

Isaksen and Treffinger's Six-Stage Problem-Solving Model

Isaksen and Treffinger have developed a six-stage problem-solving model that addresses both critical thinking and creative thinking. Their technique may be particularly useful to the team for annually developing recommendations for improving school programs and services based on I&RS team action plans and actions taken.

1. **Condition Finding** involves identifying the conditions to be addressed or the situation that demands attention.
2. **Data Finding** involves collecting information, knowledge, facts, feelings, opinions, and thoughts to more specifically sort out and clarify the condition. Teams determine what they know about the situation and what they still need to know.
3. **Problem Finding** involves formulating a "problem statement" expressing the "heart" of the condition. It is important for team members to put aside the common assumption that they "already know what the problem is," and state the problem in a manner that will invite novel perspectives.
4. **Idea Finding:** In this stage, teams follow the rules for brainstorming to identify as many ideas or alternatives as possible for addressing the problem statement.
5. **Solution Finding:** Now is the time to systematically evaluate the ideas. Identify the most important criteria for evaluating the problem, like costs, expediency, time, resources, and support. Evaluate ideas against the criteria to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions and the selection of solutions.
6. **Acceptance Finding:** Teams formulate a plan of action to implement the priority solutions: determine the kind of help that will be needed, the obstacles or difficulties that might get in the way and specific short and long-term steps to address the original condition.

Adapted from: Bellis, Mary. Critical Thinking and Creative Thinking Skills. 2005.
<http://inventors.about.com/library/lessons/bl_isaksen_treffinger.htm>