UNESCO/APC MULTIMEDIA TRAINING KIT

Trainers' manual: Cooperative Problem Solving

Developed by: Search for Common Ground

Introduction

This "Prep book" provides information and tips on preparing for and leading the Cooperative Problem Solving module. For some general resources on conducting training visit the ItrainOnline web site: http://www.itrainonline.org/itrainonline/english/trainers.shtml

There are several web sites listed on the "I Train Online" site that are particularly useful for teaching the Cooperative Problem Solving workshop. They are:

"25 Tips for Trainers"
http://www.solutionsevents.com/extras/25tips.pdf

"A Trainer's toolbox of Templates, Outlines, and Briefings"
http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/templates/templates.html#ISDguidlines

"Teaching Tips Archive"
http://web.indstate.edu/ctl/ctl1/tips.html

"Train The Trainer Manual"
http://gemini.lib.purdue.edu/staffdev/handouts.cfm#profdev

"Training Function Resource Collection"
http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~smceachren/ctl1605/index.html

Enjoy your experience!

The purpose and overall design of the workshop

The skills and principles learned in this workshop can be applied to conflict in many different contexts: interpersonal conflict, workplace and organizational conflict, community conflict, etc. This type of introductory workshop is a prerequisite for anyone who is interested in addressing conflict through the media.

As you move through this module, please realize that this is one of many models for Cooperative Problem Solving that exist in the world. While these materials were developed in the United States, they have also been shown to be useful and effective in other contexts. It may be appropriate to translate these materials into local vocabularies and customs.

This is a different kind of workshop. It is designed so that the participants walk out at the end feeling confident that they can use Cooperative Problem Solving - because they will have actually done it successfully in simulated real time throughout the course of the workshop. Several design factors make it possible for this to happen:

o   This is a very interactive workshop. It is based on the idea that all of us are experienced in Cooperative Problem Solving. We may or may not be good at it (we tend to learn position-based problem solving when we are growing up), but we've been doing it all our lives. With this in mind, there are no lectures. Rather, the participants are led by the workshop leader to identify the principles and skills needed to conduct Cooperative Problem Solving based on mutual interests.

o   The largest portion of the workshop is devoted to exercises in which the participants observe and participate in Cooperative Problem Solving. These exercises progress from relatively simple and "safe" scenarios to ones that are increasingly complex and difficult, including real-life cases provided by the participants.

Overview of the workshop

This workshop is designed for people who want to understand and practice the cooperative problem-solving model for managing conflict. The process focuses on encouraging mutual agreement and developing positive relationships.

Based on the book *Getting to Yes*, the workshop addresses:

o   Treating conflict as a natural resource
o   How to attack problems while respecting people
o   Raising an issue in a constructive manner
o   Exploring opposing positions to discover shared interests
o   Generating options to address all parties' needs
o   Crafting clear and healthy solutions
o   Dealing with differing perceptions
o   Managing emotions
o   Insuring two-way communications
o   Choosing when to use a cooperative approach, and
o   Being a peacemaker while resolving conflicts

As mentioned before, this is a highly interactive workshop. It provides an opportunity both to learn a model for Cooperative Problem Solving, and to test how that model applies in "back home" situations. We tend to know already what works and what doesn't in interpersonal conflict resolution, and the workshop is structured in such a way that the participants draw upon their experiences to discover a process that they can use in a wide variety of situations - at home, in the workplace, and in their community - to turn conflicts into good agreements and good relationships.

The workshop consists of fifteen units:

Unit One, Introduction to the workshop: This begins with welcoming the participants and having them introduce themselves. An overview of the workshop - its purpose and structure - is presented, and administrative matters are covered.

Unit Two, Introduction to Cooperative Problem Solving: The participants begin right away with a role-play. In the debriefing at the end of the role-play, a number of points are covered:

o   We tend to assume that conflict resolution must be an adversarial activity.
o   The difference between adversarial and Cooperative Problem Solving is explored.
o   To solve problems cooperatively, it is critical that we:

   - Shift from focusing on positions to focusing on interests, and
   - Listen to the other person.

The participants then identify a personal scenario that they will use throughout the workshop to practice Cooperative Problem Solving. Finally, they are oriented to the Cooperative Problem Solving Map, which will form the structure for the rest of the workshop.

Unit Three, Raising an issue: The participants agree on some guidelines for raising an issue in a way that encourages Cooperative Problem Solving, and then practice applying these guidelines to their personal scenario.

Unit Four, Listening: In real life, people tend to become defensive when someone raises an issue with them. At this point, it is easy to slip into an adversarial approach. This unit highlights that dynamic and provides an opportunity to explore and practice the "secret" to staying on the cooperative path: listening.

Unit Five, Discovering interests: Again, in real life it is important to shift from arguing over positions to exploring for, and working with, interests early in the process. In this unit, the difference between positions and interests is made clear.

Unit Six, Working with perceptions: One of the realities in problem solving is that the parties often have different perceptions of the same situation. In this unit, this dynamic is explored and strategies are identified for turning differing perceptions into sources of creative solutions.

Unit Seven, Respecting emotions: Sometimes problem solving gets off track not because of the parties' logical abilities but because of feelings. In this unit, the emotions often associated with conflict are identified, and ways of managing one's own anger and that of another person are considered.

Unit Eight, Generating options: There are often a number of ways to solve a problem, once the parties' interests have been identified. This unit focuses on how to identify such options.

Unit Nine, Using standards and developing agreements: Here the participants explore several tips on actually coming to agreement.

Unit Ten, Being a peacemaker: Up to this point in the workshop, the focus has been largely on what to do to succeed at Cooperative Problem Solving. This unit is not about doing but about attitudes - we identify the personal characteristics of an effective peacemaker, and each participant explores situations in which they have demonstrated those traits.

Unit Eleven, Being prepared if cooperation doesn't work ("Best Alternatives to Negotiated Agreement" - BATNA): This unit explores how to prepare for CPS not working - and how we are more likely to succeed if we have a backup plan in case of failure.

Unit Twelve, Cooperative Problem Solving - a matter of choice: This unit is making two points: First, that we are not suggesting that CPS is appropriate in all cases, and second, that it is worth considering before going automatically to an adversarial or avoidance mode.

Unit Thirteen, Back-home action planning: This provides the participants an opportunity to plan for using Cooperative Problem Solving back home, and to coach and be coached by another participant regarding their plan.

Unit Fourteen, Workshop evaluation: The participants evaluate the workshop and return their evaluations to the trainer. This provides useful information on the benefits people experienced from the workshop, and how to improve it in the future.

Unit Fifteen, Closing: This is a brief closing to recognize the participants' completion of the workshop.

Many of these units can be presented individually as brief "mini-workshops" on a particular topic. However, if Unit Three, "Raising an Issue" is given, it should be followed by Unit Four, "Listening" and Unit Five, "Discovering Interests." The reason for this is that, in real time, when someone raises an issue, the response from the other person is often defensive or adversarial. Therefore, it is important, if one is about to raise an issue, to be prepared to listen to the other person and to be able to distinguish between positions and interests.

In addition, Unit Eleven, "Being Prepared if Cooperation Doesn't Work," should be presented in conjunction with the other units. Otherwise, the impression might be given that adversarial methods are being recommended in place of cooperative methods of problem solving.

The role of the trainer

The trainer fulfils several roles during the workshop:

o   Facilitator: To help the participants bring forth what they already know (but perhaps don't yet recognize) about successful Cooperative Problem Solving
o   Role Model: Consistently modelling Cooperative Problem Solving both in structured exercises and in whatever real-time problems may (will) arise.
o   Coach/advisor: To the participants as they wrestle with managing conflicts both in the workshop and back home.
o   Host: Greet people individually as they come in on day one - create a friendly environment
o   Time Manager:
   - Go over ground-rules
   - Agree on official time - explain the continuity of the workshop and therefore the need to stay within the break and lunch times in order to follow that continuity.
   - Start on time.
   - Help each other out (e.g. give an "out of time" sign).

o   Unit Introducer: At the beginning of each unit, it is useful to help the participants see where the unit fits into the CPS process. Three ways to do this are:

   - Point to the topic being covered on the "CPS Map" wall chart,
   - Briefly state the purpose of the unit, and
   - Give definitions of any new terms.

o   Exercise Manager: Timing: At the beginning of an exercise, tell the participants how much time will be allowed for the exercise. As the exercise progresses, allow a little more time if needed; wrap up sooner if people are finished - keep it moving.

   - When writing on the flipchart, write what people say, not what you wish they had said!
   - During report backs: build on what's right. Catch them doing something right and be positive. Remember the "90% Rule" (i.e., focus on the 90% - or whatever percent - people get right; their confidence will grow and they will improve as that occurs).
   - Briefings: Be brief. Let the participants do the talking.

o   Miscellaneous hints:

  - If ever there was a workshop that should be team-taught, it is this one, both to provide adequate support to the participants and to provide perspective and guidance on managing the dynamics involved.
  - You don't have to be an "expert" on Cooperative Problem Solving to teach this workshop. Your job is to be a good facilitator of the learning process. Everyone has had experience in dealing with conflicts - let their experiences be heard. In that sense, "You have a room full of experts."
  - Prepare, prepare, prepare. When you first start teaching, you should plan to spend one hour in preparation for each unit.
  - Be there for everything - even when your teaching partner is teaching a unit. It fosters continuity of the workshop and support for the teaching team.
  - Be a team with your teaching partner and with the participants. Help each other out, and when problems arise, use Cooperative Problem Solving to resolve them. Participants will be looking to you as a role model. Treat differences as an opportunity to listen, identify interests, connect, respect. "Walk the talk"!
  - Trust the learning process. It may be that some participants are sceptical at the beginning. Respect their point of view, and keep moving. Trust that people want to learn how to solve problems cooperatively.

Characteristics of a good workshop leader

We have asked a number of successful leaders of this workshop what they think are the characteristics of a good workshop leader. Here are their responses:

1.   Organized
2.   Positive attitude
3.   Self-confident
4.   Flexible
5.   Energetic
6.   A good listener
7.   A believer in the cooperative problem-solving approach
8.   Speaks clearly
9.   Focused
10.   Makes time to speak with participants
11.   Prepared, prepared, prepared!
12.   A good sense of humor
13.   Disciplined
14.   Walks the talk
15.   Good teamwork with other workshop leaders

Skills practice sessions

That which I hear, I forget,
That which I see, I remember.
That which I do, I understand.
John Dewey

Throughout the workshop, the participants practice Cooperative Problem Solving in simulated real-time settings. This is the heart of the workshop.

The workshop leaders will conduct some of these simulations as demonstrations for the class. Others will be done in smaller groups, with some participants serving as observers/coaches while others practice Cooperative Problem Solving.

These practice sessions are designed to give the participants a safe environment to practice their skills and develop their ability to deal with real-life conflicts in a cooperative manner.

It is important that you encourage the participants every time they have a success, however small. It's also important to tolerate mistakes. Let people know that you know it's tough to develop this skill - like crossing your arms the opposite way that you usually do.

Why small groups?

Many activities in the workshop are conducted in small groups. This is not accidental.

Small group learning has been built into the workshop because:

o   Everyone has more of a chance to be involved.
o   Participants are more likely to participate in small groups than larger groups.
o   In small groups, participants tend to learn from each other.

The workshop as an intervention

This workshop can be conducted simply as a training activity with the purpose of improving individuals' knowledge and skills. However, if conducted with people from the same organization or community, it can serve as an intervention - with the purpose of changing the conflict-management culture of the group and build cooperation and teamwork. It can do this by:

o   Giving the participants a common frame of reference and common set of skills for managing conflict, and
o   Providing a forum in which real-life group issues can be addressed in a learning environment.

When the workshop is conducted as an intervention, it will be important to do preparatory work with the sponsor to develop a plan for its use (goals, participants, opening and closing sessions).

Managing resistance, managing yourself

There are a number of reasons why people may resist learning in this workshop - at least at the beginning:

1. The workshop challenges the assumption that all conflict is a bad thing. People may have had very bad experiences with conflict.
2. Therefore there may be some fear of the unknown.
3. Some participants may be experiencing stress/conflict on the job or in personal situation(s), so dealing with conflict may be uncomfortable. They may want to avoid it.
4. Someone may be in the workshop with others that make him or her feel uncomfortable.
5. Some participants may have pressing business elsewhere.

Possible forms of resistance:

1. Negative attitude
2. Does not actively participate
3. Side conversations
4. Challenging the leader
5. Busy/ distracted/ can't focus
6. Not following class ground-rules (e.g. showing up on time)
7. Having a difficult time catching on
8. Asking a lot of "what if" questions

9. Trying to make the workshop leader an expert

Ways of managing yourself

1. Don't take it personally - recognize the other person is dealing with their issues.
2. Assess my own perceptions/ reactions/ behavior to see why I am bothered by this behavior.
3. Talk to other workshop leaders - support each other.
4. Take a walk.
5. Keep breathing!
6. Remember: To know all is to forgive all.
7. Use the principles of Cooperative Problem Solving - re-examine the issue and think about the interests involved, then weigh your options.
8. "Walk the talk" in the workshop. Acknowledge the person's point of view - actively listen. Look at the person. Show respect.
9. Show confidence - keep on keeping on.
10. Give people time. Let them work it out.
11. Be wise.
12. Trust yourself.
13. Know your limitations.
14. Of course you will have butterflies - just keep them flying in formation.

Some dilemmas about this workshop

1. Everything is connected to everything else. Therefore, the participants need to learn everything at once. Time being what it is, they can't. Therefore, it's a bit awkward at first. Keep cool. Be patient. Show confidence - in the process and in them.
2. Emotions and habit regarding conflict make it difficult to do active listening to discover interests - even in the workshop. Real-time issues raise the most emotions. But unless you use real-time issues, people won't gain real-time experience. So use real-time issues, but be patient - and encourage the participants to be patient with themselves.
3. For most of us, interest-based conflict management is a learned, not a natural response. Give it time. Celebrate any successes.
4. People want to jump to solutions before generating options (or even discovering interests!). When this happens (over and over), point it out and help people clarify interests and/or generate more options, as needed.
5. James Bond never used Cooperative Problem Solving. Role models are hard to find. Be a role model.
6. The door opener in Cooperative Problem Solving is active listening until you've identified interests.

Preparation checklist for the hosts of a Cooperative Problem Solving workshop

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Contact the Workshop leaders to arrange for a preparation session with them.

2. Reserve space for the workshop:

   o The room for the workshop should be large enough to hold all participants comfortably so they can move easily and talk freely. (The discussion groups will generate a lot of sound). A room of 1200^2 feet is ideal; 1000^2 feet is acceptable.

   o Participants should ideally be seated at six-person tables.

   o The lectern or workshop leaders' table should be located at a central point.

   o See the diagram on page 10 for suggested room layout.

3. Order materials for each participant:

   o   Paper, pencil

   o   Name tent-card

   o   Certificates of completion: (one certificate per participant indicating attendance at the Cooperative Problem Solving Workshop)

   o   Workshop schedule

   o   Name tag

4. Obtain *CPS Guides* - one for each participant, plus a few extras.

5. Order supplies and equipment:

   For each table/group:

   o   Easel and pads of newsprint

   o   Felt-tip markers (10)

   o   A roll of masking tape

   For the workshop leaders:

   o   Easels (2) and pads of newsprint

   o   Felt-tip marker

   o   A roll of masking tape

6. Prepare posters (included at the end of this Prep Book).

7. If appropriate, arrange for a leader from the sponsoring organization to open and close the workshop.

8. Arrange for administrative support during the workshop:

   o   Duplicating facilities

   o   Fax facilities

   o   Emergency contact number

   o   Refreshments

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Get the names of the participants.
2. Send out information on the date, time and location for the workshop and any other information that will be helpful to the participants.
3. Make up roster with names, titles, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of participants.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Insure that all of the above is ready.
2. Have the Certificates of Completion signed by the appropriate people.

THE DAY BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

1. Put up posters.
2. Set up tables, supplies and equipment.
3. Declare victory and go have a celebration.

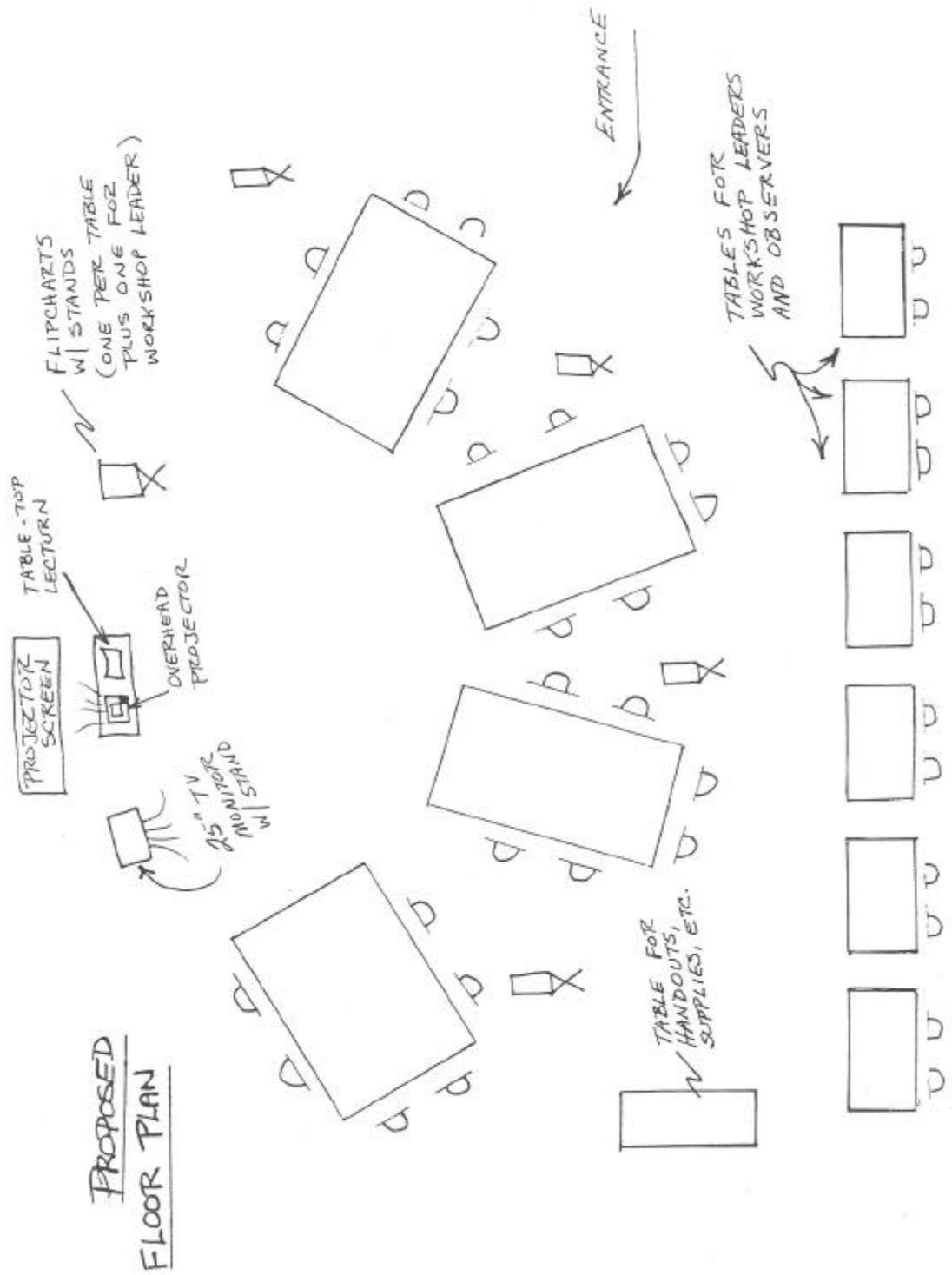## *Immediate pre-workshop preparation*

Put up posters:

o Welcome to the "Cooperative Problem Solving: A Life Skill" Workshop
o Map
o Definitions
o Agenda

Prepare for each person:

o Name tag
o Tent card
o CPS Guide
o Paper and pencil
o Roster with participants' contact information
o Certificate of completion

Equipment/material:

o Easels (one for each table, and one for the workshop leaders)
o Masking tape (ditto)
o Coffee stirrers for the "options" exercise
o Ugli Orange role play sheets

PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN

FLIPCHARTS W/ STANDS (ONE PER TABLE PLUS ONE FOR WORKSHOP LEADER)

TABLE-TOP LECTURN

PROJECTOR SCREEN

OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

25" TV MONITOR W/ STAND

ENTRANCE

TABLES FOR WORKSHOP LEADERS AND OBSERVERS

TABLE FOR HANDOUTS, SUPPLIES, ETC.

Personal scenarios

During the workshop the participants practice the principles that they are learning, using an actual conflict that they are aware of. This is done in the following manner:

Unit 2, Introduction to Cooperative Problem Solving: Each participant identifies a conflict that they want to work with.

Criteria:

o It involves no more than two parties;
o It is one that the participant would like to see resolved in a way that improves the parties' relationship;
o It is one that is appropriate to discuss with other participants.

Unit 3, Raising an issue: In pairs, each participant, representing one of the parties, plans for and practices raising the issue, in a way that opens the door to Cooperative Problem Solving.

Unit 5, Discovering interests: In new pairs, the participants identify the possible interests of the parties involved.

Unit 8, Generating options: In new pairs, the participants brainstorm possible solutions that will meet the needs of both parties.

Unit 11, Being prepared if cooperation doesn't work: In new pairs, the participants identify possible unilateral alternatives that each party could take, in the event that their cooperative effort fails.

The learning model used in this workshop

The Cooperative Problem Solving Workshop uses the "EIAG/PD" model of adult education. This stands for "Experience, Investigate and Analyze, Generalize/Practice, Debrief".

This model allows the Workshop Leader to serve as a facilitator rather than an expert. The participants take the initiative in the learning process and the Workshop Leader provides the conditions that allow the learning to occur. Participants do not learn because someone else dictates what they "ought" to learn; they learn what they need to learn in order to effectively work through specific problems or situations.

We learn from experience and from reflection on the experience. The model provides a sequence that allows the participants to experience and to reflect in a manner that enhances the learning experience.

The process is one that systematically plans opportunities for the learners to experience, reflect on, apply, and review their learning:

THE EIAG/PD LEARNING MODEL
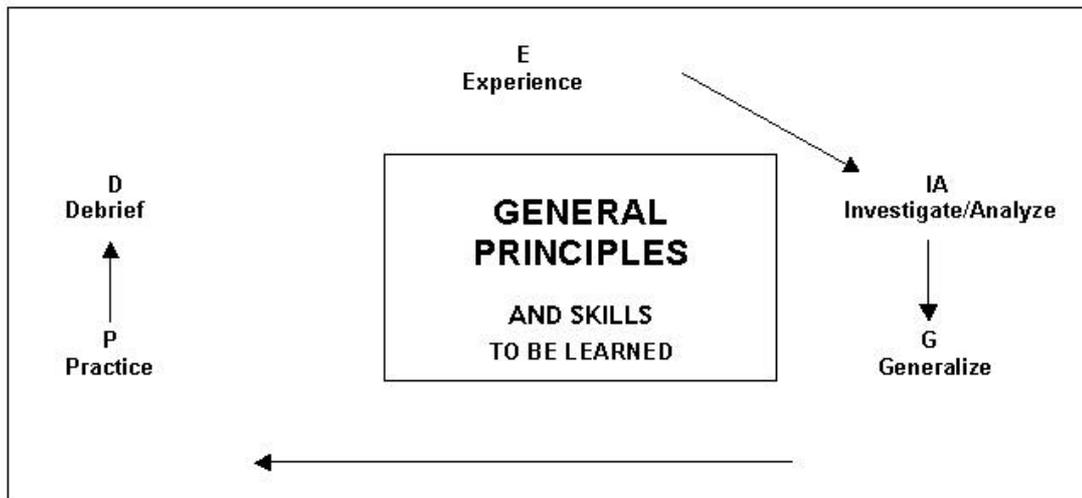
The EIAG/PD Learning Model

E   Experience: A situation that involves the principles and skills to be learned. This may be something like the "UGLI Orange exercise, or an activity or discussion led by the workshop leader.

I   Investigate/Analyze: The participants investigate and analyze the principles and skills that were demonstrated.

G   Generalize: The participants reflect on the general principles and skills that are involved. The workshop leader refers the participants to an appropriate handout.

P   Practice: The participants practice using those general principles and skills. This practice is done in a safe environment that simulates the real world.

D   Debrief: The participants discuss what happened in the practice sessions to consolidate their learning.

Most of the modules in the Cooperative Problem Solving Workshop are based on the EIAG/PD model. The model not only presents an understandable sequence to the activities within a lesson, but it also enhances the learning of the participants. Therefore, it is recommended that the activities in the lesson plans be conducted in the sequence developed rather than deviating from the lesson plan or skipping portions of the lesson.

Granted, we can save time by sometimes skipping parts of a lesson or shortening the time devoted to different parts of the lesson. If conceptual knowledge is the goal, then just reading the material would probably suffice. Since understanding and skill development are the focus, shortening the time for analyzing, generalizing, practice, and debriefing may be counter-productive. The purpose of the Cooperative Problem Solving Workshop is to give people the confidence that they can manage conflict in a cooperative fashion. It has been demonstrated that when the EIAG/PD model is used, the participants usually develop that self-confidence.

References

EIAG model adapted from *Planning for Adult Learners*, George Brown, Ecumenical Leadership Education Program.

Experiential Learning Cycle from *Introduction to Structured Experiences Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*.

Posters

The following posters relate to the various principles and skills addressed in the workshop. They are designed to be posted around the room in order to reinforce the points covered in the workshop. You may want to put up only a few at a time, and to change them from time to time. If you have access to a "poster-maker" machine, you can enlarge these posters by running them through it.

The posters also serve to lighten things up - essential for keeping one's perspective (and sanity) in conflict situations.

Attitude

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearances, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing that we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.
And so it is with you...
We are in charge of our attitudes.

                                              - Charles Swindoll

R E C O N C I L I A T I O N

The situation of the world is still like this.

People completely identify with one side, one ideology.

Reconciliation is to understand both sides…

Doing only that will be a great help for peace.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Quality Work

"I believe it is fair to say that quality work is never achieved in an adversarial relationship."

Lester Edelman, Chief Counsel
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Another Option

> **Conflict is inevitable. Fighting is a choice. Conflict is inevitable in our lives. Some of us believe that there are only two options when conflict arises. We must either roar like a lion and impose our will, or back off like a sheep and give in (and perhaps subtly try to impose our will). Neither choice has much to say for it.**
>
> **Thank goodness we have another option. We can listen to what others are saying. We can get clear with ourselves and see what we have to learn.**

- **Author Unknown**

Seeing Things Differently

Have you not learned the most in your life

from those with whom you disagreed –

those who saw it differently than you?

Walt Whitman

Conversation

"The true spirit of conversation
consists in
building on the other person's
observation, not overturning it."

Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton

"My friend may very well be someone whose ideas run counter to mine

And who thereby enriches me."

Antoine de Saint Exupery
Wartime Writings
126

I Am Only One

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do
The something that I can do.

Edward Everett Hale