

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This issue of *Parent Perspectives* contains information about the component known as AbPS or Action-based Problem Solving. The information comes from Deb Woythal, Parent Committee Chair and former Iowa Affiliate Director.



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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW BEST TO INTRODUCE CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING TO YOUNG CHILDREN?

Let me introduce you to a very fine way to involve young children in creative problem solving. ACTION-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING (AbPS) provides the same creative problem solving process as the other Future Problem Solving components, but it is presented in an easier non-competitive format. In our many years of teaching, we have found that not all children are ready to compete with Global Issues or work on a Community Problem Solving team; thus, Action-based Problem Solving is a very appropriate place for them to learn and practice their new and very important skills.

Since 1974, Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) has provided instruction, application, and evaluation for these components: Global Issues Problem Solving; Community Problem Solving; Scenario Writing; Scenario Performance (new in 2015), and Action-based Problem Solving . Using AbPS especially tailored for the novice problem solver, this non-competitive process guides students easily into future success should they choose to compete.

A special word of THANKS to the Portugal Affiliate for sharing all of the photos in this issue! It is great fun to see AbPS in action!



WHAT IS ACTION-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING?

AbPS introduces students to creative problem solving, higher-level thinking, and action-skills in a hands-on, flexible format - most often in a classroom setting. AbPS readily engages learners as they construct meaning and apply knowledge and process to REAL-LIFE situations.

FPSPi teaches students how to make informed choices and solve complex problems. AbPS begins the active learning process by presenting issues on the same topics as the other components, but presented at a considerably more familiar level. The six-step creative problem solving process is condensed into 5 steps, beginning with discussing perplexing issues presented as “fuzzies” dealing with the annual topics. As students work cooperatively toward a common goal, their written and oral communication skills increase, along with their abilities to problem solve and make informed decisions.

WHAT THEN?

After a booklet is completed, the teacher can choose to send in one or more booklets to be evaluated by trained evaluators in the Affiliate Program. Assessment is very important as students receive feedback on what the team(s) did well and where the team(s) can improve. Students pay attention to the feedback their team receives, and they want to work to improve their problem solving.

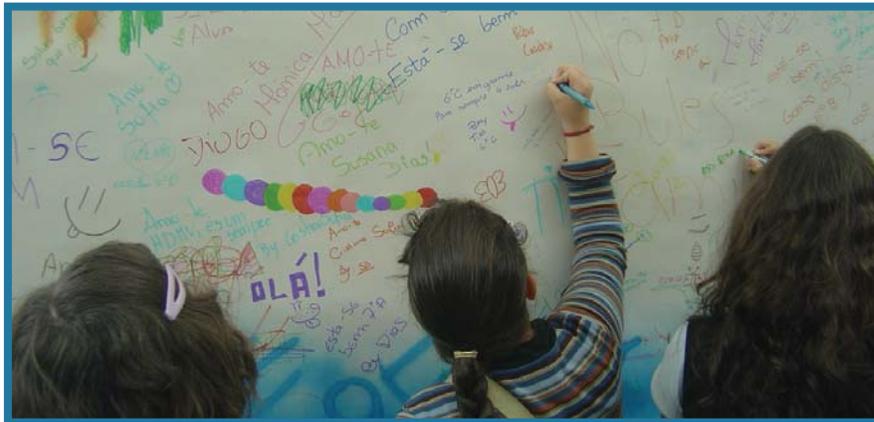
WHAT IS THE BASIC PROCESS?

The basic process is presented one step at a time, in a fun and interesting manner, with lots of instruction from the very helpful materials (www.fpspimart.org).

The 5-step creative problem solving process:

- Step 1. Identify Challenges
- Step 2. Select an Underlying Problem
- Step 3. Produce Solution Ideas
- Step 4. Generate and Apply Criteria
- Step 5. Develop an Action Plan

Step 1 Jot Board ... Brainstorming Challenges



JOT BOARD

All group members should contribute ideas to be included on the Jot Board, writing down as many ideas as the group can think of by jotting them down on the Jot Board - even upside down or sideways. Simple phrases, words, symbols, or drawings are fine. All ideas, including *wild* and *crazy* ones, should be listed on the Jot Board.



Jot Boards are a fun and easy way to encourage brainstorming and creative thinking throughout the AbPS process!

AS A PARENT, WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

How about offering to work with an AbPS team on one of the topics the older students are studying? It's a great way to get started and most teachers would be thrilled to have your help in this critical area of importance - problem solving! One caveat I would suggest is this: Ask the teacher to stay in the room while you teach the process. The teacher becomes aware of the process and can continue your work in other areas of the curriculum. Most teachers will be happy to have this help with teaching such important skills.

HOW CAN WE INCREASE INTEREST IN LEARNING TO PROBLEM SOLVE?

Excellent handbooks can be purchased from FPSP's ZippyMart (www.fpspimart.org) at a very reasonable cost. These handbooks contain many fine ideas to help engender strong skills of problem solving, communication, and cooperation! Do check these resources out.

Students love to work on problem solving in fairytales and folktales. All cultures have folktales which fit well with the problem solving process! Great ideas for using these can be found in the AbPS handbooks.

One idea that we can pass along is the use of children's storybooks. Find a favorite one of yours and you will soon see how it's set up well for the application of problem solving! Just think about these titles: *The Poky Little Puppy*, *Are You My Mother?*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, etc. (You can tell my era, that's for sure!)

I've chosen this book, *Make Way for DUCKLINGS* by Robert McCloskey, as an example of how you might start. Here are a few challenges to assist in getting the problem solving started. Have students think about what kinds of challenges for Step 1 could come from these statements from the book:

1. Every time Mr. Mallard saw what looked like a nice place, Mrs. Mallard said it was no good.
2. People at the Boston Public Garden threw peanuts into the water for the two ducks.
3. They found a place by the Charles River, just as their feathers were starting to molt.
4. Mrs. Mallard couldn't leave the nest because she had to sit on the eggs to keep them warm.

WON'T THIS BE FUN?! If you are interested in developing an AbPS program for younger or novice students, please talk with one of the FPS coaches or your FPS Affiliate Director. They can help you get underway and you'll really enjoy this work!



We Encourage You to Explore Action-based
Problem Solving in Your Affiliate!