

Developing a Dilemma
A Laboratory Exercise for 4-6 Participants
Ted Ward
Michigan State University, 1979

Preparation

Each person writes one sample situational dilemma dealing with a matter of judgment. The dilemma should be related to a training task of interest to the particular lab group.

Leadership

Select a “design consultant group” of two people. These two will raise questions and focus the discussion.

Discussion

Examine the sample situational dilemmas as prepared in advance. Find any that could be used or adapted for use the exercise being designed by the lab group.

What decision does each situation deal with? What would the learners be asked to do individually? In small groups? What would be the intended learning outcome? Most important: what two values-in-tension is the dilemma to simulate?

Activity

Develop the new dilemma exercise and prepare it for use or demonstration in the seminar. The “design consultant” will be particularly concerned for simplicity of format, clarity of task instructions and simplicity of wording of the situations.

Tips for Writing

Brief, terse, concise writing is important. A true dilemma allows no stereotypic “right versus wrong” decision. A dilemma has no “easy out” –it is a matter of deciding which of two values will be given precedence. The feedback and/or discussion in the exercise might be focused on the “why” of the decision.

Report

The “design consultants” are to prepare the resulting learning exercise for use (or demonstration) in the seminar. If multiple copies are needed, please allow three workdays in our office. Inform the instructor so that the seminar time can be scheduled.