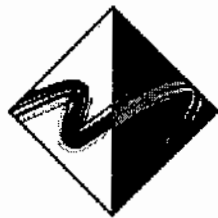


**EXTERNAL
VS.
INTERNAL
FACILITATION**



**MEDIATION
NORTHWEST**

399 East 10th Avenue

PO Box 10846

Eugene, OR 97440

Phone: (541) 484-1200

Fax: (541) 686-2967

Email: Julie@MediationNorthwest.com

www.MediationNorthwest.com

DEFINITIONS

Collaboration. A group process where all members of a group work together as equals in a non-authoritative model.

Consensus: A decision-making process where every member of the group agrees to support the group's decision. Some members may have wished for a different decision, but agree to support, and not block, the group's decision.

Content: The information, decisions, and actions of a facilitation group.

Facilitation: Facilitation is derived from the Latin word "facilis," which means "to make easy." Facilitation is a process where a facilitator assists groups to achieve the group's goals and increase the group's overall effectiveness. Although dealing with conflict can be a significant part of facilitation, it is not the primary focus. .

Internal Facilitator: An internal facilitator is a group member who uses facilitative techniques to assist a group in achieving the group's goals. The internal facilitator is responsible for the process and participates with the group in making content-related decisions. The internal facilitator is *not* impartial.

External Facilitator: An external facilitator is an impartial third party and uses facilitative techniques to assist the group to achieve the group's goals. The external facilitator is responsible for the process and the group is responsible for content-related decisions. The external facilitator is impartial.

Mediation: Mediation is derived from the Latin word "mediatio," which means "to come between." Mediation is a process where an impartial third party assists parties in conflict to resolve their conflict. Resolving conflict is the primary focus of mediation. The mediator has process-related decision-making authority, but does not have substantive decision-making authority.

Process. *How* a facilitation group acts upon content (information, makes decisions, and takes action).

"Rojong" is an Indonesian word meaning the relationship among a group of people committed to accomplishing a task of mutual benefit." - Drew Howick

Interest Based Negotiations

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

What Are Open-Ended Questions - Open-ended questions allow for a unique response. Closed-ended questions limit the answer.

How to Ask an Open-Ended Question - Journalists are taught to ask open-ended questions using the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” formula. I will refer to these questions as the “Sensational Six.” When attempting to ask an open question, use the Sensational Six as your default method.

Examples

Closed-ended question: “Did you take the wallet?” limits the response to either a “yes” or “no” answer.

Open-ended question: “What do you think happened to the wallet?” allows for a unique response.

Consider This

Attorneys intentionally ask closed-ended questions during examination of witnesses at trial. Attorneys do this in order to create the story they want to show the court, and no more.

Additional Examples

1. Tell me what that looks like for you.
2. How did that impact you?
3. What was that experience like for you?
4. Who was present during this conversation?
5. What is your goal by attending this mediation?
6. Could you detail the sequence of events for me.
7. When did XYZ occur?
8. What are some solutions to this situation?
9. How would you like to respond?
10. What has XYZ advised you regarding this situation?
11. What other avenues are available to you to resolve this conflict?
12. What are the advantages and disadvantages to that suggestion?
13. And then what happened?
14. What did you do next?

NEUTRAL REFRAMING

What is Neutral Reframing? Neutral reframing is a communication tool that takes the sting out of another party's statement by changing negative language into neutral language.

How to Neutrally Reframe - A good communicator will (1) hear the emotional trigger words and (2) replace the emotional trigger words with definitionally similar, but emotionally neutral, words.

Example - When a party says, "I'm sorry, but Sam is lying to you," a good communicator will identify "lying" as an emotional trigger word and then choose to reframe the statement as, "Sally, I hear you saying you disagree with Sam's statement."

When to Best Use Neutral Reframing

This tool is best used when there are at least two individuals with different perspectives of a situation in the same room.

Neutral Reframing Examples

1. He keeps repeating that he wants the district to place his child in the regional program.
He has been very clear to you regarding his position.
2. I have the education and experience to determine the best approach for this child.
You are equipped to make decisions regarding this child.
3. He is disrespectful.
From your perspective, he acts in a manner that is not respectful to you.
4. She is such a control-freak.
She appreciates a certain level of control over her environment.
5. He never listens to me.
You value being heard.

FACILITATION'S ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Advantages

- ◆ Encourages active participation from all group members
- ◆ Assists in generating ideas
- ◆ Manages group conflict
- ◆ Provides structure and focus
- ◆ Guides a group through decision-making
- ◆ Potential for dramatically decreased meeting time
- ◆ Creates decision-related buy-in from group members and thus decreases the likelihood of additional meetings due to member sabotage

Disadvantages

- ◆ Potential for increased meeting time if improper facilitator tools are used
- ◆ Increased preparation time for the meeting
- ◆ Potential monetary compensation for an impartial facilitator
- ◆ Facilitation is not always the cure for the (extremely) high-conflict IEP. Sometimes, a District needs their attorney present at an IEP meeting, not a facilitator.

“You can’t keep balance unless you have a center. If you work from that center, you won’t lose your way in the conflict.” - Sri Daya Mata, President of the Self-Realization Fellowship.

EXTERNAL FACILITATOR VS. INTERNAL FACILITATOR

<u>External Facilitator</u>	<u>Internal Facilitator</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is a facilitation expert.◆ Is <i>not</i> a member of the group.◆ Is impartial.◆ Does <i>not</i> participate in content-related discussion or decisions.◆ Assists the group in making process-related decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is skilled in facilitation techniques, but is not an facilitation expert.◆ Is a member of the group.◆ Is <i>not</i> impartial.◆ Participates in content-related discussion and decisions.◆ Assists the group in making process-related decisions.

THE EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR

Qualities of an Effective Internal or External Facilitator

- ◆ Prepares prior to the meeting
- ◆ Assists the group in determining the group's goals
- ◆ Brings in all necessary members to achieve the group's goals
- ◆ Looks for members who have the most and least perceived authority and influence over group members
- ◆ Stays alert to the group's dynamics that will impact other member's willingness to communicate openly and honestly
- ◆ Shares *any and all* opinions, reasoning, motives, and intent the internal facilitator may hold relating to the group's discussion. It is vitally important that the internal facilitator's opinions, reasoning, motives and intent are apparent to the group. This way, the group members do not make inferences regarding the internal facilitator's use of facilitative techniques.
- ◆ Suspends judgment about other member's motives
- ◆ Allows time for all members to share concerns, information, and ideas
- ◆ Acknowledges and values all member contributions
- ◆ Models appropriate behavior
- ◆ Makes sure no one member dominates the process
- ◆ Encourages active participation from all group members
- ◆ Guides the group through a decision-making process
- ◆ **KEEPS THE GROUP ON SCHEDULE!**

CREATING A REALISTIC AGENDA

It is the facilitator's role to create the meeting agenda, distribute it to meeting members, edit it (if necessary), and review the agenda with the group at the beginning of the meeting.

A great meeting agenda should *contain*:

- All meeting members names and titles (if any), the meeting date, time and place;
- Specific topics for discussion;
- Time allotments for each topic for discussion; and
- The goal of the meeting

A great meeting agenda should *create*:

- Valid expectations of the meeting; and
- Interest in the meeting.

A great meeting agenda should *be*:

- Distributed to all meeting members prior to the meeting within a reasonable time frame for meeting members to add specific topics for discussion or edit the time allotments for the topics for discussion; and
- Edited to accommodate topic additions and/or time allotment edits

The agenda should ideally be placed for all meeting members to view. A facilitator may consider using a flip chart, white board, chalk board or overhead to place the agenda.

Great facilitators avoid "winging it" without an agenda and "over-planning it" with an agenda.

"Have a plan for everything." – Bear Bryant.

SAMPLE IEP MEETING AGENDA

- 3:00 - 3:05 Introductions, meeting roles, and connection to the child
Ground rules: cell phones, no interruptions
- 3:05 - 3:07 Review agenda and corresponding time lines
Explain consensus
Determine district representative
- 3:07 - 3:10 Hopes and dreams for the child
(begin with district and end with the parents)
- 3:10 - 3:15 Eligibilities and evaluations (if necessary)
- 3:15 - 3:55 Present level of academic achievement and functional performance, goals and objectives - area by area
- 3:55 - 4:10 Specially designed instruction; Related services;
Supplementary services/aids; Accommodations and modifications; Supports for school personnel;
Transportation
- 4:10 - 4:20 Placement
- 4:20 - 4:22 Special factors; Non-participation justification; Statewide and district assessments
- 4:22 - 4:25 Transition (if child is 16 or older); ESY (if appropriate)
- 4:25 - 4:30 Conclude meeting

GROUND RULES

Ground rules protect groups from unproductive behavior. In order for ground rules to be effective, the group needs to agree upon (1) each ground rule, (2) who will enforce the ground rules, and (3) the consequences for failing to follow a ground rule.

When creating ground rules, keep the language simple and refrain from using multi-definitional words such as “respectful.” Additionally, research shows that the number of items people can hold in short-term memory is seven +/- two. With this information in mind, the following suggested ground rules may be helpful at your next meeting.

A Few Suggested Ground Rules

- One person speaks at a time
- Share the time with all group members
- Put ALL cards on the table. (Explain what you want to happen, why you want it to happen, and how it will impact you and the child)
- Use constructive comments (describe what is happening - negative, indifferent, or positive - PLUS a suggestion to improve the situation)
- All decisions shall be attempted to be made by consensus (which means you can “live with” the decision, even if you do not agree to every specific item of the decision)

Enforcement of the Ground Rules

It is the facilitator’s role to assist the group to determine the ground rules. When using an internal facilitator, it is considered a best practice for the group, and not internal facilitator, to enforce the ground rules because the more responsible a group is for its behavior, the more likely the group will be productive. When using an external facilitator, the group usually agrees that the external facilitator retains the power to enforce the ground rules.

It is *essential* in the internal facilitator model that the group, and not the internal facilitator, enforce the ground rules because of the perceived authority of one decision-making member (i.e. the internal facilitator) over other decision-making members. Therefore the internal facilitator must clearly explain at the beginning of the meeting the expectation that the group will, and not the internal facilitator, enforce the ground rules.

Consequences of Failing to Follow a Ground Rule

The group must have a discussion about the consequences of failing to follow a ground rule. My favorite consequence is, “Anyone who breaks a ground rule two times in one meeting must bring donuts to the next meeting and may not eat a single donut.” Go ahead, be creative!

FACILITATIVE TOOLS

A good facilitator uses many tools to increase the group's overall effectiveness and thereby increasing the likelihood the group will achieve its goal.

- 1. Timed Talk.** When either the group or an individual talks too much, a facilitator may suggest using the timed talk tool. The facilitator applies the timed talk tool by determining either how long one person may talk at a time or how long the group may talk on a particular topic. For instance, a facilitator may suggest two minutes per person or ten minutes of group discussion on the current topic. Once applied to the situation, the facilitator must maintain the stated time-frame in order to maintain the respect of group.
- 2. Talking Ball.** The talking ball is a tool that limits individuals from interrupting. The facilitator simply provides a ball to the group and no one may speak unless the speaker has the talking ball. This way, the interrupter cannot speak until the ball is in her possession and thus cannot interrupt other speakers.
- 3. Quick-Check-Why.** The quick-check-why tool is helpful when there is not enough time for discussion or when the group needs to quickly determine who supports and who opposes a particular solution and why. The facilitator applies the quick-check-why tool by providing the group with a minute or two to silently process their thoughts. Then, the facilitator asks each person, "Sally, where do you stand on _____ right now and why? You have one minute." After the first person provides their commentary, the facilitator continues to proceed in a clockwise manner until the entire group has had an opportunity to speak. By understanding who supports and opposes a proposed solution, and why each member holds their position, the group can focus its time and efforts to attempt meet the minority member's interests and thus create consensus.
- 4. Red-Yellow-Green.** This tool requires a red indicator sign, a yellow indicator sign and a green indicator sign, which can easily be made from card stock and craft sticks. This tool is most helpful when the group is continually discussing an issue and the facilitator needs to quickly know if the issue being discussed is either a barrier to consensus or an attempt to achieve perfection. Simply ask the group to vote with their red, yellow and green indicator signs whether they fully agree with the proposition (green), whether they agree with the proposition with reservations (yellow), or whether they will block the proposition until their concern is met (red).
- 5. Talking List.** When too many people want to participate in the discussion, a good facilitator will employ the talking list, which is simply a list placed in a conspicuous place detailing who is currently talking, who is the next person to talk, and so on.
- 6. Celebrate Success.** Celebrate every success the group achieves. I usually accomplish this by saying, "W-Hoo! We are doing great!" with my arms in the air.

7. **Humor.** Use humor as appropriate. Keep the meeting light and respectful.
8. **Invite Contributions.** When specific group members are too quiet, invite them to provide their input. Sometimes group members feel they need permission to speak. By inviting them into the conversation, they may provide valuable input they otherwise may not have contributed.
9. **Processing Time.** Every individual processes information in different ways. Some people process information as they talk - this person is called an external processor. Others need time to properly process information by themselves - this person is an internal processor. A good facilitator attempts to accommodate the entire continuum of processors.
10. **New Information Only.** Large groups are challenging - especially when members of the group feel the need to share their individual opinions after every different opinion shared. During these times, a good facilitator will ask the person who wants to provide feedback if the information is new or if it replicates another's previously shared thoughts. If it is new then the information can be shared, if it replicates another's thoughts, then the speaker is prompted to say, "I agree with what _____ stated."
11. **Parking Lot.** The parking lot is a white board, flip chart, or overhead, where off-topic areas can be placed for discussion at a later date. The parking lot is helpful to gently remind individuals that the agenda will be followed unless the group, and not a single individual, changes the direction of the meeting. It also provides visual confirmation that the topic will be discussed.
12. **Time-out, Reframe, Move-on.** The facilitator may utilize the time-out signal (i.e. the right hand horizontally placed over the vertical left hand, to indicate a need for a break) when a speaker is either repeating herself, escalating emotionally, or wandering in her presentation. When the speaker breaks for the time-out, the facilitator should place the burden upon herself for the time-out (i.e. "Sally, you have given a lot of information, but I need to make sure I understand everything), reframe what has been said, then move to the next speaker.
13. **Set a Deadline.** It is amazing how groups will vacillate for hours, and then because a perceived deadline is approaching, the group finally makes a decision.
14. **Walk-N-Talk.** Sometimes the best way to keep a meeting moving forward in a positive manner is to take a break and ask the "problem" member of the meeting to take a walk with you. The facilitator should literally walk with the "problem" member because walking will increase blood flow and breathing, which will help reduce the stress the "problem" member is feeling. Also, the private nature of the walk will provide the facilitator the opportunity to ask open ended questions such as, "Tell me how the meeting is going for you?" and potentially find buttons or misperceptions that the facilitator can help resolve.
15. **Columbo.** Blame yourself for problems the group is experiencing. This will assist the group from blaming each other and increase the probability to achieve success.

IMPARTIALITY

(For the External Facilitator)

It is difficult for the external facilitator to maintain both actual impartiality and the perception of impartiality. Both are equally important to the facilitation process. When a facilitator finds herself lacking impartiality, consider the following techniques:

- 1. Become that Party.** The facilitator may wish to attempt to “become that party” in order to understand why the party is acting in that particular manner. Feel the anger and frustration of the party. How has the party’s upbringing helped determine who she are today? How is the party’s present circumstances affecting how she is acting today? Ask yourself, “Why is she (acting in a manner) that is frustrating me?” Once you potentially identify the reason why she is acting in this manner, allow yourself to feel her feelings and the cause of her feelings. This may provide you with a better understanding of who she is and thus help you find your center of impartiality.
- 2. Look at the Party’s Fingernail.** Do you have difficulty with the party’s fingernail? Of course not! This illustration is simply to remind facilitators that there are attributes to every person that you do not have difficulty. We all have similarities. Find those similarities between yourself and the party. Work from their fingernails to their hands to their arms and so on. Focus on your common ground with the party, not the differences.
- 3. Crack the Goo.** For those who have fantastic imaginations, imagine all of irritation with a party as mustard yellow goo that is oozing from their head to their toes. Let the goo ooz until your irritation has subsided. Then, gradually, imagine the goo hardening into a shell on the party. When you are ready, imagine the shell cracking away from the party, along with your irritations. You will meet the party anew and free of irritation.
- 4. Don’t Take the Parties’ Feelings Personally.** Simply stated, the parties’ feelings are not the facilitator’s responsibility. Acknowledge the party’s feelings, be compassionate about the party’s feelings, but do not take responsibility for her feelings. When you are responsible for a party’s feelings, you are no longer impartial.
- 5. Shift the Perspective.** Imagine the absolute worst facilitation party imaginable (I, personally, have some real-life examples to draw from). Then compare. Is the party with whom you are having difficulties as bad as your imaginable party? If not, take heart, it could always be worse.
- 6. Private Sessions (aka the Walk-N-Talk).** Take a private session with the party with whom you are having difficulty being impartial. This will allow you time to fully explore her perspective. Also, consider taking a private session with yourself to relax and breath.

TIPS OF THE TRADE

When	Try
1. A group member is late.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the group if it wants to wait or proceed without the person. • Waiting may be perceived by group members as rewarding the late person. • Re-work the agenda so that the group will not be disadvantaged by the late party's absence.
2. A group member objects to the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the group if anyone else shares the concern. If so, restructure the process to meet the entire group's need. If not, use your Sensational Six to find the speaker's interest and try to re-structure the process to meet the speaker's interest as well as the remainder of the group's interests. • Ask the group how it wants to proceed.
3. The group is engaged in a meaningful discussion, but time is running out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the situation to the group's attention and ask the group how it wants to proceed. • Bring the situation to the group's attention and suggest the Quick-Check-Why tool to assess where the group is toward reaching consensus. • Use the Red - Yellow - Green tool followed by the Sensational Six tool to determine why the red indicator holders are blocking consensus • Re-schedule the meeting

When . . .	Try . . .
4. Group members are uncomfortable giving their opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Sensational Six to solicit responses in their voices. • Use the Invite Contributions tool.
5. A group member asks a question off topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the question or statement into the 'Parking Lot.'
6. Mutiny occurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest with the group that the process is not working. Then, ask the group how they want to proceed. • Take a break. Breathe and remember that you are only human - some problems don't have easy solutions. • Use the Walk-N-Talk tool with a friendly (but mutinous) team member. • Run. (Just kidding).
7. Two or more group members engage in side discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the behavior and enforce the ground rules in the manner previously determined by the group. Try, "There seem to be several side conversations. I understood the enforcement of the ground rules to mean after a general reminder, the next person to break a ground rule _____." • Don't forget the "look." It is amazing how many people will refrain from side discussions when you give them the "look." • Stand next to the side talkers. • Ask the side talkers for their opinions on the subject matter up for discussion.

When	Try
8. The group is stuck.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move onto another agenda item. • Take a break. • Use the Walk-N-Talk tool. • Ask the group how it would like to proceed.
9. One person continually breaks the ground rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the behavior and enforce the ground rules in the manner previously determined by the group. • Walk-N-Talk with the person and privately address your concerns.
10. One person engages in filibustering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframe the speaker's main points. People tend to repeat themselves when they do not feel heard. Try, "Sally, I heard you say X, Y, and Z. Is that correct? (Sally answers, 'Yes') Great, thank you for your contributions. We have a lot of people to hear from, so I would now like to move on to Jim. If Sally says, "No," then ask her, "Please tell me your four main points you would like the group to understand." Reframe the points you heard and move onto Jim. • Record the speaker's comments on the flip chart. • When they take a breath say, "Sally, please summarize your main points in one minute." Then, "I need to move on to ____." • Utilize the Time-out, Reframe, Move-on tool.

When	Try
11. Interruptions are occurring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try, "I am noticing that interruptions are occurring. At the beginning of the meeting we agreed to refrain from interruptions and to enforce interruptions by (1) a general reminder, which I am providing you now, and (2) the next person to interrupt loses the right to speak for five minutes." • Say, "Thank you, Sally, however, I need to hear the end of Jane's comments before moving onto another's comments."
12. One meeting member is attacking another meeting member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the speaker as soon as it is clear she is not acting appropriately and advise her that the particular behavior is not acceptable at the meeting. • Stop the speaker as soon as it is clear she is not acting appropriately, call a ten minute break, and Walk-N-Talk with the party. • Stop the speaker as soon as it is clear she is not acting appropriately, inform the speaking party how her actions and words may be impacting the other party (i.e. her intent may not equal the actual impact)

"If we knew where opinion ended and fact began, we should have discovered, I suppose, the absolute." – Alec Waugh, English Author (1898-1981).

typo?

FACILITATOR'S PRE-MEETING CHECKLIST

- Necessary IEP Team members invited (team members may be excused, in whole or part, if the parent consents in writing and either (1) the member's area of expertise is not being discussed or (2) the member has submitted input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting):
 - parents
 - one regular education teacher (if th chid is, or may be, participating in regular education)
 - one special education teacher (or where appropriate special education provider of the child)
 - representative of the district (who has authority to delegate district resources)
- Discretionary IEP team members invited:
 - the child
 - individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluations
 - any other individual who has knowledge or special expertise of the child
- Internal Facilitator: the meeting notice was sent to every member of the team on _____.
- Create an agenda with specific items for discussion and corresponding time lines.
- Internal Facilitator: Has every district member had an opportunity to provide feedback to the agenda items and time lines?
- Internal Facilitator: Have district members been notified of the date written information must be submitted for discussion?
- Internal Facilitator: The agenda and district written information was sent to parents for review and edit on _____.
- Internal Facilitator: Received agenda and any additional written information to be shared at meeting from parents on _____.
- Are there name tags for each member?
- Has the necessary paperwork, including school records, blank IEP forms, Draft IEP (if any) been supplied for each team member?
- Is the room reserved for the appropriate amount of time including overflow time?
- Are there enough appropriate chairs for everyone in the group?
- Is there a flip chart or white board with multiple colored pens?
- Are there pens and paper for each member?
- Is there tissue, water, and snacks?
- Is everyone and everything ready for a **productive** meeting? Re-schedule the meeting if the necessary information is not available or if all the stake-holders cannot attend.

FACILITATOR'S MEETING CHECKLIST

- Name cards, tissue, pens, paper, water, and snacks on table.
- Agenda on flip chart or white board in full view of the members.
- Copies of all documents for all participants (i.e. old IEP, draft IEP, evaluations, data, present level of academic achievement and functional performance, goals and objectives)
- Chairs and table arranged for collaborative work.
- Greet every member (the same way). The greeting creates the tone and individual expectations for the meeting.
- Introduce every member, explain each person's role, and discuss each member's connection to the child.
- Explain your role as the facilitator (i.e. internal or external).
- Internal Facilitator: determine who will fill, and explain expectations of, the following roles:
 - Recorder: writes options on flip chart and makes notes as necessary for the facilitator.
 - Time Keeper: keeps track of time for the meeting and informs the group when the agenda's allotted time for a topic is running out of time.
 - IEP Writer: writes the IEP
- Explain the structure of the meeting including the definition of consensus, the rules requiring an IEP team to attempt consensus, and the district representative's duty should consensus not be reached. It is vitally important that the parents understand they have a voice equal to each individual members and not an equal voice to the district.
- Review the agenda. Ask members for additions to the items for discussions and edits to the time allotments.
- Create ground rules.
- Direct the group through the agenda
- Sign the IEP and provide a copy of the IEP to the parents, OR
- Plan a time and date to reconvene the meeting and determine the agenda.
- Acknowledge what was accomplished at the meeting.
- Honestly and compassionately thank every member for his/her participation.

BEST IEP DRAFTING PRACTICES

What is the best way to draft a child's present level statement - The child's present level of academic achievement and functional performance statement needs to be data-based.

Present Level Statement Example -

Common practice: Student has a difficulty writing and identifying her letters and numbers.

Best practice: Student can write and identify all her uppercase letters. Student can write and identify the following lowercase letters: a-g, i-k, m, o, q and w. Student has difficulty with remaining lowercase letters. Student can write and identify the following numbers: 1-4, 6, 8-13. Student has difficulty with remaining numbers.

What is the best way to draft goals and objectives - The goal is the general area of achievement and the objectives are specific areas to achieve the goal. Additionally, either the goal generally or the objectives individually need to include a mechanism for measurement and a method of measurement. Best practice is to provide one of the following measurement mechanisms: percentages, rates, trials, days, weeks, or months.

Goal example -

Common practice: The student will be able to write his letters and numbers.

Best practice: The student will increase his ability to copy letters and numbers as demonstrated by mastery of the following short-term objectives.

Objective example -

Common practice: The student will be able to master writing his lowercase letters.

Best practice: The student will be able to write the following lowercase letters: h, l, n, p, r-v, x-z, for five consecutive days. Progress will be measured through observable data and instructional probes.

Measuring mechanisms - In addition to the best practice measurements (i.e. percentages, rates, trials, days, weeks, or months) districts may choose to utilize a bench-mark system within the objectives. A bench-mark system provides an expected date that each objective will be achieved.

Bench-mark example -

- The student will be able to write the following lowercase letters: h, l, n, p for five consecutive days. Progress will be measured through observable data and instructional probes. This objective is expected to be met by December 1, 2004.
- The student will be able to write the following lowercase letters: r-v, x-z, for five consecutive days. Progress will be measured through observable data and instructional probes. This objective is expected to be met by June 1, 2005.

IS YOUR PLAN

S - pecific

M - easurable

A - ffirmative

R - ealistic

T - ime-Measured

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