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Online Class 5:

PROBLEM SOLVING AND FACILITATION

FAM4362 – 310. Group Dynamics: Organizational Behaviour

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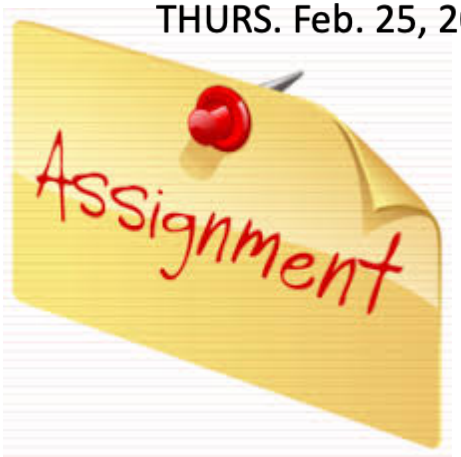
THURS. Feb. 25, 2021



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THURS. Mar. 11, 2021

PROBLEM SOLVING

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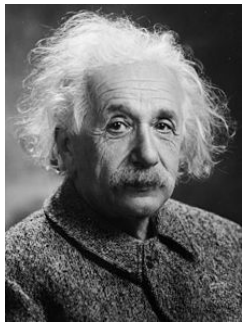
Problem Solving

- "The world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far has created problems that cannot be resolved by thinking the way we thought when we created them." *Albert Einstein*

- "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." *Albert Einstein*



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Core task of management & staff = Problem Solving

- There is a general consensus (among scholars studying organization behaviour) that one area of common-ground among all organizations is that; “organizations are primarily problem-solving systems whose success is measured in how efficiently they solve the routine problems associated with accomplishing the organizations primary mission”.

- Whether it is a company manufacturing automobiles, or a company that sells insurance, how effectively the company responds to emergent problems and opportunities directly impacts whether the company can survive or grow in our complex and ever-changing world.

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Kilmann (1979) describes problem-solving this way:

- "One might even define the essence of management as problem defining and problem solving, whether the problems are well structured, ill-structured, technical, human, or even environmental. Managers of organizations would then be viewed as problem managers, regardless of the types of products and services they help their organizations provide. It should be noted that managers have often been considered as generic decision makers rather than as problem solvers or problem managers. Perhaps decision making is more akin to solving well structured problems where the problem is so obvious that one can already begin the process of deciding among clear-cut alternatives. However, decisions cannot be made effectively if the decision is not yet defined and if it is not at all clear what the alternatives are, can or should be".

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- Groups are used in solving complex problems, especially when no one person has all the necessary information, skills, and diverse perspectives. The more diverse the group, the better people can contribute a variety of new dreams, new ideas, different pieces of information, and varied ways to contribute getting tasks done.
- Problem solving is not just a mental puzzle – it is also a social process that ***requires communication, perception, creativity, conflict management and group/ facilitation skills.***
- Employees at all levels are more likely to be committed to implementing the solutions to problems if they participated in the problem solving process. Therefor the decision about who is invited to problem solving groups is critical. As a general rule, those who are likely to be critical in the implementation stage of a solution should be members of the problem solving team, along with those who have the most knowledge about the situation and the most power to change it® Osland et. al, 2015, Textbook, page #288

Models of Problem Solving.

Model 1 – a Dialectics model of Problem Solving

- Elbow (1973) describes the "doubting" and "believing" games as one way to conceptualize the two different mindsets required for problem-solving. The first rule of the believing game is that people refrain from doubting or evaluating and instead focus on possibility thinking – openly exploring how an idea can work.

- In contrast the doubting game comes later in the problem solving process. The doubting process focuses on a reductive, structured, "objective" rationality. People who are oriented towards doubting poke holes in ideas and arguments, they torpedo any assumptions, and probe ideas or plans analytically. People who are orientated to doubting ask "what's wrong with this".

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Model 1 – a Dialectics model of Problem Solving continued

- It is important to note that effective problem solving involves the integration of dialectically opposed mental orientations. What are referred to as red and green mindsets.
- Green Light Mindset – Believing = facilitates the expansion phases of problem solving, vision/exploration, information gathering, idea getting, participation.
- Red Light Mindset – Doubting = facilitates analysis, criticism, logical thinking, and active coping with the external environment. This mode is most appropriate for the contraction phases of problem solving such as priority setting in situational analysis, problem definition in problem analysis, decision making in solution analysis and planning in implementation analysis.
- Problem-solvers need practice to match mindsets with the problem solving tasks at hand and to be always aware if they are in red or green mindsets and be ready when appropriate to switch from one mindset to the other.

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Stages of the Problem Solving Model

Stage 1: Situation Analysis

Step 1: First task is to examine the situational context and *determine the right problem to tackle*. Problem finding is as important as problem solving.

Step 2: *Visioning/ Exploring* is the stage where groups envision what is possible. The process of articulating desired goal states and ideals.

Step 3: *Priority Setting* has three specific tasks. (1) to explore the current situation for those features that facilitate or hinder goal achievement; (2) to test the feasibility of changing those features; and (3) to articulate reality–based goal statements that give substance to values and allows them to be realized. An example of a clearly articulated goal statement is - ”Reduce the cycle time for the grant-proposal process by 20 percent within six seeks”.

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Stages of the Problem Solving Model Cont.'

Stage 2: Problem Analysis – the task of the problem analysis is to understand and define the problem thoroughly.
Step 1: *Information Gathering*. Problem finding is as important as problem solving. In this step it is important for facts to be separated from opinion so that the eventual solution will be data-driven and based on solid ground other than assumptions.
Step 2: *Problem Definition* is a process of building a model portraying how the problem works – factors that cause the problem, factors that increase or decrease the strength of the problem, connections and relationships among various elements, and symptoms of the problem.

Only when the problem has been thoroughly analyzed and defined is the group ready to begin thinking about solutions in the next stage.

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Stages of the Problem Solving Model Cont.'

Stage 3: Solution Analysis – Idea getting and Decision Making.

There are two stages of idea getting. The first requires great creative imagination to generate ideas. The second, an analytical process to evaluate the ideas that are generated.

Step 1: *Idea Getting.* Brainstorming is the process that helps most in idea getting and will be explained in more detail in further slides.

Step 2: *Decision-Making.* The focus of this step is to sort through the ideas that are generated in brainstorming and then evaluating ideas against the criteria that an effective solution could meet. It is important to assess "if" the solution solves the problem, and produces the desired result. It is also important to ensure the solution has no harmful side effects or negative un-intended

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Stages of the Problem Solving Model Cont.'

One way to evaluate solutions is to use the Payoff Matrix below. General Electric (GE) is one company that uses this tool to help employees think about and categorize solutions in terms of their potential impact and achievability.

Payoff Matrix

	EASY TO IMPLEMENT	TOUGH TO IMPLEMENT
Low Payoff		
Big Payoff		

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Stages of the Problem Solving Model Cont.'

Stage 4: Implementation Analysis – Participation and Planning.
The final stage is to ensure the solution is successfully implemented. This involves getting the right team together and developing an effective plan to make sure the problem gets solved.

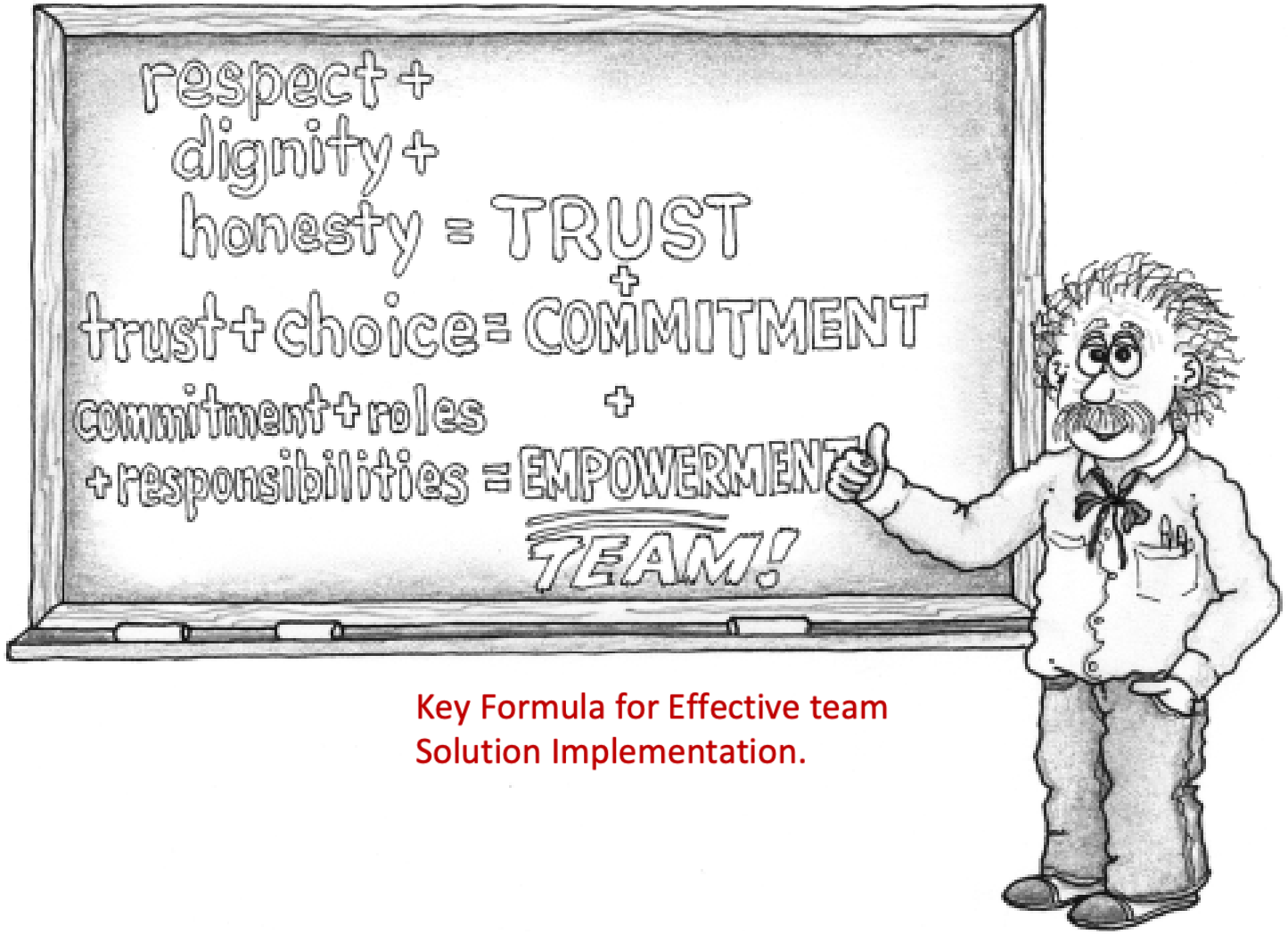
Three common errors in this stage are:
(1)Failing to gain the commitment of the people needed to implement the plan;
(2)Failing to assign clear responsibility for each task;
(3)Failing to follow-up and monitor the implementation process.

Stages of the Problem Solving Model Cont.'

Stage 4: Implementation Analysis – Participation and Planning.

Step 1: *Participation.* In organizations most solutions are implemented in groups or teams, so the critical task is full participation of the best people who work together effectively.

Step 2: *Planning.* Like we discussed in management class – if you fail to plan – plan to fail. Once team members are committed (think of the Einstein chalkboard shared in class) they need to know their roles, responsibility's, key tasks with deadlines, how their work will be monitored and how collectively the work and solutions will be evaluated.



Key Formula for Effective team Solution Implementation.

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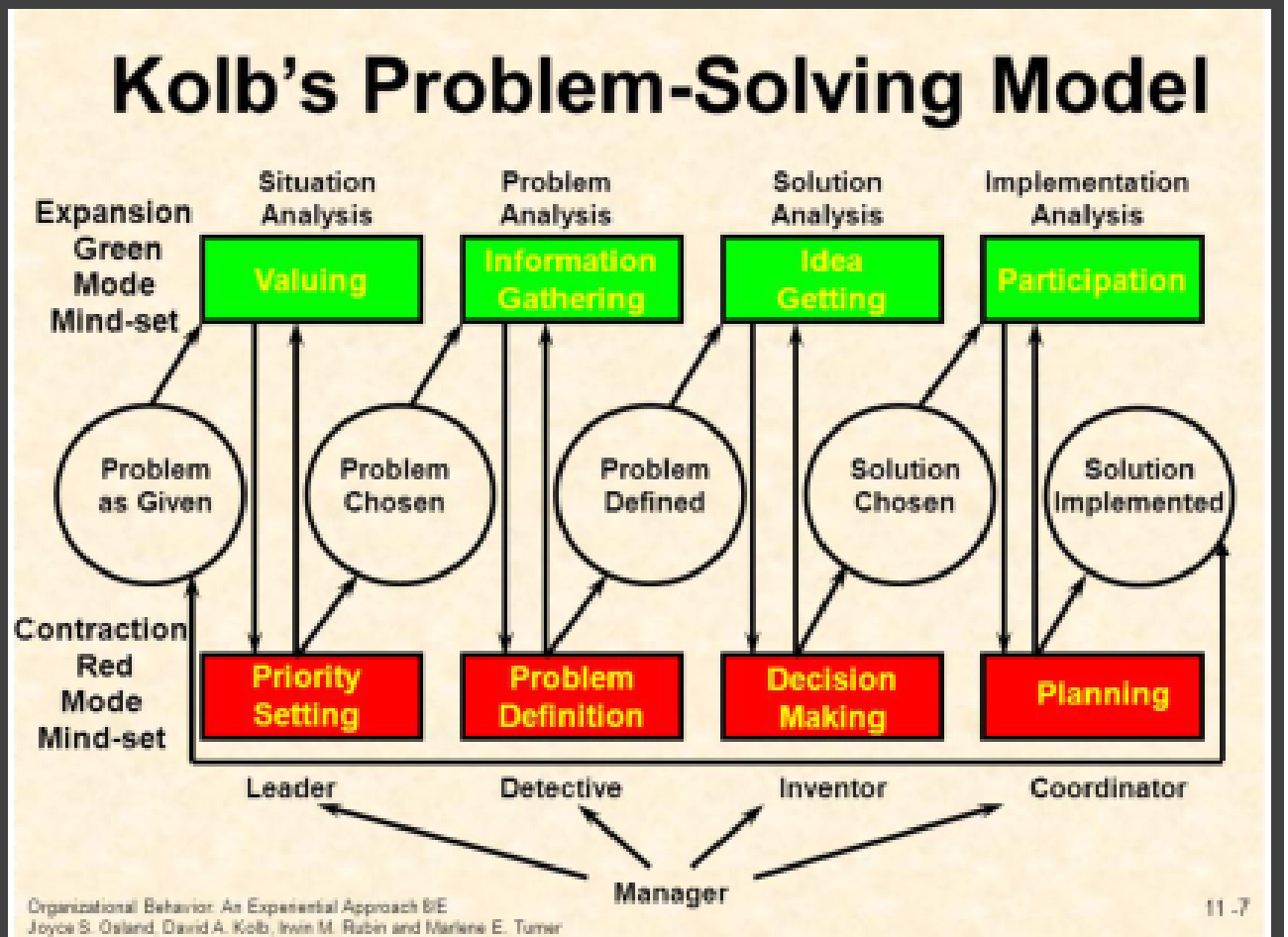
Model 2: The Kolb model - was developed to help prevent people from failing to see;

(1) The opportunities in the problem;
(2) The danger of leaping too quickly into discussing potential solutions before completely analyzing the problem, and;
(3) The missed opportunity of not focussing enough on the implementation of issues.

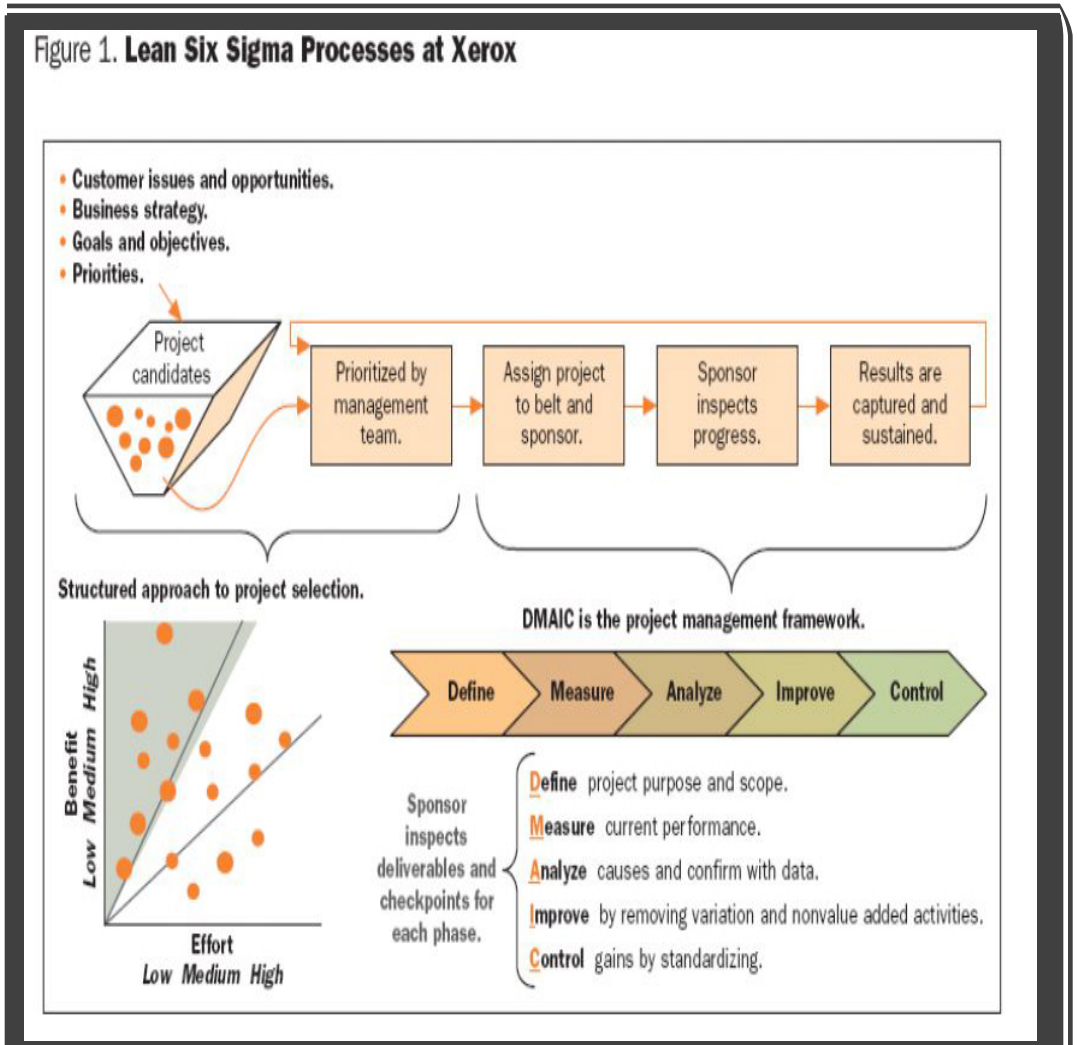
This model consists of four analytical stages that correspond to four stages of the experiential learning cycle.

The KOLB MODEL:



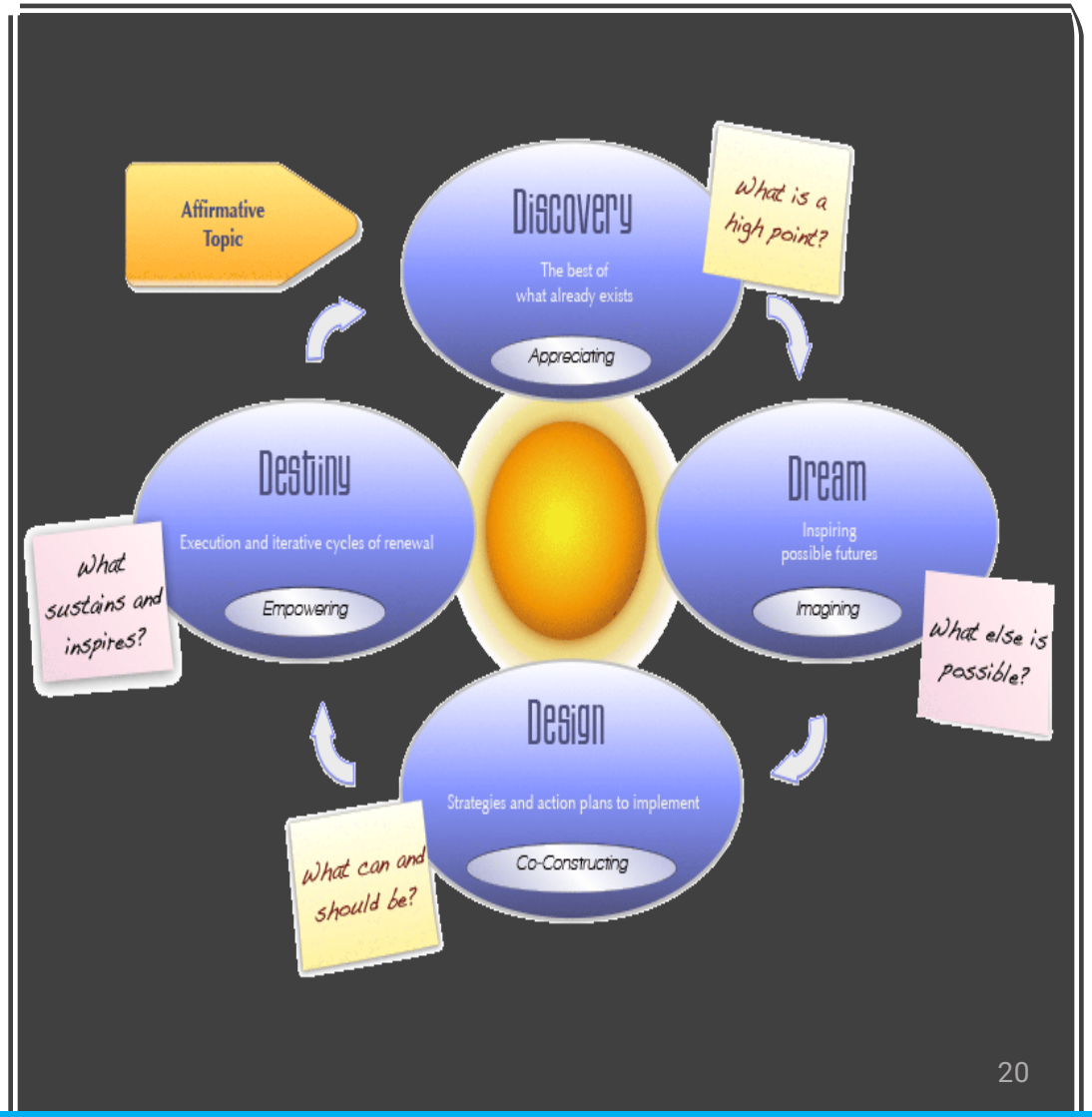
Stages of KOBL's Problem Solving Model

Stage 1: Situation Analysis	Corresponds to concrete experience	What's the most important problem?
Stage 2: Problem Analysis	Problem analysis, to reflective observation	What are the causes of the problem?
Stage 3: Solution Analysis	Solution analysis, to abstract conceptualization	What's the best solution?
Stage 4: Implementation Analysis	Implementation analysis, to active experimentation	How do we implement the solution?



SIX STIGMA
new generation problem-solving

- Six stigma is one of two of the most highly developed and distinct approaches to problem-solving.
- In the 1980's Motorola was inspired by the success of Japanese companies such as Toyota created high quality products and the Total Quality Movement (TQM). To compete, American companies like Motorola, Texas Instruments and GE developed Six Sigma problem solving, that has reportedly has saved GE alone over $8 Billion in one three-year period alone.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY
new generation problem-solving

- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is used in organization development in efforts to make organizations and the people within them more effective.
- Rather than focusing on problems, AI focuses on what the organization is like at its best.
- Developed by David Cooperrider, the following is the process that employees are taken through:

1. **Discover:** Appreciate “what is”
2. **Dream:** Imagine ”what could be”
3. **Design:** Determine “what should be”
4. **Destiny:** Create “what will be”

FACILITATION 101

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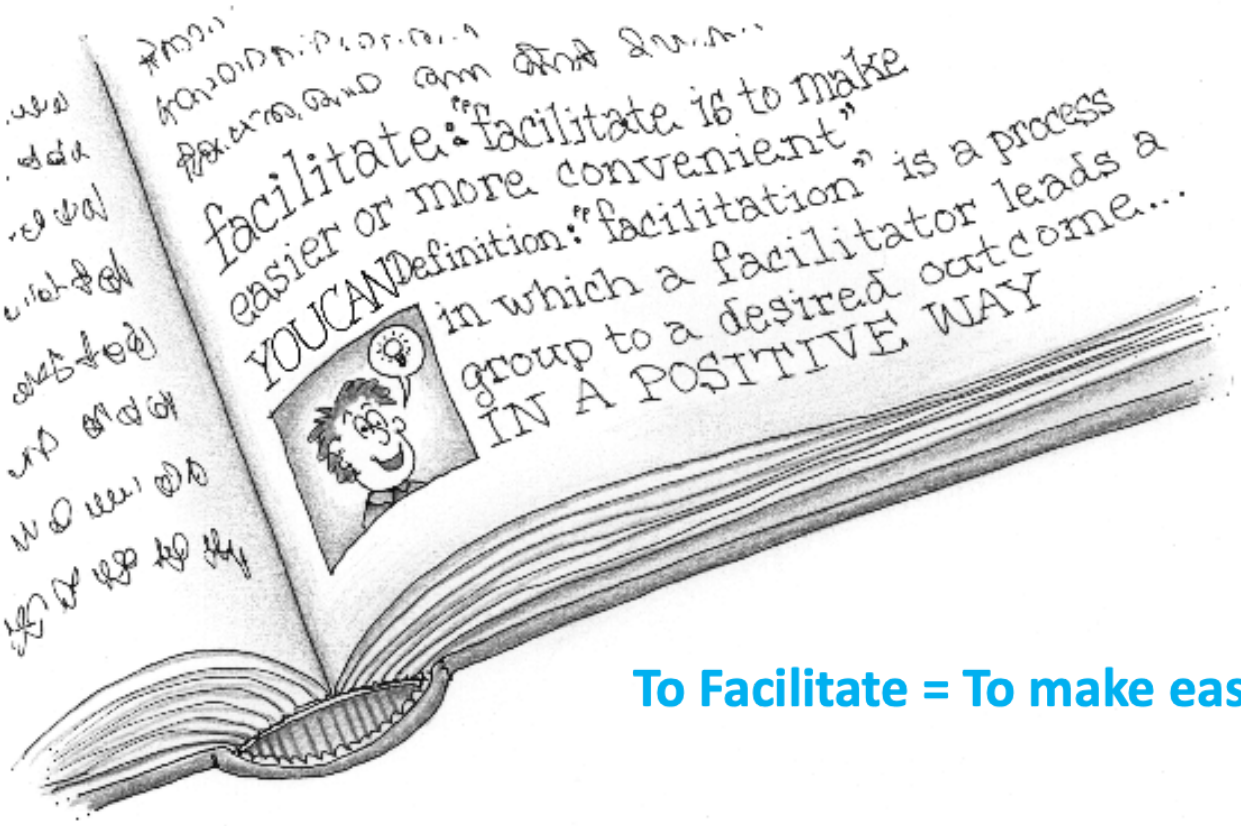

To Facilitate = To make easy.

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A Facilitator:

• Sets the tone in creating a respectful and welcoming environment.
• Directs the process.
• Encourages the parties to speak freely and respectfully.
• Recognizes that assisting others with a group process is very sensitive and serious, especially when they are opening up emotional areas of anger, fear, conflict and frustration.
• Is not a judge or advisor.

Role of a Facilitator:

- **Confidentiality -** All matters are confidential at all times.
- **Listening -** A Neutral facilitator must at all times model effective listening and respect for participants. Participants must feel like they all had a chance to speak and when they do speak, that they are listened to appropriately.
- **Do not be afraid of silence during the session.** Occasionally, you may feel the need to break the silence, but the silence may allow you to gather your thoughts, analyse the problem, compel the parties to talk to each other, and finally, set the tone for listening.
- **Directing the process -** "Directing" does not mean being stern in appearance and not allowing dialogue or discussion. To direct the process really means, to be the person who is the keeper of the ground rules and procedures, which are conducive to the eventual resolution of a specific problem or issue. Your responsibility is to give structure to the session.

Role of a Facilitator:

- **Being Neutral -** As a facilitator, you must be neutral. Assisting others to help resolve their differences and conflicts to achieve a common goal, requires a great deal of energy and commitment. It is a role not to be taken lightly.

- **Impartiality -** A facilitator must impartially and conscientiously project the posture of neutrality to the parties throughout the session.

- **Avoid making assumptions -** This can prevent your proper understanding, which may also aggravate the existing problem.

- **Do not criticize, antagonize or chastise -** Determining guilt or innocence is not the basis of the process. At no time should you be judgmental or make put downs, accusations or criticism.

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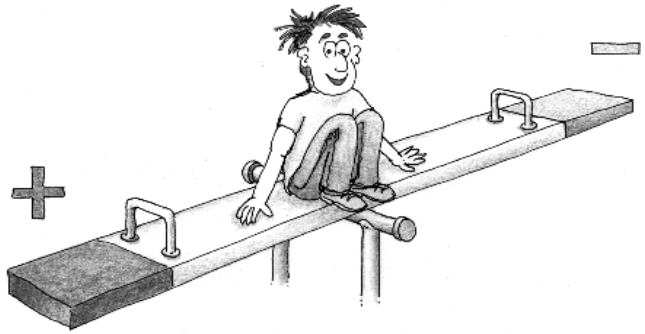

A Facilitator begins by setting Ground-rules:

- The purpose of establishing ground rules or guidelines is to create a "container" for the group process. By agreeing explicitly on how the process will go, people become more consciously aware of the impact that behaviour has on the success (or not) of an event.
- One way to establish ground rules (especially if time is short) is to post a list of ground rules and secure agreement from participants to abide by them. Below are some suggestions of what effective ground rules could be.

Suggested Ground Rules

- Respect each person's opinion.
- Only one person talking at a time.
- Give each person equal time to speak.
- No interrupting.
- Avoid discrimination and put-downs.
- All ideas are valuable (no judging).
- What is said in the room stays in the room.
- Cell phones on mute or off.
- Whatever else your group thinks is important.

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BRAINSTORMING:

Brainstorming is when members of a group come up with as many ideas as possible around one topic or issue. The facilitator generally writes all the ideas on flip chart paper and the flip charts are posted on the wall so that all participants can see them.

The intention of brainstorming is to come up with as many different ideas as possible. Ideas should not be judged, except to say: “Every idea is a good idea.” Even ideas that seem silly or unrealistic may lead to other, more practical ideas, and should be encouraged.

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RULES FOR BRAINSTORMING:

1. Do not evaluate the ideas that members generate.
2. Everything gets written down in the words of the author of the idea.
3. Include all ideas – even the wildest ones.
4. Generate as many ideas as possible.
5. Combine and build upon ideas already generated

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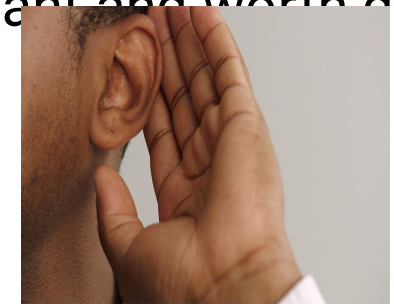
LISTENING:

- Effective listening is essential to facilitation, it is what encourages facilitation participants to talk openly about the facts, feelings and trust the group with any ideas they generate.
- To effectively listen attempt must be made by the listener (a facilitator in this case) to restate the content of what the speaker has said. It shows the listener is trying to understand how it would feel to be the other person. It shows that the other person is important and worth giving your .



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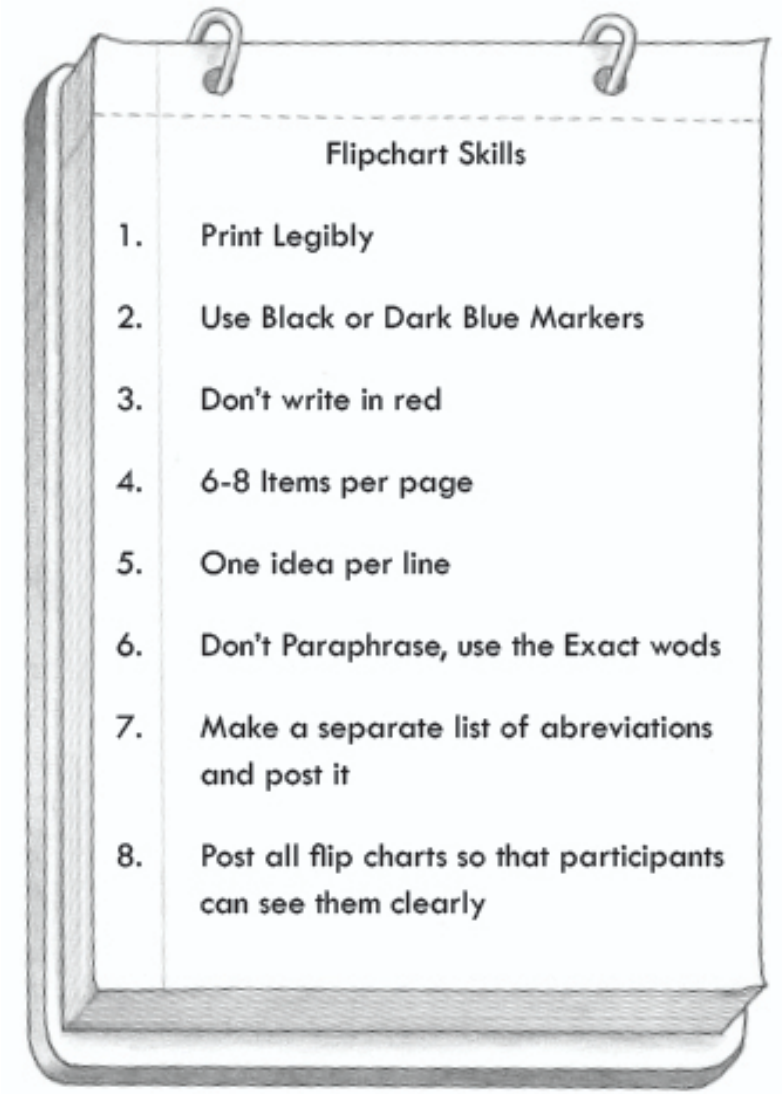
FLIPCHARTING:

- Facilitation has become synonymous with “Flip-charting”. Flip charts and paper are not cheap. There are many situations where they will not be available. When they are, they should be treated as a valued resource. Having a plan “B” is always a good idea if flip charts are not available.



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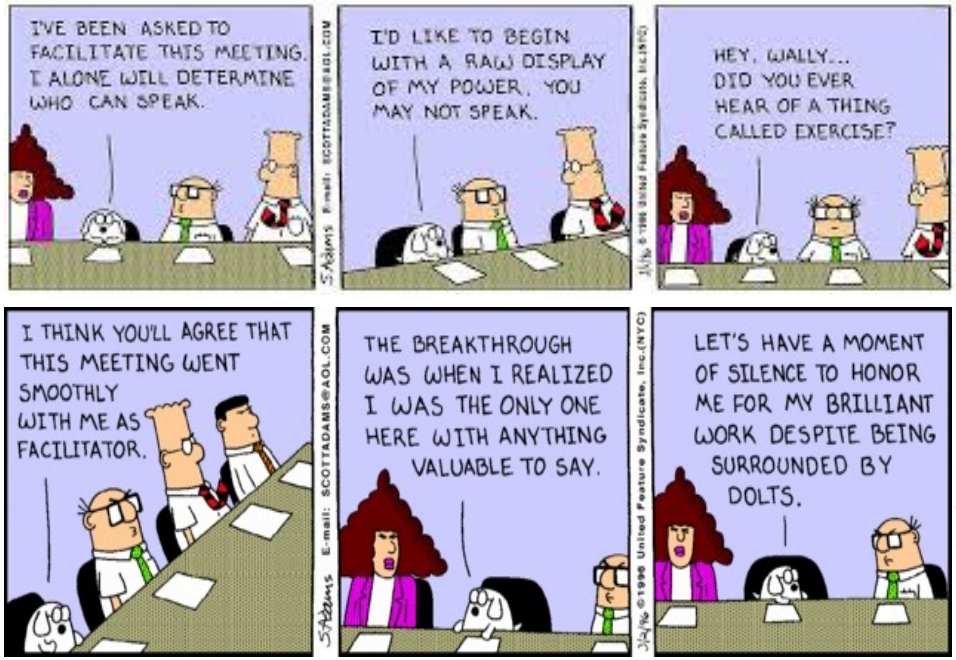
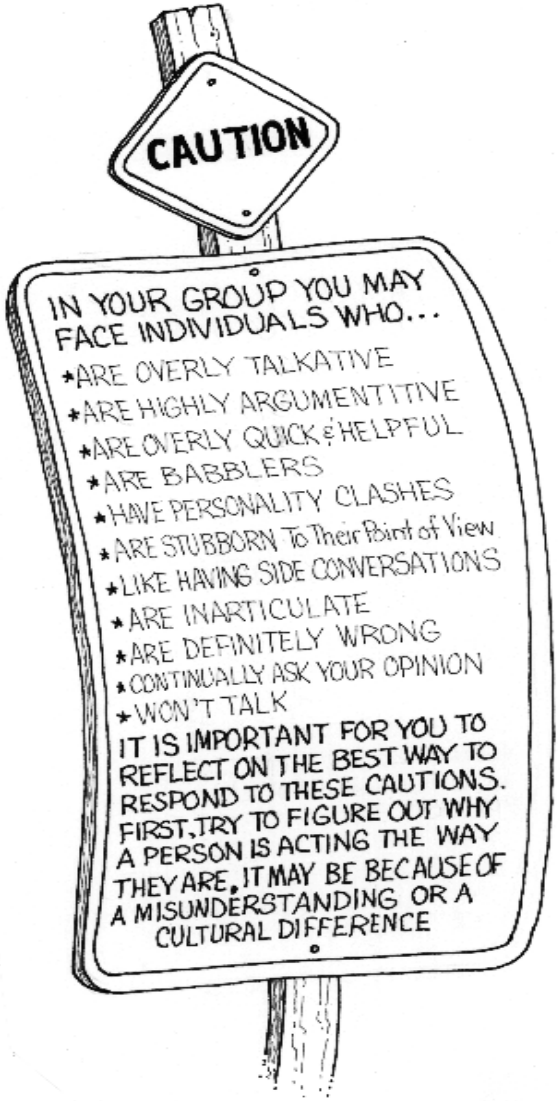
FACILITATION:

- We will cover more on facilitation in class.





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