

e-paper

**Face-to-Face Techniques
in
Environmental Education**

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Acknowledgements

This e-paper results from the reflection of SocioSistemas on its 25 years of practical experience in the environmental education. For this experiment contributed entities, employees and target participants of our work, from very young children to adult population, in Portugal. A fruitful partnership that has led to this text we share now with great pleasure.

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Summary

Given the complexity of the new environmental issues, the future of environmental education necessarily involves using socio-pedagogical methodologies for citizens' listening and participation, which encourage their involvement in the whole process.

Thus, the following text will reflect on the path of environmental education in Portugal since the late 60s, and establish the efficacy of three socio-pedagogical techniques that make a much more informed and a much more interventionist citizen. They are "Door-to-Door Intervention", "Awareness-raising Session" and "Forum".

For simplification, these three techniques were grouped under the concept "Face-to-Face", as the common thread between them is the simultaneous presence of the facilitator and participants. This makes it more effective and more demanding.

Note

In this e-paper, diagrams and photos are marked with "click", corresponding to links to view animations and videos.

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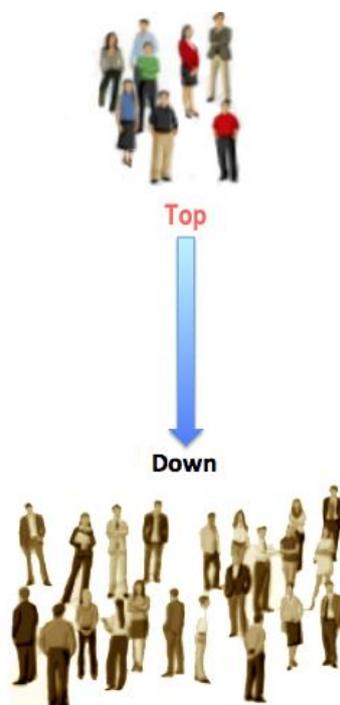
Environmental Education in Portugal

Role and positioning of the Entities

Portugal has a large environmental education experience, a journey mainly initiated at the late 60s. This education was carried out from the State strong initiative (Central Administration, Local Administration and Public Enterprises), and had a broad and complementary involvement of private companies (SPV, SOGILUB and other Waste Management Entities and Operators) and environmental NGOs. For this education, they used Socio-Pedagogy¹ instruments, which proved to be fairly effective, in most cases.

Thus, to characterize the path followed by this environmental education, it can be said that its most significant feature is the *top-down* strategy, that is, it has been promoted by entities that are on top of social decision pyramid (Central and Local Administration, and Public Enterprises) and targeted the ordinary citizen at the base.

In scheme

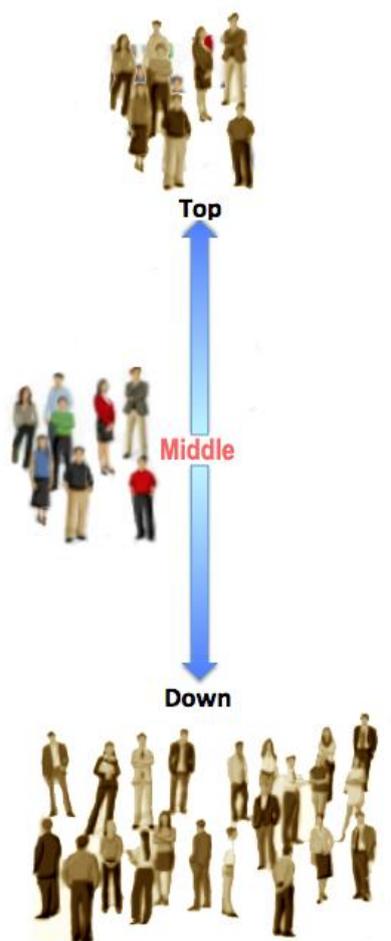


¹ The Socio-Pedagogy is the methodology that induces and builds Social Change. Its different techniques will be described throughout this text.

These top decision makers unloaded requirements, information and pre-set instructions over the ordinary citizen, as if this last one was a mere receiver.

Meanwhile, the participation of private companies and NGOs in this education movement can be considered as *middle-up-down* strategy because they are in the middle of the pyramid of social decision, keeping strong links to state authorities and intervening in the population from its middle position.

In scheme,



Here, too, the same or similar requirements, information and predefined instructions were discharged on the citizens, and these remained also in the mere receiver position.

In short, the citizen has so far been handled by all stakeholders in environmental issues as a repeater of rules to comply.

The previously described approach made sense, given the history of environmental concerns in Portugal. So it all started by the 60's of XX century, with the interests about Nature Conservation.

This conservationist line gave generic guidance to citizens, preparing them to respond to possible environmental attacks, particularly in terms of public opinion. It resulted.

Concern for Nature Conservation has remained to this day, but, from the 80's, another came, the management of natural resources and, with this, the management of municipal solid waste.

If, in the conservationist's point of view, the guidelines are given to citizens in a generic form, the message about the municipal solid waste management is absolutely directive, such as:

do so ... do not do so ...

ie the message is specified into a number of very clear and explicit rules of behavior, infinitely repeated over the years. From the rules of disposal of waste for recycling to home composting, everything was reduced to easily understandable and doable rules.

It can be said that this approach also worked very successfully, due to the relative simplicity of those two themes – Nature Conservation and Waste Management.

Socio-Pedagogy and its techniques

For the results described above, it was necessary that all parties involved resorted to Socio-Pedagogy, the methodology that, through various techniques, allows lead and build Social Change.

Resuming the *top-down* scheme previously referred, let's remember that the *top* entity, for example Central Administration, had a Social Change project to bring to the *down* population, about the separation and deposit of recyclable packaging in the due collection containers.

So that the population follow this request of separating the recyclable packages and deposit them in the right way, the entities used three sets of socio-pedagogical techniques, *information, communication, and emotion*.

Let's consider the characteristics of each set of these techniques and the obtainable results.

Information



[click](#)

Information refers to a set of techniques that can be data transmission about some project, but does not provide direct feedback from the population. Information is, for example, brochures, billboards, radio ads, TV, websites, etc. With the information, the project and the new required behavior became known, but the result obtained in the population is very basic, it stays only at a cognitive level. The population will say: **I know** ... new information about the project.

Communication



[click](#)

On a second level, **communication** refers to a set of techniques that allows the population to give direct feedback about the information received.

Communication is, for example, Awareness-raising Sessions, mobilization meetings, Door-to-Door Interventions, chats and social networks online, etc. Communication allows the public face-to-face discussion, debate, objections and clarifying doubts about the project. The result refers to the attitudes of the population, and the people say: **I agree...** with the project.

Emotion



[click](#)

The previous two sets of techniques are not yet able to achieve the desired behavioral change. This is achieved only with the third-level set techniques, **emotion**. Emotion is, for example, events, festivities, freebies, participated live demonstrations, etc., in which is promoted emotional involvement of the population in the project. Emotion allows people to feel and live the project, try it, build the group's shoulder-to-shoulder, and detonates the imitation factor. Now people will say: **I do ...** what the project asks.

In Portugal, the entities involved in environmental issues used all this techniques, and in a similar way. This means that, in most entities that have promoted environmental education, it can be identified the use of information (brochures, ads, posters, etc.), communication (debates, Awareness-raising Sessions, etc.) and emotional mobilization (festivities, contests, giveaways, etc.).

The existing differences refer to the higher or lower level of invested funds, and even to the level and type of emotion mobilization used, which have been higher and contrarian by NGOs. For example, by definition, NGO's are located in counter-power, thus they have the possibility to use also the street demonstrations, parades, blockades, occupations, etc., actions not permitted to institutional entities.

Thus, it can be said that, over the period considered, there were many national, state, private and NGOs entities who took in their hands the environmental education, there were numerous and varied education techniques used which proved to be globally effective, and there were wide-resources spent on training and mobilization of citizens for the specific cause of resource management, among others.

So, today we know that, in changing people's behavior, we have to give information, discuss information, and celebrate the change. Of course, to do all this with efficiency, it requires from the promoters of the project an increasing level of creativity and innovation. It can be said that it's required "every imagination in the service of transformation".

However, all this know-how is no longer enough. The future proves to be much more demanding.

The demanding Future

Today, in the XXI century, the major concern is much more comprehensive and complex than the Natural Resources Management, as it is to promote the sustainability of the various systems, not only from an environmental point of view, but also economic, social and cultural. Now the message is very difficult to simplify by rules, and therefore it requires that citizens be in an absolutely different position from the previous.

In other words, the citizen will have to go from "repeater of rules" to "creator of actions", being essential to have a more enlightened perspective that allows him to act.

This assumes that is made available to the citizens a much more comprehensive level of information that transforms into real and operative tools for a deeper, creative, and informed intervention.

However, the high quality of information the citizen must receive is not enough to change his "repeater of rules" position. It is also crucial that the citizen gain a much higher interventionist role for defining and resolving the issues in question. In a word, it is necessary to cause

the citizen's empowerment

which means, increase the citizen's intervention in the Sustainability Policy, changing his role from "information repository" to "active agent of social change".

Empowerment



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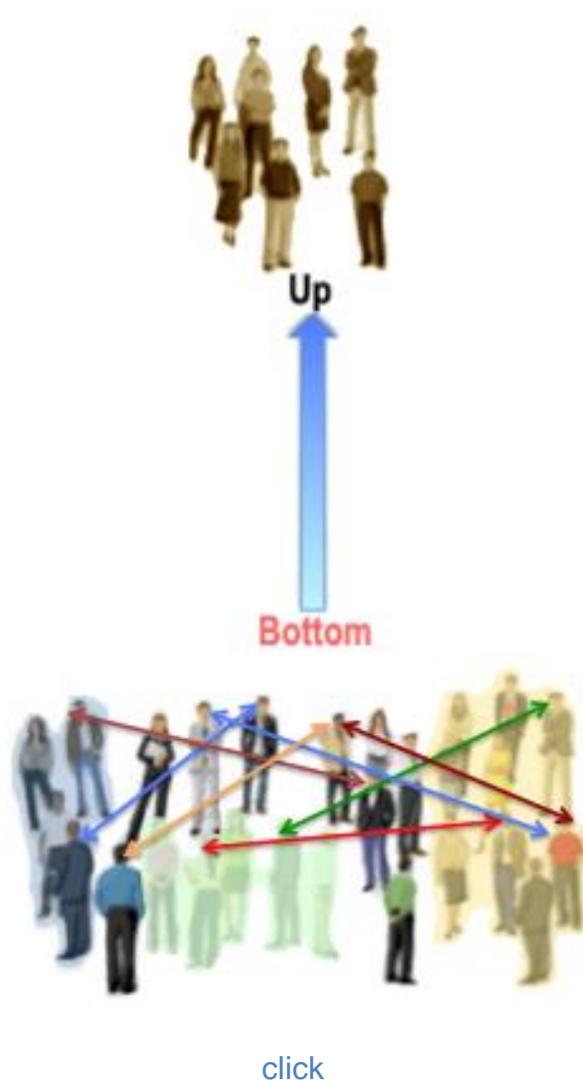
Empowerment is a set of fourth level socio-pedagogical techniques because implements two main instruments - the mechanisms of "listening" to the population, and the mechanisms of "participation". Now people will say: **I build...** the project.

The listening mechanism refers to techniques that are necessary to listen to the population, observe their behavior and obtain data about the effective operation of the project. It's true that the call centers, surveys, polls, etc., already give some support to this concern of listening to the population, but they are not still sufficiently used.

In turn, the mechanism of participation refers to techniques that are necessary to provoke the active participation of the population in the preparation of the project, especially with regard to adapting it to the social reality in which it will be deployed. The public consultation of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the dynamics of the Participatory Budgets of Municipalities give some support to this concern of participation, but they need to be more widely used. The "Forum" is, in turn, the technique that goes further in building participation.

So, the empowerment is a set of techniques of innovative education. These techniques put the citizen in a stronger position of *bottom-up* participation, i.e., as a generator, active and creative agent.

In scheme:



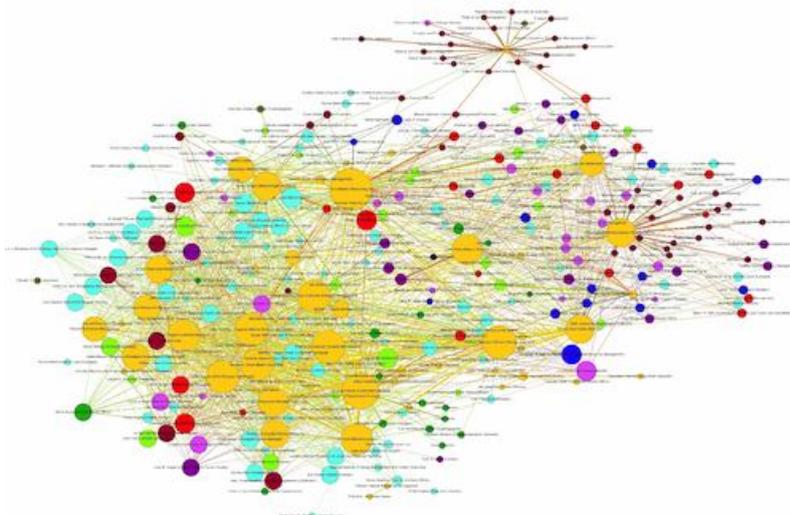
The Partner Citizen

These innovative education techniques put the focus on the community, using, deepening and strengthening the local, regional and national social fabric. It's expected to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of this education, in that the values, practices and environmental solutions are recreated, assumed and self-rated by this community in its sphere of responsibility.

Similarly, the community's involvement will stimulate creative ways of informal learning, whose breadth; depth and speed of dissemination provoke also a greater efficiency, quality and consistency of results produced in awareness-raising. It is thus to promote the so-called *communities of practice*.

It is intended, then, to promote the use of extremely rich and complex networks of interpersonal and group relations present in any community, and turn them into active agents of "epidemic" awareness.

In an evocative image, it can be seen the synchronous representation of a social network:



This means that, for example, a project for quantitative and qualitative improvement of the selective disposal of recyclable packaging would have to be injected into a group of citizens, assumed and developed by them within their social network, using the "epidemic" awareness tools of this community.

Or, at a deeper level, the project would be born in and by the initiative of the community, there it would be worked out and implemented under its direction. In the finalization stage, the project would have the potential partnership of official or unofficial entities.

Coupled with the use of the community's own social network, and strongly linked to it, there is still the possibility of exponential utilization of the obvious potential of the Internet, due to its high efficiency and low cost. New communication technologies and online social networks are today an asset for all the work of mobilizing public action.

Thus, the experience and results obtained within various communities can epidemically contaminate other communities, be copied and recreated, strengthening the project and ensuring its sustainability and its continuous improvement.

Groups of citizens become thus project partners of mobilization, having a high degree of information, tools for a qualified decision, and a high level of intervention in the issue.

Thus, the citizens transform a "project" into a real **cultural acquisition**. It can be said that, only then, Social Change will be held.

In summary

It can be said that, given the complexity of the new environmental issues, the future of education necessarily involves the use of socio-pedagogical mechanisms of population listening and participation, to encourage the active involvement of citizens in the whole process.

What the Future requires is

a much more informed citizen
and
a much more interventionist citizen

This e-paper addresses these two lines of requirement.

Thus, the following text will lay down the performance conditions of the three socio-pedagogical techniques: the Door-to-Door Interventions, Awareness-raising Session, and the Forum, which allow obtaining "a much more informed citizen" and "a much more interventionist citizen".

As mentioned above, the first two are techniques of Communication, and the Forum is an Empowerment technique.

These three techniques are the core of Socio-Pedagogy and the conditions of its use and operation are difficult and need to be greatly improved. A new approach, a lot of creativity and innovation are required so these instruments can result.

For the sake of simplicity, these three techniques are gathered under the concept **Face-to-Face**, because the common thread is the simultaneous presence of the facilitator and participants.

Face-to-face, techniques and base tools

"Face-to-face education" refers to situations in which the facilitator is in front of the participant, in direct communication therewith, being essentially of three distinct types:

- **Door-to-door intervention**, taking place at school / work station or in the participant's home, addresses only to one person or a very small number. The used teaching tool is the "experiential pedagogy" in real situation;
- **Awareness-raising session**, which runs in classrooms or auditorium, is aimed at a large number of people. Uses visual aids, and also uses the "experiential pedagogy" in real situation or simulation;
- **Forum**, which takes place in a closed or open space and organized in "coffee tables", is addressed to a large number of people, and uses the methodology of focus groups for "collective intelligence". The pedagogical tools used are Scenius and Metaplan.

As a technique that uses the close proximity to the population, face-to-face enables to get the message, immediately assess its understanding, answer objections, and enables to stimulate and gather opinions and decisions on the issues concerned.

Each of the above techniques has its own objectives, strengths and clearly identified weaknesses, critical factors of well-defined success criteria and evaluation of its effectiveness.

The choice of which technique to use is a strategic decision that depends on the objectives that the project wishes to achieve.

But, to discuss the whole theme of face-to-face is important to draw the three bases of its successful use tools.

Thus, on the one hand, as the basis of face-to-face is the interpersonal communication, it is necessary to set the rules for effective **Speech**, in that the message spread must be of rapid and immediate comprehension, and at the same time ensuring a high level of adhesion.

On the other hand, it must be understood the importance and principles of **Experiential Education**, base tool for increasing the understanding and involvement of the participant in the subject concerned.

Finally, it is also essential to clarify the principles and functioning of the **Collective Intelligence**, base tool for discussion groups in Forum.

Effective Speech

To attend a convention, an Awareness-raising Session or a work meeting can be a traumatic experience for ordinary mortals. Why? It is traumatic because, in most cases, experts excel in expressing themselves through a hermetic language, difficult and absolutely incomprehensible to those who are not in their area of expertise. On the other hand, they speak for a long time, occupying the "airtime" in a long, repetitive and tiring speech.

In result, most listeners demobilize, the disinterest is general, and the ideas presented are lost. Seniors fall asleep, younger quit. The general feeling is of waste of time.

But the patience of the listeners is not the only important issue. More important, is that the idea slipped away, the theme become obscure, hidden by the verbiage, entangled in the confusion of arguments and in the length of the sentences.

And if the idea slipped away, if the subject was not understood, it is impossible to build social adhesion to the very topic. Individuals and groups are unable to reflect on it, and have only three alternatives:

- ✓ form their opinion from crumbs that they could capture,
- ✓ form their opinion from crumbs someone released,
- ✓ ignore the issue because they failed to form an opinion.

Why use knotty speech?

A reflection on the phenomenon of "knotty speech" takes us to the consideration of three questions:

- ✓ speak difficult as sign of intelligence?
- ✓ speak difficult as the group code?
- ✓ speak difficult to retain power?

The sign of intelligence

The phenomenon of "knotty speech" is very old, and takes us back to historical times where access to knowledge was sealed to most citizens. Thus, if the knowledge was only held by a few, as the monks in the Middle Ages, for example, it established a hierarchical relation between the two poles, those who don't know versus those who know, the ignorant versus the wise, the stupid versus the intelligent.

The most typical historical example is the figure of Pythia, the priestess of Apollo at Delphi Temple in ancient Greece, who interpreted the signs of the gods for the ignorant believers. Or sorcerers, healers, astrologers. And doctors in general.

As ordinary mortals could not understand what was said, did not understand the language, could not draw conclusions, they were in a position of inferiority. "Speak difficult" was thus a sign of intelligence, a symptom of superiority, and a characteristic of very gifted beings.

This trait has remained in contemporary culture. And so the facilitator, the individual that translates, explains and speaks clear is considered a minor figure, from the point of view of merit. The much listened commentator, the historian who explains history, the scientist who explains science, the conductor showing the orchestra secrets are seen as smaller figures, poorly reasoned and shallow.

From this point of view, who has social weight is the figure of the closed and isolated individual in his office, surrounded by books, computers, test tubes and microscopes, who rarely explain his findings. The more he leaves the office, the more he is known and accepted by his fellow citizens, more frowned upon he will be by his peers.

And why do peers, other technicians, other scientists reject the facilitator? Reject him because, in addition of showing "low intelligence", he also is a threat to the group which he belongs to.

The group code

Apart from being interpreted as a sign of intelligence, the "knotty speech" responds also to the need that each group has to differentiate from others, to mark its specificity to the outside, one of the main conditions of maintaining its internal cohesion.

So, each group has its own dialect, hardly understood by outside elements. Examples of this are the language of the young versus the language of the older, the football dialect, the language of civil servants, managers, politicians, governments, legislators, computer technicians, etc.

The following video, made by one of the best Portuguese comedians groups, Gato Fedorento, effectively illustrates the above lines.



[Click](#)

The common code to each group is a factor of identity and internal cohesion and it serves as a distinguishing mark in relation to other groups. Who does not realize the group language is ignorant and “not ours”.

And why is it so important to be seen as intelligent and belonging to a group? It’s important because he has more power over who is ignorant and “not ours”.

Retain power

The "knotty speech" is an important source of power. It’s power over the thoughts, opinions and actions of others.

The principle of "Magister dixit," a phrase that in the Middle Ages Latin meant "says the Master," is the perfect example of how the someone’s thought, translated in an hermetic and coded language, can command the evolution of social thought, catching the expression of individual creativity and killing any attempt of criticism of the established truth. The “Master’s say”, whatever it was, was inexplicable, unquestionable, and did not admit alternatives, commanding knowledge and social behaviors.

Today, this phenomenon still remains. Every social system has its sapient and heroes, its unquestionable figures, its respectable corporations. All of them make every effort to issue their opinions, their knowledge, in a most complex possible way, far far away from the common citizen, because this is the

guarantee that they will remain in the wise and superior position they conquered.

Speak easy for what?

Einstein used to say that he only would know a lot about the Theory of Relativity when he would manage to explain it to his maid. With this idea, he wanted to mean that the more competent a technician is in his area, more conditions he has to be able to translate his knowledge into simple formulas, clear and easily understood by those outside of that area.

If so, why is it becoming so essential today to create another model of Speech, another social practice nearest of the principles of mature citizenship, typical of the XXI century?

The truth is that contemporary democratic practice has aspired and required increasingly interventional citizens. From all the organizations that protect consumers and clients, to the public consultations of environmental impact studies and the power of complaint and accountability of Central and Local Administration, the citizens has increasingly need to identify the situations, to be able to recognize their lines of strength and weaknesses, and to express their informed opinion.

For that, the citizen needs to understand what he listens and reads, and have data to reflect, draw conclusions and decide his action.

The “understood word” becomes therefore a crucial factor for evolution and change of the social system, at two levels:

- ✓ for adhesion to a proposed change, and
- ✓ for behavioral change of individuals and groups.

In fact, just stick to a change project those who can understand, reflect and discuss about it. And only change their behavior those who adhere to a proposed change, because they understood it, reflected and discussed it.

Speak easy is therefore not a style, a fashion, a populism or weakness. It is rather a civilization imperative.

How to speak easy?

Speak easy requires hard work. It is much more difficult than speak difficult. It requires a lot of information, a lot of research, a lot of thought and preparation. It requires a great mastery of the topic, and a great respect for the listener. Let us see how.

The "core"

And what is to explain an idea, put it into easy words for all to understand? Is it a reduction, an impoverishment, a fake? No, it's being able to go to the "core" of that idea.

And what is the "core" of an idea or a project? It is being able to summarize in a few words the essence of the idea or project, its main features, removing all flourish around them. The Anglo-Saxon culture calls this effort to summarize as

get to the point!

Get to the "core" of the idea is the first step towards clarifying the speech.

But it is not enough. Now, it is necessary to put it in simple words, support it with practical examples and illustrate it with schemes and images. Anything can be used if it promotes effective comprehension and feed the reflection of the beholder. Again, the Anglo-Saxon culture plays with this work, calling it a

KISS

meaning,

Keep It Simple, Stupid!

The effective sentence

The discussion about the "core" and the clear and simple word brings us to the effectiveness of sentence.

So, to summarize in one sentence the essence of an idea is a trainable art. It requires again a great reflection and work and a lot of creativity.

For example, see the following phrases:

- ✓ "Bad it's not change your ideas Bad it's having no ideas to change!"
- ✓ "You must worry about the future, because that is where you will live the rest of your life."
- ✓ "Do you live with me, or against me?"

Any of these phrases is highly effective in conveying the idea. In a simply and directly way, it can summarize the message. This message immediately reaches the listener, and may serve as a "core" for the development of the subject till the final conclusion.

So, build a speech is also seek effective phrases that work and that provoke the adhesion of the listener to the topic.

An effective phrase is not a slogan, although it can be used as such, is rather a unifying understanding of the idea and a factor of its memorization.

Now, let's talk about the organizing of ideas, and their exposure. Let us look at the assumptions.

The conclusion comes at the beginning

The traditional technique of exposing an idea or project follows the Cartesian demonstrative logic, with the following steps:

Introduction

- 1 -
 - 1.1 -
 - 1.1.1 -
 - 1.2 -
- 2 -
 - 2.1 -
 - 2.1.1 -
 - 2.2 -
-

Conclusion

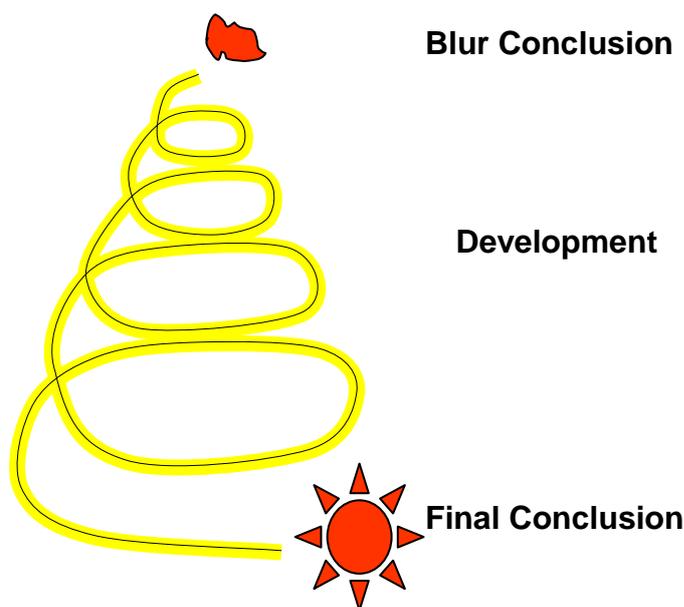
The essence of this speech organization technique is to build the idea slowly, step by step, until the final conclusion. As in building a house, speaker will providing information, brick by brick, floor to roof, until his final result, the completed house.

Thus, the exposure of the idea starts with a tip, the alleged beginning, and moves through successive points, piece by piece, until the end. The listener only gets the full picture at this end, the so called conclusion,

This technique of exposing an idea is extremely tiring, and requires the listener's great attention, permanent concentration and no deviations.

But there's another way to expose ideas, as old as the Greek rhetoric. This is the "spiral exposure" to involve the listener in the explanation.

It looks like this:



In this case, the “Blur Conclusion” is given at the beginning, by an outline, a brief and synthetic description of the "core" of the theme. The "Development" comes next, in successive enlargements of the theme without losing sight of the outline, and enriching it with more information, examples, and graphics, whatever is required to clear the idea. Then, at the end, comes up the “Final Conclusion”, which is no more than the enriched crystallization of what was said at the Blur Conclusion.

It is not, therefore, to build a house from floor to roof, brick by brick, as in traditional exposure technique, but to paint a picture. Here, the painter first performs a topic outline with its main contours, the so-called "sketch". Then he will perfect this draft, making arise increasingly its nuances and details, the Development, until showing the finished picture - the Final Conclusion.

The advantage of this display technique, based, as mentioned, on a clear "core" and on an understandable language, is to keep the listener permanently involved in the unfolding of explanation, and without losing the thread. The guiding thread, the sketch, the “blur” is always present. This is the reference of the whole idea development, till the final conclusion.

And even though the listener's attention may divert for a few seconds for any reason, the thread is not lost, the outline is still there, and only some details would be lost.

The adhesion sources

After organizing the exhibition of ideas, we must think also about their strength, about their capacity to conquer the listener’s adhesion. To this end, it is

necessary that the speech appeals to different capacities of the listener, as it unfolds.

Thus, at the “blur” phase, it is necessary to appeal to the listener's emotions, as it is through emotion that attention is immediately aroused. To appeal to emotion is to express the idea in an affective way, positive or negative, using images with strong meaning, within the limits of good taste, of course. It will sound something like this:

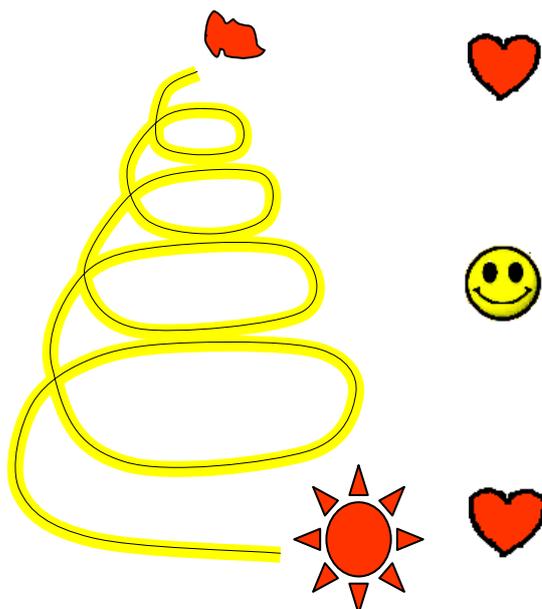
"The problem *xxx* represents *yyy* in our country. Let us see how. "

Development is the time for intellectual reflection, time to use graphics, demonstrations, and facts. It is a purely brain period, allowing enrich the blur with all the data needed to deepening the idea.

At the end, comes the Final Conclusion. Back to the emotional appeal, the Final Conclusion, as stated, is the crystallization of all that was said and it should strengthen the listener’s adhesion to the idea. It is also important that this Final Conclusion induces action in the listener, through the creation of a future link between the idea and who listens to it. It will sound something like this:

"In short, the problem is
and if you want to deepen it, you can connect to the site *xxx* ... "

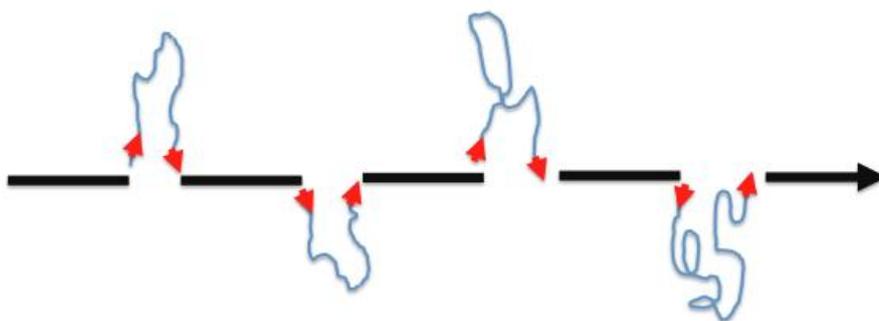
The following diagram illustrates this dynamic:



Tergiversation is not allowed

This concern about “speak easy” brings another point that can be deadly to those who listen. It's called "tergiversation". This means that the speaker, despite having a clear thread, is permanently deviating from this thread, opening side considerations and additions to the theme that cause noise and disturbance to the exposure and to the understanding of the idea.

The tergiversation looks like this:



and it sounds something like this:

"Speaking about Economy, I would say that the situation remains as expected - which I incidentally had already stated at last seminar – but, as I said, remains as expected - indeed I'm not the only one saying this, Dr. X also has said it in the recent article x - ...".

And so on... In this case, the most attentive listener will be suspended from the conclusion that never comes, and will be tired of so much diversion to the main theme. The less attentive will turn off after a few seconds.

In short

“Speak easy” is not easy, it requires a lot of work and a great concern with the objectives to be achieved and respect for those who will listen. But it is a worthwhile effort because it enables considerably raising the level of understanding of ideas and projects which they refer to.

The highest compliment anyone can do to a speaker is:

"I do not agree with anything he said, but I love listening to him!"

This means that the idea was understood, was assimilated by the listener, and enabled him to draw a conclusion. This is the first objective of a speaker. Be understood.

The Effective Speech is one of the fundamental pillars of face-to-face education.

The Experiential Education

The traditional education mainly makes appeal to the participant's cognitive abilities, i.e., the understanding of any issue is caused by the explanation of its concepts.

In one example, the teaching about how to separate waste in recycling bins is done by giving the rules with the support of Power Point slides, more or less animated. The participant thus gets to "know" the rules and maybe later he will "do" the separation of packaging.

But, the world today puts at our disposal a huge amount of different information that encourage us greatly and in various directions, and each of them competing for our attention.

Therefore, how to ensure that the information the facilitator wants to impart will get the participant's attention? How to insure that this information will exponentially increase his learning, and at the same time involving him in the theme, assuring more strongly his adhesion to the subject? That is, what can increase the probability that the participant will subsequently "do" the separation of the packaging?

This is where the Experiential Education comes in. The Experiential Education proposes a different approach from mere "knowledge". Today, it's not enough to "know", it's essential

to do ... and think about it.

Thus, the Experiential Education is based on the "to do" and, above all, "to think about what was done."

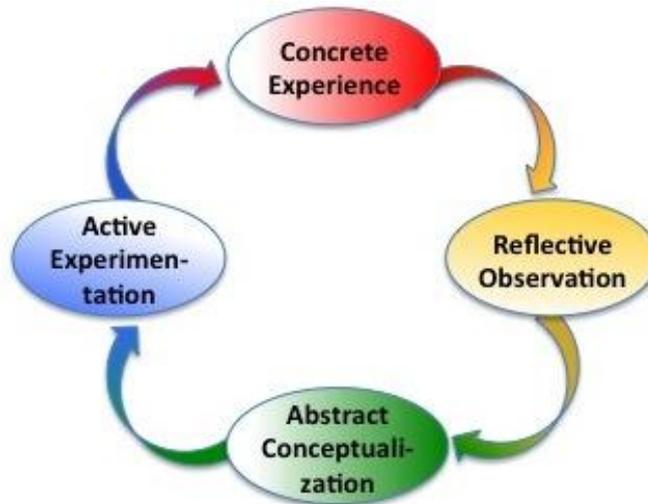
The following video illustrates the situation.



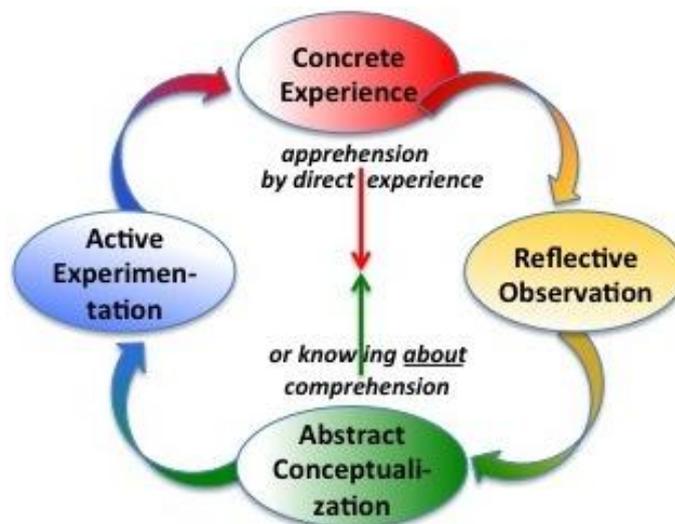
[click](#)

This means that, in a first moment, learning is based on action, in experiencing concrete situations, and in a second moment, that experience is reflected, conceptualized and embedded in a new role model.

Translated into a scheme², the process covered by the Experiential Education will be:



Deepening the previous scheme, the Experiential Education generates two complementary ways to get knowledge, by apprehending the concrete experience and by understanding the abstract conceptualization:



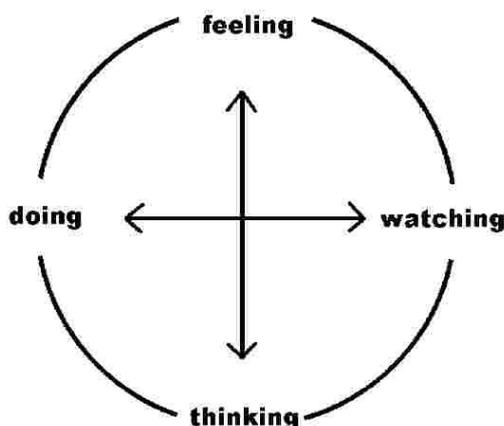
² Kolb, Rubin, McIntyre, "Organizational Psychology-An Experiential Approach"; 1984 Prentice Hall.

Thus, in a concrete example, the issue of packaging separation for recycling is introduced, firstly, by the actual live experience of separating packaging and, secondly, by reflecting on this experience, assessing the rights and wrongs, successes and failures, difficulties and strengths.

These two steps, "live experience" and "reflection" on what is experienced, will allow build and consolidate the "knowledge" of the waste separation rules. But these two steps go further.

Also because the participant experimented and reflected on his experience, he was involved in the issue, his adhesion increased, also raising the probability of actually "do" the packaging separation, later on.

In a scheme³



So, with Experiential Education, first, the emotional side of the participant is appealed, by the "feel" of live experience. Only then the reflection on what was "felt" provokes the cognitive learning.

The closing cycle is the "well thought and well informed action" which ensures that the new learned behaviors become **culture acquisition**, ready to be transferred and copied by the Community.

The Experiential Education is a pillar of face-to-face education.

³ Ibid.

Collective Intelligence

Why put the project to a group discussion? Isn't simpler if the subject is examined and decided by a specialist?

It is probably simpler but the results will be very different.

In an analogy of Stanford University News:

"... In the human brain, a single neuron responds only to those linked with it. However, all together, they create a cortex as rich as that of Einstein, where thousands of new possibilities are born."

Collective Intelligence is a similar phenomenon. When a group of individuals are put in direct contact, where they give ideas, discuss views and make decisions, the result gained is infinitely richer, more creative and deeper than which would be obtained by a single individual.

The principle is the old saying "every human being has some knowledge about something, but no human being has all knowledge about everything". And this is the first purpose of using Collective Intelligence. It intends to take advantage of the richness of "thinking together".

A definition of the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence says that Collective Intelligence is

"the group shared intelligence, which emerges from the collaboration and constructive competition of several individuals."

The following video illustrates this.



[click](#)

However, the use of Collective Intelligence obeys specific rules of procedure, the main being the "integration of dissent". This means that in group discussion it's necessary to overcome the normal tendency for the idea of the strongest participant to prevail, or to decide by majority. What is important in Collective Intelligence processes is that the group puts its agreements and disagreements in confrontation and, on that basis, can define a solution that satisfies all the points of view involved.

This process is based on four orientations:

- exchange of mutual understandings (not arguments struggles);
- shared creativity (individual logic originating shared innovation);
- cycles of "tangible" results to validate or transform;
- partial results accepted to join the overall result.

The result thus obtained belongs to everyone. It was not produced by anyone but belongs to all. Everyone recognizes himself in some detail of the result.

The resulting group relationships create an atmosphere of creativity, dialogue and partnership, dominated by participation in the research and construction of an unknown global outcome and, in the process, everyone feels and is autonomous, aware and responsible for its actions.

This participation, this feeling of sharing and being present, is the second major objective of Collective Intelligence.

In fact, a Collective Intelligence process, where the individual and the group participate in the discussion and decision on any project, means to be part of it, take ownership of it, become attached to it, and become spokesmen and guarantors of success of its deployment in the community.

The new technologies, related to the Internet and all its options, from Google and Skype to Wikipedia, are important tools for the development of Collective Intelligence.

Collective Intelligence is a foothold of face-to-face education.

Door-to-Door Intervention



[click](#)

The Door-to-Door Intervention aims to the immediate change of behavior and is directed only to a person or a very small number of people.

The most effective form of Door-to-Door Intervention occurs when it is made at home, at school or on job of the participant, and where the behavior takes place, for example, nearby his composter. The pedagogical tool used par excellence is the "experiential pedagogy", in real situation and on-site.

Thus, awareness-raising is carried out as close to the real situation as possible, and the facilitator searches for the participant.

All the action is design from the scheme "blur-development-conclusion" described above, along with the delivery of information material and freebie.

The Door-to-Door Intervention allows extending the deepening cycle of "experiential" because it can be repeated periodically, following the evolution of behavior in actual practice. To ensure success, it is necessary to make cycles of deviations control and continuous monitoring.

Group characteristics

The Door-to-Door Intervention can be directed to the general population of a community, town or neighborhood, or to a specific professional group.

It is addressed only to adults, and the approach is made to one by one person, or to a very small group of two to five elements.

Socio-economic characteristic of the group must be known in advance, because it depends on the objectives of the awareness-raising project.

The intervention is not pre-scheduled in detail and the participant will not be waiting for the facilitator. So, this group has the characteristic of being initially resistant to receive the facilitator and the intervention.

Intervention design

The intervention always takes place wherever the awareness-raising behavior targeted occurs, be it at home, at school, at work, or at any other participant's place.

The awareness-raising is accomplished through a "casual" conversation, and supported by the informational material and observation of the real situation, for example, the normal waste container, the composter, or other. This is, par excellence, an awareness based on experiential.

The message is absolutely adapted to the socio-economic characteristics of the target group otherwise it will not be effective.

Being a very close face-to-face communication, the aim is to establish an intense dialogue, with all the room for the participant's intervention, and to question about doubts and difficulties.

At the end of the intervention, there is a commitment ritual, more or less binding, for adhesion to the real action on the project.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

The realization of the Door-to-Door Intervention requires sending notice by mail, email, social network or announcement in the media.

To overcome the initial resistance and cause the participant to be available to receive the message, the visit begins with a strongly affective approach, based on the empathic form of the facilitator's presentation, and the immediate offer of the foreseen freebie.

The language of the facilitator has to be fully tailored to each listener, because the same message may have to be passed, for example, to participants of different characteristics within the same professional group or a neighborhood.

The intervention of the facilitator should always take place in a constructive and appeaser way, in order to gain the participant's adhesion to the issue and dilute any resistance. The participant should feel partner in the project, and not subject to the same.

Because it is a conversation, the space control is very important, being crucial not having too much "noise" that diverts attention and causes impatience to the participant.

The intervention time has to be carefully thought out and should take place in the shortest possible time, taking into account the richness and complexity of the message, the participant's availability and the degree of commitment to be achieved. In model, the intervention should elapse between 30 minutes to 1 hour.

To achieve the objectives of the intervention it is crucial to observe the participant's behavior, especially through their nonverbal language.

The final commitment ritual occurs always through some form of action by the participant, be it a verbal acceptance, a written acceptance, an active farewell, exchanging contacts or acceptance of the project's equipment, for example.

In any project involving Door-to-Door Intervention, this is not the end but the beginning of a partnership with the participant. His connection to the project is maintained with subsequent monitoring and feedback of results.

Critical success factors

It is essential to have a good preliminary characterization of the target group. In case of detecting failures, it is important that the facilitator has the necessary leeway and pro-activity to address these failings.

The positive or negative image which the project or the entity that promotes it provokes to the public can unlock or block, respectively, the receptivity to the intervention, so it is an important factor to be managed by the facilitator.

The more or less stressful or "noisy" environment, in which the intervention takes place, and the very availability of the participant at the moment are also critical factors of its success and also needs to be managed by the facilitator.

The interference of an outsider element in the ongoing conversation, especially if he has resistive stance regarding the project, can lead to the participant's demobilization and it is a situation to be managed by facilitator.

The facilitator should learn to "read" how the intervention is developing, and retire at the right time so he does not close the door to future action.

How to know if the intervention was successful?

The commitment ritual is the main sign of success of the intervention. But even during this, the approval of the facilitator’s answers to participant’s questions and difficulties is an important criterion for evaluating success.

In projects involving door-to-door, the aim is clearly to change / improve the participant's immediate behavior. Therefore, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of this behavior is fundamental to the success of the project.

The assessment / monitoring may be made by regular telephone conversation, by new face-to-face interventions, and/or by observing the result of the behavior. This tactic ensures that the "misbehaviors" are tracked and resolved and that the project remains "alive".

Awareness-raising Session



The purpose of an Awareness-raising Session is to change the participant’s behavior. The aim is to get increasingly more citizens aware of the issue on the table, citizens who become proactive actors of the desired changes, and citizens who pledge to immediate change of their daily gestures.

Associated with this objective of behavioral change of each participant is the possibility that each one will have of spreading the message within his group / network of relatives, friends and acquaintances. It is also associated the important dimension of the "example-imitation-epidemic" factor, where the new gestures of each participant provokes or influences new gestures in those who

watch them. There is here, therefore, a possibility of social mobilization that spreads far beyond the four walls where the Awareness-raising Sessions takes place.

The Awareness-raising Session will therefore have to be tailored to each target group in order to produce the mobilizing effects of desired changes.

This idea of tailored design assumes that the facilitator can make a preliminary conversation with the entity requesting the session, so that he may have a minimum diagnosis of the initial situation and its transformation possibilities.

This contact will allow getting an idea, albeit general, of the participant's socio-economic characteristics, age, level of knowledge on the issues, as well as the installed behavior.

The Awareness-raising Session should be held in a classroom / auditorium and is aimed at a large number of people. So, it will also be essential to know in advance the conditions under which the session will take place, including the type and size of the room and the audiovisual aids available.

Based on this kind of information, the facilitator can design an Awareness-raising Session tailored to those concrete participants, not only with regard to the selection of themes to be addressed and their degree of development, as the selection of pedagogical methods to be used.

An Awareness-raising Session uses audiovisual media, and also uses "experiential pedagogy", in real situation or simulation. Its duration will be between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

The Awareness-raising Session should always develop according to the above mentioned spiral model of effective speech and uses, simultaneously, information, communication and emotional involvement, essential to the defined pedagogical strategy.

Therefore, each Awareness-raising Session has a dynamic based on four chained stages:

- 1st Emotional involvement - for group building
- 2nd Debate - for installed ideas admeasurements
- 3rd Information - for installed ideas renewal
- 4th Emotional involvement - for future action commitment

This pedagogical strategy will be translated into any thematic content and uses experiential pedagogy, through games, role plays, case studies and observation of real situations, adapted to each different target group.

This means that the participants' learning of the new intended knowledge is based, initially, on the action, on the experience of concrete situations, real or simulated. And secondly, this experience is thought, reflected, discussed and incorporated in a new role model.

The experiential pedagogy also pretends that the mobile to act is maintained in the future, as each session should create and maintain a permanent bond with the participants.

Next it will be described the practical application of this model to typical target groups, in particular Schools, in different levels of education, Business and Professional Groups, and General Public.

Schools

The Awareness-raising Sessions designed for schools cover all levels of education, particularly for children preschool/kindergarten (3-5 years), primary/elementary school (6-10 years), middle school (11 -12 years), middle school (13 -15 years) and high school (16-18 years).

The college level is considered as adult in this text, being encompassed in the target group Business and Professional Groups.

To adapt the Awareness-raising Session to each target group it is essential to know in advance the level of knowledge about the theme, the learning difficulties, the disciplinary behavior, the specific interest of the school, and the classroom conditions.

When applied to the students, the behavior change is not immediate, because young people still don't have decision-making power and are only a source of pressure on the family. Obviously, when the school also does sessions for teachers, staff and parents, the project is more complete and the objectives of change are quickly achieved. It's also important that the School have a concrete project in the environmental area to boost the pretended action of the students.

The experiential pedagogy is always present at all levels, but with different feature. As we go forward in the group age, the "lived" and the sensory manipulation, typical of preschool and primary school, is replaced by a strong

component of challenging "problem solving". Thus, there is a crescendo that goes from play to thought activity.

Create efficiency within the space and time allotted for the session forces to manage the experiential tools depending on the time available and group characteristics. If we have more time ... we go further.

Awareness-raising Sessions in schools use games and humor as affective tools, in different ways at every level of education. For example, the preschool children react well to nonsense, middle school between 13 to 15 years old is very critical of the joke efficacy, and in high school it is possible to use sharp humor and irony.

Regarding the freebie, this causes satisfaction, but it is not crucial to the session effectiveness. It is used as a farewell rather than a presentation.

The management of the unexpected is very important in three typical cases. On the one hand, the classroom and audiovisual equipment may be different than expected. A lack of communication between the staff of the entity about the session organization can also happen. Finally, it is essential that all players respect the schedule and time of entry in the classroom so there may be no delays and interruptions.

Preschool / Kindergarten



[click](#)

Group characteristics

The group that attends preschool / kindergarten is in the stage of acquiring concepts, knowledge of objects, materials, animals, and sometimes even colors. This is the time for discovery of the world, so any intervention with this group must allow the child's exploitation and respect their learning time.

On the other hand, the child has great availability to participate in group, to intervene in the challenges, and to act. The act is his essential source for collecting and learning the information available.

Inherent to this phase of growth is the extreme curiosity about everything around, the immediate and positive reaction to situations that provoke surprise and mystery, and the need to play.

It is also characteristic of this group the difficulty of orientation and movement in space.

Finally, when put into limelight situations, the child sometimes has difficulty in making individual decisions.

Session design

The design of Awareness-raising Sessions follows the workshop model.

The targeted issue of the session has to be very "lived" and "felt" by the child. So, there is no place for the use of PowerPoint, and the session has to use exclusively the experiential by simulation. However, this simulation has to enable the child handle real materials. This means "feel in order to know."

The experiential instruments used are games, role playing, dramatization, spiel, music, nonsense approach, objects and colors manipulation, and vocalization (e.g. mimic of garbage truck noise).

These activities must involve all participants.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

In the Awareness-raising Session, the people responsible for the children must be present, which is, the teacher and the auxiliary staff.

In heterogeneous grouping, by age or different abilities, the children help each other, but the facilitator has to adapt the speech to the various levels. On the other hand, in homogeneous grouping, by age and ability level, the focus on the children difficulties becomes more obvious and the need to adapt the speech less pressing.

The fact that the child at this stage do not know the colors, objects or materials, animals, and concepts requires presenting the reality by live demonstration (e.g., showing and allowing to touch compost, seeds, recycling center, materials, waste or water), and the action has to be performed by all participants. So, the rules of a game or any other experiential activity have to be demonstrated with live practice.

Thus, the essence of this socio-pedagogical strategy, in this target group, is the real experience of the concepts, and is based on the question-answer dialogue, and strong participation of the group.

It must be taken into consideration that, within the same group, there are different levels of skills and difficulties, independent of age. And, from group to group, these differences are also present, because the skills of each group are depending on the teacher's work in the classroom. The facilitator must identify and overcome these differences.

Given the low level of concentration of these groups during more or less prolonged periods, it is essential gaining and keeping their attention. It is therefore essential to insert the theme from the experience of each, balance the spoken word with the act, which is the central point, and stimulate curiosity through the connection to their reality. To maintain their curiosity and action is essential having the minimum possible time of inaction.

It is essential never frustrating the participants because they have to enjoy being there. So, the facilitator must not allow a hasty or frustrated child to fail and give up without overcoming his failure and party his success.

Learning is made by the swinging between group game and individual action, with mutual support among the participants. In the group game the individual imitates, in the individual action the group helps.

Regarding the management of space, it was said earlier that this group finds it difficult to orient autonomously and move around. It is therefore crucial to organize the space according to the game, creating marked spatial references so the participants remain at the right spot and be guided through the game. Otherwise, the group will be dispersed.

A group with a too controlled behavior cannot make individual decisions, because is always waiting for adult approval. In a group with few work rules, the facilitator takes longer to achieve and maintain the level of work and participation necessary to develop the theme.

Critical success factors

The size of the group is a critical success factor. The ideal group should have between 20 to 25 participants so that everyone can act without long waiting times. As it was said above, long inaction times provoke demobilization. This dimension is also essential for monitoring the group dynamics.

With respect to group dynamic it is essential that the facilitator is capable of managing the group participation, not giving opportunity to speak all at once, inducing rules of listening to each other, and not giving chance of playing outside the activity.

When the theme depends on abstract concepts, the teaching process is more difficult because facilitator has to do the parallel between the concept and the reality lived by the child, many times without using the audiovisual or on-site observation. These two instruments are difficult do use in this group situation

The management of the available space is another important factor, especially if, being small, hampers the mobilization of the group. In turn, the circulation of strange people in the session space creates distraction.

Also, the teacher and the auxiliary staff that don't follow the developing of the workshop, causing background chatter, is an important distraction factor.

How to know if the session was successful?

Overall, the success of the session is evaluated by the level of constructive participation achieved, and by the evolution of the learning process inside the game, as the session proceeds. It is also measured by the attention that the participant gives to the facilitator and to the game.

The positive feedback of the teacher is also a success indicator. However, the absence of immediate feedback is not failure indicator since usually a subsequent evaluation form is made available.

Primary/elementary school



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Group characteristics

From the standpoint of its development, this group is capable of learning abstract concepts and already knows most of the concrete concepts. Thus, this group already follows a more or less complex conversation and is able to discuss ideas.

Incidentally, this group feels the need to share personal experiences, and is absolutely available to be involved.

With regard to experiential activities, this group is available for all kind of games and dramatizations but no longer needs rhymes, nonsense approach, vocalizations or music to keep their attention. However, these tools may be used as message vehicle but must be more challenging. The surprise still has impact for maintaining the group's attention.

This group is capable of following a visual presentation but continues to be more sensitive to real examples and live demonstrations. It is enough to explain the game rules, not being essential its demonstration.

In this target group is not necessary that all individuals participate in all activities because they already are capable of respecting the time and space of each. So this group accepts the situation where only some play and the others watch.

Session design

The design of this Awareness-raising Session follows the workshop model, which is already supported by the audiovisual aids, keywords, images and movies but with very little text.

The theme is always placed from the group reality and therefore it is essential resorting to dialogue, discussion and questioning, and to give space for individual testimonies and stories.

With this in mind, the experiential is crucial, in the sense of "act to know", being built from stories, narratives, games, demos materials and role playing.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

The facilitator has to start from the group participation to explore the theme, giving time for the message to be learned. However, since the availability of the group to share personal stories or express ideas is extra large, the time management of the session is a crucial factor.

The group accepts well any topic, and reacts well to dialogue. But this must always be supported by live demonstration and games. Similarly, movies, and simulations are also tools to get the message across.

Thus, to keep the group attention, the facilitator relies on experiential activities and on the dynamic of the group participation. He may now use simple or course humor. This group still reacts well to surprises and nonsense approach.

In the dialogue dynamics it is crucial to not reject any answers but take advantage of them, reformulating, developing and explaining them in the desirable direction to the theme, giving opportunity to amend any deviations to the message.

In heterogeneous groups, it is necessary to manage the speech in order to maintain the interest of all, without demobilize natural subgroups.

It is crucial organize the space in two stages, the presentation/dialogue stage and the game/activity stage, this last being less important in this group than in the kindergarten group, because in that case the movement is more rapid and self-oriented.

Critical success factors

The size of the group is a critical success factor. The ideal group should have between 25 to 30 participants so anyone can intervene in the dialogue.

If the children do not have yet the rules for participation in group - talking and listening, waiting for the right moment to intervene - or if they are still very dependent on the sensory, they will easily demobilize in dialogue moments. The facilitator only will know this factor after a few moments of interaction with the group. So the adaptation of the workshop to the concrete situation is only made at that time. Thus, the workshop has to be sufficiently flexible to allow more or less time for dialogue, or more or less time for games, object manipulation and dramatization.

In an extremely heterogeneous group, due to mixing different school levels, for example, in a case where a first year school level group (who still cannot read) is combined with a fourth year school level group, this last one will smother the youngest. So, it is crucial that the facilitator can keep a sufficient level of challenge for the first year and still be motivating for the fourth year.

The space dimension is a critic factor. If it is too small, the participants will be piled and the facilitator will have no room for movement and manipulation of the group dynamics. If too large, it will cause group dispersion. In this case, it is necessary to surround it by tapes, poufs or chairs to avoid excessive movement.

The presence of individuals which are not able to stand still during moments of inaction is a risk factor, because they become restless and destabilize the group. In this case, it is necessary to reduce the dialogue time and increase the action time.

How to know if the session was successful?

Overall, the success of the session is evaluated by the level of constructive participation achieved, by the attention that the participant maintains in the facilitator action and in the game, and by the evaluation, through debriefing, of the learning attained.

The students' and the teachers' positive feedback, at the end of the session, is also success indicators. However, the lack of immediate feedback from the teacher is not a failure indicator since usually a subsequent evaluation form is made available.

Middle school (11-12 years)



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Group characteristics

Arrived to this school level, the participants already have access to all kind of information, and are very autonomous in searching their own interests. Thus, the theme has to have novelty, and the involvement of the group is only accomplished if the session brings "new and different things". There has to be stimulating surprises.

This group has availability to participate, mainly so the individuals can show their knowledge, with each participant wanting to be acknowledged by his peers and by the facilitator.

This group already has ingrained the classroom rules and is capable of remaining at a session during long periods of time, even if losing interest in the subject. The focal concern of the facilitator is not the destabilization of the group by an element, but the non reaction to the session.

This group is available to participate in games but not in a standard dramatization. The dramatization only can be used if the group has a high and active role in it. Meaning, the group is only available for a made by him prior dramatization construction and to be presented in the session.

The group is able also to discuss concepts from a movie, or a case study.

Session design

For this group, the session is supported essentially by audiovisual aids, with animated diagrams, keywords, images and movies.

However, it's essential that the experiential factor remains present through games, materials demos and simulation.

The dialogue and questioning continues to be a strong tool for exploring the theme. This theme presentation is made with concepts, in a context enlarged to the world, and no longer based on their personal reality.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

The group is able to stand to long periods of facilitator presentation, but it has to be further complemented by the action of the participants, whether in a game situation, demonstration with objects or dialogue.

The novelty and surprise of the subject presentation is a socio-pedagogical strategy to gain and maintain the interest of the participants. Also, the films, simulations and games are tools to keep attention on the theme exploitation. The humor can also be used as a strategy.

It is crucial not reject any answers. Facilitator has to send them to the group assessment, questioning its views about right or wrong.

At this level, heterogeneous groups between 11 and 12 years are very close in terms of development and apprehension facility, so there is no necessity in speech adaptation.

The session space is dependent on the school conditions and is likely to take place in a classroom or auditorium. However, it is always preferable to move away the group from its usual classroom. The group control through space is made by the seating, that is, the participants must be seated as close as possible to the facilitator and close together, for no dispersion and no subgroups.

In this group, the intervention of the accompanying teacher starts to be indispensable. As he has previous knowledge of deviant behaviors within the group, he has the possibility to manage the location of those individuals in order to correct possible misbehaviors.

Critical success factors

The dimension of the group is a critical success factor. The ideal group should have between 30 to 45 participants so that everyone can be involved in the session's dynamics without loss or demobilization.

Because the size of the group is already considerable, the distance between the facilitator and participants must to enable him to be seen, since visual

contact is essential for the group control. Thus the space management is a critical success factor.

A theme without novelty is apathy warranty. In this case, the only chance of success is to offset this potential flaw through games or other challenge experiential activity. However, unlike previous groups, the games should have a larger component of cognitive concentration, to the detriment of action through physical manipulation.

Although this group has already high general world knowledge and it is capable of a considerable level for abstraction, it is essential that the facilitator's speech has a strong, clear and simple explanatory component of the concepts to convey.

How to know if the session was successful?

Overall, the success of the session is evaluated by the level of constructive engagement and participation achieved, by the attention that the participant maintains in the facilitator action and in the game, and by the evaluation, through debriefing, of the learning attained.

The positive feedback from students and accompanying teachers, by clapping and commendations at the end of the session, is also a success indicator. However, the lack of immediate feedback from the teacher is not a failure indicator since a subsequent evaluation form usually is made available.

Middle school (13-15 years)



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Group characteristics

This group is difficult to manage as it gives more value to its peers than to the facilitator or any other authority figure.

Thus, each individual's availability to participate is conditioned and curbed by the acceptance of his peer group. The participation proposal made by the facilitator cannot be forced. It has to be discretely suggested and evaluated at the first moments of contact with the group.

These participants have access to all kinds of information, being autonomous in the search of their own interests, and these are well defined at each moment. Thus, the theme has to be referred to their interests and reported, presented and discussed from their point of view.

This group is accustomed to be in a classroom and is capable of remaining in a session during long periods of time, even if losing interest in the theme. So, in case of indifference to the Awareness-raising Session, it will quietly ignore the facilitator or try to boycott the session through crosstalk.

If the facilitator is able to arouse the interest of the group to the theme, the participants become available for games or other experiential activities proposals. However the proposed activities cannot be very demanding.

Session design

For this group, the session is supported essentially by audiovisual aids, with animated diagrams, keywords, images and movies.

However, the experiential factor is still present, through games, materials demos and simulation.

The dialogue and questioning continues to be a strong tool for exploring the theme, but it has to be adapted to the availability and participation type of each group.

The theme presentation is made through concepts, in a context enlarged to the world and referenced to the participants' direct interests.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

In these groups, due the importance given to the peer pressure, it is common to detonate participation energy inside the group, and not from the group to the facilitator. Therefore, is essential that the facilitator is able to manage this form of participation, taking advantage of the peer to peer conversation to manipulate the discussion and message to be delivered.

In addition, it is possible to explore the group characteristics of "challenging the authority figure" by making comparisons between the different behaviors of the various generations, and praising surreptitiously the youngsters' opportunities.

They are very sensitive to humor, and very critical of any flop in its accomplishment. A joke has to be really funny.

The group is able to stand long periods of presentation by the facilitator but it has to be further complemented by action, whether in a game situation, demonstration with objects or dialogue.

The capture and maintenance of interest in the theme are made through the unexpected, technological advancement and advantage for their day-to-day management. The information to convey has to have impact. The films, simulations and games are tools to maintain or attract attention and opportunities for discussion.

It remains important not reject any answers and it is essential to prevent the group's critic and mockery about a "wrong" intervention. Facilitator must reformulate and refocus on the subject.

At this level, the facilitator's speech must be adapted according to the age and school level of the group (13, 14 or 15 years of age), since the depth of the held general knowledge is substantially different. However, the socio-pedagogical tools used are the same.

The session's space is dependent on the school conditions, and is likely to be held in the classroom or auditorium. However, it is always preferable to move away the group from their usual classroom. The group control through space is made by the seating, that is, the participants must be seated as close as possible to the facilitator and close together, for no dispersion and no subgroups.

It remains essential, and yet more important, the intervention of the accompanying teacher, who should manage the location of the group in order to correct misbehaviors.

Critical success factors

The ideal group should have between 30 to 45 participants. Due the participation features discussed above, when the group is too large, it's necessary to shorten the dialogue and questioning, and increase the control of the group participation.

Because the size of the group is already considerable, the distance between the facilitator and participants must enable him to be seen, since visual contact is essential for the group control. Thus the space management is a critical success factor.

In this group, it is a risk factor the disrespect for the schedule and time of entry in the Awareness-raising Session, for example, by participants who enter the classroom in the middle of the session, because the group destabilizes easily, and there isn't sufficient time to get back to the topic.

Given the potential for destabilization, and the short session duration normally available (45 minutes to 1 hour), the facilitator must consider doing the game at the session's close. This strategy allows positively conduct the energy released by the group, ending the session with a smile and enabling the excess energy to be channeled out of the room, to the recess.

But if the session is longer, the game can be done in another moment, provided there is sufficient time to allow the group to calm its energy.

It is also essential a good classroom acoustics, without any echo, as the participation of peer groups is done by crosstalk and the facilitator must listen to these interventions in order to take advantage of them for the discussion.

The theme has to be impactful and with information which directly concerns the interests of this generation.

How to know if the session was successful?

Overall, the success of the session is evaluated by the level of constructive engagement and participation achieved and by the attention that the participant maintains in the facilitator and in the game.

The positive feedback from students by clapping and commendations at the end of the session is also a success indicator.

The positive feedback from the teacher may not mean a success indicator among students. However, the lack of immediate feedback from the teacher is not a failure indicator since usually a subsequent evaluation form is made available.

High school



[click](#)

Group characteristics

The participants of this group are at the stage of choosing their future career, and their interests are well defined.

The importance of peers still exists but is not so obvious, and so is not the challenge to the facilitator or the authority figure. Their behavior in the classroom is therefore guided by the theme, filtering in it what interests them as a tool.

The participation is strongly driven by self-interest thereby it is no longer directed by the facilitator. Now the participation is proposed through interventions by the initiative of each participant. These interventions enable to enrich and steering the theme.

There are differences between the 10th level of school and the remaining 11th and 12th levels. In the 10th level, the participant is still learning this new posture, which we call "adult". So, although in this level the provocative and deviant interventions are not well accepted by most peers, they still appear sometimes.

Accustomed to be in a classroom, this group respect the code of participation, listening to the facilitator and peers, and intervening in the right times. Even if losing interest in the subject, there is no misbehavior or crosstalk.

They are available to conduct group activities and complex activities.

Session design

The session is based on the audiovisual aids, with animated diagrams, keywords, images and movies.

The explanatory materials, simulations and games are addressed to solving theme problems, and solved by the group. The facilitator makes the debriefing.

The free dialog is the session base rule, and comes from the participant's intervention.

The theme setting is made from the participants' special interest, and as a tool for their future professional performance.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

It is essential to allow time for the participants' interventions, and adapt the theme to their interests in order to make it the tool they seek for their future.

The group stands well the exposure time. The role of action simulation or game is no longer message passing vehicle or attention attraction, but rather makes the group reflect on the happened and draw conclusions. The game can serve also as ice breaker element or relaxation.

To catch and maintain interest, the facilitator uses the unexpected, the technological advances, and the advantage of the theme for the participant's future. The information to pass has to have impact. The films, simulations and games are tools for discussion and problem solving within the theme.

The session space depends on the school, likely to take place in the classroom or auditorium. Space management serves here not for group behavior control, but to enhance the effectiveness of the dialogue among all, facilitator included. Thus, it is necessary to locate the participants as close as possible to the facilitator and close to each other, to create the élan for the debate.

In these groups, the teacher in charge can act as a participant, and help the facilitator with the dialogue, seeking a specific participant's intervention about his special interest.

Critical success factors

The size of the group is not here as decisive, though, the higher, the greater the difficulty of organizing the work. The optimal size is 45 to 60 participants.

Environmental and acoustics of the room are essential keys as well as the existence of microphone for groups greater than 60 participants.

It is essential that the theme be directed to group's interest and serve as a working tool. If not, disinterest settles and they will not participate.

Given the behavioral characteristics of the group, the game or any activity can happen at any time of the session, and their importance and impact on further discussion are the critical success factor.

How to know if the session was successful?

In general, session success is measured by the achieved level of constructive participation, and the participants' contribution to the discussion of the topic.

The positive feedback of the students at the end by clapping and commendations is fully achieved success signal.

The positive feedback of the teacher is one more indicator of success. However, a subsequent evaluation form is usually available.

Business and Professional Groups



[click](#)

In the Business and Professional Groups, the session has the clear objective of provoke immediate action.

In these groups, the session is entirely tailored for each target, so it is essential to collect, a priori, a set of information, in particular, the desired objectives, the educational level of participants, the performed function, the degree of interest in the topic, the subject knowledge level, the existence of previous actions, the

company's experience in the subject, the room arrangement, and the number of expected participants.

Group characteristics

The group may be homogeneous, with the same function or the same occupation, sometimes varying the age level. Or it may be completely heterogeneous, adding different functions, different professions, and different educational and age levels.

This group, being adult, complies with the rules of the debate. However, the presence, in the same session, of elements of different hierarchical levels can be an obstacle to the voluntary and easy participation of the participants.

The session is usually mandatory for the group, but can also be organized on the basis of expressions of interest, by registry. These differences affect group participation in the session.

Session design

As mentioned, the session is totally tailored to each target, adapting the speech to the group characteristics and concerns.

The session is based on the audiovisual aids, with animated diagrams, keywords, images and movies.

The theme explanation is done by observation of the company particular reality, and the debate must focus on particular cases, uses and habits installed and change difficulties and advantages.

Experiential is here focused on the company reality reflection, and on suggestions and creative solutions for its improvement, often based on the testimony of the participants.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

The theme has to be impressive and catching attention, especially if the participation in the session is mandatory, with the facilitator's role of breaking any initial resistance.

This theme should have a more cognitive or more emotional treatment, depending on group professional function.

The dialog is the session base rule, and comes from the voluntary participant's intervention. The theme setting is made from the group special interest, and as a tool for its professional performance in the company.

The explanatory materials and simulation are used only if it is not possible to observe the real situation. Otherwise, the experiential is constructed from this observation, with a "recreational" activity totally directed to the company's problem-solving, and settled by the group. The facilitator makes the debriefing.

The confidence of the facilitator on the subject is a pressure to change factor, creating energy for adhesion. And his arguments should be designed from the interest and usefulness to the group.

Subtle humor and ironic provocation are well received.

Critical success factors

The size of the group is important, and this must have at least 12 participants. This minimum becomes very important because in this group it is essential to create a critical mass that allows change in the company, and a large number of suggestions and testimonials. A too small group does not allow this result. A small group may be considered only if the session is the first attempt to introduce the subject in the company.

The size of the group is just crucial for the organization of the room and the equipment and tools, such as lights and microphones.

The level of participation is very important to the success of the session. Thus, the installed conflicts within the group, mandatory participation in the session, or speech muffled by the presence of supervisors or directions are factors to be managed by the facilitator. The prior information about these factors, before the session, is essential for the development of a proper group control strategy.

How to know if the session was successful?

In general, session success is measured by the constructive participation achieved level, and the participant's contribution to the discussion of the topic and the suggested change measures.

The positive feedback of the participants at the end of the session by palms, or commendations, is a fully achieved success signal.

The positive feed-back of the individual in charge of the session is another indicator of success. However, a subsequent evaluation form is usually available.

For companies and professional groups, it is important to evaluate the change brought about by the session on a continuous basis over time, and record and broadcast both in the company and to the facilitator. Those are the only way to

get future sessions organized, to reinforce the message and overcome any difficulties.

General Public



[click](#)

For General Public, the session has the clear objective of provoke immediate action.

In these groups, the session is entirely tailored for each target, so it is essential to collect, a priori, a set of information, in particular, the social and educational level of participants, the desired objectives, the degree of interest in the topic, the subject knowledge level, the existence of previous actions, the room arrangement, and the number of expected participants.

Group characteristics

This group is always very heterogeneous at all levels, and the connecting factor is the interest in the subject and the concern about the management of its daily life.

The presence at the session is voluntary and is normally done by expression of interest and prior enrollment.

On arrival at the session, participants are not yet a group but rather a "small bunch of people," more or less unknown. The group is framed in the session and it is the cozy and reliable ambience created in the room that facilitates participation.

Being voluntary, participation expresses the personal interest of each participant in the subject. Participants raise questions, doubts and problems and each one can give the testimony of their experience.

Session design

The session is designed based on the information obtained in advance about the group, responding to its characteristics and concerns, but totally adaptable to any last minute unforeseen circumstances.

It is based on audiovisuals aids, with animated diagrams, keywords, images and movies, and live demonstration.

The theme explanation is done by simulation of real live, focusing the debate on particular cases, uses and habits installed and on the difficulties. Facilitator must emphasize the benefits of the change to these consumers and society in general.

To create the group, facilitator uses the ice breaker tools, humor and striking initial information.

The subject is contextualized within the country and the behavior of society in general, making up the call for a change, and for the fundamental role of the citizen in this change.

Experiential is here focused on the day-to-day reality reflection, and on the suggestions and creative solutions for its improvement, often based on the testimony of the participants.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

When the group characterization is impossible to do before the session, facilitator must adapt the speech, arguments and tools at the first moments of the session. It is required, therefore, tremendous flexibility and mastery of the topic.

The theme has to be dealt with an impactful way to ensure a high level of participation and a great adhesion to the future act.

The confidence of the facilitator on the subject is a pressure to change factor, creating energy for adhesion. And his arguments should be design from the interest and usefulness to the group.

The dialogue is the session base rule, and comes from the voluntary participant's intervention.

Subtle humor and ironic provocation are well received.

The existence of freebies to distribute may be a factor of interest in attending the session. But this is not a fundamental element because there is no visible difference between adhesion levels to change, if any, or not freebie to distribute.

Critical success factors

Last minute unforeseen is common in this type of session. Even when there is a pre-registration, and already confirmed, the number of participants can vary, for more or less than expected. Linked to this, there is still the possibility of the group being different than anticipated, in terms of its features.

The size of the group is important, and this must have at least 12 participants. This minimum becomes very important because in this group it is essential to create a critical mass that allows change in the community, and a large number of suggestions and testimonials. A too small group does not allow this result. A small group may be considered only if the session is a first attempt to introduce the subject in the community and to seek leaders for the local change.

The size of the group is just crucial for the organization of the room and the equipment and tools, such as lights and microphones.

The level of participation and free will is very important for the success of the session. Thus, the installed conflicts within the group or speech muffled by the presence of local authorities are factors to be managed by the facilitator. The prior information about these factors, before the session, it is essential for the development of a proper group control strategy.

Still on participation, it is more useful a negative participation than no participation at all. Thus, the expression of resistance and doubts about the theme allows the facilitator opposing arguments and solutions, overcoming barriers to change.

How to know if the session was successful?

In general, session success is measured by the constructive participation achieved level, particularly with regard to the participant's contribution to the discussion of the topic, the difficulties expressed and the suggested change measures.

The positive feedback of the participants at the end of the session by palms, or commendations, is a fully achieved success signal. It is also significant the number of participants who, at the end of the session, addresses the facilitator in private.

In the case of General Public, it is difficult to assess the changes brought about by the session. However, this can be assessed over time and recorded and broadcasted to the group and to the facilitator, using surveys or door-to-door visits. Those are the only way to get future sessions organized, to reinforce the message and overcome any difficulties.

Forum



[click](#)

As previously indicated, the Forum, taking place in a closed or open space, arranged with "coffee tables", is addressed to a large number of people, and uses the methodology of focus groups for "collective intelligence". Scenius and Metaplan are the pedagogical tools used.

The aim of the Forum is to put a group to work on an issue, problem or project, discussing it by collecting solutions and creating the methodology for the change of the situation. The group is also responsible for the implementation of this methodology.

Thus, it is the group that is the source and actor of the desired change, which rises inside it and, preferably, is not imported from the outside.

This change generator group serves also as a driving force and disseminator of the proposed project, boosting this to network of relatives, friends and acquaintances. Another important dimension is the factor "example, imitation, epidemic" that the new gestures of each one cause in those who watch them. There is here, therefore, an effective social mobilization action that spreads far beyond the sessions of the Forum.

The aim is thus to get an increasingly number of citizens aware of the issue in question, who become proactive actors of the desired changes, and commit to immediate change of their daily gestures.

The Forum session is customized for each objective or theme, and every objective originates dynamic and necessarily distinct group work methodologies.

The Forum session allows the simultaneous presence of a very large number of participants, usually between 100 and 500, and their number is only conditioned by the type of room available and the possibility of using new technologies. These allow online participation in the session, so the maximum number of participants is not a limiting factor.

The Forum has a meeting leader, but his role is not to provide information and to motivate behavior change, but guide the group for work, for creating ideas and solutions. Thus, the leader, in this case, has the role of facilitator.

Next, we will describe the practical application of this model.

Group characteristics

The Forum session can be arranged with any kind of group, depending only on the objective to be achieved. Thus, it can work with youth or adults of various age groups.

The link between the participants is the theme or project work, and the Forum can be organized in the context of community, enterprise, professional groups or lobbying interests.

Participation in the Forum is usually voluntary, so the motivation of participants to collaborate is very high.

However, given that installed culture in Portugal still does not promote enough discussion routines and group work, it is normal that participants have not only difficult to comply with the rules of the methodology, as may arise interpersonal conflicts for informal leadership, imposition of personal opinion and smothering the intervention of others. In this context, the work of the facilitator becomes crucial.

Session design

For session design, it is essential to know a priori the objectives and the deepness to be achieved in the discussion of the topic or project, the characteristics and size of the group, installed conflicts and resistances.

Based on this survey, the session is designed in a way to break the inertia and the initial inhibitions of any group, to stimulate creativity to work, to make the work productive, effective and mobilizing, controlling pre-existing conflicts, preventing the emergence of new, and ensuring that all participants have their speech time and a very active role in the collective construction.

Next there is one exemplifying model of a seven hours Forum session, and designed according to the criteria described above.

Forum session model

Step 1 - Ice breaker activities and creative stimulation

Step 2 - Research and getting ideas and decisions

Stage 1 - Data Base Construction

1. Questions and Answers
2. Database and map 1

Stage 2 - Map Reformulation

1. Report
2. Recasting Map

Stage 3 - Getting Results

1. Report
2. Statements

Stage 4 - Results Review

Re-statements

Stage 5 - Results Presentation

Group A
Group B
Group C
Group D

Stage 6 - Decision and Group Priorities

Step 3 - Building projects

Stage 7 - Projects Draft Construction

1. Selection
2. Setting parameters
3. Project construction

Stage 8 - Results Presentation

Group A
Group B
Group C
Group D

Step 4 - Conclusions

1. Conclusions
2. Closure

As seen above, the Forum begins with a time dedicated to the icebreaker, to establish interpersonal networks, and creative stimulation of the participants' thinking. This step proves to be essential for the creation of different views on the subject, and "out of the box" ideas.

At the search stage, the phase of generating ideas is made individually and anonymously, to allow everyone register his point of view without feeling the burden of peers' "censorship". These ideas are collected, mixed and returned to the sub-groups for discussion, no longer personal but belonging to the collective.

The phase of the ideas discussion, now collective, is made in the subgroups, which will organize them into thematic clusters and discuss them for their enrichment. Participants will rotate between the different subgroups, debating the ideas under development. Thus, it is achieved that all participants discuss and contribute to everything.

In the stage of prioritization and vote the ideas, the whole group chooses which will be develop to turn them into projects.

The project construction stage is done, again, by subgroups, and they will present the results to the global group, at the conclusion stage.

This example of a working day model can be divided in their stages and held on different days, and may also be repeated in full in deepening cycles.

In another model, it is possible also deliver different stages to different groups in successive cycles of work, including awareness-raising sessions to increase the technical data of the participants on the topic.

In the session design, it is necessary to plan the division of the larger group into subgroups, the rotation of these at different stages, the meeting room arrangement, different at each stage of work, and the use of various media, in particular audiovisual, and cards and placards for ideas exhibition.

If necessary, it can also be considered the use of recording and video display, videoconferencing and the connection to social networks.

Socio-pedagogical strategy

So the Forum sessions run as desired, it is essential the use of ice breaker games and creativity. These activities, which always involve out of the box problem solving, should be managed so as not to create frustration in groups. On the contrary, groups should feel comfortable, confident, and able to

reach the end successfully. Facilitator has in his hands not let the group dynamics create destructive strains of the élan to be achieved.

These activities may take place in the same meeting room where the job will be done, or in an alternative place equipped for this purpose, but always close to each other.

In the next steps, it is essential that the facilitator can ensure that everyone participates, that no one has his speech muffled or dismissive, and that the sub-groups arrangements do not provoke tension. It is in his hand to get the business come under great motivation and positivity.

The collection of anonymously ideas is a determining factor for not generating tensions. As is known, the groups are culturally trained to immediately "judge" the peer opinion, which is a clear obstacle to the free gift of ideas. The judgment is a phenomenon to avoid at all costs.

The meeting room management is also crucial for the work development. This is usually arranged with "coffee tables" to allow effective face-to-face communication, and alternates with small meetings, standing before the ideas display placards.

Finally, it is essential an effective time management of the entire Forum. Compliance with the schedules and the absence of boring gaps is a guarantee of the group mobilizing dynamic.

Critical success factors

One of the main critical success factors of a Forum is the meeting room logistics conditions, in terms of size, temperature, light and acoustics. These items must be fully adapted to the comfort and efficiency of the work to be held.

On the other hand, it is essential that participants are fully available for the time provided for work because absences and arrivals or departures for various reasons disturb the Forum dynamics. This has a known schedule, and working times and breaks must be absolutely respected.

The so-called boring gaps demobilize group, for example, too large breaks, different workflows among various subgroups and waiting times between the various phases of work. The possibility of occurrence of these has to be planned and organizationally corrected.

Tensions between the participants, pre-existing or detonated in the situation, can be a serious obstacle to the positive group dynamics. The conflict management techniques have to be part of the luggage of the facilitator.

Themes incorrectly presented, or in a demobilizing way of group attention are also risks. On the other hand, it may happen that there is not enough critical mass of ideas that makes the debate interesting. If so, facilitator must provide the questioning of the group to generate new ideas or change the path of the installed point of view.

How to know if the session was successful?

As the Forum is a situation of extremely intense face-to-face communication, manifestations and comments from participants about what is happening are very common. Therefore, the content of such expressions and comments is a valuable indicator of the progress of the Forum, and provides timely feedback that allows any corrective intervention by the facilitator.

The applause or satisfaction with the projects developed by the Forum and presented by the group to the group, at the end of the session, are also an important indicator of the success of the work. The Forum can be also assessed through a satisfaction survey, distributed and completed at the end of the session.

After the Forum, it is essential to monitoring and continuous evaluate the project implementation and operation, and achieved changes.

As stated before, the Forum is a very effective empowerment technique, highly mobilizing groups and received with satisfaction by the target group. It is a cultural leap in the social change techniques.

Endnotes

Working face-to-face is very challenging and highly rewarding, whatever the subject.

On the one hand, it allows us to observe the behavior and draw valuable conclusions. It is interesting to note that, for example, children express the emotional dependence on their family, pre-teens seek approval from authority figures, teenagers deny that authority and seek the comfort of their peers, and young adults already have their individuality and autonomy. From these observations, it is exciting to create pedagogical strategies to get the message across.

On the other hand, it pays to gain adhesion of an unbeliever citizen, and listen to him saying "oh ...I did not know it was like that ... No one explains anything!"

So, those working in this area have the feeling of being intervening in the future, and provoking change.

In Portugal, it is easy to work with all citizens. Contrary to what one might think, they are not conservative and, very cleverly, they are available to join the novelty and innovation, provided that these are very well explained and advantageous in the short, medium or long term.

It is not fair to say that there is a "resistance to change". If the change did not happen, it's because it was poorly managed.



[clicar](#)

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