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**Intellectual Output 1**



**The Language of Negotiations for Engineering Students**

**A guidebook for English learners with theoretical and diverse hands-on activities focusing on innovative cross-cultural communication practice for engineering schools and technical universities. The course embraces diplomatic language, bargaining, active listening, self-assertion practice, and much more. It is based on authentic sources.**

**IO1: LANGUAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS**

**Written by MAŁGORZATA TOMAL**

**SJO AGH UST, KRAKÓW**

***SECTION EIGHT***

***SELF-ASSERTION IN PRACTICE***

**STUDENTS**

**I. OBJECTIVES – HOW YOU WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS SECTION:**

ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL TASKS CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON YOU SHOULD:

* *Expand your practical knowledge of assertive, non-assertive and aggressive behaviour*
* *Be able to distinguish between these types of behaviour and how they are reflected in the language*
* *Expand your language capacity related to assertion and practise assertive strategies*
* *Boost your soft skills to cope with potential conflicts in an assertive manner*

**II. WARM-UP QUESTIONS**

1. Can you think of any strategies that might be helpful in difficult situations? How can you behave and what can you say?

2. Make a list of five strategic moves that might help you avoid conflict and lead to a win-win situation with your opponent.

3. With your partner read the section below and compare your own answers with the recommendations listed below. Did you come up with similar ideas?

**III. DID YOU KNOW?**

There are certain **techniques** one may learn in order to become more assertive in situations of conflict or discomfort:

* Ask for time to be able to form a true opinion of a subject and to avoid making rash decisions you could later regret
* Acknowledge your opponent’s position
* Ensure your counter-arguments are clear, logical and - properly heard
* Offer an acceptable compromise to find a win-win solution
* Express your feelings honestly and clearly, using “I” rather than “you”
* When necessary, say “no” in an uncompromising, yet polite manner – do not apologize or justify yourself
* Keep your calm, be polite and unemotional
* At all cost avoid threatening, warning, accusing or blaming your opponent, as well as shouting, as this will certainly fester rather than defusing the conflict
* Use the “broken record” technique: reiterate what you said, using the exact same words as long as it takes for them to be heard.

**IV. ACTIVITIES**

**A. WITH A PARTNER GO OVER THE SITUATIONS BELOW AND DECIDE WHICH RESPONSE IS ASSERTIVE, NON-ASSERTIVE OR AGGRESSIVE (mark your answers in the table below). JUSTIFY YOUR DECISIONS.**

**1. You have organized a meeting at home for your colleagues to discuss a project you are managing together. One colleague arrives an hour late and seems quite unapologetic. You have been trying to call her, but to no avail. You are annoyed and you say:**

a. Come on in. We have all waited for you to start.

b. What happened? We’ve been waiting for an hour. You could have called to say you’d be late. We had to start without you.

c. You’ve got a lot of nerve coming so late! How typical of you! This is the last time we are doing a project with you on the team!

**2. Your colleague keeps asking you to do some extra work for her. You are fed up doing your own work and hers. Today she has asked you to give a presentation for her, as she must catch up on her overdue report. You say:**

a. What? Again? Forget it! I’m not your slave!

b. No, Maggie. I told you last time I wouldn’t help you out anymore and I’m keeping my word. You could do with a time management course.

c. I’m rather busy. But seeing you so worried, I suppose I can do it for you.

**3. You are returning to the store faulty headphones you bought the day before. You have unpacked the item and have your receipt in place. The salesman is trying to give you a gift card instead of your money back. You know your customer’s rights and say:**

a. Well, give me my money or I will ruin your reputation on Twitter!

b. Well, are you sure you cannot possibly refund the purchase? I do need the cash…

c. I am sorry, but I’m quite sure it’s the producer’s fault. I didn’t even use the headphones once, they just never worked. I insist I get my money back.

**4. A new worker has just been employed in the company, whose office is next door to yours. You have passed by him on several occasions, but have not had a chance to introduce yourself. You meet him in the lift in the morning.**

a. You hold out your hand and introduce yourself with a friendly smile.

b. You stare at him and smile mysteriously.

c. You avoid looking him in the eye and study the ‘Emergency” instruction instead.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SITUATION | NON-ASSERTIVE | ASSERTIVE | AGGRESSIVE |
| 1 | **A** |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |

**In cases you marked as assertive underline any phrases that helped you decide to that end.**

**B. USEFUL EXPRESSIONS BANK: HANDLING CONFLICTS IN AN ASSERTIVE MANNER.**

**FILL IN THE PHRASES WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS:**

**Asking for time**

Can I **get back** to you later on?

Let me **sleep** on it. I’ll give you the answer tomorrow. Is that ok **……………..** you?

I’m not in **………………** to give you an answer right now.

I have some **……………………………….** as to this issue. Do you mind if I **…………………….** some time to **…………………** it **……………………….**? I’d love to talk about this **…………………………………….**, but right now I cannot commit myself.

**Acknowledging your opponent’s position**

I understand that you feel **……………………………………………………………….**, but I’d much rather…

I **…………………..** this might not sound very **………………………………….**, but…

I do **……………………………** you must follow your own **………………………………..**, however …

**Ensure you are being heard**

Do you see what I **………………**?

Can you see **………………………**?

Let me **…………….** it in other words.

What I’m **…………………..** at is…

Do you **……………….** what I’m saying?

The way I **……………..** it is…

**Offering a compromise**

What would be an **…………………….** compromise?

Let’s **…………………** the difference, **…………………..** we?

I’d be happy /**…………………** / ready to… if you …

I’d much **…………………** to do… / I’d rather do this than…

Why **……………………….** both reconsider our positions?

Why **……………………….** go over the offer again and see what we can do about your suggestions, shall we?

**Expressing your feelings**

I feel a little **……………………….** to ask you this, but could you…?

I feel a bit **………………………………………..** having to refuse, but…

That **…………………** a little unfair to me.

***………………………………..***, I’m not sure if…

This puts us in a very ***………………………..*** situation, I’m afraid.

I ***……………………………..*** to say it, but…

**Saying no**

I (do) ***……………………***the offer, but no, thanks.

Thank you very much for your recommendation, but that will do.

No, thanks.

I have to refuse, but thank you ***……………………….***.

I’m afraid not.

**C. ASSERTIVENESS ROLE PLAY.**

**WORK IN PAIRS: ONE OF YOU IS STUDENT A, THE OTHER ONE – STUDENT B.**

**USING SOME OF THE ASSERTIVENESS TECHNIQUES AND PHRASES FROM THE BANK, ENACT THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS. TRY NOT TO BE PERSUADED!**

**SITUATION 1**

STUDENT A:

You work for an advertising company as a Website designer. Your boss has a tendency for slave-driving his team and is asking you to develop the social media campaign for a seriously sick colleague. You have too much on your plate as it is and must refuse.

STUDENT B:

You are a senior manager for the Media Designing team in an advertising company. Your talented social media designer is seriously ill and you must urgently find a replacement. You try to persuade the Website designer to take on her colleague’s tasks.

**SITUATION 2**

STUDENT A:

You are a loyal and committed employee of a thriving IT equipment and services company. You are a valuable asset for your company, however you have not received a pay rise in five years, even though you have applied for it and have been promised it for some time. Talk to your boss.

STUDENT B:

Your company is going to through a bad patch financially and you must try to economize on every field, or you might have to file for bankruptcy. Your most valuable employee is appealing to you yet again for a well-deserved pay rise. You try to reason with her/him.

**SITUATION 3**

STUDENT A:

You have decided you are a little overweight and have been trying to keep a healthy diet. Your friend has cooked dinner especially for you and does not appreciate much the fact that instead of eating with appetite, as you would always do, today you seem to be eating like a bird. Try to resist her/his persuasion.

STUDENT B:

You have cooked a wonderful, lush dinner for your friend – a true gourmand. I went out of your way to make a special meat and vegetables casserole and some Chinese cuisine delicacies. Your friend has hardly touched anything and you suspect she/he does not like the food at all.

**SITUATION 4**

STUDENT A:

Your company is organizing an incentive event (a trip to Marrakesh) for the top ten performers. You have been doing exceedingly well as a sales team manager, bringing the sales up by 10% in the last two quarters. However, just like in the previous year, you have been outrun by one point by your two colleagues, the same ones as before. Talk to your boss about this issue, trying to persuade her/him that they should make an exception and take you as the 11th top performer.

STUDENT B:

Your company is organizing an incentive event (a trip to Marrakesh) for the top ten performers. One of your high-flyers is approaching you to complain that he/she has missed coming in the top ten just by one point, and thus not joining the trip – just like last year. She/he will argue that they should be taken as the eleventh best performer. Try to convince her/him that rules are rules and that the budget is too low to make such an exception.

**V. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

Some ideas in Section III, Did You Know and Activity IV B were inspired by the input in:

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SITUATION | NON-ASSERTIVE | ASSERTIVE | AGGRESSIVE |
| 1 | ***A*** | ***B*** | ***C*** |
| 2 | ***C*** | ***B*** | ***A*** |
| 3 | ***B*** | ***C*** | ***A*** |
| 4 | ***C*** | ***A*** | ***B*** |

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Can I ***get back*** to you later on?

Let me ***sleep*** on it. I’ll give you the answer tomorrow. Is that ok ***with you***?

I’m not in ***a position*** to give you an answer right now.

I have some ***reservations / second thoughts*** as to this issue. Do you mind if I ***take*** some time to ***think*** it ***over***? I’d love to talk about this ***later*** / ***at some later time***, but right now I cannot commit myself.

**Acknowledging your opponent’s position**

I understand that you ***feel upset /unhappy / discontented / not very pleased***, but I’d much rather…

I ***realize*** this might not sound very ***appealing / promising***, but…

I do ***appreciate*** you must follow your own ***agenda / plan***, however …

**Ensure you are being heard**

Do you see what I ***mean***?

Can you see ***my point***?

Let me ***put*** it in other words.

What I’m ***driving*** at is…

Do you ***hear*** what I’m saying?

The way I **see** it is…

**Offering a compromise**

What would be an ***acceptable*** compromise?

Let’s ***split*** the difference, ***shall*** we?

I’d be happy / ***prepared*** / ready to… if you …

I’d much ***prefer*** to do… / I’d rather do this than…

***Why*** ***don’t we*** both reconsider our positions?

***Why not*** / ***Let’s*** go over the offer again and see what we can do about your suggestions, shall we?

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I feel a little ***embarrassed / awkward*** to ask you this, but could you…?

I feel a bit ***uncomfortable / ill at ease / guilty*** having to refuse, but…

That ***seems*** a little unfair to me.

***To be honest / Frankly speaking***, I’m not sure if…

This puts us in a very ***uncomfortable*** situation, I’m afraid.

I ***hesitate / am not happy*** ***having*** to say it, but…

**Saying no**

I (do) ***appreciate*** the offer, but no, thanks.

Thank you very much for your recommendation, but that will do.

No, thanks.

I have to refuse, but thank you ***anyway***.

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