

INTEREST-  
BASED  
DECISION  
MAKING

BRIGITTE  
MARSHALL



# DECISION MAKING

What comes up for you when you think about solving problems and making complex decisions that will impact different stakeholders?



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# DEFINITIONS....

- **Problems** - harmful situations that need to be dealt with
- **Positions** – situations and conditions
- **Solutions** – explanations or answers
- **Interests** – things that concern
- **Decisions** – conclusions or resolutions

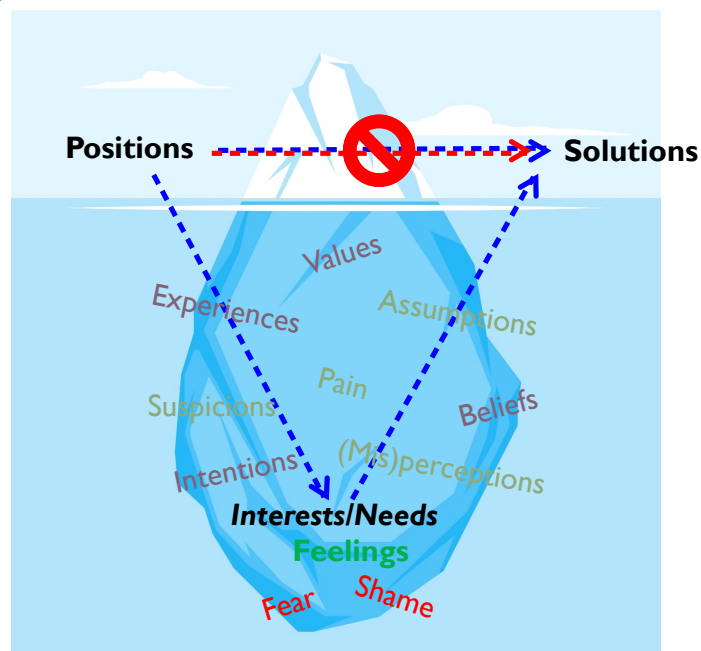
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# WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT INTEREST-BASED DECISION MAKING?

- Decision Making
  - identifying a solution to a problem
- Interest-Based Decision Making,
  - consider positions, situations and conditions
  - make a **detour** to consider **interests**
  - identify a solution

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# WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?



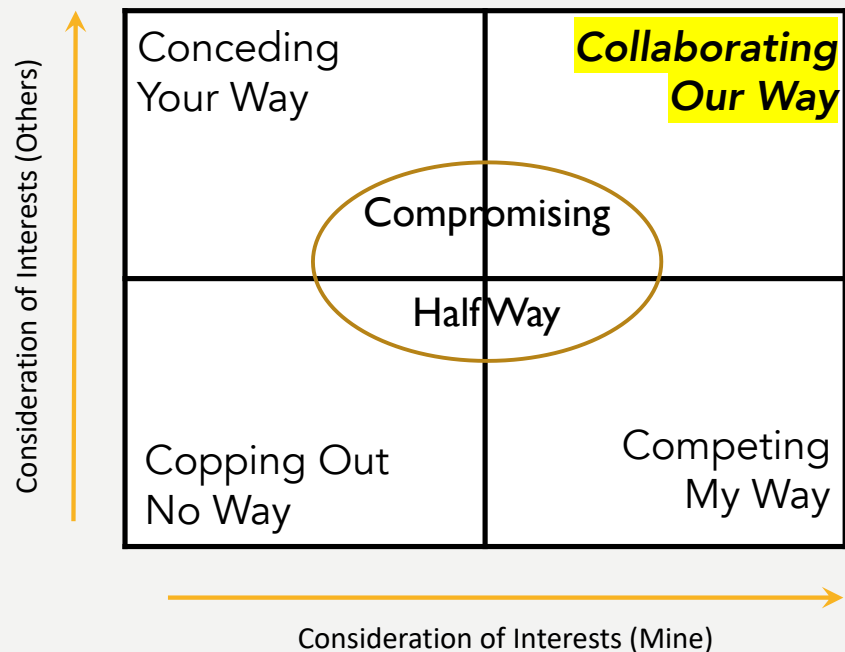
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# PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACHES

Problem Solving	Either/Or	Both/And
Value system	Competitive	Collaborative
Expected outcome	Win/Lose	Win/Win
Attitude to winning	To the victor goes the spoils	Your success is my success
Attitude to losing	Someone has to lose	If someone loses, everyone loses
Attitude to minority opinions	Get with the program	Everyone has a piece of the truth
Why explore competing positions?	Search for bargaining chips, horse trading and compromise	Build a shared framework, mutual creative thinking
Essential activity	Analyze - break into parts	Synthesize – integrate parts into whole
How long it takes	Faster in the short run	Faster in the long run
When to use it	Expedience more important than durability	High stakes, multi-party interests,
Underlying philosophy	Survival of the fittest	Interdependence of all things

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## Interests Inter-relationships



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## TAKE THE INTERESTS DISCOVERY DETOUR BECAUSE....

- *Complex* challenges require thoughtful problem solving
- Expedience at the cost of sustainability?
- Commitment to outcomes increased by collaborative decision-making
- Real collaboration requires identification and consideration of *interests*

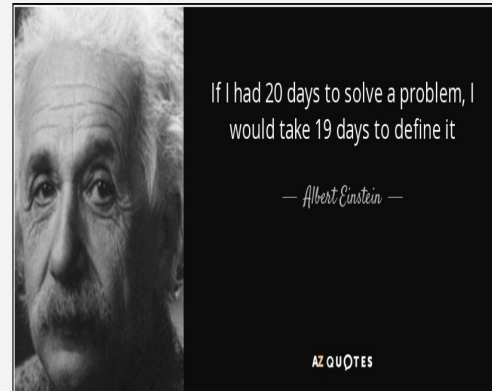
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## INTEREST-BASED DECISION MAKING

- Step 1. Define the Problem
- Step 2. Identify the Stakeholders
- Step 3. Determine their Interests
- Step 4. Identify Shared Interests
- Step 5. Develop Options
- Step 6. Craft a Solution

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# STEP 1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM



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# STEP 1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM

- Create the boundaries for problem solving – start with “How might we.....?”
- Open ended queries to surface multiple solutions – no “Yes/No” answers
- Not too broad – avoid “boiling the ocean”
- Not too narrow – avoid limiting the solutions
- No premature solutions
- No accusations
- Recognize that the issue statement may change as the problem is understood in greater depth



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## **Apples Adult Education Consortium Case Study**

Struggling to develop course offerings that.....

- are responsive to adult learners
- are responsive to labor market demand
- avoid duplicating course offerings across adult schools
- align courses between adult schools and the Community College

Historically, adult education in the area....

- has been hub of the community
- had many community interest classes
- had ESL classes attended by same senior students for years

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## **Apples Adult Education Consortium Case Study**

Some of the adult school administrators wants to...

- professionalize their faculties
- embed prep, planning and PLC time into paid time
- focus on improved outcomes for adult learners

Consortium Director....

- stresses need to develop regional relationships and partnerships

Some adult school instructors....

- don't trust regional approach
- don't think it will be good for adult learners
- believe adult schools will lose adult learners
- concerned about adult learners who won't be served

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## Apples Adult Education Consortium Case Study

Some adult school instructors are....

- resistant to change focus of instructional programming
- concerned about reduction in instructional hours
- skeptical about teacher recruitment for employment-focused classes
- doubtful about student demand for employment focus

Some Community College instructors and administrators believe....

- adult schools should focus on preparing adult learners for Community College classes
- we don't have the capacity to do it all, we need the partnership

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# STEP 1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM

For Example -

How might we develop a realistic portfolio of high demand, aligned course offerings that are designed to prioritize rigorous, adult learner outcomes?

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# STEP 2. IDENTIFY THE STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder	Position	Interests/Needs
Administrator	Quality better than quantity – offer fewer classes, more prep, planning and PD - focus on hard outcomes	
Some instructors	Prioritize service delivery that maximizes number of classes available to adult learners	
Some instructors	Preserve historical portfolio of course offerings – it's what adult ed is all about	
Adult Ed Consortium Director	Eliminate programming that spreads pool of adult learners too thin and undermines shared ability to demonstrate effectiveness	
Some adult learners	I want my community interest classes back, they really helped me to feel connected	
Some adult learners	I really need to improve my English/basic skills so that I can be successful in the CC program	
Some adult learners	I need to learn some skills that will help me to get a higher paid job as fast as possible	
Community College instructors	Adult Schools should focus on preparing adult learners to be more successful in CC classes – we can't do it all	

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# JUDGING V. LEARNING QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE INTERESTS

Judging Questions	Learning Questions
Why don't you feel able to support a shift to outcomes-focused programming?	What comes up for you when you think about outcomes-focused programming?
Why do you object to changes in our schedule?	How will the proposed schedule changes impact you and your students?
Why do you want to see a continuation of community programming?	Who are you concerned about if community programming is reduced at our school?
Why don't you want to get involved in the course alignment work with the Community College?	When there are opportunities to work on course alignment, what gets in the way of your participation?

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## STEP 3. DETERMINE THEIR INTERESTS

Example Learning Questions for our Scenario:

- How are you feeling about the possibility of our adult school reducing the number of course offerings so that we can redirect some of our resources to teacher preparation, planning and professional development?
- What do you think will be different if we move in this direction?
- Who do you think will be most impacted by this decision?
- What kind of impact do you think that decision might have on you, personally?
- What do you think might change, if our adult school decides to offer fewer classes so that we have more funds to spend on support services for students?

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## STEP 3. DETERMINE THEIR INTERESTS

Stakeholder	Position	Interests/Needs
Administrator	Quality better than quantity – offer fewer classes, more prep, planning and PD - focus on hard outcomes	Fear of adult ed “take over” by CCs. School District Adult Ed may become a thing of the past. We are in, and accessible to, the community in a way that CCs are not, I want to preserve that for adult learners.
Some instructors	Prioritize service delivery that maximizes number of classes available to adult learners	If fewer classes are offered, fewer instructors are needed and I might lose my job. I want to continue to serve adult learners who need accessible services.
Some instructors	Preserve historical portfolio of course offerings – it’s what adult ed is all about	I don’t like the way our community is changing – the focus on hard outcomes and emphasis on employment feels less friendly and accessible to vulnerable communities. I want adult learners to have access to what they need.

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Stakeholder	Position	Interests/Needs
Adult Ed Consortium Director	Eliminate programming that spreads pool of adult learners too thin and undermines shared ability to demonstrate effectiveness	If we can’t get this right we are playing into the hands of critics of Adult Education who are quick to identify our service delivery weaknesses. We may become obsolete as we are currently configured. If school district adult education goes away, adult learners suffer.
Some adult learners	I want my community interest classes back, they really helped me to feel connected	I don’t feel like I’m part of this community any more. I’m lonely, isolated, I need ways to feel connected.
Some adult learners	I really need to improve my English/basic skills so that I can be successful in the CC program	I’m barely making it right now, I need to improve my skills so that I can get a better job and support my family. I don’t really understand how it all works, but this school doesn’t charge money, and I know I need help.
Community College Partner	Adult Schools should focus on preparing adult learners to be more successful in CC classes	Our completion rates are too low. Students are entering our programs with very low basic skills – it makes it hard for us to be successful. If we can’t all figure this out, School District Adult Ed may become a thing of the past. Community colleges aren’t equipped to take on all of non-credit adult ed

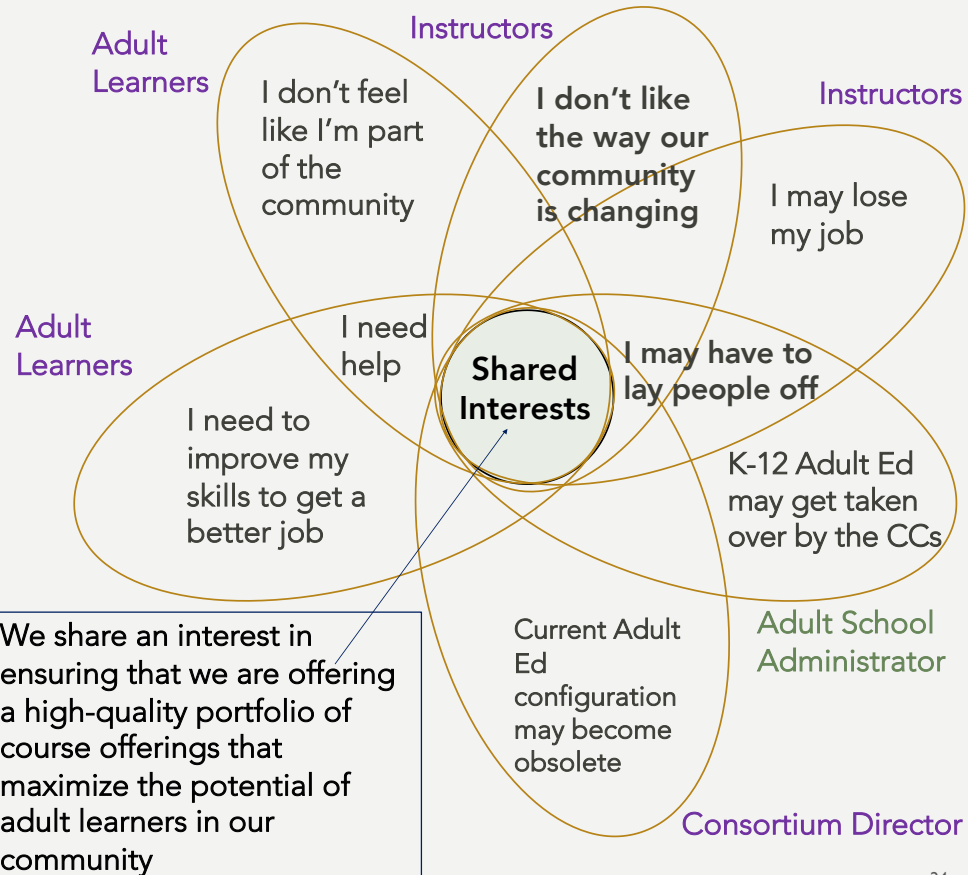
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## STEP 4. IDENTIFY SHARED INTERESTS

For Example -

We share an interest in ensuring that we are offering a high-quality portfolio of course offerings that maximize the potential of adult learners in our community.

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## STEP 5. DEVELOP OPTIONS

- Engage Subject Matter Experts
  - look at research if applicable
- Look at Best Practices
  - learn from others
- Brainstorm
  - engage your stakeholders
- Straw Design
  - try it on, test it out, make modifications, try again

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## STEP 6. CRAFT A SOLUTION

- Remember! This is not a linear process!
- A complex problem requires a complex solution
- Bring appropriate options from Step 5 together - satisfy as many identified interests as possible
- Make the matching visible – this solution is responsive to interests because....
- Anchor the solution in the **shared interests** and remind people what they are
- Identify dependency between the options – if we do this, we'll need to do that....
- Focus on achieving the result rather than developing the perfect plan, things will change
- Communicate a lot, and often to your stakeholders

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# INTEREST-BASED DECISION MAKING

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# THANK YOU!

Please be in touch!

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