DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 138 360 PS 009 234

AUTHOR Campbell, Dorothy Muirhead
TITLE Traveling Toward Competence: The California State College Child Development Associate Project. Booklet II: A Problem-Solving Approach.
INSTITUTION California State Coll., Pa.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Child Development (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 28p.; For other booklets, see PS 009 233-236
AVAILABLE FROM Dorothy M. Campbell, Child Development Associate Project, Keystone Education Building, California State College, California, Pennsylvania 15419 (no price quoted)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Change; *Change Strategies; Changing Attitudes; *Child Care Workers; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Strategies; Individualized Instruction; *Performance Based Teacher Education; *Preschool Teachers; Problem Solving; Training
IDENTIFIERS *California State College PA; *Child Development Associates

ABSTRACT

This is the second in a series of four booklets describing the Child Development Associate (CDA) Project at the California State College in Pennsylvania, one of the 13 original CDA pilot programs. The focus of this booklet is on the problem solving approach used in the project. Topics discussed include: (1) the necessity for change in behavior required by competency-based education programs and prevalent barriers to competency; (2) the accountability for change in teacher performance; (3) the need for individualization in training; (4) the effects of training on the trainer and trainee; (5) problem solving cycle illustrative of the process of behavior change; and (6) strategies for change (value clarification, self affirmation, educational encounters, and goal achievement through objectives). (SB)

TRAVELING TOWARD COMPETENCE

The California State College

Child Development Associate Project

BOOKLET II: A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

Dorothy Muirhead Campbell
CDA Coordinator, California State College
California, Pa.

Additional copies may be obtained by writing to:

Dorothy M. Campbell
Child Development Associate Project
Keystone Education Building
California State College
California, Pa. 15419

TRAVELING TOWARD COMPETENCE

The California State College

Child Development Associate Project

BOOKLET II: A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

by

Dorothy Muirhead Campbell
CDA Coordinator, California State College
California, Pa.

To the California State College
Child Development Associate Field Site Supervisors

This set of booklets is dedicated with great appreciation and affection to the ten field site supervisors of the California State College CDA Program. This group of individuals has been continuously involved with the project since its beginning, first as trainees and then as field site supervisors. Their involvement has been characterized by great commitment, determination, flexibility, and purpose. They, more than anyone else, have directed the course of the project and shaped its philosophy. My thanks to

Sally Aber	*Loretta Hogans*
Beverly Altman	*Joanne Mujwit*
Judy Daly	*Ilene Reed*
Betty Duritsa	*Bob Sumner*
Ann Gaydos	*Regina Young*

The California [illegible]ge Model

of Child Develop[illegible]e Training

A PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

The CDA pilot project reported herein was performed pursuant to a Grant from the U. S. Office of Child Development, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions and recommendations expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Office of Child Development, and no official endorsement by the U. S. Office of Child Development should be inferred.

THE NECESSITY FOR CHANGE

Competency-based training (CBT) sets some unique requirements for a learner. It requires that a learner demonstrate through behavior the possession of specified skills and knowledge. It is not enough for the learner to be able to verbalize about certain concepts or pass a test on certain discrete skills. The learner in a CBT program must integrate skills and knowledge into a consistent pattern of competent behavior while performing a job function.

Because of its emphasis on performance, CBT defines learning as a change in behavior. Such a definition of learning is not without its problems. People often gain new understanding of concepts or increase certain discrete skills without achieving a long-term change in their on-the-job behavior. Experience in all areas of life has taught us that people do not change patterns of behavior easily. But in CBT it can not be assumed that any learning has occurred unless a consistent change in behavior is in evidence.

People seem to resist change. Preschool directors and trainers can often be heard lamenting the persistence of inappropriate teaching behaviors in spite of extensive training efforts. For example, a preschool teacher in a competency-based training program returned to the use of "pattern artwork" in her classroom after having provided her children with a variety of art media as required for her training. When asked about this regression, the teacher replied, "Oh, but I already have proven I am competent in providing art activities for young children." Such experiences are all too frequent.

Do people resist change out of inherent laziness or obstinacy? Such is often assumed by trainers. I do not believe that this attitude is common among teachers. Most are eager to affect those changes in their teaching behavior that would result in a better education for the children in their care. However, the adult learner is often blocked from appropriate change by a host of barriers. Many times trainer and trainee alike are insensitive to the presence and effect of these barriers and thus do not deal with them adequately. The result is that the inappropriate behaviors persist.

The California State College CDA Project has identified what it considers to be six of the most prevalent barriers to competence facing preschool teachers. They are briefly outlined below.

BARRIER 1. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Preschool teachers need a thorough understanding of the theory underlying early childhood education practices. For it is the theory which provides a rationale for choices among the alternative behaviors available to the preschool teacher. In addition, however, the adult learner needs assistance in making the bridge between theory and practice. At this point specific skills logically required by a theory must be practiced.

s/he be expected to underste
assume that this barrier of l
attempt to deal with it. But it
knowledge and skills is the
competent behavior. In some
all. There are many examples
knowledge, but not changing
knowledge on the job.

BARRIER 2. UNCLEAR OR

A second barrier of uncle
have been the problem in the
using "pattern artwork" inst
The goal of this teacher in usi
to comply with what was re
clarified the value of such act
had no clear goals for the cl
enough to have knowledge a
knowledge and skill will be
integrate knowledge and skill

nge. Most trainers
:ills is present and
assume that lack of
inge toward more
ıot be a problem at
ıecessary skills and
of these skills and

S AND GOALS

ıd goals might well
ɔl teacher who was
ɔriate art activities.
pparently had been
gram. She had not
'erhaps this teacher
children. It is not
which dictate how
fied before one can
ɔf behavior.

STYLE

I have found that many adult learners are blocked from competent behavior because they have no clear image of the teacher they want to be. They value so many things for themselves, their classroom and children but have not prioritized and organized their values into a philosophy of teaching. Before teaching competence can be achieved the learner must have a clear vision of self and her/his role as teacher. S/he must understand the unique set of strengths and weaknesses, talents, values and personality traits s/he brings to the teaching situation. New theories and viewpoints must be tested for consistency with one's teaching philosophy and congruence with one's unique teaching style.

BARRIER 4. PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

Once a learner has a clear vision of the competent teacher s/he wants to be and has the knowledge, skills, and clear values that lead to appropriate decisions s/he can hardly be prevented from reaching the destination of competent teaching. However, s/he will most likely encounter some practical difficulties along the way in living out a philosophy. There are financial problems to deal with, there are physical environments that pose problems; there are administrators or other teachers with conflicting values and needs; there are personal problems which interfere with progress. Unless the solving of these practical problems is seen as a legitimate part of the training curriculum, the opportunity to demonstrate competent teaching might be obliterated.

BARRIER 5. INSECURITY

There is one barrier which can virtually kill progress at any step, and that is insecurity. It takes a risk to change and grow as a person. Such growth means making oneself vulnerable to possible failure. New patterns of behavior are uncomfortable; the old feel all too comfortable. A person will only experience the kind of dramatic permanent growth we are seeking when s/he is secure enough to be open to change.

BARRIER 6. LACK OF COMMITMENT

Growth and change require great commitments of time and energy on the part of the learner. There are times in everyone's life when because of other life needs and pressures, one **cannot** make these kinds of commitments to professional development. A wise trainer will provide the flexibility to slow down efforts toward change at such a time. However, CDA training is not the place for individuals who are basically unwilling to make a commitment to work hard for their own achievement of competence.

Competency-based training is not for everybody. It is for those who have the courage and ability to assume responsibility for their own lives. It is assumed by CBT that a learner may be held accountable for her/his behavior. The learner's behavior thus becomes the focus of all assessment and training. It doesn't matter as much what the preschool teacher knows about art for young children as what is happening in her/his classroom behavior regarding art experiences. The learner is not only held accountable for performance, but also is given primary responsibility for eliminating those barriers which block the demonstration of competent job performance

There are few styles of training which give so much responsibility to the learner for personal growth. Instead, many training programs appear to view the learner as the helpless victim of a tug of war. On one side are forces restraining the learner from change; on the other side are forces pulling the learner toward change. The predicted outcome is obvious: the stronger team wins.

This model of the learner as helpless victim has some serious faults. We have all seen trainers or administrators who disregard the adult learner's responsibility for changes in behavior and solutions to problems. They enter the tug of war as a force pulling the learner toward change. Such tactics seldom succeed in affecting more than a short-term change, if that. Pressuring an individual to change through criticism, rewards and punishment, orders, policy changes or threats usually has disappointing results.

Why don't these strategies work in achieving positive growth changes? I believe it is because these authority "power" forces deny one of man's most treasured possessions, freedom. Whether or not s/he chooses wisely, each person cherishes the freedom to make choices about her/his own behavior and life. The learner does not see her/himself as the helpless victim of a tug of war. Indeed when s/he feels her/himself to be treated as such, s/he reacts and shows strength. Often the more an authority tries to force a change, the more the learner sets up coping mechanisms that further impede change. Such mechanisms may take strong form in resentment, rebellion, resistance, and defiance. Or they may take more subtle form in lying, hiding feelings, blaming others, excuse-making, or bossing others in turn. More submissive learners might comply, apple polish, withdraw, or simply drop out. All of these responses block positive growth changes that lead to more competent job performance.

Many trainers and administrators would object to such authoritarian ways of dealing with learners. They see themselves as supportive facilitators of learning. But they too must be careful of how they are viewing the learner. If they see the learner as needing too much support and help, they may unwittingly encourage the myth that learners are helpless victims of a tug of war. Although avoiding authoritarian demands, they may rely heavily on advice-giving, suggestions, and excuse-making for incompetence. Out of a desire to be sympathetic and supportive, the

You may at this point protest that others often seek a trainer's advice and may want to be told what to do. I, too, have often experienced the pleasure of having others seek my advice and apparently welcome my solutions to their problems with competent job performance. But I have found in many cases there was very little commitment to the solutions I suggested. Why? Because the learner is not a helpless victim just waiting for the "right" answer. S/he is free to choose and often chooses to ignore advice. The learner often becomes confused by conflicting pieces of advice given while seeking help from various sources. Or s/he may feel that the particular situation is not really understood, so although the solution might work for someone else, it wouldn't for her/him. I have seen much evidence to support the notion that if a suggestion or solution comes from an outside source, the learner seldom adopts it.

On one particular occasion I had explained to a group of educators the problem-solving philosophy of the California State College CDA Program. One educator spoke out critically against the principle of learners assuming the responsibility for changing toward more competent behavior. She protested that training programs have neither the time nor the money to allow the luxury of trainees solving their own teaching/learning problems.

Later this same woman was involved with me in a conference in which she was seeking help with a real problem that was preventing her best job functioning. Although she had earlier advised me to "tell" my trainees how to solve their teaching problems she consistently rejected every solution I suggested to her for the solving of her problem. This did not surprise me at all. Usually people are not sold on a solution to their own problem unless they have had a large part in designing that solution.

Let us look at an example. An aide comes to a trainer with the complaint that the head teacher is discriminating against her. The trainer is anxious that the aide get the support she needs and experience good staff relations, but the problem in staff relations clearly belongs to the aide not the trainer. The aide is not a helpless victim of circumstances, rather an involved party in a situation preventing utmost competent job performance. Therefore, it is an inappropriate (but all too frequent) response for the trainer to say, "Let me handle this. I'll talk to the head teacher immediately." The trainer in taking on this problem as her/his responsibility will have denied the aide an opportunity to make the decisions and compromises that lead individuals to become mature, responsible, competent human beings.

There are some passive people who will encourage the trainer or supervisor to solve problems for her/him. Such a person typically disowns responsibility for her/his actions or problems. S/he convinces her/himself that circumstances are to blame or that the problem really isn't that big or that it is someone else's responsibility. There is some research to support the notion that the passive person who wants another to assume responsibilities for her/him is most harmed by such an action. When someone else picks up one's load of responsibilities for her/him, the

One of the cornerstones of all competency-based training efforts, and certainly of the CDA effort, is individualization. The assumption is that a training plan for an individual should match her/his particular job role and current profile of competency.

A common way that competency-based training programs approach the goal of individualization is to first identify through assessment those competencies in which a person is weak. For example, a weakness in parent involvement competencies might be identified. Typically, a candidate is then directed through a predetermined set of experiences and resources dealing directly with the topic parent involvement, after which the competency is reassessed. Usually every trainee within the program who is working on parent involvement competencies is given the same type of experiences and resources with which to deal.

An alternative approach to individualization, however, is the California State College CDA problem-solving model. In this approach, a weakness in an area of competency is viewed as a problem resulting from one or more of the many possible barriers to competence. The trainee is involved in a problem-solving cycle. From this, a training plan is designed to eliminate that which prevents the individual from demonstrating the competency. The following example illustrates how problem-solving guarantees the individualization of training.

After an initial assessment of the original ten CDA trainees in the California State College project, it was determined that several were weak in the area of parent involvement. However, through the problem-solving cycle, it became apparent that in only one case was a lack of knowledge about parent involvement the barrier to competency. This trainee, a private day care operator, had neither the mandate nor the training to deal with involving parents in her program. Therefore, she needed to do a great deal of background reading in parent involvement and needed to discover ways to begin to involve parents in the life of her

Another trainee, a public school kindergarten teacher, likewise had no parent involvement in her classroom at the time of entry into the CDA project. However, she had been successful for many years in having parents involved in her summer Head Start Programs. The thing that was preventing her from being able to demonstrate her competency was not lack of skills and knowledge. Rather, the public school system employing her had never had a parent involvement component. Therefore, her beginning training plan called for the development of skills in bringing about change within an institutional structure. The teacher prepared a well-documented letter of request that won her the opportunity to experimentally involve parents in her classroom. She now has succeeded in establishing not only a parent volunteer program in her classroom but throughout the entire school. Had she been assigned a predetermined set of readings and experiences, she would have been highly frustrated and her problem still wouldn't have been solved.

component was resulting from poor organization within her agency. Several people had input into the parent involvement process, but each was unclear as to her/his particular role. As a result, nothing was getting done. Notices to meetings were sent late; parent programs were disorganized; and home visits were erratic. Therefore, the first step taken was to compile a list of all the tasks inherent in a parent involvement component. Then the entire staff was involved in a task analysis in which they determined who had approval and operational responsibilities for each task. From this the group designed clear job roles for each person involved. Although this organizational problem was eliminated, there were still other barriers to deal with before competence could be demonstrated. These barriers formed the basis of a continuing training plan.

This problem-solving approach has led the California State College Project to gain an appreciation for the importance of the inter-relatedness of competencies. In some cases, poor administrative skills can adversely affect a person's ability to demonstrate many other competencies. Therefore, the administrative competencies must be dealt with first. In other approaches, these administrative difficulties might never be dealt with at all, and therefore, an individual's barrier to demonstrating the related competency might never be removed.

It should be clear from the above description of this problem-solving approach that each of the three teachers in the California CDA Project working on parent involvement competencies had a unique training plan with a unique set of experiences and list of resources. Only when such is the case can training truly be called individualized.

If a training effort is not having significant effects upon those working with the enrolled trainee, it is probably not having significant effects on the trainee either. No one can grow in isolation. When an individual makes significant changes in behavior, others react. It is important to foresee this phenomena and plan for it, so the reactions of others will be supportive.

Let us return to the three trainees from the previous section who were developing competence in parent involvement. The private day care operator in order to begin to more closely involve parents in her program wisely discussed this step with the board of directors and her staff before taking any action. She involved board and staff members in the planning and implementing of an open house for parents as a beginning step. From the first, those who would be affected: board, staff, children, and particularly parents, were involved in the planning toward increased parent involvement.

The kindergarten teacher likewise took the reactions of others into consideration. Her very first written request for parents in the classroom was sent to everyone concerned: the school principal, the elementary supervisor, the superintendent of schools, and the school board. Later everyone was kept informed of progress through reports, invitations to the classroom, and a slide show that was developed. The community was kept informed through articles in local newspapers. The fact that a school-wide volunteer program was later coordinated by this teacher indicates her success in involving other staff. Through involvement of the PTA, for the first time the school library was used to full potential, staffed with parent volunteers. Much of the success that this teacher met in developing an outstanding parent volunteer program was due to her understanding that everyone who is affected by a change should be involved in creating that change.

Had the third teacher in our example, who had organization problems, handed everyone on the staff and parent council a job description, she would likely have met with failure. People tend to resist imposed changes. However, because they helped to create their job descriptions, they felt some commitment to them.

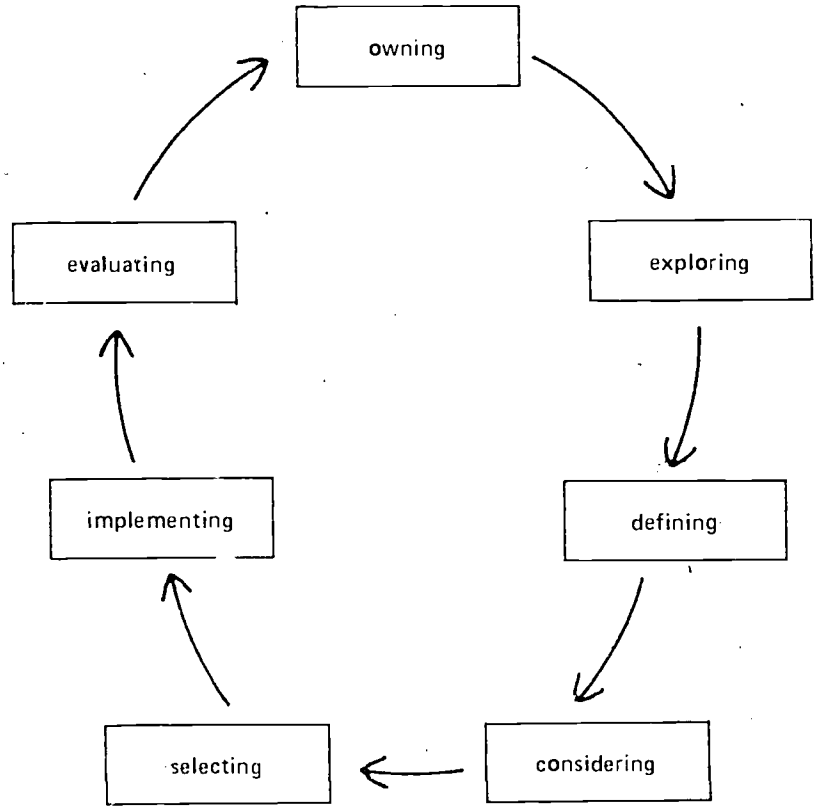
A first step with every trainee in the California State College pilot was a meeting with the CDA coordinator, the trainee, the field site supervisor, and the trainee's administrator to come to agreement and understanding of the requirements and guarantees of the training experience. I believe it is because of this initial and on-going contact with administrators that the program administrators have been so supportive and cooperative with this pilot training effort.

A second step in each trainee's experience with the pilot should be a joint meeting of the CDA staff representative, the trainee, and the center staff working in the trainee's center. Such meetings should be frequent. If not, there will be times when other staff are threatened by changes in the trainee. An explanation or involvement of other staff in changes could lessen the likelihood of such problems. Change is not easy. It can be threatening. But when people are prepared for and involved in change, it can be an exciting growth experience for everyone.

changes occurring in the trainee's behavior.

1. Trainer and trainee alike need to maintain a pe
well as a task orientation when considering cha
give consideration to how changes might affect
then be prepared to support others through the cl
2. The trainer and trainee need to plan ways to in
by the change in the process of change. Other
assurance that they will have opportunity to inf
of the change.
3. The trainer and trainee need to keep those
informed about progress in areas where they
involved. People are most threatened by the unk
4. The trainer and trainee need to plan times and
express their feelings about changes throughout
stage. Feelings are important and a chance
essential.

The problem solving cycle is the process used by the California State College CDA. Project to bring about lasting changes toward more competent performance in the job of child care. The process is viewed as a cycle because of its continuous nature.



16

Owning	Owning the problem means that the learner recognizes he has a problem and is ready to assume primary responsibility for solving the problem.
Exploring	Exploring the problem means to move beyond an initial presentation of the problem to reach a thorough understanding of all the ins and outs of the problem situation as it affects the individual.
Defining	Defining the problem means to concretize the problem accurately and in such a way that something can be done about it. This leads to defining the goal which is a positive restatement of the problem.
Considering	Considering courses of action involves a search for alternative objectives and strategies to effectively meet the goal. Also considered are values, strengths, assets, and styles of learning.
Selecting	Selection of objectives and strategies is based on their appropriateness for the individual and for the achievement of the goal.
Implementing	Implementing is putting into action the selected objectives and strategies.
Evaluating	Evaluating is determining the effects and ramifications of the completed objectives on the accomplishment of the goal.

As a more detailed discussion is offered of each step, some attention will be given to the role of the trainer or field site facilitator who is helping a trainee through a problem-solving process.

In training supervisors in a problem-solving process, I have often witnessed the frustration of supervisors who are trying to correct situations that trainees do not view as a problem. Their efforts are almost always to no avail. A person must recognize that he has a problem before anything else can be accomplished. In the California State College Model, we use educational encounters to challenge individuals to rethink their assumptions and behaviors. Perhaps from such an encounter a person may recognize that s/he has a problem. In any case, the problem-solving cycle does not begin unless the trainee recognizes there is a problem.

Many times trainees are willing to say they have a problem but are quick to blame someone else for the situation. Because they see the problem as caused by someone else, they feel there is nothing they can do about it.

In the "owning" stage of the problem-solving cycle the trainee must be able to make four statements:

1. I have a problem.
2. The problem is significant and deserves attention.
3. I believe the problem is solvable.
4. I am ready to assume personal responsibility for trying to solve it.

In order to help a trainee to the point of owning the problem, the trainer must consistently set expectations of self-responsibility for the learner while providing support to the learner.

Example: A trainer observes a very structured art activity which frustrates the three year olds who are participating. In conversation with Evelyne, the trainee, the trainer learns that Evelyne also recognized that the activity failed to meet the children's needs. The two agreed that the problem was significant enough to warrant attention since most art activities provided by Evelyne were of this nature and had similar results. After initially blaming the children for being too young to do anything right, Evelyne agreed that it was her responsibility to deal with the problem.

Exploring

In the exploring stage of the problem-solving cycle, the trainer is attempting to help the trainee toward as clear an understanding as possible of what barriers and what assets are at work in a problem situation. Also the trainer wants to better understand how the trainee views her/himself as a person.

It is the job of the trainer at this exploring stage to interact in a way that will enhance an understanding of the other person's frame of reference. The trainer does it in many ways such as: accepting ideas and feelings of the trainee, asking clarifying questions, attending to body language, resisting distractions and when appropriate, giving information.

stage is far down the line. Premature solutions can waste much time and energy, thus leading to discouragement. Other critical errors for the trainer to avoid are: making judgmental statements, setting expectations, giving directions or emphatic agreement, denying or rejecting the trainee's feelings, and responding on the basis of "intuition" or "experience" rather than on the basis of what the trainee has overtly stated.

After a while, the trainer will begin to be able to identify themes or essentials in the conversation. Likewise, the trainer will start to understand what the person has been saying about her/himself. The trainer will identify consistencies and inconsistencies in what the trainee has been saying. At this point it is appropriate for the trainer to make summary statements which will enable the trainee to gain more understanding of self.

- Example: After discussing with Evelyne the reaction of the three year olds to the planned art activities, the following summary statements were made: "The three year olds cannot deal with the structure of the art activities planned because the activities are not developmentally appropriate. However, they do respond to activities that allow for free exploration and sensory stimulation. Such art activities tend to be messy. You are uncomfortable with messy activities, Evelyne, because things get too confusing for you. You don't know how to avoid this confusion."

Defining

After much exploration of the situation, a clear statement of the problem is helpful. Defining the problem focuses the attention of the trainee on the most important aspects of the problem situation so that s/he may get a handle on what is often a very complex situation. We have found it helpful to define problems in terms of barriers to competence. The most frequent barriers defined have been:

1. lack of knowledge and skills
2. unclear or conflicting values and goals
3. lack of a teaching philosophy and teaching style
4. practical problems
5. insecurity
6. lack of commitment

Once the problem is stated to everyone's satisfaction, the goal is easy to write. It is merely a positive restatement of the problem.

Example: Statement of the problem – "You are insecure with messy art activities, Evelyne, because they cause confusion. You do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to set up, implement and clean up such an activity without a great deal of confusion."

art activities with a minimum of confusion.

Considering

At this point it is appropriate to consider courses of action that will help the trainee reach the goal. Discussion centers around values, strengths, assets, styles of learning, and preferences which make each learner unique. (See sections on value clarification and self affirmation.) All possible means for achieving the goal are considered. Both the trainer and the trainee may make suggestions, as well as other staff members who might be involved in the center. No workable course should be excluded from consideration. It may prove to be the most creative and effective alternative. Also more than one course of action may be required to meet the goal. Brainstorming and similar techniques may be utilized to generate alternatives.

Selecting

Beginning objectives are now selected that appear to be appropriate for the individual and for the achievement of the goal.

The trainee should have a large part in their selection. Occasionally, the trainer may be strongly at variance with the selection of the objectives and strategies made by the trainee. I recommend following the suggestions of the trainee to reinforce the concept that the learner has primary responsibility for solving teaching/learning problems. If these fail to meet the goal, other strategies may be adopted.

The objectives that are written are specific behavioral statements for achieving the goal. The behaviors dealt with must be observable and assessable. They narrow the goal sufficiently so that progress towards the goal is achieved in logical, manageable steps.

Example: Two beginning objectives written for Evelyne were:

1. Evelyne will observe three teachers of three year olds setting up messy art activities, carrying them out, and cleaning them up. She will record her observations.
2. Evelyne will read in three sources dealing with children's art and outline how these authors suggest the handling of messy art activities.

Implementing

This is the part of the process that is most up to the trainee. If the trainee has been a willing and active participant in the problem-solving process thus far, s/he will most likely make the time and energy commitment required to implement the plan. It may be requested of the trainer, however, to assist in making available whatever resources are

Evaluating

Once the implementation stage has been completed and documented, the trainer and trainee again meet to ask some basic questions. The first question is whether the objectives have been achieved? If so, then has the achievement of these particular objectives led to the achievement of the overall goal? Many times a series of objectives developed over a long period of time are required to accomplish the overall goal.

Once it is determined that a goal has been achieved, it is a helpful procedure to have the trainee write a rationale for long-term maintenance of the newly acquired behavior. The maintenance of the behavior should then be subject to periodic evaluation.

Example: At the evaluation meeting, it was determined that Evelyne did achieve the stated objectives but not the overall goal. Other objectives were then written which would require Evelyne to consolidate her learnings into an organizational plan of her own which she would then practice and refine.

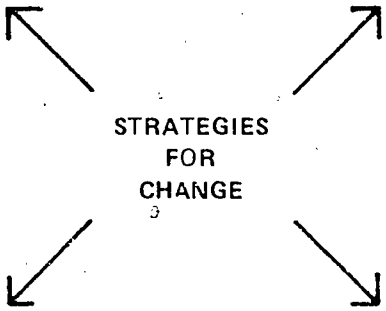
The problem-solving process described above may appear to be too time-consuming to be practical. However, it has one overriding argument in its favor: it succeeds in bringing about sustained significant changes toward more competent job performance. Faster, more "efficient" training methods can rarely boast the same. The problem-solving cycle as a process for change becomes more economical in the end.

THE STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Positive, purposeful, enthusiastic, proud, growing are all words which well describe the participants of the CDA Project at California State College. They are best characterized as people who know where they are going professionally and have developed some successful styles of getting there.

If one is unsure of his destination, he will likely never reach it. Therefore, the first question a person involved in a competency-based training program must ask her/himself is, "Where am I going professionally?" This question does not so much mean, "What will be my ultimate professional achievement?" as it means, "What are my immediate and long-term goals?"; "What is my operating philosophy?"; "What skills must I develop?"; "What are my values?"; "Who am I now and who do I want to become?" The answers to these questions, once clarified, will determine one's destination in a competency-based training program.

But just as important as a clear destination are some successful styles of traveling toward that destination i.e., some strategies for change. The California CDA Project has stressed four strategies for change toward competence. They are illustrated in the following chart and diagram.



Educational Encounters

Goal Achievement Through Objectives

Training Strategy	Variables	Goals
1. Value Clarification and Advocation "What you believe"	position theoretical basis rationale clear & unclear values philosophy	effecting change testing ideas communicating commitment productivity responsibility consistency
2. Self Affirmation "What you are"	strengths achieved competencies established values interests stage of development	positive self concept self-direction confidence self respect preservation of uniqueness personal teaching style
3. Educational Encounters "What you can be"	new avenues new interests alternative values other models	open-mindedness awareness respect for other opinions consciousness raising reevaluation of own assumptions creativity interdependence
4. Goal Achievement Through Objectives "What you are doing"	weaknesses incompetencies areas of strong interest	eliminating barriers to competence meeting individual goals & objectives

many types of competency-based teacher training programs in the nation today. All competency-based training programs have several characteristics and issues in common. One of these is their common dependence upon clearly stated educational values as a prerequisite to success.

In order to have a competency-based training situation, one must have a stated set of competencies toward which to train. Obviously, unending lists of competencies could be generated by teacher trainers. Out of all the possible competencies, it very quickly becomes necessary for those involved in a training program to write and/or select those competencies which they value in a teacher. Those competencies valued in a teacher are closely related to the philosophical characteristics the training program values in an educational process. Likewise, values of education philosophy are directly derived from the characteristics of the developing human being that are valued. For example, if one highly values human beings who can get along and cooperate well socially, the educational philosophy would reflect an emphasis on social development. In turn, a teacher who could competently encourage this kind of development in her/his students would be highly valued. On the other hand, if an educator highly valued an independent human being s/he might deemphasize social interaction in the philosophy and thus value a teacher with quite different competencies than the teacher in the first example. Trainers need to deal with values.

Likewise, teacher trainees must themselves deal with values. Trainees are often confused and uncertain on some very basic issues. They do not have a clear picture of the learners and human beings they would like their children to become, nor the teachers and human beings they would like to become. Many are attracted to first one educational theory and then another. They seem to value so many things for their children and themselves and become frustrated when they cannot accomplish everything. Others seem to be doing a random walk through their teaching days, with one set of activities seemingly totally unrelated to other classroom experiences.

Such a teacher is like a person who having some carpentry skills decides to build his own home. He gathers information on house construction and immediately begins to build. But lacking a clear vision of the house that would suit his needs and failing to clarify what he personally values in a house, the construction is piecemeal and in the end highly unsatisfactory.

It seems to be absolutely vital for any training effort which has competent performance as its goal to engage its trainees in a process of clarifying, choosing, organizing and then advocating values. The answering of three questions will greatly assist teachers and trainers to clarify their values and gain a clear vision to teach.

1. What kind of human beings do I want my children to become? What do I value as important goals for the children I teach?

3. What do I value in the teacher I want to become? What competencies must I gain to be that teacher?

The answers to these three questions must be very closely inter-related and consistent to give a clear vision to teach. Because of a recognition of the difference a clear vision to teach can make on competent teacher performance, all of the CDA trainees in the California State College Project have spent considerable time clarifying their values. The following account relates the experience of one trainee, Ilene Reed, with this process.

"About one year ago an entirely new approach to teacher training was made available to me. As one of ten candidates in the California State College Pilot CDA Project, I became involved in a competency-based education program. I knew that my professional growth had been stymied by the limited number of available opportunities for short-term training open to me. I knew also that I was not ready to continue my education in a formal master's degree program. Coming from a traditional educational background, though, I had difficulty in perceiving how an individualized approach could work in teacher training. I soon came to understand that individualization can be universal, and not limited to preschoolers.

"At our first meeting the CDA Project Coordinator helped each candidate to begin to organize her/his ideas about child development, and to prioritize them. As I began to work through this process I realized that in my two years as a classroom teacher I had neglected to take the time to assess my own development. I had fallen into patterns of teacher behavior which violated my beliefs concerning what is 'good' for children.

"The CDA Coordinator suggested that I begin to evaluate my assumptions about children and how they grow and to determine whether or not I was operating in accordance with my beliefs. I had studied theories of Early Childhood Education in the course of my college career. However, I had never really bothered to figure out what worked best for me, and therefore had no easily identifiable philosophy of my own. I spent many long hours working through what I value in preschool education. Yet, the more difficult task was to limit my choices to what I could demonstrate in my own classroom. Not only did I have to make these choices, but had to be able to defend them. Some of my assumptions have changed since I originally clarified them, but the process of valuing allows for continuous reevaluation and change. As I have gained more experience, knowledge and confidence through my CDA training it becomes increasingly easier for me to act upon what I believe is good for children and to demonstrate my philosophy 100% of the time."

Any training program is always in grave danger of giving total attention to deficits and forgetting accomplishments. This is particularly true of diagnostic approaches like competency-based teacher training efforts which focus constantly on attainment of competencies not yet being demonstrated. A constant focus on weaknesses, incompetence, and undesirable or unclear values can have a very destructive effect upon the success of a training program and on the trainees themselves.

Teachers, like the children they teach, flourish upon receiving recognition for the competencies they've already achieved, the positive values they've already established, and the interests and abilities they already possess. By giving recognition where it is due, a trainer validates and affirms his trainee's worth. But a higher goal is to lead the trainee to the place where s/he affirms her/his own worth by taking pleasure in accomplishments and progress and giving recognition to her/himself.

A training experience can often lead to self depreciation and thus discouragement and low motivation because the trainee becomes so aware of weaknesses. Often s/he sees models of competence far beyond the image of her/himself. Trainees need to receive feedback on how they are doing for their stage of development and helped to realize that they, too, like the children they teach, progress through stages of development in their professional competency.

There are many ways to build into a training program the missing essential self validation. The most obvious is with praise, i.e. specific, selected, verbal recognition. Praise can lose its meaning when it is not specific and selective. People tend to appreciate most being praised for an accomplishment or ability they value highly and strive toward. Selective praise means for the trainer getting to know her/his trainee and the values and goals each holds.

Another factor related to self affirmation is the expectations for success set by the trainer. If the trainer expects the trainee to put forth her/his best efforts, to value self, to succeed, it is likely all this will come to be. Assigning positive rather than negative motives to the trainee's actions also indicates the trainer's expectations are high for that trainee. Unfortunately, many trainers blame a trainee for failing to do something in the manner the trainer wishes, rather than assuming the trainee's actions are due to lack of knowledge or skill in alternative behaviors. Assuming the best, expecting the best, usually leads to getting the best.

Another strategy that enhances self affirmation is taking into account the type of training and area of curriculum that a trainee values. You, as the trainer, might feel that a trainee "needs" some work on a particular competency. But if the trainee does not value that work, her/his motivation is low. People need to be given recognition for the priorities they value.

There are many rewards when self affirmation is included as a training strategy. Trainees will develop more positive self concepts which will result in more self-direction, confidence and motivation to press on to new goals. With this kind of trainee, no training effort can fail.

Most of the day-to-day training in the California State College CDA Project is directed toward eliminating barriers to competence by working toward a series of **individually specified** objectives. However, not all types of learning are facilitated by specification of goals and objectives. Nash writes that a "period of free play with materials, tools, concepts, ideas, or whatever, seems to be an essential preliminary to the creative use of them. It also seems to be necessary that this play take place in a low-risk, low-threat atmosphere without regard for goals and objectives. Otherwise the subsequent ideas or outcomes adhere too closely to convention and precedent and fail to break new ground."[1]

The California State College CDA Project decided to organize almost all of the project's group meetings as educational encounters. Therefore, rather than specifying behavioral objectives for group meetings, individuals were encouraged to interpret and integrate the encounters uniquely, depending on their own expectations, needs and stage of development.

The overall purpose of the educational encounters was to broaden horizons and challenge participants into new modes of thinking and perhaps acting. Alternative values, assumptions, and professional approaches were explored. The educational encounters appeared to lead to an evaluation of alternative assumptions and values, a respect for others opinions, and a more open-minded attitude toward new and sometimes conflicting points of view. There appeared to be increased awareness and creativity in thinking.

Many of the educational encounters held by the project have engaged groups of peer learners in the sharing of apprehensions, goals, problems and discoveries. Many CDA participants used the educational encounters to advocate values they had clarified for themselves. Other educational encounters provided simulations or other exploration/discovery opportunities to help the participants define alternatives open to them. Other events considered by us to be educational encounters were attendance at professional meetings and conferences, visits to training and child care programs, and informal bull sessions with those in the profession of child care.

It was largely through educational encounters such as those described above that the CDA Coordinator and the field site facilitators together entered the process of articulating the philosophy of the California State CDA Project that is reported in this booklet.

[1]Nash, Paul, *A Humanistic Approach to Performance Based Teacher Education:* Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1973, p. 7.

Goal achievement through objectives is a strategy for change used by the California State College CDA Program which builds upon a problem-solving process. For it is only after a teaching/learning problem has been carefully explored and defined is it then possible to state the goals a learner is striving to meet. In fact, a goal can be viewed as the positive restatement of the problem. For example, when the problem is, "No one on the staff is clear about her/his own job expectations", the goal will be, "Everyone on the staff will be clear about her/his own job expectations". To the extent that the problem-solving process has been skillfully conducted, the goal derived will be meaningful to the learner.

Once a trainer and trainee decide on an appropriate goal, then their job is to write some initial objectives which will enable the trainee to begin to reach the goal. When appropriate, the trainee shares these objectives with anyone who would be affected by the objectives. Based on the feedback of others these objectives could be revised.

At this point in the process, a group meets to brainstorm on possible strategies or approaches to achieve the objectives. The group may be the trainer and trainee but where possible should include others who are affected by the proposed changes. From the many suggested strategies, the trainee chooses those s/he would like to implement.

After implementation, the trainer and trainee evaluate whether the accomplishment of this set of objectives has led to the accomplishment of the goal. If not, other objectives are written which would logically build on the objectives already completed. This process continues until the goal is met and documented. Then other goals are set.

CONCLUSION

This booklet has outlined the problem-solving approach to competency-based education used in the California State College CDA Project. The necessity for change in behavior required by competency-based education programs has been summarized. The accountability for change in teacher performance has been clearly assigned to the teacher/learner. A warning has been offered about the effects of change so that ways of dealing with these effects might be built into the training process. The problem-solving cycle has been outlined in seven steps. Incorporated into the problem-solving cycle are the strategies for change: value clarification, self affirmation, educational encounters, and goal achievement through objectives. Common barriers to competence which often become the target of the problem-solving process have also been outlined. The next booklet clarifies the nature of the training plans which the problem-solving process yields.

Photograph:

Al

lets by: