

Institution:	Manchester Metropolitan University
Programme:	Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences Undergraduate Network
Module:	Organisations and the Environment
Activity:	Negotiation exercise based on a real planning case study
Level/Year:	1
Learning hours:	4

Work-related learning outcome(s)

Learning outcomes for students include:

- awareness of negotiation as an important tool in work and everyday life;
- development and practice of different techniques of negotiation (positional bargaining and creative thinking); and
- the application of these techniques to a real problem relevant to their course.

Description of the teaching activity which achieves the learning outcome(s)

The activity is based upon a real planning case study where different actors take up different positions. The issue they have to resolve is a proposal to build a new factory for ERF trucks on land near junction 18 on the M6. The proposal is controversial. The whole of the site is open countryside, although part of it is allocated for employment development and as expansion of an existing industrial estate on the edge of the town of Middlewich. The development would affect a farm and farmhouse and might have an adverse effect on a watercourse. The company and the District Council want the proposal to go ahead. It would create good quality jobs in a company with an international order book. Granting planning permission would enable another section of the Middlewich bypass to be built – a long term goal of both the District and the County Councils.

The students role-play the negotiation over a two week period. In the first session they are given input about negotiation theory and different styles. In groups of two or three they take the parts of the interest groups: developer or owner of the land and the industrial estate, ERF, District Council, County Council, residents, English Nature, Environment Agency and a local wildlife group. The aim is to reach a negotiated agreement on the scheme.

Rationale for the selection of the teaching activity

The activity is used to demonstrate the use and complexity of negotiation in a work-based setting. It is a real case study and the maps and plans are made available to show the proposals and to facilitate discussion of alternative layouts, landscaping etc. The students are asked to consider creative solutions to resolving the issues rather than to take up positions which they later have to defend. Communication is essential between the groups, but they learn that they must be prepared before going into a negotiation discussion. A large part of the discussion hinges around the need to extend the industrial estate road, which will eventually become the bypass, and who will pay for its construction. This is an interesting exploration of the concept of 'planning gain' which is relevant to the rest of the course and is a key feature of many planning and environmental decisions. By becoming involved in the exercise students learn which organisations are responsible for some of the main functions related to the environment. At the beginning of the second week a new factor is introduced – the farmhouse is listed as being of historic or architectural interest – and this encourages the students to 'think on their feet'. It is a good indication that the negotiation continues during the intervening week.

Assessment – approach and detail (see copy of previous assessment sheet below)

Students write an essay to reflect on the role of negotiation in an organisation setting.

Future developments

The cases must be up-to-date so new ones are frequently sought. It may be beneficial to increase the amount of time in class for reflection on the process.

Contact details

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FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES

IN-COURSE ASSESSMENT

NAME:	
COURSE:	
UNIT CODE:	69EG1108
UNIT TITLE: Organisations and the Environment	
TITLE AND CONTENT OF ASSIGNMENT:	
ASSIGNMENT ONE	
<p>What are the advantages of negotiation as a style of management? Use your experience of the Midpoint 18 role-play and any original examples where appropriate.</p>	
Resources and Starter References:	
<p>Bennett R (1994) <i>Management 2nd Ed</i> Pitman. London. Hellriegel D, Jackson S & Slocum J (1999) <i>Management 8th Ed</i> Business Press Oldcorn R (1996) <i>Management 3rd Ed.</i> Macmillan. Basingstoke.</p>	
<u>Penalties for late submission will be deducted in accordance with the Assignment Guidelines in the Course Handbook.</u>	
NO. OF WORDS: 1000-1500	WORD PROCESSED: Yes
DATE SET: 25th September 2001	HANDING IN DEADLINE: 8th January 2002
NAME OF STAFF SETTING ASSIGNMENT: Chrissie Gibson	