

# Building on Difference: Diversity Training for Electrical Apprentices

Construction Economics Research Network  
The Center for Construction Research and Education  
April 17, 2008  
Washington D.C



By  
Julie Brockman, PhD  
School of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Michigan State University



# Presentation Format

- What's the *Problem*?
- What's the *Program*?
- What's the *Impact*?
- What's *Next*?

# What's the Problem?

- Director/instructors spend too much time resolving preventable interpersonal issues with and between apprentices on the job site.
- At the core of these issues is intolerance to difference/diversity.
- This problem can be addressed through a variety of initiatives or mechanisms - one of these is training.

# What's the Program?

- Incorporated throughout the five year apprenticeship curriculum
- 5 (4 hour) modules, balance of new knowledge and skills.
- Use of multiple interactive teaching techniques to introduce and reinforce key concepts and behaviors (vignettes)











# Module 1: The Legal Perspective

## Purpose

- Introduce the business case
- Increase awareness of discriminatory acts and the origins of discrimination as defined by law

## Agenda includes:

- Discrimination law history
- Stereotyping
- Discrimination Law
- Prevention and investigation
- Workshops (what would you do and why?)
- Vignettes (what would you do and why?)

# Module 2:

## The Intrapersonal perspective

### Purpose

- To provide apprentices with an opportunity to explore their own preference type and the implications for working with others.

### Agenda includes:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and individual results
- Making sense of the results
- Problem solving exercises which highlight differences

# Module 3: The Interpersonal Perspective

## Purpose

- To provide strategies which can be used to work more effectively with others

## Agenda includes:

- Working with other “preference types”
- Best/Worst interpersonal exchanges
- Constructive Feedback techniques
- Vignettes

# Module 4: Preventing and Resolving Conflict

## Purpose

- To assist apprentices in gaining the knowledge and skills associated with preventing and resolving interpersonal conflict

## Agenda includes:

- Self-Assessment
- Nature of conflicts
- Strategies to resolve conflict
- Strategies to prevent conflict
- Vignettes

# Module 5: The Leadership Perspective

## Purpose

- To prepare apprentices for the journey person/ supervisory role

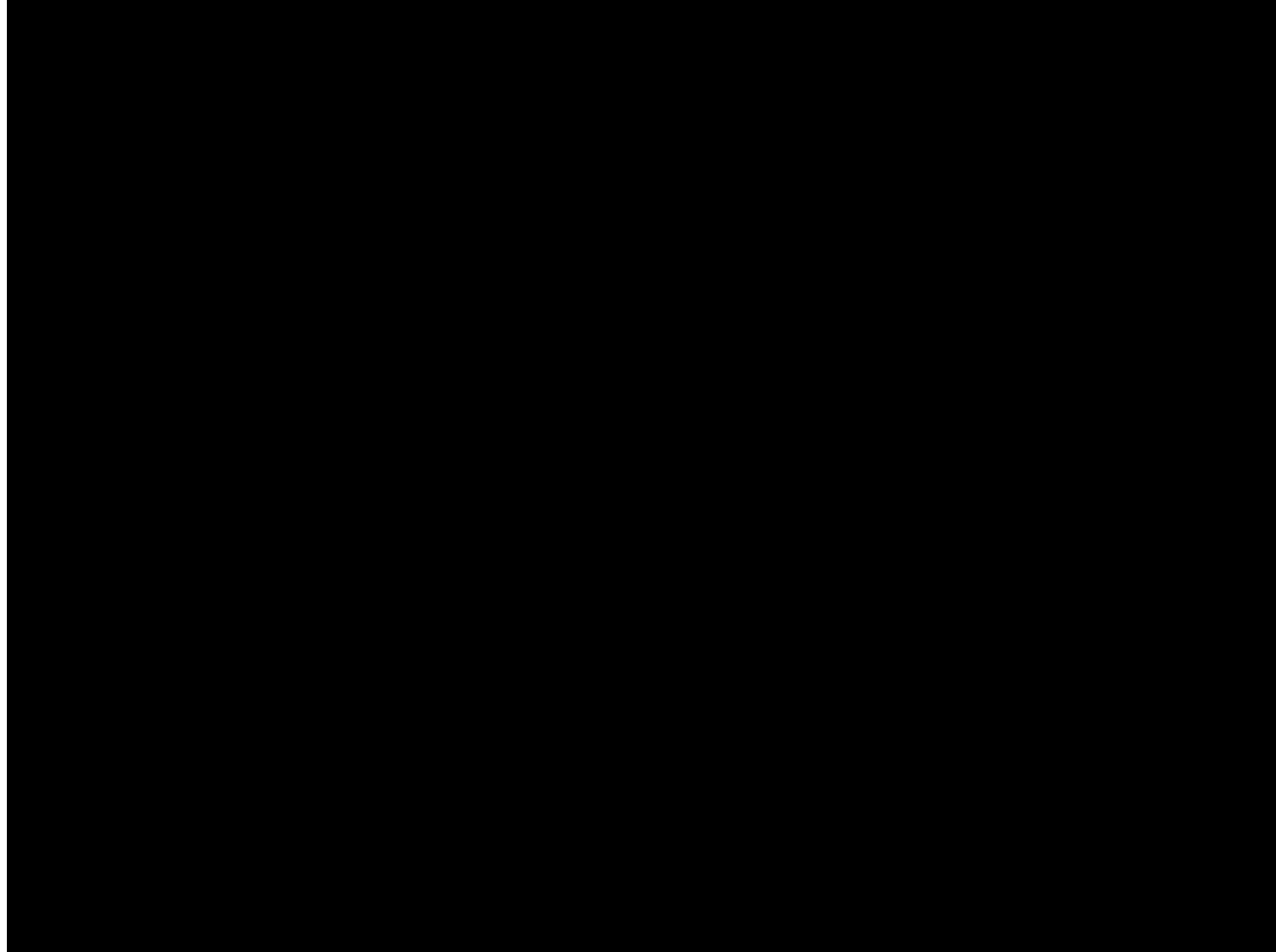
## Agenda includes:

- Leader responsibilities
- Spheres of Control
- Dealing with difficult people
- Vignettes











# What's the Impact?

#1: Favorable climate change, over time, with respect to women and minorities on the job and in the classroom **as measured by** a pre-post survey.

#2: A decrease in the number of discrimination-related complaints to training staff and/or apprentice, **as measured by** focus group interviews with training staff and apprentices about the amount and nature of complaints they have received over time.

#3: An increased retention rate of minorities and women in the apprenticeship program, **as measured by** apprenticeship retention records.

#4: Improved individual performance on performance review items which focus on interpersonal relationships and respect for others, **as measured by** monthly performance evaluation forms completed by the apprentice's supervisor.

## **Apprentice Satisfaction (N=61)**

- Training was perceived as informative (Mean=4.14/5.00)
- Training was perceived as useful (Mean = 3.83/5.00)
- Raised personal awareness (Mean = 3.67/5.00)
- Increased ability to work with diverse persons (Mean = 3.61/5.00)
- Encouraged treating others with dignity and respect (Mean = 3.88/5.00)
- Increased ability to work well with others (Mean = 3.50/5.00)

## In the Classroom (N=61)

- Class is welcoming for Caucasians (Mean = 4.24/5.00)
- Class is welcoming for females and minorities (Mean = 4.29/5.00)
- All apprentices are treated equally (Mean = 4.47/5.00)
- Apprentices would be disciplined for acts of discrimination (Mean = 4.39/5.00)
- Most students (39/42) have not witnessed discrimination in class (Mean < 1 incident)

## On the Job (N=61)

- Responses about the jobsite were less positive on each dimension, but were still generally positive.
- The jobsite is welcoming for Caucasians (Mean = 4.10/5.00)
- The jobsite is welcoming for females and minorities (Mean = 3.67/5.00)
- All apprentices are treated equally on the jobsite (Mean = 3.62/5.00)
- Apprentices would be disciplined for acts of discrimination on the jobsite (Mean = 3.84/5.00)
- While most students (34/48) have not witnessed discrimination, the mean response is 1.67.

# What's Next?

- Continue research
- Incorporate/transition 5<sup>th</sup> year material to the new journeyperson/supervisor training curriculum
- Present at IBEW/NECA National Training Institute
- Gain wider adoption
- Questions?