

UNESCO/APC MULTIMEDIA TRAINING KIT

Trainers' notes: Cooperative Problem Solving Working With Perceptions

Developed by: Search for Common Ground

Introduction	Unit message: this unit deals with one of the “non-linear” dimensions of cooperative problem solving – perceptions. If we understand that each of us experiences the world differently, then we can use our different perceptions as sources of creativity and understanding, rather than as sources of dissent.
Timing/Duration	50 minutes
Content outline and main topics covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Moving object exerciseo Cup/profiles exerciseo Birth Order exerciseo Guided discussion
Target audience	General
Prerequisite skills/Knowledge	-
Unit objectives/Expected outcomes	Upon completion, participants should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Understand the dynamic of perception and the role that it plays in cooperative problem solvingo Recognize the function of two-way communication in turning different perceptions from barriers to sources of improved understanding and problem-solving ideas
Pre-workshop activities	-
Notes on using exercises	See expanded outline below.
Resources included with unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Trainers' noteso Overheadso Copyright statement <p>Use the general CPS handout with this unit.</p>
Additional trainer resources	Read Chapter 6 of the CPS Guide.
Equipment needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Blackboard/whiteboard and chalk/dry erase markers or flipchart, markers, and tapeo Arrange for breakout rooms, if possibleo “Definitions” poster (made from overhead included with this unit)o “Map” poster (made from overhead included with this unit)

Comments	-
Expanded outline	<p>1. Introduction:</p> <p>To be successful at Cooperative Problem Solving, it is important to understand - and respect - the role of perception, or how we see things. Each of us organizes the information coming into our brain in some way to make sense of the world. The way we see the world, the interpretations and meanings we attach to events become our "perceptions" of the world. And we then act on those perceptions. Our perceptions - and others' - are therefore critical elements in managing conflict. The purpose of this module is to help you better understand perceptions and how to work with them in conflict situations. [Refer to "Perceptions" on the "Map" (wall chart and CPS Guide p 6; also in the overheads included with this unit)]</p> <p>2. "Moving Object" Exercise (2 minutes): here is a way to demonstrate the role of perception. Close one eye, extend your arm, and cover a distant object with your thumb. Now, open that eye and close the other. You will see that the object "moved!" Of course, it didn't actually move - it's just that your view or perception of it changed. We see things differently because we have different points of view - just like each of our eyes has a slightly different point of view because it is in a different place in our head. This reflects the saying: "Where you stand depends on where you sit."</p> <p>3. "Cup/Profiles" Exercise (2 minutes): Please look at the vase/profiles drawing on page 16 of your CPS Guide [overhead included with unit]. If you ask several people what they see when they look at this picture, some will say a vase, some will say two profiles, and some will say both! But who is correct? They all are, of course - that's what they see! How we see things is influenced by many things - the experiences we have had in life (for example, poverty or wealth in our youth), our beliefs (political, religious, etc.), which side of a river we were born on, our gender, birth order, etc.</p> <p>4. Birth Order Exercise (30 minutes):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Introduce: Even our birth order influences our perceptions. Let's explore. ii. Participants gather in the four corners of the room by birth order: oldest child, middle, youngest, only.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Each group takes 15 minutes to develop a presentation (on flipchart or just written on a piece of paper). Their presentation answers three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was the "good news" about being in this birth order? - What was the "bad news" about being in this birth order? - Any messages for the other groups: iv. Report backs v. Summary: This is one of many examples of "hidden diversity." Note how our backgrounds influence our perceptions. vi. Brainstorm other possible hidden sources of different perceptions. vii. Refer to "Some Hidden Sources of Differing Perceptions" (CPS Guide page 16; overhead included with this unit). <p>5. Guided Discussion (15 minutes): Lead a guided discussion by asking questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Is the fact that we see things differently a positive or negative thing? (Principles of perception - CPS Guide p.16; overhead included with this unit) o What are some possible hidden sources of differing perceptions in addition to our birth order? (Hidden Sources of differing perceptions [CPS Guide p.16; overhead included with this guide]) o How could different perceptions influence the way we deal with a conflict? (Perceptions and conflict management [CPS Guide p. 19; overhead included with this unit]) o Can you remember a time when you and another person had a very different perception of an event? o Tell the story of The Five Blind Men And The Elephant [CPS Guide p. 19] <p>6. Evaluation: If you are presenting this unit separately (not as part of the whole Cooperative Problem Solving workshop), please refer to Unit 14, "Workshop Evaluation" for guidance on how to conduct an evaluation of an individual unit.</p> <p>7. Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review the major points covered in this unit. o If the entire module is being taught, introduce the next unit, "Respecting Emotions."
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