

Facilitators Exchange

Your quarterly guide to Facilitators and Facilitation in USACE

Volume 5 • Winter Issue • 2014

Welcome to the fifth issue of the Facilitators' Exchange Newsletter. It is your guide to all things facilitation related within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. You may find additional information at the Facilitators' Exchange webpage—<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/facilitator/facilitator.cfm>. The newsletter is intended to share information on facilitation webinars, case studies, process tools, facilitation resources, training opportunities, USACE facilitators and professional facilitation organizations. The Exchange is sponsored by Ms. Ada Benavides of the Civil Works Directorate.



Upcoming Webinar: 26 February 2014 at 1:00 pm Central

Our next Exchange webinar will be on Facilitating Multi-Agency Meetings with Therese O'Rourke Bradford, Chief, South Coast Branch, Regulatory Division, Los Angeles District. See Fellow Facilitator section in this newsletter for more information on Therese and the rich professional background she brings to the webinar. The Call in/Web In, Access, and Security Codes are: 888-273-3658, 5165285, and 1234. You may access archives of past webinars at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/facilitator/exchange.cfm?Option=ArchiveSchedule&CoP=facilitator>. If you have ideas for future webinar topics, please provide them to Julie.B.Marcy@usace.army.mil.



AP Photo of Niagara Falls State Park during 2014 "Polar Vortex"



**US Army Corps
of Engineers.**

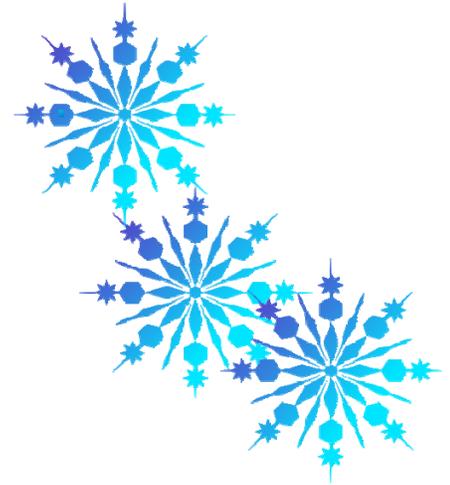
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Fellow Facilitator: Therese O'Rourke Bradford

Therese is Chief of the South Coast Branch, Regulatory Division, Los Angeles District. She became a facilitator in high school as part of a high school leadership development program. Since then, she has taken courses and trainings to further develop her skills. An intensive Facilitator Training course over a 2-year period increased her abilities to include high level coaching, mediation, and conflict resolution. Over the years, she has taken additional coursework to hone her skills and learn new techniques.

Work Examples: She likes to focus on facilitating and mediating tough resource issues. Some examples include facilitating the final section of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail which had been in dispute for over a decade; leading and facilitating the redirection of uses of the southern California National Forests under court order to comply with the Endangered Species Act; facilitating the "closure" of land deals as the end of the process seems fraught with seemingly irresolvable issues; and facilitating change within organizations – whether it is a reorganization, a new vision, or personal change. She has worked with large and small groups and individuals.

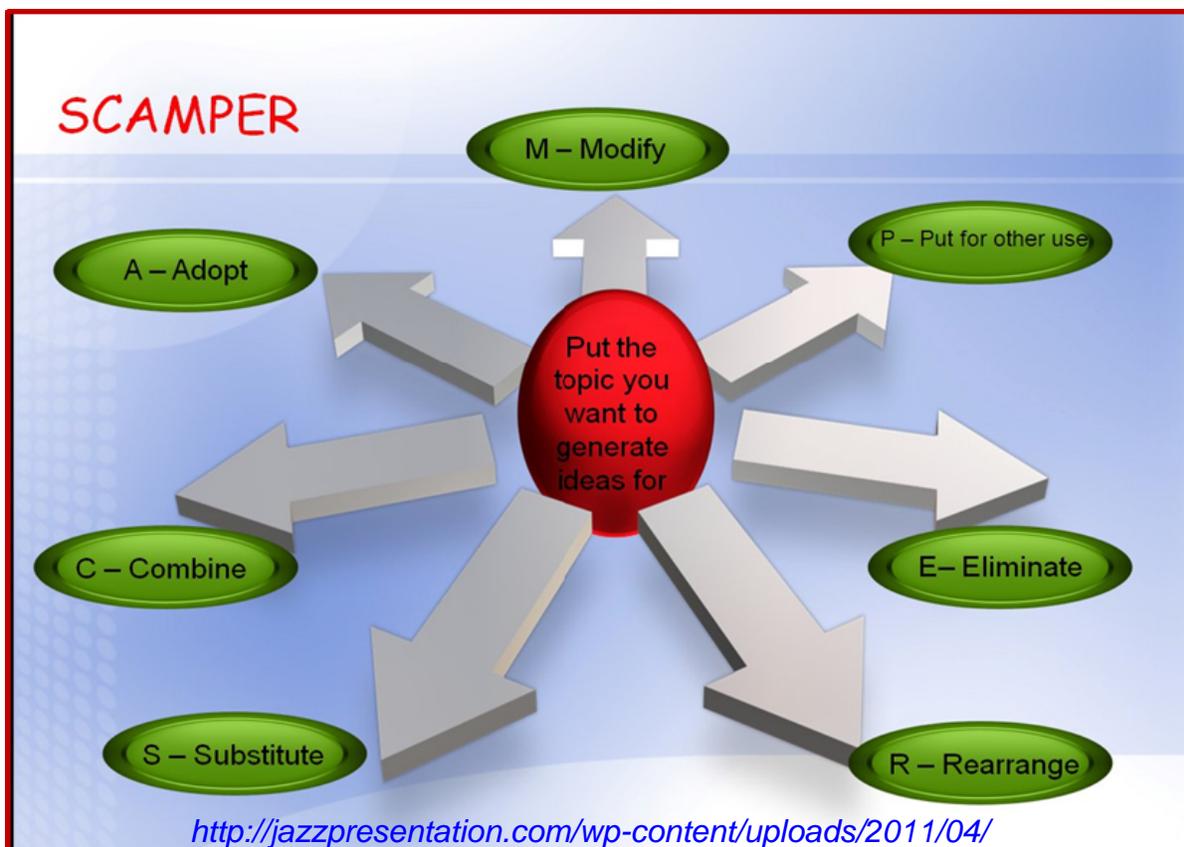


Effective Facilitation Process/Tool: Therese has facilitated a lot of Informational meetings. Many attendees have specific information or questions they want answered. Usually questions are asked at the end of a meeting or presentation. This sets the meeting up for interruptions, lack of focus, and possible failure. To have a more focused meeting – try this – *ask for questions up front*. She uses a white board or flip chart to record and asks everyone to tell her what question(s) they want to have answered by the end of the meeting/presentation. This allows them to immediately engage and participate in the direction of the meeting; relax knowing their question has been acknowledged enabling them to more fully participate; and allows the presenters to address the questions in their presentations or redirect their presentations to satisfy the participants. The meeting is wrapped up by checking off all of the identified questions and answering any unanswered ones.

Advice for New Facilitators: Know thyself! It's important to know what you do under stress so you can recognize it and modify your behavior, as necessary. For example – under stress, she tends to make jokes. Therese notes that jokes may add levity, but depending on the audience, they also may be inappropriate. - Seriousness of the topics discussed, temperament of the attendees, and cultural and language differences are important to consider. In some cases, light-hearted joking can undermine the facilitator and the process. Just make sure you know your stressors. Be authentic. Be prepared. And make it easy!

Therese's Regulatory affiliation reminds me of an interesting communications medium used by the Regulatory Program in Savannah District. It is a web-based, interactive avatar that explains the permit process to members of the public. Check her out at <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx>.





Process Prompt:

Mark Micheli had an interesting article in Government Executive magazine on the SCAMPER method of brainstorming. SCAMPER stands for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to Another Use, Eliminate, Reverse. An example given is a desire to improve customer service. In this case, he used the R for Reverse and asked “how can we reduce or make customer satisfaction worse”? Then, the group would take the new list and determine how to make positive changes out of the negative ideas generated. See <http://www.govexec.com/excellence/promising-practices/2012/11/brainstorm-more-effectively-using-scamper-method/59786/> for more application examples.

Relevant Resource:

Presentation Expert provides some great resources for face-to-face and online presentations. These include free newsletters, webinars and an online community to share ideas. Some recent newsletter topics include: “Active Pauses Help Manage Speaking Anxiety” and “Are Bureaucratic Buzzwords Muddying Your Message”. Information on maximizing and customizing PowerPoint is another frequent topic.



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presentationxpert

See: <http://www.presentationxpert.com/>



Proficiency Pick:

Mind Tools is a good resource for learning about topics such as: Leadership, Team Management, Problem Solving and Decision Making. Toolkits are available for each of their subject matter areas. This includes several online, self-assessment tools like “How Good is Your Problem Solving?” where you answer questions and calculate your score to gain insights into your knowledge and behaviors. There are also detailed explanations of tools such as Grid Analysis for decision making, and Doblin’s 10 Types of Innovation. Some materials are available free, some require a membership for complete access, and some are available for purchase. See: <http://www.mindtools.com/index.html> for more information.



Members of ERDC’s Command Staff Division’s 2013 Leadership Development Program members attending a 4-Hour Fearless Facilitation course.



Find A Facilitator

Are you an experienced Corps facilitator? If so, please add yourself to our facilitator database at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/facilitator/find.cfm>.

Please send your facilitation case studies, photos and newsletter ideas to Julie.B.Marcy@usace.army.mil.