Reimagine: Syria

Understanding and Transforming Conflict in Our Communities

2015 Pulse Program

GLOBAL NOMADS GROUP
Fostering dialogue and understanding
among the world's youth

GLOBAL NOMADS GROUP

© Global Nomads Group
www.gng.org

Reimagine: Syria
Understanding and Transforming Conflict in Our Communities
How can we, as youth, develop productive solutions to conflict in our communities?

Program Overview

As of March 2015, 3.9 million[1] registered Syrian refugees have left the country. 7.6 million more are internally displaced within Syria[2], which means that half of the country's approximately 22 million citizens have moved because of the civil war that started in 2011. Youth are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of conflict – and many young Syrians have lost not only their security and homes, but also access to school and future opportunities.

These numbers can make the conflict seem too big to fix, too violent, too overwhelming. But behind the statistics are stories of real people who have fled their communities and are working to reestablish new ones, and stories of youth who are working to improve their situations and the smaller conflicts they deal with every day.

In this program, GNG is connecting **Syrian, Jordanian, and American youth** in **a live broadcast interactive videoconferences (IVCs)** to share experiences that go beyond media stereotypes and gain an understanding of the Syrian crisis. Students will share about their daily lives, analyze conflicts in their own communities, and explore how they can work to positively transform them. **Participant schools** can watch live and chat in their questions, to help make the conversation global!

Curriculum Overview				
Class Session / IVC	**Specific Activities**	**Time**	**Checklist (✓)**	**Page #**
In Class: **Understanding the Syrian Conflict**	✓ LEARN: Syria Background Research ✓ ACT: Mapping the Syrian Conflict	50 minutes		4-6
In Class: "**A Day in Your Life**" Photo Stories	✓ LEARN: Media Captions Warm-Up ✓ ACT: Create "Day in Your Life" Photo Story ✓ REFLECT: Prepare questions	50 minutes		7-9
Live Broadcast: Understanding the Syrian Conflict		60 minutes		10
In Class: **Transforming Conflict in My Community**	✓ LEARN: Mapping our Conflict Tree ✓ ACT: Action Plan for Our Community ✓ REFLECT: Continue the Conversation	50 minutes		11-14

---

[1] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php
[2] http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/

How to Use the Curriculum

This curriculum includes both educator and student pages, to help you implement this specific Pulse program in your classroom. Educator Guide pages are marked by a green bar along the border of the left side of the page. All other pages can be printed for your students to complete.

E D U C A T O R   G U I D E

The curriculum follows a **LEARN-ACT-REFLECT** structure:

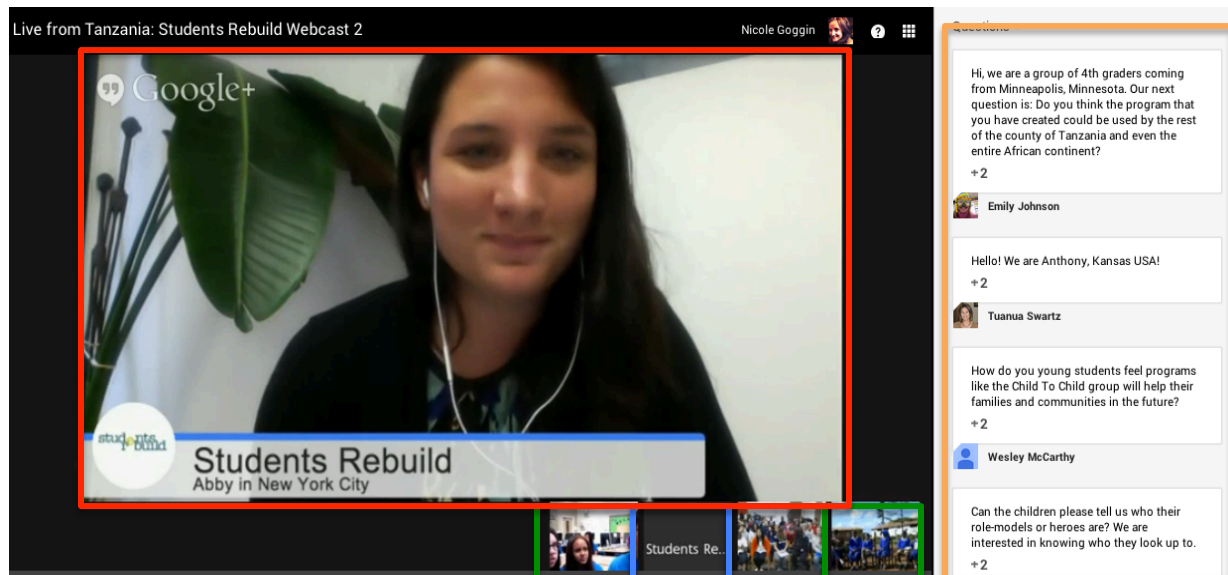| LEARN | *To give students background information on the program's topic, via a hands-on, engaging activity.* |
| ACT | *To put the knowledge and skills gained in the LEARN activity into action. ACT encourages students to work together to identify a problem in their community and create a solution.* |
| REFLECT | *After the broadcast, debrief and reflect with your class, and continue the conversations with your partners through the Google+ event page.* |

Who's in the Videoconferences?

On-Air Sites
1. *Global Nomads Group Facilitator*

2. *Ambassador Schools:* 2 groups of students selected through the GNG application process, whose students are active in the live dialogue.

Online Audience

Participant Schools: an unlimited number of schools around the world who view the broadcast, and chat in questions during the event.

Google+ Event Page
Get the conversation started on the **Google+ Event Page**. This is a space for all Pulse participants to get to know each other, post curriculum activities, and post questions before and after your Pulse session. This is also where you can watch the live broadcast.

Class Session #1
Understanding the Syrian Conflict

TIME:	50 minutes
MATERIALS:	Computer, Internet access, projector screen, whiteboard, dry erase markers
OVERVIEW:	Students will learn about the historical background and stakeholders of the crisis in Syria by analyzing different media sources. Students will then share their findings and reflect on how the media influences the ways we perceive conflict.

LESSON PLAN ACTIVITIES:

1. **Assess Prior Knowledge** (5 minutes)
    Have the students brainstorm as a class: *What do we already know (or think we know) about the Syrian conflict?* Answer the "Who? What? When? Where? Why?" of the situation in Syria and write responses on the whiteboard.

2. **LEARN: Syrian Crisis Background Research (**10 minutes)
    As a class, investigate the history of Syria and some of the causes of the conflict. Use the following resources:
    *   Watch the background Prezi from Syria Deeply: http://www.syriadeeply.org/background/basics/ (You can also use this site to explore the major players and current news.)
    *   For more on political/historical events, watch: http://www.wsj.com/video/syria-a-brief-history/2D7BB798-53DD-4066-9D88-51DF668464A1.html

3. **ACT: Mapping the Crisis** (20 minutes)
    Divide the class into small groups and have each investigate one perspective involved in the conflict. Each group will examine 1 articles and 1 timeline and fill out the graphic organizer worksheet on the next page.

4. **REFLECT: Group Presentations and Impact of the Media** (15 minutes)
    Each group presents their assigned perspective to the class using their completed graphic organizer.

    As a class, discuss the impact of the media on views of the Syrian conflict:
    *   How did the media sources present the perspective you researched? Why do you think this is the case?
    *   Did the media sources differ in the way they presented these events? In what ways? Why do you think their presentation of the "facts" differed?

> **Deepen the Discussion**
> Check out this immersive Virtual Reality experience that helps people understand what it means to be a child caught in the Syrian conflict:
> **http://tinyurl.com/olexmhk**

Understanding the Syrian Conflict

Although media coverage of the conflict in Syria may be decreasing, the situation has continued to worsen since 2011. In order to understand the conflict as a whole, we must explore: Who is involved? Why is it happening? How has the situation changed?

Instructions:

1. In small groups, pick one **key player** involved in the conflict to investigate (Assad government, opposition, etc.).
2. Read 1-2 articles and review 1-2 of the timelines/maps below, focusing on the perspective and goals of your assigned group:

   Articles:
   - Middle East Eye: http://tinyurl.com/mvpger3
   - The Atlantic: http://tinyurl.com/po3rwv6

   Timelines/Maps:
   - Al-Ahram Syrian Timeline: http://tinyurl.com/m2zmp4p
   - NY Times: Syria After Four Years of Mayhem: http://tinyurl.com/lwd9qd4

3. Answer the questions/charts below. Prepare to present the **key players** chart to your class.

What was Syria like before the civil war started in 2011? Who lived in the country?

What event(s) started the conflict? Where? When?

What has the impact of the conflict been on the…				
Syrian civilians	**Assad government**	**Syrian economy and infrastructure**	**Neighboring countries**	**Global community and foreign policy**

KEY PLAYERS (select one to analyze with your small group) Assad Government Syrian Opposition Free Syrian Army Jabhat al-Nusra ISIS Unaffiliated civilians UN		
WHO:	Who is in this group? What was their situation in Syria before the conflict?	
WHY:	What event(s)/interests made them get involved with the conflict?	
GOALS:	What do they want to achieve?	
SUPPORT:	Who supports them within Syria? Globally?	
EVENTS:	What have they accomplished from 2011-2015? (Pick 2 main events)	

REFLECT: How do the media sources you reviewed portray the conflict? Why are there differences between them?

Class Session #2
Media Captions Warm-Up and "A Day in Your Life" Photo Story

TIME:	50 minutes
MATERIALS:	Pencils, pens, or markers; "A Day in Your Life" worksheet
OVERVIEW:	Students will analyze two photos of youth from the media, focusing on what is and is not shown, and how people understand the images. Then, students will create their own photo stories about their daily life and analyze how conflict impacts their lives.
g+	Share photo stories and questions online at the Google+ event page.

LESSON PLAN ACTIVITIES:

1. **LEARN: Media Warm-Up Activity** (15 minutes)
    Split student into small groups, to analyze the images on the next page and discuss:
    *   What do you see in the image? What "story" does it tell?
    *   What is not shown in the image that might change the way you understand the story?

    Assign each group one photo and have them create TWO captions that tell <u>different</u> stories. Next, have the students share their captions with the class – and then reveal the originals:
    > **Image 1**: *"Hartford Highlights a State's Divide: In Hartford, nearly half of children live in poverty, as Connecticut's urban areas lag behind." (USA)* [3]
    > **Image 2**: *"Young Syrian Youth Living in Limbo: A young girl enjoys a lollipop while watching shoppers in the Domiz Camp for Syrian Refugees just outside of Dohuk, Iraq." (Iraq/Syria)* [4]

    Discuss the similarities and differences, using the guiding questions:
    *   Why are our captions different? What does this tell us about how people see images?
    *   What "conflicts" do these photos show? How?

2. **ACT: Create "A Day in Your Life" Storyboard** (25 minutes, <u>optional time outside of class</u>)
    Now that students have examined the impact of images on stories, it's time for them to create their own "photo stories" of a day in their life to show their peers. As a class, brainstorm:
    *   What are the main experiences you have every day that you think your peers in Syria/Jordan/the US would find interesting?
    *   What do you see in your community that makes you proud?
    *   What is hard to see every day? What conflicts or challenges exist in your daily life?

    Divide students into small groups and have each create a storyboard of 6 images showing a day in their lives. At least 1-2 of the images should address the questions: *What conflicts/challenges exist in our daily life? How can we show these in photos?*

    > **For inspiration for your photo stories**, check out these examples from Syrian youth in the Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan:
    > https://hakawatisinzaatari.wordpress.com/
    > https://zaatarimeetseoul.wordpress.com/

    <u>***Students should take/find their photos in or out of class (before the IVC) and share online.</u>

3. **REFLECT: Preparing for the IVC with your Peers** (10 minutes)
    Then, brainstorm three questions with context to ask their peers (during the live IVC) about the Syrian crisis, their daily lives, and impact of conflict in their community.

---

[3] Neider, Jesse. "Hartford Highlights a State's Divide." *The Wall Street Journal*. September 30, 2012. http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390444592404578028643248213474

[4] Kashi, Ed. "Young Syrian Refugees Living in Limbo." *National Geographic Proof*. January 29, 2014. http://proof.nationalgeographic.com/2014/01/29/ed-kashi-young-syrian-refugees-living-in-limbo/

Media Captions Warm-Up

In our globalized world, we can get information from many sources – print and online media, friends, families, social media, and more. However, they don't always tell us the full story. In this exercise, we'll look at images from the news, and how they can be interpreted in different ways.

Use the questions below to analyze the photos. For each image, write TWO captions that tell different stories, as if they were going to be published in a newspaper, magazine, or online.

What do I see in the image? What "story" does it tell?

What is not shown in the image that might be important to understand the story?

Write TWO captions, telling different stories about the image:

1.

2.

A Day in Your Life: Photo Story

Now, you are going to tell your own story of a day in <u>your</u> life through images, and examine the challenges and opportunities that impact you. When we see the same things everyday, it can be easy to forget that other people may see them differently. This is why it's important to learn how to tell your own story, with context.

Instructions: Think about the guiding questions (*right*) and then draw images in the storyboard (*below*) to show what a day in your life looks like and how you see challenges and conflicts in your community.

A storyboard is a series of images that show the main parts/scenes of a story visually, with written notes.

"A Day in Your Life" Guiding Questions:
- What are the main images or experiences you have every day, that you think your peers in Syria/Jordan/the US would find interesting?
- What do you see in your community that makes you proud?
- What is hard to see every day? What conflicts or challenges exist in your daily life?

Interactive Videoconference Outline: **Understanding the Syrian Conflict**

TIME:	Day/Date: _____ Videoconference Start Time (60 minutes): ____:____ AM / PM
MATERIALS:	Videoconference Outline (p. 10), prepared with comments and questions
OVERVIEW:	**Get ready for your session with these steps:** 1. Complete the classroom preparation activities with your class 2. Review the outline and prepare comments and questions.

1. **Introduction and Greetings** (10 minutes)
   GNG facilitator welcomes participants to the *Understanding the Syrian Conflict* Pulse Program.
   All **Ambassador** Groups *(those participating live via video)* will introduce themselves on screen.
   All **Participant** Schools will introduce themselves in the Q&A box to the right!

Schools: Have one student introduce him/herself and your group.
Name: School/Group Name and Country: One fact that you learned about the conflict in Syria through the curriculum:

2. **LEARN: A Day in Our Lives (20 minutes)**
   GNG facilitator provides a brief introduction of the Syrian crisis and its impact, and explains how both Syrian/Jordanian and US Ambassador Groups have been exploring the impact of the conflict through media, images, and virtual exchange.

   Students will share their photo stories about their daily lives. The GNG facilitator will guide a discussion between the Ambassador Groups about the opportunities and challenges students face every day. Students should record 2-3 questions about peers' daily lives:

Questions for Peers:

3. **ACT: Understanding the Impact of the Syrian Conflict** (25 minutes)
   How is the Syrian conflict portrayed in the media? How does it impact youth? Students will discuss the impacts of the Syrian conflict, locally and globally. Questions may include:
   - *How is the media portrayal of these conflicts similar or different from your experience?*
   - *How has the Syrian conflict changed over time? Who has been impacted by it?*
   - *How does media coverage of Syria impact the way you see the conflict?*
   - *What conflicts does your community experience? Based on this discussion, what role can you play in addressing these problems?*

4. **Conclusion (5 minutes)**
   Thanks to all for participating! Join us for our 2nd IVC to discuss: *How we, as youth, can develop solutions to conflict in our communities?*

Class Session #3
Transforming Conflict in My Community

TIME:	50 minutes
MATERIALS:	Flipchart paper, markers
OVERVIEW:	Students will select a problem in their community to address, and analyze it using a "conflict tree" to explore its causes and effects. Through this analysis, youth will begin to identify their role in transforming the conflict and an action plan with tangible steps.
g+	Share conflict tree and action plan online **on the event page**!

LESSON PLAN INSTRUCTIONS:

Types of Conflict
- Interpersonal
- Local
- National
- International

1. **Brainstorm: What conflicts/problems are in my community?** (10 minutes)
   Guide a class brainstorm on conflict in their lives with the following questions:
   - *What is conflict? Is it always negative?*
   - *What conflicts do I share with my partner students in the program?*
   - *Give examples of the 4 types of conflict in your lives. Which can you take action to improve?*
   Pick one conflict to analyze and address as a group. When considering conflicts, guide students to a conflict that is important to them and that they feel they could take action towards improving.

2. **LEARN**: **Map Your Problem with a "Conflict Tree?"** (20 minutes)
   Introduce the Conflict Tree as a tool to analyze the conflict they selected, and have students map its core problem, causes and effects, using the worksheet. Make sure it can be shared digitally in the IVC.
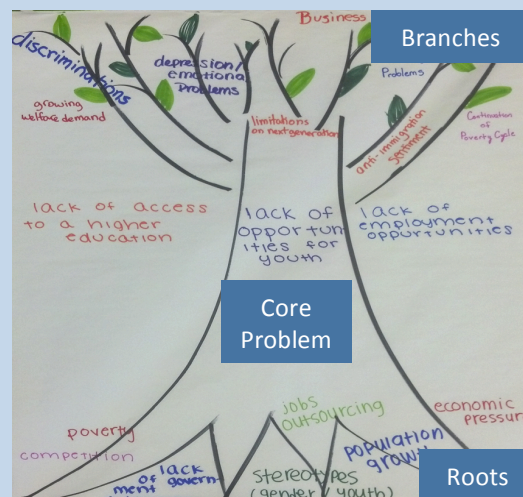
Conflict Tree Components:

Overview: *Every conflict or problem has roots (causes) and branches (effects), like a tree. Understanding causes and effects helps us identify solutions. This analysis depends on who analyzes the conflict, and from what perspective.*

Trunk (Core problem): The main issue. It's the largest visible piece of the tree, but is only one piece of the conflict, as it comes from many roots.

Roots (Causes): Underlying reasons for the problem, often hard to see even though they keep the conflict alive.

Branches (Effects): Consequences or new conflicts that come from the core problem.

As a class, reflect on the conflict tree process using the following guiding questions:
- What did you learn about the conflict you mapped? What challenges did you face?
- What are strategies you have to deal with this conflict already? How have people in your community dealt with similar conflicts in the past?
- How would begin to address the conflict: at the roots, trunk, or branches?

3. **ACT: Develop an Action Plan (15 minutes)**
   Now that your students have mapped out a conflict that affects their lives, brainstorm what they, as youth, can do to improve this situation. Use the action plan worksheet to:
   - Write a problem statement
   - Identify a goal and target audience
   - Outline action steps

4. **REFLECT: Prepare for the IVC (5 minutes)**
   Share your conflict tree and action plan online. Then, come up with 3 questions for your peers' work.

ACT: Our Conflict Tree

Every conflict or problem has roots (causes) and branches (effects), like a tree. Conflict analysis helps us understand these causes and effects, and identify solutions. This depends on who analyzes the conflict, and from what perspective.

Based on your exchanges with your peers, what problems in your community do you most want to change? Where do you overlap?
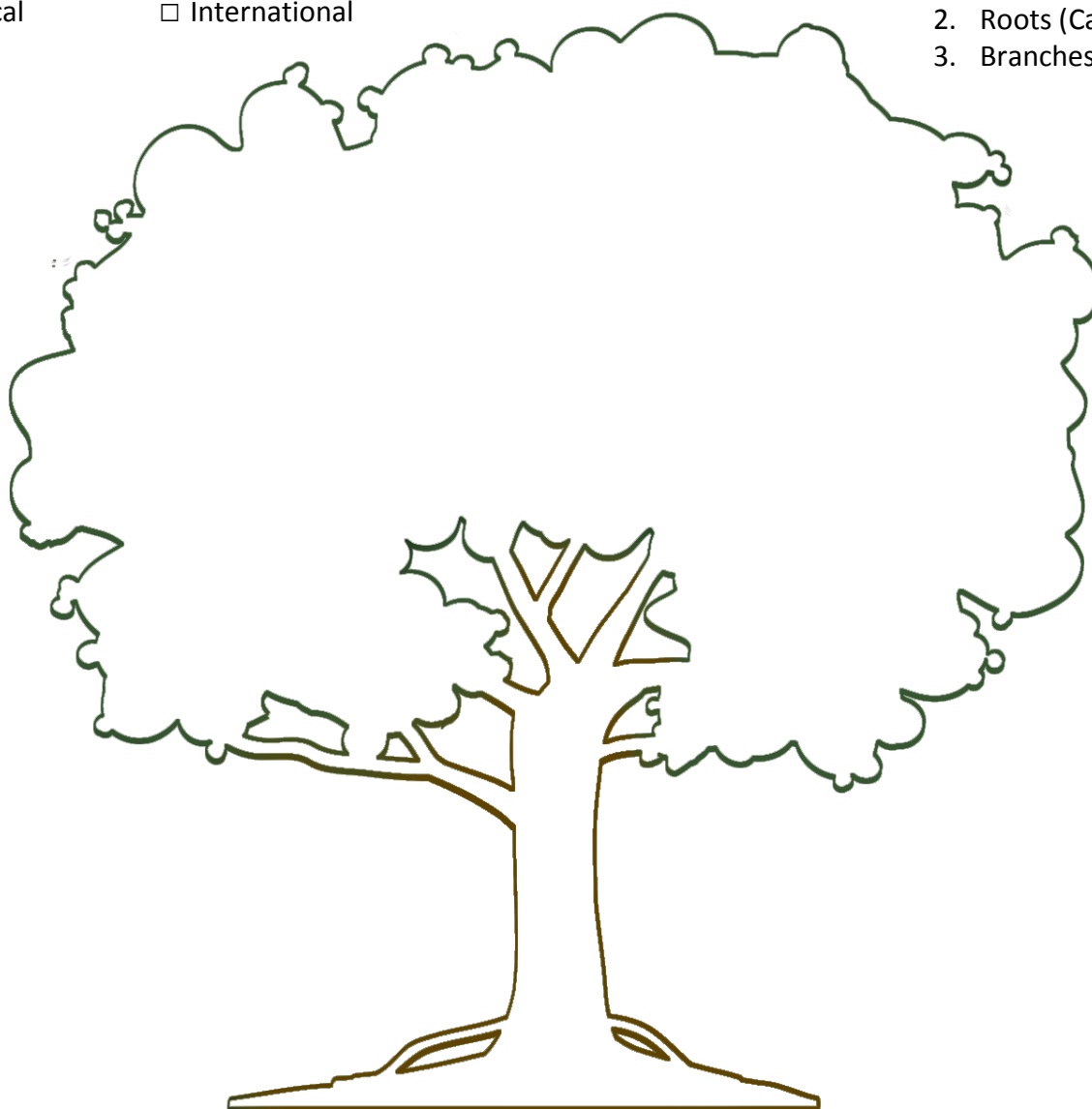
As a group, pick one conflict to address and use the tree to map its causes and effects.

Type of Conflict (select one):
☐ Interpersonal ☐ National
☐ Local ☐ International

Remember to include:
1. Trunk (Core Problem)
2. Roots (Causes)
3. Branches (Effects)

Your Action Plan

Now that you have mapped out your conflict, it's time to start developing a solution! Use this worksheet to write a problem statement, identify an objective and target audience, and outline steps to address the problem.

*You won't finish all this in just one day! Taking action is a long process – we hope you continue this work after the next videoconference!

Problem Statement:
Start by defining your conflict in more detail. This **problem statement** should answer three questions:
1.   What is the problem or need?
2.   Who has the problem or need?
3.   Why is it important to solve?

Use the following format to write a problem statement: **Who** need(s) **what** because **why.**

_____need(s) _____because_____

Action Planning Guide	
Goal/Objective *Pick awareness, advocacy, or action and then specify: What do you hope to accomplish?*	Select one: ☐ Awareness ☐ Advocacy ☐ Action
Target Audience *Who do you need to reach or impact to change this problem?*	
Action Steps *What can you and your peers do to reach this goal? What steps do you need to take/people to contact?* **Need inspiration?** Check out Syrian Youth for Peace and their projects: http://www.syrianyouthforpeace.org/	1. 2. 3. 4.

Reflect and Connect

Reflect on the questions below, then share with your class and online.

How did this program change the way you understand the Syrian crisis?

How did this program change the way you understand conflicts in your own community?

How do you plan to continue to work on your project to transform conflict in your community? What role can you play?

Deepen the Discussion

What strategies do we have to deal with conflict? Think about the ways you deal with different conflicts in your life. Do you respond differently depending on the context?
http://www.learningandleadership.com/2011/09/07/5-strategies-dealing-conflict/

Connect on Google+

Pick at least one reflection or question from your class to share in a Google+ Event Page post. Post and see what your partners are saying