

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Efficacy Rating
NA

Teams working with children and youth with disabilities often address challenges in working together to solve problems that they face in their work. The Creative Problem Solving process provides a framework, which can facilitate the resolution of some of these challenges.

SIX STEPS for Creative Problem Solving:

1. Fact Finding and Problem Finding

- a.) Assign roles to team members
- b.) Brainstorm/ List high priority issues
- c.) Restate issues in “In what ways might we...” format, addressing clear, smaller issues first

2. Idea Finding

- a.) On a chart, record ideas related to an issue (“We could”)
 - i.) implement rules for brainstorming
 - ii.) change roles, i.e., one discipline takes on the role of another discipline through 2 more minutes of brainstorming
 - iii.) discover idea clusters / interrelated ideas
 - iv.) paraphrase each group of interrelated ideas

3. Rules/Ideas for Brainstorming

- a.) Defer judgment (no commenting)
- b.) Rapid responding – Try for 10-20 or more ideas
- c.) Limit brainstorming to 5 – 10 minutes

4. Criterion-Finding

- a.) On a chart, record criteria which defines team criteria to evaluate ideas generated in Step 2
- b.) Use one of the following starter phrases when generating criteria:
 - i.) “A good idea is one that....”
 - ii.) “Will the idea?”

5. Solution-Finding:

- a.) Select the “best” solutions/ideas using the developed criteria from Step 3 to select or combine ideas from Step 2
- b.) choices in strategies you might try:
 - i.) Informal Consensus
 - ii.) Each team member comments on potential solutions/ideas using the starter phrases: “I like solution/idea # __ because it meets __ criteria.” OR “I don’t think solution/idea # __ is a good choice because it goes against __ criteria.”

6. Acceptance Finding

- a.) Make plans to overcome barriers to promising solutions/ideas; discuss & record strategies to manage these challenges (review Steps 1 & 3)
- b.) Discuss & answer who, what, when, where & how questions--considering both assistance & resistance

7. Action Planning

- a.) Take your solution/idea & identify the steps needed to carry it out & evaluate
- b.) Plan should include the following:
 - 1) Activities to be completed in chronological order
 - 2) Success criteria for each activity
 - 3) Person responsible for each activity
 - 4) Start date for each activity
 - 5) Actual outcomes

Adapted from Giangreco, et al., 1994; Osborn, 1953; Parnes, 1992; Prelock, 2003; & Thousand, 1995.

Creative Problem Solving - Resource and Information

References:

Parnes, SJ (1997). *Optimize the magic of your mind*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Press.

Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis & Edelman (1994). Problem-solving methods to facilitate inclusive education. *Creative and collaborative learning* (pp 321-346). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.

Osborn, A (1993). *Applied imagination: Principals & procedures of creative thinking* (3rd revised edition) Buffalo, NY. Creative Education Foundation Press.

Parnes, SJ (1988). *Visionizing: State-of-the-art processes for encouraging innovative excellence*. East Aurora, NY: D.O.K. Publishing.

Parnes, SJ (1992). *Source Book for creative problem solving: A fifty-year digest of proven innovation processes*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Press.

Websites:

Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/index.cfm>

Materials/Tools/Curriculum:

Problem-Solving Methods to Facilitate Inclusive Education, Michael F. Giangreco, Chigee J. Cloninger, Ruth E. Dennis, Susan W. Edelman (2002) in *Creativity and Collaborative Learning* (2nd Ed.) (Eds.) Jacqueline S. Thousand, Richard A. Villa, Ann I. Nevin. Baltimore: Paul Brookes

Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis & Edelman (2000). Problem-solving methods to facilitate inclusive education. *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together* (pp293-327). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.

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Articles:

ED358677: 1993-07-00: Including Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms. ERIC Digest #E521 or go to: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

Windle, Rod; Warren, Suzanne, # ED448548: 1999. *Collaborative Problem Solving and Dispute Resolution in Special Education. Training Manual*. Or go to: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

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