

**THE TRADITIONAL  
"EXPERT INFORMATION"  
MODEL**

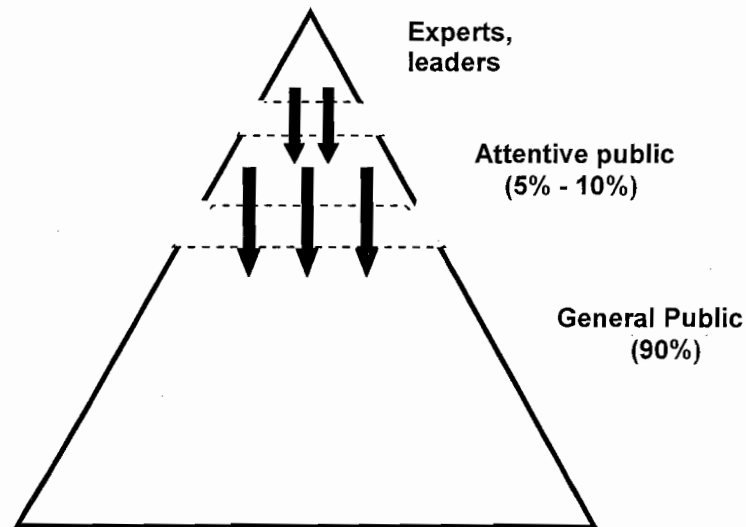
**VS.**

**THE NEW  
"PUBLIC LEARNING"  
MODEL**

Viewpoint Learning, Inc.  
Daniel Yankelovich  
May 2001  
[www.ViewpointLearning.com](http://www.ViewpointLearning.com)

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# *The Traditional "Expert Information" Model*



- Favored by experts, the government and the press
- Top-down and one-way
- The public is expected to learn, not contribute
- Focuses on information rather than values
- Focuses on creating awareness
- Assumes awareness leads to resolution
- Assumes that a *well-informed* public is the "Holy Grail" of democracy

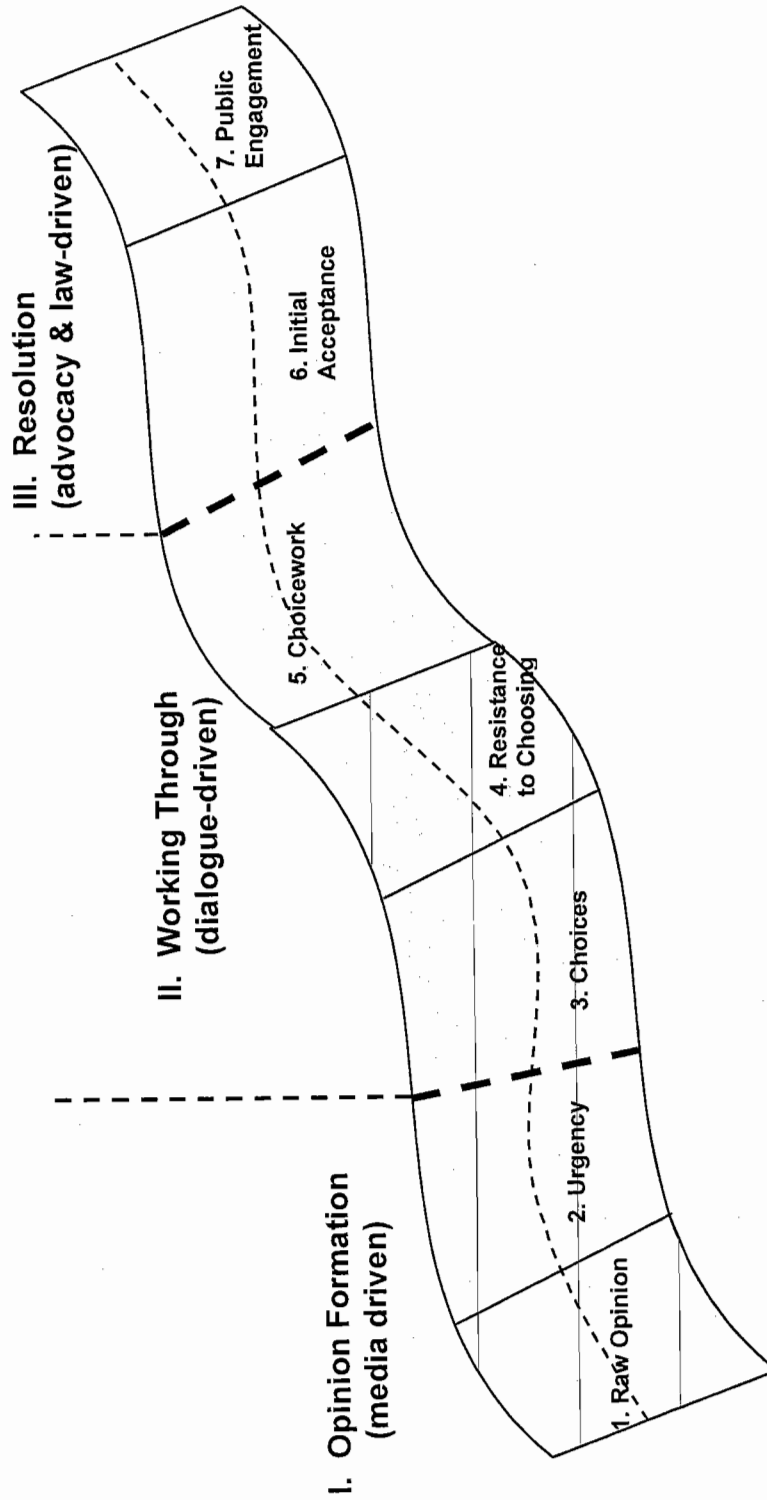
# *A Nest of Flawed Assumptions*

The traditional model falsely assumes that...

- Information is the key to public learning
- People make up their minds once they receive relevant information
- The public interprets information in the same way that experts do
- Experts know what information the public needs and how to convey it
- Experts who debate their opposing views help the public to learn
- Technology can compensate for deficiencies in the model
- There is no need to base the model on how people actually make hard choices

**CONCLUSION:**  
***THE TRADITIONAL MODEL WORKS  
ONLY WHEN THERE ARE  
NO HARD CHOICES TO MAKE***

# The New "Public Learning" Model



## Locus of Decision-Making\*

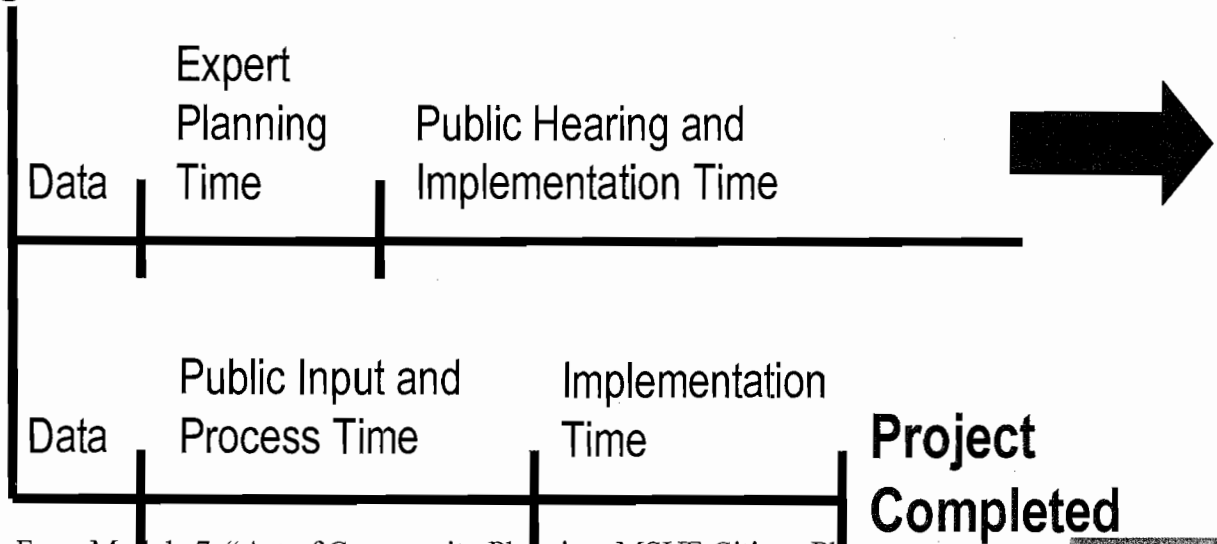
<i>Policy Situation</i>	<i>Problem Definition</i>	<i>Solution</i>	<i>Locus of Decision</i>
Type I	Known	Known	Leader
Type II	Known	Unknown	Leader and Citizens
Type III	Unknown	Unknown	Citizens

\*Heifetz & Sinder



# Traditional vs. Participatory Planning Timelines

Begin Process



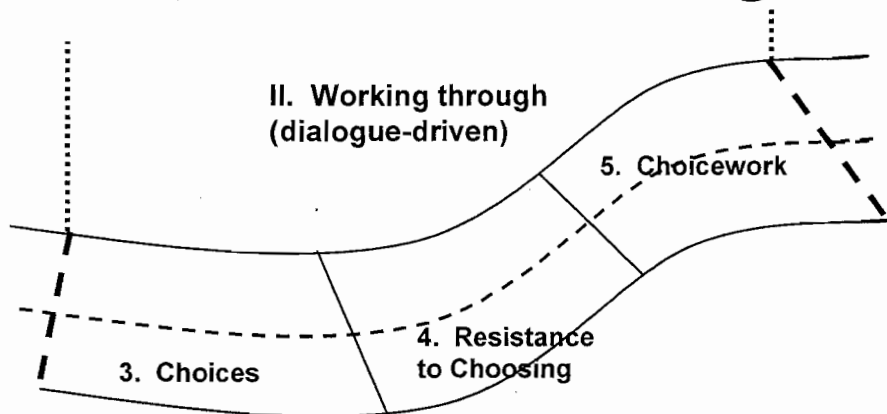
From Module 7, "Art of Community Planning, MSUE Citizen Planner Program, James J. Wiesing"



## *Major Features of the New "Public Learning" Model:*

- Requires three stages (Awareness + Hard choices + Resolution) rather than two
- Accounts for how people actually resolve hard choices
- Interactive: people learn from one another
- Total process varies from days and weeks to months, years, decades
- Requires people to struggle with conflicting values (information is often secondary)
- The public's wisdom adds value to the experts'
- Different communication strategies apply to each stage
- Our society has institutions for the two-stage model but not the new three stager

# Choice-work Dialogues



- Choice-work Dialogues are designed to help people work through the hard choice phase
- This is where issues typically bog down and strong feelings break out
- When possible, people avoid hard choices, preferring to take refuge in wishful thinking
- In this stage, people confront painful trade-offs and conflicting values
- Dialogue is the most efficient method for moving people through this stage
- Choice-work Dialogues compress into a single day a process that might otherwise stretch over months and years