

Activity	Facilitators Notes
	<i>* Note: The final meeting will be held 1 week after the previous meeting. This will give principals time to monitor the implementation of the intervention plan and the mediation process.</i>
Role play stage 5 of the mediation.	
<p>Journaling:</p> <p>How did stage 5 of the mediation go?            What were the strengths of the process?            What were the weaknesses of the process?</p>	
<p>Discussion:</p> <p>Discuss the journal prompts</p> <p>How do you think this mediation process impact the interactions between the teachers?</p>	
<p>Discussion</p> <p>How has this process impacted your stance towards addressing productive conflict?</p> <p>Do you feel like this process will allow you to preserve cohesion/ community at your school site?</p>	<p>The purpose of this process is to give the principal practice and support prior to conducting the mediation.</p> <p>Ensure that the action plan is aligned with a productive outcome.</p>



	Refer to the guiding questions in the proposal.  Help principals develop questions to guide their mediations
Reflection	
Closing/ Appreciations	

Appendix C: Pre and Post Interview

**PRE AND POST INTERVIEW**  
**For participants in the Productive Conflict Professional Development**  
**Research Design**

Thank you for participating in this research project to develop a professional development to help principals' manage productive teacher conflict. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,  
Brandee Stewart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years as a principal \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
**1. How do you define conflict?**

**2. Have you ever experienced teacher or adult conflict at your site? If so give some examples.**

**3. Describe your approach to handling conflict among teachers/ adults**

**4. Which statements best reflect your beliefs about conflict among adults at your site: (*Check all that apply*)**

	I believe that teachers/ adults should handle their own conflicts
	I believe conflict is harmful to school culture
	If I see a conflict between adults I always get involved
	I do not deal with adult conflict unless I am asked
	I always address conflicts related to instruction
	I believe conflict is important to school growth
	There is no place for adult conflict at my school
	Adult conflict helps me recognize potential problems with the school
	I avoid conflict at all costs
	I end teacher conflict as soon as it starts
	I am willing to sit with teachers, hear their concerns, and help them solve their conflict
	I am frustrated by teacher/ adult conflict
	Adult conflict is a natural part of organizational growth

6. Can you describe an adult conflict that would be unproductive in a school?

7. Can you describe an adult conflict that would be productive in a school?

8. Read the following scenarios and respond to the questions below

### **Overview**

This year California adopted new academic content standards. All of the schools in the district have begun teaching these new academic standards. However, some of the district wide systems have not yet been aligned with the new standards and testing. This includes district assessments and report cards. In order to effectively implement the new academic content standards you have allowed the teachers at your site to use weekly professional development time to meet and plan lessons together. You are asked to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team meeting to address a problem they are having with team lesson planning. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team has 5 teachers. Ms. Woodman and Ms. Lau have over 15 years of teaching experience; Mr. Harrison and Ms. Chung have 5 years of experience; and Mr. Ortiz has 2 years of experience.

### **Conflict**

**Ms. Lau:** *"Ms. Woodman and I would like to plan our lessons without the rest of the team. The new teachers are slowing us down."*

**Ms. Woodman (2):** *"The new academic standards are very similar to the old ones. We have 20 years of materials that we can pull from. We would prefer to meet separately and plan."*

**Ms. Lau (1):** *"The new teachers are trying to reinvent the wheel. When I tell them about the strategies that I use they ignore me. They must think their teacher training was better than ours. Our experience and professional wisdom is being undermined"*

**Ms. Chung(3)** *"Wisdom is an overstatement. However, the situation is the opposite from what you described. You don't respect our ideas because we are new teachers. You two constantly interrupt us, have side conversations while we are talking, or flat out say your not trying our ideas."*

**Mr. Ortiz (4):** *"We are putting the kids futures in jeopardy. If we don't plan lessons to meet the new academic standards, the students will not be prepared for the state test."*

**Ms. Woodman (2):** *"Those state tests don't make a difference. Most parents don't even look at them. But parents do look at the report card. We have to be able to give them accurate information about their child's progress."*

**Mr. Harrison (5):** *"I disagree. The state tests are more important because they reflect the new standards."*

**Ms. Lau (1):** *"So Mr. Harrison, you don't care about the parents concerns. You just want to train kids to pass the test."*

**Ms. Woodman (2):** *“Mr. Harrison, your ‘pass the test’ mentality is the problem with you new teachers. You have a one track mind. I was trained in a generation that cared about the whole child. All you care about is testing and data.”*

**Mr. Chung (3):** *“We care about student learning, that’s why we monitor data. You veteran teachers care about yourselves. You want to do what is convenient for adults, versus what is right for kids.”*

**Ms. Lau (1):** *“How dare you question my commitment to students.”*

**Mr. Ortiz (4):** *“That is exactly what you are doing to the new teachers.”*

- A. How would you describe the conflict in this scenario?
- B. Would you intervene in this conflict? Explain why or why not?
- C. How would you manage or resolve this conflict?

### **Overview**

You are conducting your monthly faculty meeting. At the end of every meeting you provide time for comments and concerns.

### **Conflict**

**Ms. Curtis (1):** *“Everybody else is afraid to say something, but I don’t care. It is not fair that some people follow the rules and others don’t. If there is no accountability then why should I follow the rules.”*

**You:** *“The expectation is that everyone follows the policies that have been outlined.”*

**Mr. Wagner (2):** *“Well that’s not happening on the second floor. The hallways are crazy in the mornings and at recess because some teachers refuse to stand in the hallways like we were asked.”*

**Ms. Johnson (3):** *“I try to make it to the hall as often as possible, but my primary responsibility is student learning. If I have a student that needs help then that’s what I’m doing.”*

Two other teachers nod their head in agreement.

**Mr. Wagner (2):** *“We all have students that need extra help. But, if we are not in the hallways then that’s a safety issue. Safety is one of our responsibilities also”. Then he adds “plus I have walked pass your room at recess on several occasions and you were in the classroom alone.”*

**Mr. Long (4):** *“I don’t come in the hallways because like you said they are chaos. The students in the other classes don’t respect what I say. I think it would be better if the administrators monitored the halls. The kids would be more responsive to them because they would get in trouble.”*

**Ms. Johnson (3):** *“Yes, if the administrators monitor the halls then we can all use that time more productively.”*

**Ms. Curtis (1):** *“Your just lazy. Why should administration monitor the halls, when we are perfectly capable. Everyone else does it without complaining. Why should we change everything just because you are scared of kids”.*

Mr. Wagner starts laughing at Ms. Curtis' comment.

Mr. Long stands up and begins to defend Ms. Johnson.

**Mr. Long (4):** *"You two are bullies. Why do think anyone that doesn't agree with you is lazy. Ms. Wagner cares about kids. You just want to control them "*

This exchange has triggered multiple conversations in the room. Teachers at different tables are whispering and discussing what is happening.

- A. How would you describe the conflict in this scenario?
- B. Would you intervene in this conflict? Explain why or why not?
- C. How would you manage or resolve this conflict?

### **Overview**

The district has recently implemented a new district wide initiative. They have identified three key instructional practices that all teachers should use. One of the key strategies is having students engage in "academic discussions." This involves students engaging in sustained conversation related to academic content and using academic vocabulary. All of the teachers at your school were trained in these new practices. You have directed each grade level team to develop a lesson plan template that incorporates all of the new strategies. For the upcoming team meeting, every teacher was asked to bring a video of them teaching using the new lesson template. The team was directed to use their lesson template as a guide to discuss the videos and provide each other with feedback. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade team has 7 teachers. As the 4<sup>th</sup> grade PLC is starting, everyone takes out their video except Ms. Stone, Mr. Gonzalez, Ms. Nguyen.

### **Conflict**

**Ms. Nguyen (1):** *"The English Language Learner teachers met and decided that the new district strategies don't work for our students. So we are not using the lesson plan template."*

**Mr. Gonzalez (2):** *"It's not realistic to ask students that are just learning English to engage in academic discussion. They don't have basic vocabulary, how can they engage in academic discussion?"*

**Ms. Thomas (3):** *"So you three know more than the district officials? What qualifications do you have to decide what is best for ELL students?"*

**Mr. Gonzalez (2):** *"You have no right to judge me. You refuse to teach the ELL classes. You use your seniority to pick the Gifted and Talented students every year. That is why academic discussion works for you."*

**Ms. Callis (4):** *"Lets look at the data. Each year our ELL students are tested in listening, speaking, and writing. Is there a way to analyze this data to compare what you all currently do and the potential impact of the new practices?"*

**Ms. Lee (5):** *“This is ridiculous. Why are we entertaining this conversation at all? The district expects us to implement these instructional practices. This group designed a lesson template to meet these instructional expectations. Why didn’t you all disagree when we were creating the lesson template? Why wait until after everybody actually did what we were expected?”*

**Ms. Callis (4):** *“Maybe they didn’t realize there was a problem until they tried to implement the plan.”*

**Ms. Thomas (3):** *“Ms. Callis why are you defending them? You implemented the plan and brought your video tape.”*

**Ms. Lee (5):** *“They probably just don’t want us to see a video of how bad they are.”*

**Ms. Callis (4):** *“Ms. Lee that comment was unnecessary. The purpose of taping ourselves is to get constructive feedback, not be judged. Although I don’t teach the ELL class I can see how these new instructional practices can be difficult to implement.”*

**Ms. Lee (5):** *“Again, this entire conversation is ridiculous. I am going to the principal. All the PLC’s were asked to implement these strategies. I’m not getting in trouble because other people don’t want to follow the rules.”*

- A. How would you describe the conflict in this scenario?
- B. Would you intervene in this conflict? Explain why or why not?
- C. How would you manage or resolve this conflict?

Appendix D: Professional Development Closing Reflection

Productive Conflict  
Professional Development  
Closing Reflection  
(Content)

Name:

Date:

Session:

1. What were the key concepts from today's professional development session?
2. What did you learn about these key concepts?
3. How has today's P.D. changed, challenged, confirmed your views about teacher conflict?
4. Any Further questions or comments

Productive Conflict  
Professional Development  
Closing Reflection Cont.  
(Process)

Name:  
Date:  
Session:

	<b>1-Very Poor</b>	<b>2- Below Average</b>	<b>3-Average</b>	<b>4-Good</b>	<b>5-Excellent</b>
Please rate the overall P.D.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching strategies	1	2	3	4	5
The content	1	2	3	4	5
Engagement	1	2	3	4	5

1. What structures/ strategies were used during today's P.D.?
  
2. Which teaching structures/ strategies helped you learn the content?
  
3. Which teaching structures/ strategies were most engaging?
  
4. Were there any teaching structures/ strategies that did not support your learning?



Appendix E: Conflict Map

Conflict Mapping

***Collect Data about the dispute (observations, secondary sources, interviews)***

Teachers involved:

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5
Name					
Grade					
Male / Female					
Other info					

***Surface The Problem***

Overview of the conflict:

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What is the teacher's perspective of what has occurred?

Teacher 1	
Teacher 2	
Teacher 3	

Teacher 4	
Teacher 5	

Other sources of information about the conflict:

Source	Relevant Information

***Reframe The Issue***

What are the teachers' real/perceived needs?

Teacher 1	
Teacher 2	
Teacher 3	
Teacher 4	

Teacher 5	

Identify a common interest, commitment, or goal.

What are potential barriers to reaching an agreement?

***Identify the Task***

Synthesize the conflict into one or two sentences (task related)

Appendix F: Intervention Action Plan

**Intervention action plan**

***Search for theories that explain conflict and that suggest interventions (What is the work related task that is causing this conflict?)***

Problem Statement

Reframe the Issue (Common interest, commitment, goal)

Intended Productive Outcome (task related)

Possible Interventions (multiple strategies)

## Intervention

**(What actions can be taken to turn this conflict into a task with a productive outcome: beneficial to the school, students, or parties involved.)**

### Focus Intervention

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### Action Plan

	Action Steps	Due Date
Teacher 1		
Teacher 2		
Teacher 3		
Teacher 4		
Teacher 5		

Principal Follow-up

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## Appendix G: Productive Conflict Checklist

### **Principal Productive Conflict Checklist**

As a principal you will be presented with numerous conflicts. Different conflicts will require different responses. There are conflicts that will require you to intervene or take action immediately. However, there are some conflicts that can impact the school positively. These conflicts can be mediated to lead to a productive outcome. The checklist below is intended to help guide principal's thinking around what types of conflicts should be managed for a productive outcome.

Is this conflict personal, task related, or unsure?

Stop	Proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal- personal tastes, political preferences, communication styles, interpersonal styles, personal values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behind the anger, animosity, or language being used there is a work related task.</li> </ul>

2. Is it possible to sift through the animosity and anger to identify a work task? What is the level of intensity?

Stop	Proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does the level of emotions require the principal to step in and take action immediately?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conflict is quickly escalating.</li> <li>- anger and emotions are currently impacting students.</li> <li>- the parties involved are engaging in hate speech or racial slurs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can the principal facilitate a discussion?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can the teachers control their anger and engage in conversation?</li> <li>- Is it possible to move away from the personal animosity?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Is the task worth your time and effort?

Stop	Proceed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Is the disagreement about a routine task that a few teachers disagree with, but the majority implement effectively?</li> <li>○ Is it a less complex task that has a very clear solution?</li> <li>○ The time it would take to resolve the problem is beyond your current capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does the synthesis of ideas solve a real problem?</li> <li>○ The conflict will improve group performance.</li> <li>○ The parties involved depend on each other to get work done.</li> <li>○ Will varying viewpoints improve performance, the team, or school?</li> <li>○ Does the outcome of the conflict impact the long range objective or goals of the school?</li> </ul>

If all of your answers are in the proceed column, then you should attempt to mediate this problem for a productive outcome.

Note: This tool is to guide your decision making. There is no right or wrong answer.



## Appendix H: Extended Scenario

### Session 2 – Extended Scenario

#### Overview:

The topic of a recent professional development is cultural competence. During the meeting the facilitator asks teachers questions related to their experiences and their definition of cultural competence.

**Ms. Lewis:** (an older white, female teacher) “I believe in treating all students the same. However, the level of disrespect from my African American male students makes it hard for me to interact with them the same way as my other students.”

As she makes this statement several other white female teachers nod their heads in agreement.

**Ms Taylor:** (A young white, female teacher) “ I agree, there is no expectation that African American boys conform to the schools academic culture. The school’s lack of accountability for African American boys is a disservice to the African American community.”

**Mr. Klein:** (A young, White, Male teacher) “ If there is an issue with African American boys then we need to take responsibility for these behaviors. We are the adults and we shape the expectations.”

**Ms. Lewis:** “There is only so much I can do. My job is to teach content. Parents should be the people teaching their students how to conduct themselves properly in public.”

Mr. Johnson an African American male teacher is visibly irritated while Ms. Lewis is speaking. He puts his face in his hands and shakes his head no. However, he does not speak during the meeting.

Two weeks later Ms. Lewis and Mr. Jones are sitting at the same table during a faculty meeting. The teachers are working in small groups to analyze student data. One of the discussions prompts asks the group to identify a trend in the data and why it may have occurred.

**Mr. Jones:** “I notice that the African American boys with white female teachers are failing. This trend is occurring because white female teachers at this school are incompetent in the area of cultural competence.”

**Ms. Lewis:** “That is outrageous and racist.”

**Mr. Jones:** (Speaking directly to Ms. Lewis)“ you think that black boys should conform to white societal expectations. You have no regard for our history or cultural practices.”

**Ms. Lewis:** (angrily) “Mr. Jones you are supposed to be a role model, but you are displaying the same level of disrespect as the boys.”

**Mr. Simko:** (A white, male, teacher) “Mr. Jones you are being totally inappropriate. cultural competence goes both ways. You are attacking white women”

**Mr. Jones:** “I am stating the facts. I am looking at the data and connecting it to statements Ms. Lewis and other white women said during our professional development.”

**Ms. Lopez:** (A Latina, teacher) “Mr. Jones is not attacking anyone. He is providing his opinion. The data shows that black boys are under performing compared to other subgroups. We need to speak honestly about why this is happening. We all need to develop thick skin and accept that we are part of the problem.”

**Mr. Simko:** “The statement we are all part of the problem is much different than white women are the problem.”

**Mr. Jones:** “I’m not the problem. Lets compare my data to Ms. Lewis”

**Ms. Lewis:** “This is a personal attack. I will not sit and be a part of Mr. Jones’ attempt to tarnish my reputation.”

Ms. Lewis packs up her things and begins to leave.

**Mr. Simko:** “I am leaving also. There is no reasoning with Mr. Jones. Ms. Lopez you are Naïve to take his side.”

Mr. Simko’s comment upsets Ms. Lopez. Ms. Lopez comes to find you and asks you to intervene.

How would you respond to this conflict?

Appendix I: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

**THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODE INSTRUMENT**

Please circle the statement which applies mostly to yourself from the following pairs of statements.

1.     A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problems.  
       B. Rather than discussing the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we agree.
2.     A. I attempt to deal with all of the other person's problems plus my own.  
       B. I try to meet the other person half way when attempting to bring about a solution.
3.     A. I might try to soothe the other person's feelings to preserve our relationship.  
       B. I am usually firm when trying to achieve my goals.
4.     A. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person.  
       B. I try to meet the other person half way to bring forth a solution.
5.     A. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.  
       B. I frequently seek other peoples help when working out a solution.
6.     A. I try to win my position or have my way.  
       B. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.
7.     A. I give up some points in exchange for others.  
       B. I try to delay the issue until I have had sometime to think it over.
8.     A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues straight away out in the open.  
       B. I am usually firm in seeking my goals.
9.     A. I make some effort to have my way.  
       B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
10.    A. I try to meet the other person half way to bring forth a solution.  
       B. I am firm in seeking my goals.

11. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
B. I tend to try and soothe the others feelings to preserve our relationship.
12. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create conflict.  
B. I will let the other person have their way, if they let me have mine.
13. A. I tend toward a middle ground approach.  
B. I press to make my point.
14. A. I tell the other person my ideas and ask them for theirs.  
B. I try to show other people the logic and benefits of my views/position.
15. A. I might try to soothe the other person's feelings to preserve our relationship.  
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tensions.
16. A. I try not to hurt other people's feelings.  
B. I try to convince the other person of the positives of my view,
17. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions.
18. A. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain his views.  
B. I will let the other person have some of their beliefs/views if they let me have some of mine.
19. A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open.  
B. I try to postpone the issue until I have some time to think it over.
20. A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences.  
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for us both.
21. A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of other people's wishes.  
B I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem.
22. A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between the other person's views and mine.

- B. I assert my wishes.
23. A. I am very often concerned with satisfying all our wishes.  
B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.
24. A. If the other's position seems very important to them, I would try and meet their wishes.  
B. I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise.
25. A. I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position.  
B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.
26. A. I propose a middle ground.  
B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
27. A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create a conflict.  
B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.
28. A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals.  
B. I usually seek other people's help in working out a solution.
29. A. I propose a middle ground.  
B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.
30. A. I try not to hurt the other's feelings.  
B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out.

**THE THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODE INSTRUMENT: SCORING KEY**

Circle the letter below which you circled on each item of the questionnaire

Competing (forcing) SHARK

Collaborative (problem solving) OWL

Compromising (sharing) FOX

Avoiding (Withdrawal) TURTLE

## Accommodating (Smoothing) TEDDY BEARS

	Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating
1	-	-	-	A	B
2	-	B	A	-	-
3	A	-	-	-	B
4	-	-	A	-	B
5	-	A	-	B	-
6	B	-	-	A	-
7	-	-	B	A	-
8	A	B	-	-	-
9	B	-	-	A	B
10	A	-	B	-	-
11	-	A	-	-	B
12	-	-	B	A	-
13	B	-	A	-	-
14	B	A	-	-	-
15	-	-	-	B	A
16	B	-	-	-	A
17	A	-	-	B	-
18	-	-	B	-	A
19	-	A	-	B	-
20	-	A	B	-	-
21	-	B	-	-	A
22	B	-	A	-	-
23	-	A	-	B	-
24	-	-	B	-	A
25	A	-	-	-	B
26	-	B	A	-	-
27	-	-	-	A	B
28	A	B	-	-	-
29	-	-	A	B	-
30	-	B	-	-	A

Total

                                                                    
 Competing   Collaborating   Compromising   Avoiding   Accommodating

The higher the total score for each conflict strategy, the more frequent you tend to use the strategy. The lower the total score for each conflict strategy the less frequent you will use that strategy