



Advanced Citizen Advocacy

Web-Based Training May 2008 ECIC Day at the Capital



Star Power Citizen Advocacy Training



Your Trainers Today

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It All Starts With a Conversation

Our goal is to transform the approach to policy making by generating better, more creative conversations between those who decide and those who are impacted by the decision. We find, over and over again, that talking and listening generate exactly the kind of understanding needed to move Michigan forward.

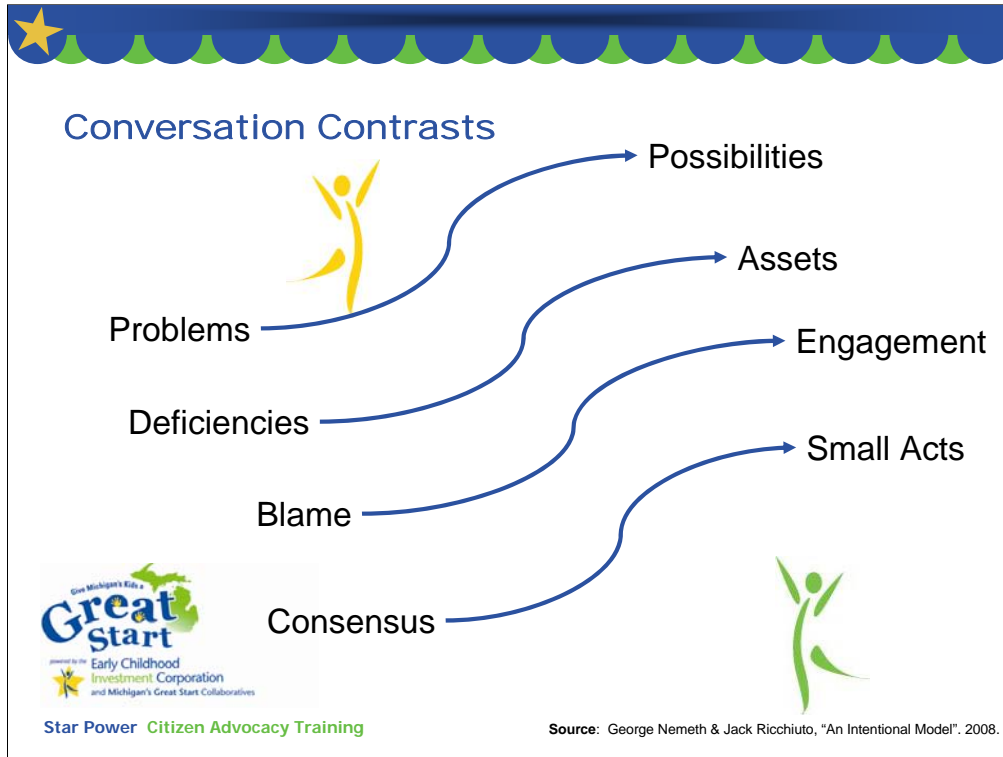



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In Lansing's term limited environment, relationships mean more than ever. Facts are important, but to get your facts elevated over someone else's, it's going to take a little bit of personal time. Research shows us that people more deeply value personal relationships now that their lives are so hectic and their means of communication so diverse. Today we're going to talk about strategies for building those relationships with lawmakers and getting beyond what has become an all-to-familiar partisanship in modern politics.

We're going to ask you to step out of your comfort zone a little bit and initiate conversations in new ways, ways that will not only help you explain yourself better but will also help you elevate that all-important oft-undervalued skill "listening." There are three focus points to today's discussion, and we're going to take time after each of them to have our own conversation about the technique and how you can apply it in your Lansing visits.

The first strategy is about moving from "closed" conversations where the outcomes are somewhat predetermined to "open" conversations that allow you to explore possibilities and solutions. Second we're going to outline a specific process for engaging in an "open" conversation called Interest-Based Bargaining; it's a negotiation technique identified by Harvard researchers that major companies like the Big Three are using to craft labor contracts. Finally, we'll talk about a listening technique called Dialogue With Difference that will help you understand the interests and motivations of the person sitting across the table from you.



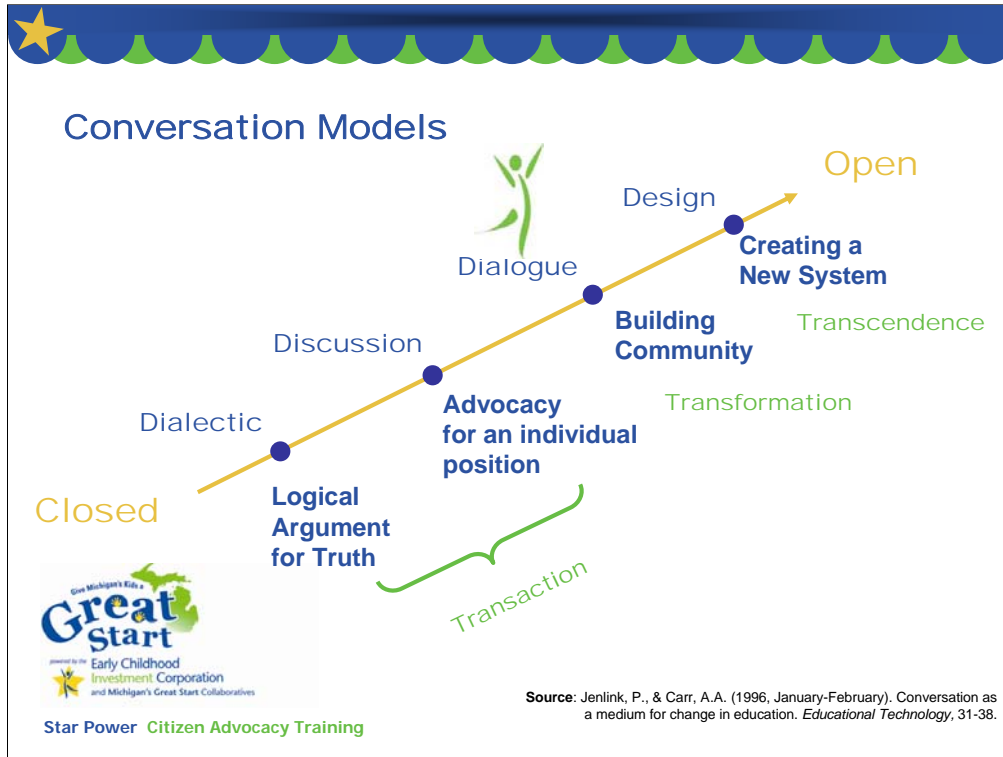
Too many decisions about policy these days are made in a traditional conflict/compromise process that excludes many new options and the discovery of common ground. In large part this is due to a cultural norm that has elevated debate over conversation. Certain kinds of conversation, however, are successfully bringing people and communities together in the process of co-creating their futures. It is relatively easy to introduce these new conversations and to put negative, disempowering conflict models behind you. Jack Ricchiuto and George Nemeth, in their work on community building, have identified four types of conversations that generate positive energy:

Dream Space: this is a conversation about possibilities rather than problems.

Gifts: discussions about what assets do you bring to the table, rather than what deficiencies your community faces

Invitations: rather than placing blame on someone for a problem, engage them in constructing a solution

Small Acts: these conversations focus on projects – “what *can* we do together?” – rather than on developing full consensus about a complement of issues



From Jenlink, P., & Carr, A.A. (1996, January-February). Conversation as a medium for change in education. *Educational Technology*, 31-38 as presented in synopsis by Lorraine Sherry at the University of Colorado -Denver

"There are three broad purposes of conversation:

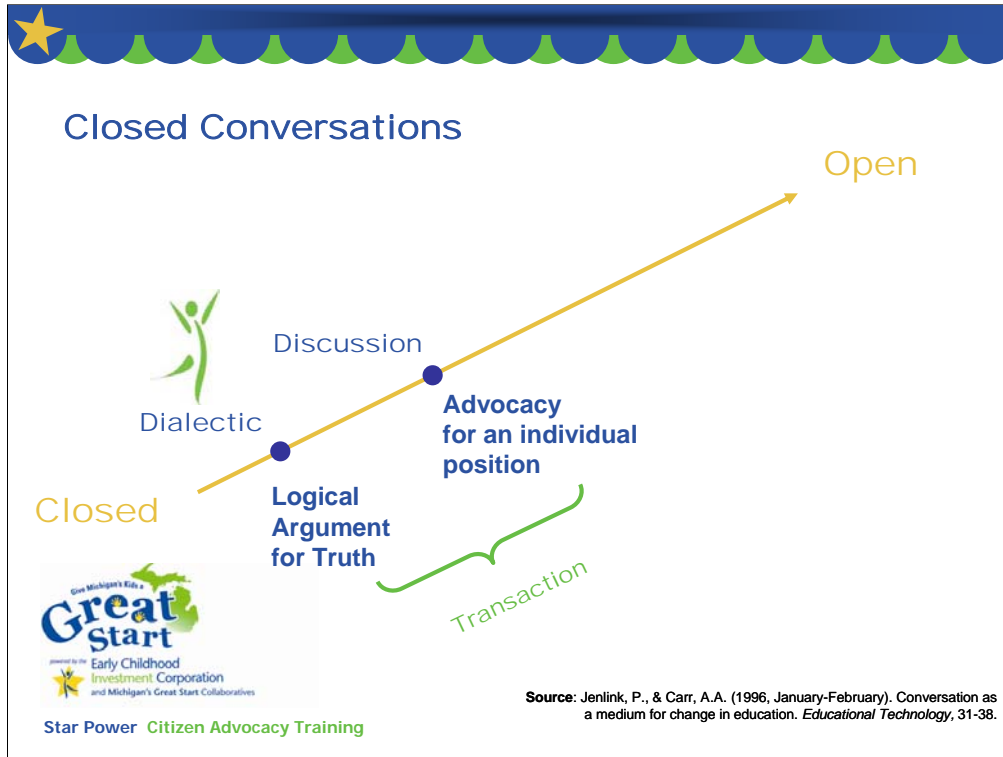
Transacting: conducted for the purpose of negotiating or exchange within an existing problem setting

Transforming: conducted when individuals suspend their own personal opinions or assumptions, and their judgment of others' viewpoints (ref. Bohm & Edwards; see also [Carl Bereiter on progressive discourse](#))

Transcendent: where the purpose is that of moving beyond or "leaping out" of the existing mindsets of schools, learning, and educational change, and creating an entirely new learning system (ref. Banathy; see also [Roy Pea on 3 types of communication](#)).

There are four types of conversations. Discussion is the most familiar and pragmatic; dialogue is also pragmatic but less common. Dialectic and design are more disciplined orientations.

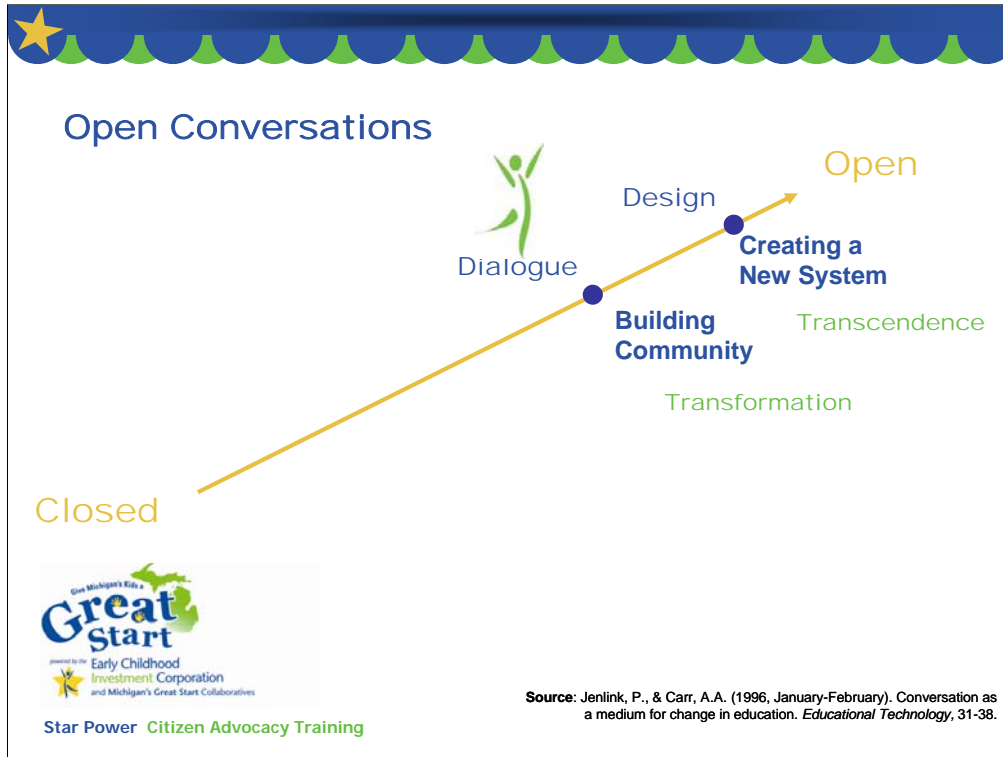
- Dialectic conversation focuses on framing a logical argument for distilling the truth.
- Discussion conversation is the forum in which many of us advocate for our own individual position.
- Dialogue conversation is a conversation where meaning is constructed through sharing.
- Design conversation focuses on creating something new.



Dialectic conversation focuses on framing a logical argument for distilling the truth. It is a scientific approach, a disciplined inquiry into whatever is being examined. In dialectic conversation, participants are often rigid in their beliefs and debate for what they perceive as truths. The nature of the dialectic conversation is one of debate and logical argument within a context of limited negotiations for change. This often results in factionalization or breaking apart of individuals into different camps. Participants often see their truths as the only truths, and subsequently see any attempt at school change as a personal attack on their understanding of the school world.

Discussion conversation is the forum in which many of us advocate for our own individual position.

Unlike the logical argument expressed by a dialectic, discussion is more subjectively influenced by opinion and supposition. Discussion conversations are transactional in nature, one participant negotiating with others with the advocacy and preservation of personal assumptions as the center of the discourse. Incoherence in thinking is brought on and reinforced by the advocacy or preservation of personal opinions and rigid mindsets, especially when ungrounded suppositions enter the discourse and participants are unwilling to disclose their beliefs or suspend their judgments of others' points of view. This results in a breakdown in communication. *Most* discussive conversation has been about specific change in issues and not within the change process itself.



Dialogue conversation is a conversation where meaning is constructed through sharing.

It is a community-building form of conversation. Its purpose is to create a setting where conscious collective mindfulness can be maintained. This form of discourse transforms the individual thinking and thought processes, creating collective thought. It requires that individuals first examine their personal assumptions or opinions and then suspend these assumptions before the entire group. They must step out of their advocacy for personally held assumptions as well as those of others. This type of conversation recognizes variously held common experiences. *Regarding school change*, in a school setting this begins with unconcealing the hidden assumptions or opinions and suppositions which guide the interactions among individuals. It then moves to examining the diverse views of meaning held for educational change. Finally, participants suspend their individual thinking and begin to share collectively, thus creating commonly shared meanings for educational change or constructing a shared purpose.

Design conversation focuses on creating something new.

Dialogues help the design participants create collective consciousness as well as clear the minds of distorting or conflicting assumptions that lead to incoherence of thinking. Through creating coherence of thinking, a community evolves wherein collective thought is possible and the creative consciousness may emerge to focus outside the constraints of old mindsets on the process of designing a new educational system. Design conversation goes beyond the suspension of personal opinions and moves into a suspension of mindsets themselves. *Regarding school change*, design conversation is rare in school settings because school practitioners and change agents typically engage in conversations focused on solutions to problems within the existing system, rather than engaging in dialogue through which they can begin to create a design space together. Whereas dialogue transforms collections of individuals into a community of action, design conversation focuses on a change that transcends both systemic constraints within the school and the constraints of a narrow, traditional view of how change should happen. “



Interest-Based Bargaining



Move from Positions To Interests To Shared Wins

Four Principles of Interest-Based Bargaining

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Invent options
- Evaluate options using objective criteria



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Source: Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes*. Penguin. 1991.

IBB (also, integrative bargaining or win-win negotiating) is a form of collaborative negotiation in which the parties strive to understand each others needs, desires, concerns and fears – their “interests” – and identify solutions that are mutual beneficial. The process relies on trust-building and transparency and incorporates creativity strategies to maximize the options offered for discussion. IBB is differentiated from traditional competitive negotiation (e.g. zero-sum games or hard exchanges) in that participants are guided by their interests rather than their positions. A simple story illustrates the difference:

In a busy restaurant kitchen two chefs were preparing a meal for a special guest. The first was preparing an orange glaze for the main course, the second an orange soufflé. Unfortunately, for each recipe to be perfect, each chef required two oranges. There were only two oranges in the kitchen, not four.


The Competitive Negotiation Solutions: *As they competed for the use of limited resources, the chefs were faced with a series of unsavory [sic] choices. One of them could choose a different recipe or they could divide the oranges and each produce a less satisfying product.*

The Interest-Based Solution: *Discussing their needs, the chefs were able to develop a solution that allowed each of them to succeed. The sauce required the juice of the oranges, the soufflé the rinds. By understanding each other’s interests, they both achieved their goals with the resources at hand.*


In the story above, had each chef begun negotiating from a position (e.g. “I must have two oranges.”), you can imagine the conflict that would have arisen. Surely knives would have been involved and French curses. By asking what the underlying interest in the oranges was (i.e., “juice” or “rind”), each party was able meet their needs.

From both a product and emotional standpoint, the outcome of an interest-based process is frequently more broadly satisfying. Neither party has to be a winner or loser, rather each might derive satisfaction from helping the other succeed. Four basic principles guide interest-based bargaining:

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Invent options
- Evaluate options using objective criteria




Separate the People from the Problem



Three Sources of People Problems


- **Misperceptions**
- **Heightened Emotions**
- **Poor Communication**

Focus on Interests, Not Positions



Positions: Each side's preferred end result

Interests: Encapsulate the underlying values and motivations behind positions



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Separate the People from the Problem

- it's easy to become intertwined in the topics you're advocating, with good reason - many of you have good personal reasons for getting involved in this issue
- but it's essential to keep people problems and differences on the substance of issues separate
- when someone doesn't immediately support your view, it's not a personal attack
- people problems will interfere with resolution of substantive issues, so acknowledge them ASAP and set them aside
- 3 sources of people problems: perception, emotion and communication

Focus on Interests, Not Positions

- positions are each side's preferred end result (I need all the oranges, or the Legislature should increase the budget for the Great Start Readiness Program)
- interests encapsulate the underlying values and motivations behind those positions
- while positions are important to articulate INTERNALLY, when they are the starting point of negotiation it artificially constrains the range of possible solutions
- instead, share your interests and find out the other side's relevant interests, you may find you share many in common
- if interests aren't obvious, ask questions about why each person is taking the position they are to uncover them



Invent Options



Brainstorm without Restriction . . . “What if?”

- **Separate the “creation” from the “evaluation” stages**
- **Use mutual interests as a starting point**
- **Develop solutions that meet both sides interests**

Evaluate Options Using Objective Criteria

Data: Agree upon which sources both of you will use

Criteria & Targets: Seek unanimity by developing shared targets, which are more easily achievable



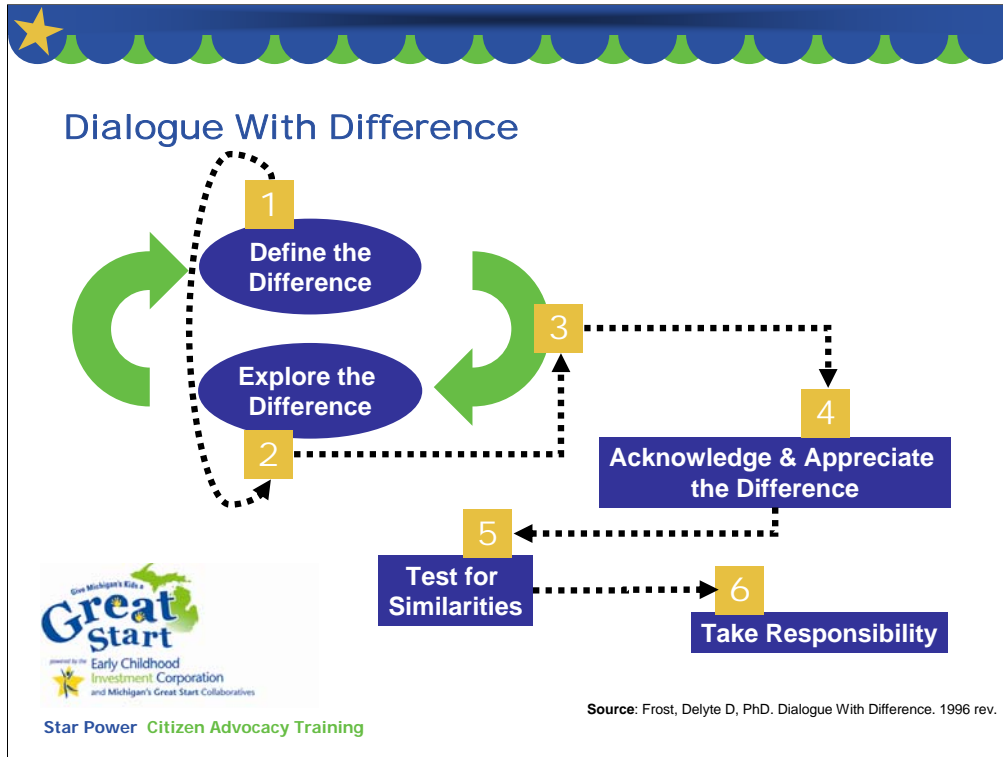
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Invent Options

- develop solutions that meet both sides' interests
- important to separate creation from evaluation stage
- use mutual interests as starting point, then move on to the hard stuff


Evaluate Options Using Objective Criteria

- involves identifying agreed-upon criteria in advance, then evaluating each option using those criteria AFTER brainstorming is over




Dialogue With Difference is a conversation process model designed to prompt active listening and help parties reach a deeper understanding of the interests and concerns that may motivate conflict. When a higher level of competency is achieved between the two parties, they are more open to new information and transcendent processes. Effective dialogue becomes a powerful resource in negotiating change. You learn to appreciate and anticipate differences and trust your ability to deal with them in productive ways. Completing a dialogue successfully gives you more options and choices. It also allows easier initiation of future conversations and provides a means for responding to conversations that are initiated in a conflict mode. The process involves six skills used in a cyclic fashion:


1. Define the Difference: state beliefs, experiences and feelings using “I” statements
2. Explore the Difference: ask questions, dig for details, wonder; be open to new details and information
3. Recycle: switch roles, inviting statements and questions; don’t press your own point or work to convince the other person
4. Acknowledge and Appreciate the Difference: paraphrase the distinctions; admit to insights, identifying where you differ and restating the values behind the other position; the seeker has something new, the teller feels heard and is seen in a new way.
5. Test for Similarities: check for similarities and suggest areas of agreement; “Given our differences, how are we alike?”
6. Take Responsibility: Get concrete; suggest next steps; say what “I” will do, take action



Questions and Conversation



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www.ECIC4Kids.org



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Advanced Citizen Lobbying

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