Evolving a "Third Way" to Group Consultancy: Bridging Two Models of Theory and Practice

Jean E. Neumann, Evangelina Holvino, and Earl T. Braxton

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we propose an integrated approach that intentionally links two traditional models for consulting to and working with groups. We hope to make a contribution to an existing stream of literature by naming and describing integrative behaviors that we have observed in our own practice. Lastly, we believe that such a "third way" has implications for practitioners and researchers in the areas of group consultancy, organizational development, and change management.

Professional consultants, regardless of their particular organizational speciality, usually apply some form of group theory as an intentional basis for their practice. Since the 1950s, organizational consultants have drawn ideas and methods from one of two traditions for working experientially with groups. One tradition, derived from the National Training Laboratory (NTL Institute) in the U.S., focuses on interpersonal effectiveness in the context of group process. It has been disseminated world wide through educational events, academic institutions, and applications in international corporations. Another tradition, founded at the Tavistock Institute in the U.K., emphasizes the group-as-a-whole embedded in a wider social system. This model has also been disseminated internationally through educational conferences, universities, and applications in public sector institutions, most notably in the U.S. by the A. K. Rice Institute.

Both theories were developed as part of post-WWII social movements to introduce more democracy and less alienation into workplaces and other social systems. Indeed, in the hands of change managers and organizational consultants these group theories and their applications have been useful in doing just that. Changes in working life since the late 1980s, however, mean that the demands on organizational members have changed as well.

Many organizations have moved away from historical notions of a unified workplace, managed through bureaucratic procedures, and steep, broad hierarchical relationships. Organizational members find themselves, as a result, working more closely together in groups around daily tasks or collabo-

rating extensively on projects across boundaries of speciality, function, work-flow, and authority levels. In other instances, specialists are working alone, away from an organizational site with higher levels of productivity required and more individual responsibility to manage relationships with colleagues, clients, and bosses. Even those employees in lower status occupations, where rigid procedures and tight hierarchies still dominate their daily work, may find that their section of the organization operates with greater demands for output and thus greater need for expansion of their capabilities.

We believe that these changing organizational demands require abilities that can be usefully developed through combining insights, knowledge, and skills from both group traditions associated originally with the NTL Institute and the Tavistock Institute. For example, flatter hierarchies, team-work, networks, partnerships, joint ventures, communities of practice, alliances, and virtual teams all require actions based on understandings of both relationships and hierarchy, personal and organizational authority, and the dynamics of social systems at a variety of levels: individual, interpersonal, group, inter-group, institutional, and international.

The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to an integrated, practical model of group consultation and facilitation based on combining the two traditions into a third way. It has been our experience as researchers and practitioners that such a combination is more suited for today's dynamic and turbulent organizational settings than an approach predominantly based on one tradition only. This third way compliments and enhances both traditions and can also lead to higher levels of competence in groups and organizations.

Overt Social Scientific Comparison

Social scientists and practitioners have previously compared the two traditions of group theory and practice. They were seeking to describe differences in approach or were selecting parts of each in order to create something different and better than the other two. In the early years of each theory, researchers worked more closely together than they did as the theories began to be expanded and disseminated.

Most early collaboration took place between 1947 and the mid-1960s when both U.S. and U.K. social scientists were laying the groundwork for emerging fields of group process, organizational development, and other nascent fields related to organizational theory. Through a common link with social psychologist Kurt Lewin, the NTL Institute and the Tavistock Institute co-operated on producing the influential journal, *Human Relations* (Trist & Murray, 1990). As those formative years ended, however, collaboration between the two institutes had shifted almost exclusively to educational events for the purpose of increasing understanding about small group dynamics.

NTL Institute conducted its first group development laboratory in 1947, while the Tavistock Institute offered its first Group Relations event ten years later (Miller, 1990). A few London-based researchers travelled to Bethel, ME initially to observe and then to serve as staff for training group (t-group)

workshops. Some ideas from NTL Institute's events were incorporated into the Tavistock Institute's experiential workshop, particularly the inter-group exercise (Higgin & Bridger, 1964).

By the late 1960s, the two approaches to Group Relations theory and practice had developed in distinctive ways. The NTL Institute's training groups basically focused on the attitudinal and behavioral change of individuals resulting in effective progress within the group. The Tavistock Institute's Group Relations conferences focused on understanding psycho-analytic dynamics within the group as members related to authority figures embedded within a larger social institution or system. In 1965, the Washington School of Psychiatry sponsored a series of Group Relations conferences in the U.S. that led rapidly to the creation of the A. K. Rice Institute (AKRI) (Rioch, 1970).

Indeed, there were enough substantial differences between the two group approaches to spark scientific comparison and discussion. Harold Bridger was both a member of NTL Institute working as a trainer for t-group laboratories and an employee of the Tavistock Institute directing Group Relations conferences. In the 1970s, he developed an approach that selected from both group theories to create another type of educational event (Klein, 1989; Neumann, 1991). During the same decade, three articles appeared that compared the two approaches or that described the English approach to an American audience.

An initial article was published by NTL Institute in *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. Klein and Astrachan (1971), stated that "these approaches arise out of different traditions and tend to view the same behaviors from disparate perspectives" (p. 659). The described differences had to do with "theories and techniques for group training" (p. 662). The NTL Institute was viewed as stressing "democratic structure and interactions" as well as "positive aspects of individual and group behavior" (p. 667). Klein and Astrachan considered that the Tavistock Institute's approach had "a strong emphasis on psychoanalytic theory" and a more "negative view of change in groups and in the person" (p. 667). In the study group operated at Group Relations conferences, "individual behavior is seen primarily as representing something in the group, and group processes are seen as defining the feeling states of certain individuals" (p. 673). Whereas in the t-group, "individual behavior is the responsibility of that individual…expected to speak for himself, owning up to his own feelings" (p. 673).

Klein and Astrachan provided many other comparisons and concluded that "in order to learn in groups and about groups, a theoretical model needs to be developed which combines elements of both t-group and study group" (p. 678). They asserted that the two approaches complemented each other and mentioned that their graduate students were exposed first to study groups and then to t-groups: "we underscore the necessity of attending to the rational as well as the irrational" (p. 679).

The second influential article appeared toward the end of the decade when a training resource much used by U.S. practitioners, *The Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators,* published a lecture written by two A.

K. Rice Institute members. Banet and Hayden (1977) offered an introduction to "the Tavistock method" for practitioners whom they suggested were schooled in "Gestalt, encounter, and other approaches [that] celebrate individual uniqueness" (p. 155). They stated that the Group Relations approach "concentrates on the individual only insofar as he or she is manifesting something on behalf of the whole group" (p. 155). Thus "the Tavistock approach" highlights the group as "an entity or organism that is in some respects greater than the sum of its parts – and that the primary task of the group is *survival*" (p. 156) and employs "a regressive, or "whirlpool," model of change" (p. 157).

A third influential article appeared in the first volume of the A. K. Rice Institute's publication, *Journal of Personality and Social Systems*. Alderfer and Klein (1978) hypothesized that differences in theory and method would result in differences in interpretation and action. They stated, "comparisons between NTL and Tavistock *organisational consultation* are virtually nonexistent" (p. 19). Using teams of researchers representing both approaches, they studied one organization in which autocratic styles of management were being changed to more encouraging styles. Researchers analyzed findings according to three topics: assumptions about human nature, the relationship between social structure and process, and the nature of leadership and power. "In general, the Tavistock tradition is associated with a relatively pessimistic view of human nature, while the NTL position is viewed as more optimistic with regard to human potential" (p. 20). "In the area of social structure and process, the *simplified* difference between the two positions gives Tavistock the structural orientation and NTL the process focus. More careful examination reveals that both schools concern themselves with structure and process, but in somewhat different ways" (p. 21).

Regarding leadership and power, researchers involved with NTL Institute were initially concerned "with internal matters, including 'democracy' and the provision of support and nurturance to followers…later works demonstrated a broader conception of leadership by dealing with external 'boundary-crossing' activities" (p. 23). Theorists working with the Tavistock Institute, however, "have consistently focused on external boundary management…symbolising the leader…who must look inward and outward and contend with the stresses between the two perspectives" that recognize "the mutual dependency between leaders and followers" and identify "the potential mutual hostility between the two roles" in which "hostility resides in both leaders and followers" (p. 23).

At the conclusion of their organizational analysis and description, Alderfer and Klein (1978) considered that having researchers on teams from both traditions "aided in developing a balanced view of the phenomena" providing "correctors for tendencies to move in extreme directions and facilitated more shared perceptions" (p. 32). This separate but equal approach to integrating the two traditions "grew out of a sustained and problematic effort to compare and combine the two traditions" (p. 19) that had been undertaken at Yale University in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

DEVELOPMENTS TOWARD INTEGRATION

Since that period when explicit attempts were published to compare and combine the two traditions, developments towards integration have continued in less visible ways. Of particular note are researchers and practitioners associated with the Yale School of Management. They have gone on to teach others and to publish research in which integration is present in their literature and/or in their data analysis (Gillette & McCollom, 1990).

These researchers often worked with ideas of levels of analysis, boundaries and inter-group dynamics. Alderfer, who was involved with much of the integrative research during his time at Yale, incorporated both group traditions in substantial edited volumes on learning about social processes (Alderfer & Cooper, 1979). He contributed extensive research applying open systems theory to group and organizational behavior, notably the idea of "underbounded" and "overbounded" (Alderfer, 1979) as well as progressed applied theory about inter-group relations (Alderfer, 1976). Both Brown (1983) and Smith (1987) developed these ideas by applying them to conflict at interfaces within organizations and between cultures.

Wells usefully linked five levels of analysis in what he terms a "psychoanalytic perspective," including simultaneous or sequential attention to intrapersonal, interpersonal, group-as-a-whole, inter-group, and inter-organizational levels (Wells, 1980). Wells, an African American who died in 1997, was considered by Alderfer (1998) to be "one of the very few whose work effectively integrated NTL methods with the insights about unconscious processes available from object relations theory as developed by scholar-practitioners associated with the Tavistock Institute" (p. 375).

The application of psychodynamic theory and clinical ideas to applied social science and group dynamics, such as "parallel processes" and "paradoxes," brought new and valuable integrative insights particularly relevant for training and development around issues of difference (Smith, 1985; Smith & Berg, 1987, 1997; Berg & Smith, 1990). In addition to the authors mentioned above, Thomas has published extensively on racial dynamics (Thomas & Proudford, 2000). Interest in the boundary relations between genders, and how they were mobilized during systemic tensions, has been pursued as well (Smith, Simmons & Thames, 1989).

Gillette and McCollom (1990) positioned their work in relation to that of the Yale school as well as to the traditions of experiential group training of both NTL Institute and the A. K. Rice Institute. As editors, they wanted "to reclaim the relevance of small group analysis by integrating it into…theories of organizational processes and management practices" (p. 2). They argued for "a new perspective" that flowed from these two prominent schools (pp. 3-4).

This stream of comparative research and theoretical development did not represent all attempts at integrating the two traditions of group theory. Much continued in practitioner and applied research networks (e.g., Bayes & Newton, 1978; Gilmore & Krantz, 1988; Hirshhorn & Gilmore, 1992). It

is in the context of this prior work that we aim to evolve a third, integrated way of group consultancy practice that flows from the two traditions with an emphasis on how integration can help those working to effect organizational change.

THE STORY OF THE "TWO TRADITIONS" WORKSHOP

In the decade leading up to their 50th anniversaries, developments at both the Tavistock Institute and NTL Institute put integration back on each organization's research and development agenda. The initial integration issue in London had to do with bringing Group Relations as a theory back into relationship with a larger organizational context originally represented by the socio-technical systems approach to work organization design (Neumann & Hirschhorn, 1999). As this work progressed, the role of the consultant as more than a caricature of a psychoanalyst emerged as needing attention. Beginning in 1993 in an attempt to address these integration problems, social scientists at the Tavistock Institute created an international professional development program based on interconnected areas of applied social science (Miller, 1997; Neumann, Miller, & Holti, 1999). Named the "Advanced Organizational Consultation Program" (AOC), the seven modules included simultaneous and sequential learning opportunities rooted in psychodynamic approaches, organizational theory, and consultancy competence.

Meanwhile, NTL Institute had developed a Master's program in organizational development in collaboration with American University in Washington, DC. In 1994, they asked Evangelina Holvino to create a course on theories of group dynamics. Using some consultants trained predominantly in the NTL approach and others trained in the A. K. Rice Institute tradition, the course combined one weekend of theoretical and experiential work in the t-group mode followed by another weekend of Group Relations work. The last afternoon and the written assignments focused on the integration of both models in theory and practice. Holvino was struck with the powerful learning that students derived about individual, group, and organizational behavior from understanding the basic premises, skills, and potential applications of each tradition.

Based on the success of the American University course, Holvino initiated an open workshop offered through NTL Institute and approached Braxton to work with her. Holvino and Braxton together designed the "Two Traditions of Group Development: NTL Institute and the Tavistock Institute," first offered in 1997. After an opening afternoon reviewing theories behind the two traditions, two days followed of experiential events in the Tavistock Institute modality of small study groups and an Inter-group Event. The next two experiential days were comprised of events in the NTL Institute tradition using both t-groups and community sessions. The last day and a half was dedicated to integrating the two traditions by providing theoretical inputs that were supplemented by experiential and application exercises.

After two years, Holvino and Braxton decided to add a research and development component to the workshop in order to sharpen practical theory about integrating the two traditions. They initiated negotiations for co-sponsorship between NTL and the Tavistock Institute. Representing the Institute's Organizational Change and Technological Innovation Programme (OCTI) team, Neumann joined the workshop staff in 1999. The research and development activities underlying this chapter took place that August in Bethel, ME.

EVOLVING A "THIRD WAY" TO GROUP CONSULTANCY

All three authors had previously developed a version of integration in their group and organizational consultancy practices. As a part of their own professional development, they had made their separate ways to simultaneous memberships in organizations devoted to the each of the two traditions: the NTL Institute, the A. K. Rice Institute, or the Tavistock Institute. The precise nature of their integration, however, was under-articulated and, for the most part, unpublished and therefore not subject to professional debate or dissemination.

Both Holvino for the NTL Master's program and Neumann on behalf of the Tavistock Institute's AOC program had created side-by-side comparisons of the two traditions. Neumann (1994, 1998) noted similarities and differences in founding location and date, publicised aim, disciplines of founders and early developers, and selected central theorists. Holvino (1995, 2000) addressed approaches to group work in particular, contrasting t-group theory and practice with that of small study group dynamics (see Table 1 on p. 428).

In designing the two traditions workshop, Holvino and Braxton brought together references and models they found useful in thinking about integration. Many of these ideas were not surprisingly from researchers associated with the Yale University projects reviewed above. From this and other literature, they found four concepts especially useful, which they called "bridging concepts": levels of analysis, paradoxes, polarities, and linking. It is around these bridging concepts that we propose directions for evolving a third way.

"Levels of analysis" refers to different types of social phenomenon in existence at the same time during the development of a social system. Common ways of looking at levels of system are the individual level, the group level, the organizational level, and the societal level. Each tradition of group theory brings some levels to the foreground while pushing others into the background. For example, NTL Institute approach tends to make figural the individual and interpersonal levels, while the Tavistock Institute approach brings group, intergroup and institutional levels to the forefront. *We propose that evolving a third way to group consultancy involves the intervener in paying attention to all the different levels of a system, highlighting one or another type of interaction or system phenomena when addressing the purpose of the consultancy.*

Cumming and Holvino's (2000) adaptation of Reddy's (1994) iceberg model of group dynamics (p. 93) brought together the different levels of work that can occur in a group: the content, the overt processes, the covert processes, and the unconscious processes. Despite Reddy's statement that "unconscious dynamics may be explored appropriately only within the professional boundaries of some individual and group psychotherapies" (p.

TABLE 1

Comparison of NTL and A. K. Rice Institute/Tavistock Approaches to Groups

T-Groups/NTL	AKRI/Tavistock
1. Emphasis on the personal and interpersonal, e.g. feedback (implicit recognition of the power of others to influence self perception).	1. Emphasis on "group as a whole" dynamics, e.g. the group as having its own life, more than the sum of the individuals.
2. Group development concepts: linear; progressive; modern; based on individual and psychological models of development, e.g. forming, storming, norming, performing; inclusion, control, affection.	2. Psychodynamic/analytic concepts: projection; transference; valence; defenses against anxiety; the covert level; the unconscious. Open system concepts: task, boundary, roles.
3. a. The overt and conscious level of process, not group content, e.g. communication; decision making; norms; task-maintenance roles; dependency, counter-dependency, interdependence. b. Group structure: task, boundaries, role, and authority	3. a. The covert and less conscious aspects of group process, e.g. pairing, fight-flight assumptions; gender roles; splitting; envy. b. Group structure: task, boundaries, role, and authority
4. The role of the group facilitator.	4. The role of the group consultant.
5. The study of personal relations, e.g., disclosure, feedback, identity, behavior and its consequences.	5. The study of authority and authority relations.
6. Key words: trust; model behavior, self in the group.	6. Key words: container, primary task, self for the group.
7. Objectives: individual growth; interpersonal competence; behavioral change through experimentation.	7. Objectives: interpretation and understanding; connecting emotion and intellect; reflection and behavior.
8. "When in doubt do the loving thing."	8. "When in doubt do the difficult thing."
9. Application: Organization development.	9. Application: Socio-technical systems.

Similarities between the two methods:
1. Human relations paradigm.
2. Study behavior as it occurs - experiential and "here and now".
3. Opportunity to learn about behavior at individual and group levels of analysis.
4. Awareness of the self in groups.
5. Increase effective and responsible behavior in groups.

93), an integration of the two traditions incorporated the group unconscious as the fourth level of analysis.

"Polarities" are two seemingly opposite phenomena, which are part of the same and cannot be solved by choosing one or the other (Johnson, 1992). Because polarities are interdependent, moving towards one side of a polarity without paying attention to the other side does not solve the dilemma but, on the contrary, exacerbates it. It is for this reason that Johnson (1992) contended that polarities cannot be solved, but only managed.

The two traditions can be understood as having polarized what consultants look at in groups. NTL looks at the overt and conscious processes while Tavistock looks at the covert and unconscious. Both overt and covert, conscious and unconscious are happening all the time. The differential emphasis in each theory encourages the consultant to limit their attention and action according to that which has been polarized in the particular tradition. So, the NTL facilitator attends to the overt dynamics in the group, translating any awareness of unconscious into specific behaviors that can be discussed, while the Tavistock consultant attends to the covert dynamics while limiting direct comment on overt meanings and intentions.

Popular models of group development exemplify another polarity: progression versus regression. The well known "forming, norming, storming, and performing" progressive stages of development derived from the NTL tradition (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The Tavistock tradition, on the other hand, was based on a psychodynamic theory that emphasized the regressive aspects of groups, like Bion's basic assumptions of fight-flight, pairing, and dependence (Bion, 1959). These dynamics could be used in the service of the task or as a defense against the task, but they were always present, even in the most sophisticated groups. *Integration, we maintain, involves the consultant in attending to overt and covert, progressive and regressive dynamics, bringing in the opposite of an articulated or unarticulated polarity in the group.*

"Paradoxes" are seemingly contradictory forces that are true, simultaneously legitimate and opposing (Smith & Berg, 1987). "Both/and" paradoxes signal oppositions of ideas, wishes, drives, persons, groups, and other forces that co-exist and can be identified in apparently contradictory and self-referential themes. Paradoxes are also experienced as dilemmas where one must choose between two alternatives: pushing group members to feel in an either/or situation or double bind. Smith and Berg identified three sets of paradoxes in small groups (belonging, engagement, and speaking) and have developed a whole theory of intervention based on the notion of paradoxes. *A consultant concerned with integration essentially needs to develop the ability to reframe the paradox in a way that the group can find the connection embedded in the apparent contradiction.*

Each tradition presupposes its own set of paradoxes that, when kept in mind, show the way to incorporating the other tradition. The Tavistock tradition, for example, highlights three paradoxes. 1) The consultant is helpful as well as hated. 2) Group members want to belong to the group at the same time that they want to remain separate individuals. 3) Opposite emotions and thoughts to those being expressed in the group are also present such as love and aggression, life and death, and progress and regression.

The NTL tradition, on the other hand, highlights a different set of para-doxes: trust and disclosure; diversity and individuality; and here-and-now versus there-and-then. In order to disclose, an individual needs a certain level of trust; but in order to develop trust, they need to risk disclosure. In order for a person's sense of individuality to be fully recognized, one needs to dif-ferentiate from alike others; But if individuals solely identify in terms of their connection with others like them, they lose their individuality. In order to develop relations in the group in the present (here-and-now), individuals need to have available the memories, fantasies, experiences, and events from the past that make them who they are today. If they focus, however, only on memories and events of the past (there-and-then), then they are not able to experience the present.

The purpose of the research and development effort underlying the two traditions workshop is to make a contribution towards a practical model or guidelines for combining both, especially in those consulting situations that invite applications of group theory. We propose that a practical model for evolving a third way to group consultancy requires attending to levels of anal-ysis, polarities, and paradoxes. We call this process of attending "linking."

OBSERVED INTEGRATING BEHAVIORS

During the 1999 two traditions workshop, the authors undertook data collection and analysis activities by taking turns deploying one staff member for research activities while the other two implemented the three key sections of the workshop. Data collection consisted of observing and taking verbatim notes in all group sessions and presentations. There were moments of par-ticular analytical concern when consultant staff were expressing some sort of integration, for example: making comments that normally might be located in the tradition in which they were not currently working; or missing dynam-ics from one tradition because they were working in the other. Following the workshop activities, the researching staff member interviewed the consulting staff in order to have them identify the moments where they felt the need to integrate, or the pull to remain in one or the other of the two traditions. These observations were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher deployed to that section. During the workshop, staff held two data analysis and review meetings, and their initial findings were presented and discussed with the participants.

Our research suggests that bringing together separate parts of the two traditions can be behaviorally observed and accomplished in eight types of integration responses or moves (summarized in the list below). All the inte-grating moves or responses involve combining frameworks and behaviors from one model or tradition with those from the other, in a variety of ways that generates an understanding or intervention different from what might have been possible otherwise. In that sense, combining perspectives from one tradition (*this*) with the other tradition (*that*) generates something else: a third way. Below, we present examples from our two traditions workshop that illustrate the eight integrating behaviors.

1. First *this*, then *that*.
2. You do *this* while I do *that*.
3. Having *this* in mind as a way of informing on *that*.
4. Doing *this*, but in *that* way.
5. *This*, inside a predominant context of *that*.
6. A little of *this* in the service of *that*.
7. Progress on *this* moves things in *that* direction, in the service of *this* task.
8. Doing *that*, noticing that *this* is missing.

Integrating behavior 1: First this, then that

This integrating response involves first thinking and acting within one model, followed by frameworks and actions grounded in the other model. The time span between intervening in one model and the next may be min-utes, hours, or days.

For example, during the first day of the t-group (NTL tradition), the facilitators intervened at the group level pointing to issues of inclusion, joining, safety, authority, and risk. Later during the week, they intervened at the interpersonal and individual levels, supporting the giving and receiv-ing of feedback, facilitating management of conflict, and suggesting indi-vidual experiments to increase intra-personal awareness and inter-personal effectiveness.

In this example, the Tavistock group-as-a-whole lens was used first to highlight issues of authority and group level phenomena. Later in the week, when the group had the opportunity to work on issues of authority and devel-op skills in identifying group-level phenomena, the consultants intervened in ways that highlighted the NTL individual and interpersonal lens. The initial focus at the system and group level served to contain the interpersonal and individual work that followed. This was the sequence in which the Tavistock and the NTL models were presented and studied within the "two traditions" workshop. It was similar to the type of integration reported by Klein and Astrachan (1971).

Integrating behavior 2: You do this while I do that

This response requires two interveners with one attending to issues highlighted in one tradition, while the other attends to issues highlighted in the other. A division of roles takes place where each consultant pays attention to different aspects of the system, while simultaneously holding in mind the differentiation they are enacting. This is the type of integration reported by Alderfer and Klein (1978).

For example, in a t-group session, one of the consultants paid atten-tion to the total system, handling issues of time, space, and task boundaries, while the other consultant focused on the individuals' behaviors and their struggles in the group. Having one consultant pay attention to the Tavistock dimensions of boundaries and group-as-a-whole freed up the other consul-tant to concentrate on the NTL dimensions of intrapersonal and interpersonal growth in the group context.

Integrating behavior 3: Having this in mind
as way of informing action on that

When integrating with this response, the facilitator/consultant intervenes from the perspective of one model or tradition, but the intervention in that model is informed by insights gathered from the other model or tradition. It is as if the facilitator is first drawn to see or intervene using one lens, but after considering what the other model can add to the initial picture, the intervention is expanded with added insights derived from the second model, which continues to remain in the background.

For example, during a Tavistock small study group session, a clinically trained participant named Mary noticed that people were sitting in a line up. Members with experience in the Tavistock tradition were sitting on one side of the circle and members with experience in the NTL tradition were on the other. As the group proceeded to explore her observation, the consultant intervened noticing that the foreigners in the group were on one side while the northeastern U.S. citizens were on the other. She interpreted that such differentiation and the competition being enacted in the group was "a result of the fear that what one has learned in one tradition is going to be challenged by the context of the workshop." After the consultant's comment, the group members discussed the competition among them and the perceived competition between the two models and described it as "who has the truth about what's going on in the group."

Here the consultant paid attention to Mary's Tavistock informed observation on the implicit authority of the two models enacted in the seating arrangement. She went on to expand Mary's observation by bringing into focus the additional insight of the cultural and social differences also revealed in the line-up, reflecting the NTL lens. Informing the first observation with the second, her interpretation was now broader but was still delivered as a group-as-a-whole interpretation. It pointed to the larger system level competition between the two traditions that the workshop had created in participants and which shaped their competitive behavior in the small group.

Integrating behavior 4: Doing this, but in that way

This integrating response involves working within the precepts of one model or tradition, but intervening in the style or within recognized premises of the other. Behavior that should look like X is modified to look like Y, though the context and principles remain those of X.

For example, in a t-group session (NTL tradition), the facilitator paid attention to the boundaries of time and task (Tavistock model) by intervening close to the end of the session with a question to the whole group, "Is this a good place for people to stop?" She did a quick non-verbal check throughout the group and said, "Good, we'll see you this afternoon." While the facilitator was paying attention to boundary issues (the Tavistock model), the style and way of intervening was very much in the gentler interpersonally focused NTL style.

In another example, preparation was underway for the small study groups (Tavistock approach). During the opening plenary where the task, roles, and boundaries of the event were clearly delineated in a style that avoided polite conventions in order to facilitate participants' projections, the consultant announced, "We will commence at 8pm in room B," and then he smiled. In the context of the Tavistock opening, a nurturing stance more appropriate to the NTL tradition was briefly used.

Integrating behavior 5: This, inside a predominant context of that

In this integrative response, the intervener acts within one tradition while in the predominant context of the other tradition. The circumstances surrounding the consultancy (e.g., sponsorship, input and output systems, and learning methodologies) clearly express the biases of one tradition. The consultant or facilitator, however, takes up a role or otherwise behaves according to aspects of the other tradition.

For example, in the first Tavistock small study group session, a member was struggling to address his relationship to the consultants, expressing his fear of being rejected and his wish to have a special relationship with the male consultant. Other members joined in. The male consultant intervened with a metaphor offered earlier by the group where people were seen marching around a pool. He suggested that the group was expressing its ambivalence about the consultants in the metaphor of "lifeguards; are they on duty or not, do we want them or not, will they make it safe?"

The notion of safety, a dynamic issue overtly addressed in NTL group theories, was brought up in the Tavistock small study group context. One could say that the issue of safety belonged more to "that" other mode of work (the NTL tradition). But in the context of a Tavistock study group, safety was used to re-focus the group on the authority dimension of their relatedness to the consultants.

Integrating behavior 6: A little of this in the service of that

This integrative response involves taking something from one model or tradition and using it to bring attention or movement in an issue that would be of primary concern in the other model or tradition. Paying attention to issues that belong more in one framework paradoxically helps the group move towards addressing issues figural in the other framework.

For example, in the fourth t-group session, Anna directly confronted Mary about an incident the prior evening where Anna felt rejected by Mary. The male consultant intervened to support each woman about the directiveness in her communications and getting what they needed from the interaction (NTL model). But the apparent interpersonal conflict continued until other women got involved, suggesting that the conflict was about relations between women in the group more broadly. The female consultant observed (using a more Tavistock inter-group relations interpretation), "perhaps what Anna and Mary are fighting about is also about two different ways of using power in this group as women: Some women are in the 'sisterhood/feminist' camp and other women are in the 'beyond feminism camp." After this intervention, the group moved to a discussion about their attraction to each other and to the male consultant.

In this incident, the conversation started with an interpersonal exploration between two women (NTL focus). It then touched briefly on the relations among women, and that somehow enabled the group to begin to explore gender relations with one of the consultants (the Tavistock focus on authority). This process resulted in a different direction than the one suggested by each of the consultants' initial interventions.

In a similar integrating move, the consultant intervened in the third small study group by saying, "while the group has been working on one aspect of affiliation - the silent members - the avoided question is affiliation in the service of what? The affiliation conversation is masking issues of power and leadership in relationship to the members and the consultants." The consultant used the group's preoccupation with affiliation (NTL tradition) to point to that which was missing from the other tradition: power, leadership, and authority (Tavistock tradition). After the consultant's intervention, a group member talked about his fear of dependency and another member joined him with the question, "can we count on each other and the consultants and our own authority to learn what we need to learn in this group?" The affiliation theme (NTL) had been used to link to the authority relations theme (Tavistock).

Integrating behavior 7: Progress on this moves things in that direction in the service of this task.

Using this integrative response requires the consultant/facilitator to take into account that movement at one level or done with issues in one model may shift things in an apparently different direction, while still advancing the task under the initial model being used.

For example, in one small study group session, Jose realized that the group was using him to engage in a series of fights with different members of the group. As he experientially understood his own valence towards fight in the group (Bion's group-as-a-whole assumption), Jose shared the insight that this was the same stance he took in his family of origin. This intrapersonal awareness (NTL focus) deepened his understanding of the power of the group to influence individual behavior (Tavistock focus). Understanding group level phenomena paradoxically produced intrapersonal insights that reinforced his learning about the group-as-a-whole and allowed the group to examine its own behavior and move on.

Integrating behavior 8: Doing that, noticing that this is missing.

In this integrating response, the consultant acts or behaves from the perspective of one model or tradition, aware that the perspective from the other model (and what it may add to interpret and understand group phenomena) is missing. Nevertheless, the model of choice continues because the intervener does not immediately incorporate the alternative interpretation from the other tradition or because the intervener determines that it is not appropriate to bring up what is missing that the other model could contribute.

For example, in the third t-group session, members were taking turns disclosing very intimate aspects of their past, like having been sexually

abused. A third member shared his experience that "it is getting too sugary, maybe we are competing for tears." The consultant noticed that this was an important group-as-a-whole observation pointing to unvoiced feelings of competition and envy in the group, including coded feelings toward the consultants. Nevertheless, the consultant continued to focus her interventions in supporting the member's disclosure in the here-and-now and coaching them to complete their transactions with each other.

In this example, the consultant noticed that an intervention about the covert processes of envy and competition, being enacted in the interpersonal exchanges around disclosure, was missing (if she were to bring in the Tavistock lens). But she continued to support the process of disclosure and intimacy going on in the group, major elements of the NTL tradition. Her assessment was that at this fairly early stage of the life of the group as a t-group, members were still learning how to disclose in a manner that leads to more intimacy. This level of disclosure was needed as a foundation for achieving a sense of inclusion and safety that would allow them to address the difficult issues of competition and conflict between them: the next stage in the NTL progressive models of group development.

LINKING UNDERLIES INTEGRATIVE BEHAVIORS

What seems to be common to these eight integrating behaviors is the ability to link or bridge the paradoxes, polarities, and the different levels of analysis emphasised by each tradition. Linking is the process of attending to the polarities, paradoxes, and levels of analysis happening in the group at a particular moment. It is the underlying ability that helps practitioners find the frame or intervention that makes sense of the complex group processes. Linking provides an internal mechanism by which the consultant/facilitator's mind can hold the complexity, allowing for a range of possible interventions rather than a one-dimensional response limited by any one group theory. Indeed, it is probable that experienced consultants allow themselves more flexibility in this regard even when intentionally working from one tradition than a less experienced consultant might.

Identifying the paradoxes, polarities, and levels of system present at a particular moment in a group's life and bringing them back together are key components of integration. For example, when a consultant or facilitator feels caught in a "this vs. that" dilemma over the two traditions, they have the choice of intervening at the individual or at the group level. This kind of moment signals the potential for integration because attending to it addresses tensions being experienced, enacted, or suppressed by group members. One may either continue to "stick to this" because one believes it is what is needed, or one may "shift to that," because one understands that it is an important missing dynamic that must be addressed. Or, lastly, the consultant may incorporate both lenses in "a third way" that gets to a more comprehensive intervention.

We maintain that the NTL and the Tavistock models provide a complementarity, or a "ying and yang," group theory and practice. Within each model are the elements of the other. Each tradition has staked out an area or

aspect of group life to focus on that is seemingly the polar opposite of the other. Yet, each contains the aspects on which the other focuses. We think that organizational practitioners and those wishing to understand and manage the complexity of group and organizational life must be able to see these polarities, such as group-as-a-whole and the individuals in it, not separately but simultaneously.

INTEGRATION APPLIED TO
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For consultants in general and organizational consultants in particular, diverse and increasingly complex organizations require being attuned to the *polarities* and *paradoxes* in them. It is also necessary to be able to work at various *levels of analysis* (individual, group, intergroup, and systemic) in order to address symptomatic behavior that is often evoked by an intervention.

Complexities arising from polarities, paradoxes, and unclear tasks and roles require a strong use of *linking* and *bridging* skills. It is only when groups and/or their leaders can see the relatedness of seemingly overwhelming variables that some clarity can evolve. The highlighted concepts above are also reference points for looking at how the eight types of *behavioral integration* previously identified manifest themselves in work and organizational life.

On a systemic level, the sense of breakdown and things being out of control are often the central impetuses for organizations seeking help from professionals. Sky-rocketing expenses, plummeting productivity, lack of accountability, general confusion, and loss of direction are often seen as loss of control and referred to as "chaos" by clients. Researchers now know, however, that chaos or a period of inherent unpredictability in a system is a natural process. Chaos can not be avoided or controlled in organizational life, despite the apparent desirability of doing so.

Practitioners consequently need a technology that enables them to work with the chaotic aspects of organizations. We are proposing a third way that enables practitioners to a) give meaning and offer a way to understand the loss of control (Tavistock interpretation and translation of covert forces at work); b) work with the process of discovering meaning and achieving useful understandings (NTL individual intervention plus Tavistock group-as-a-whole intervention); and c) bridge and link to various aspects of the experiences (combined traditions).

The use of boundary concepts, for example, is a strong component in the Tavistock tradition. These concepts help track what people came to do, that is, what is their primary task. Clarity about both physical and psychological space and about roles (who is responsible for what and what criteria are used to set behavioral standards) can assist organizations in addressing blocks to task completion. The alternate use of the NTL tradition's very direct, interpersonal, and high intensity interventions, coupled with low intensity group or systems-focused interventions, which are more interpretive and therefore less personally direct, can create a powerful and comprehensive approach to intervening.

Bridging and linking offer ways to embrace change, take it in, and facilitate growth and learning from it. These tools and the previously referenced integrating behaviors provide a unique set of resources and a direction for the individual and the organization to grow through the turmoil: the push and pull of the change process. We offer two cases to illustrate the potential application of a third-way to the process of organizational change.

Case One

Braxton had the opportunity to consult to the board of directors of a not-for-profit organization during a very intense transitional process. While this membership organization adhered primarily to the NTL tradition of group process in the way in which it functioned, both NTL and Tavistock models informed the consultative stance he took.

A continual source of frustration for the board was its tendency to lose track of the larger work task the group had set for themselves. That is, the group would identify specific decisions they needed to make in order to complete a process then never make them. Pursuing and engaging the personal agendas of individual members was one of the key sources of this loss, because the group norm of being nice to each other did not support task-focused behavior. In his consulting role, Braxton found himself constantly calling the board members back to task, translating the group dynamics at work, but doing it supportively but firmly in order to be heard. Although members clearly understood the dynamics, there seemed to be limited interest in holding the group accountable in their board member roles. Those who attempted to do so without using a strong interpersonal approach were often criticized or ignored.

Since the organization was under stress, there was the constant tension of holding the polarities of the individual and the group in the context of strong organizational pressure on the board to produce results. Linking was a critical skill in the consultation, because any system or group level observation often had to be linked supportively to individual behavior in order for it to have any impact. In such circumstances, the specific consulting skill is to track individual behavioral data that supports the group or system dynamic that is affecting the work. There is a risk, however, in doing this kind of linking. If the reference to an individual's behavior is experienced as critical or judgmental, the consultant can be pulled too far into the group to be effective. That is, the consultant can get caught in exchanging feedback with individuals rather than being joined in exploring the validity of the group or system level observation and insight that would help the group. When the group does not take ownership for group or system level issues by linking their individual experience to the group dynamic, the primary task can be split off or remain held only within the consultant. As a result, integrated work is usually lost.

Attending to various levels of analysis played a significant role in this intervention because the organizational challenge called for working all of the levels and keeping them linked in order for the board as a representative system to hold its work with some integrity. This proved illusive on many occasions because board members had to struggle with their member-

ship status and the personal agendas that derived from that role as well as their representational responsibilities as duly elected board members of the larger organization.

Case Two

Another example of integration is Braxton's work in another not-for-profit membership organization oriented to the Tavistock tradition. His experience of taking up a leadership role in this organization and his integration of the two traditions helped him see how the pull toward the group-as-a-whole thinking of the Tavistock model had come to guide the organization in its attempt to do its own work. Similar to the previous example, a set of unspoken norms had been established in which one polarity, group-as-a-whole, had become the working norm to the exclusion of its opposing polarity, individual responsibility. In this case, Braxton became aware of the difficulty of moving this group to task completion because of its tendency to handle conflicts by interpreting the behavior, which was seen as resistant or interfering, with progress towards the goal. While an initial observation and interpretation of difficult issues could have served as a facilitating factor had work been done on the identified problem areas, organizational members were not very likely to be skilled or inclined towards interpersonally facilitative work in the predominantly group-as-a-whole focused organizational culture. The interpretative group level intervention that points to where and how the group is consequently stuck rarely led to the necessary follow-up work to get unstuck. That was because members tended to stay too far out to address and resolve the interpersonal dynamics that were also part of the group and system-level dynamic.

In his leadership role, Braxton found himself using at least three of the integrating behaviors. By speaking to the individual dynamics in the context of the group or system focus on conflict, he was doing "*this* inside a predominant context of *that*" (integrating behavior #5). And after an issue or conflict was expressed in group or system terms, he then expressed the issue in terms of what action needed to be taken by specific individuals to get them to take responsibility for their part of the dynamic. The Tavistock model used solely on its own does not provide for interpersonal feedback as a working tool, so people do not *engage* each other around points of conflict when working in this tradition. Conflict often stays covert and at the group level, where it can only be interpreted and looked at, rather than confronted and worked through. Braxton found it necessary to do a little of interpersonal, individual intervention in the service of group cohesion, which in turn contributed to task accomplishment; "*this* in the service of *that*" (integrating behavior #6).

In attempting to use an integrated third way, it is important to have the group or system goal in mind when engaging in the interpersonal intervention. Braxton often began his interventions at the group level, noticing there was little or no interpersonal follow through; That is, "doing *that,* noticing that *this* is missing" (integrating behavior #8). When a working system runs into barriers, resistance, or gets bogged down in conflicts, leadership must

be able to not only speak to how the system is getting stuck (Tavistock focus on the group-as-social-system) but demonstrate some skills on how to get unstuck (NTL focus on interpersonal and group effectiveness).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The above two cases illustrate the usefulness for organizational members and consultants to increase their competence in both the Tavistock and the NTL traditions of Group Relations theory and consultancy practice. While previous social scientists have worked at comparison and integration, especially those associated with the Yale University School of Management, detailed integrative behaviors that might lend themselves to discussion and debate have not been disseminated widely through the researcher and practitioner networks. We offer these propositions and integrating behaviors as a contribution towards that scientific and practical need.

In conclusion, some awareness of speculative questions that may have relevance for future work on this subject have come to light. Although difficult to answer, these questions are offered in the spirit of continued scientific inquiry, as thoughts with which we are left.

It has been hard at times to articulate the insights we have had as we trained others in the experiential use of these concepts. Written and verbal feedback indicates that the training has been very valuable to those who have taken it. But once we began writing down the ideas, they did not sound quite as new. This leads us to wonder how much of our work is influenced by our combined expertise and what we have done collectively as well as the illumination of newly articulated terrain. Perhaps the real new terrain was the delivery and articulation of the synergistic experience of combining the two traditions that, up to this point, had been carried by each of the authors in their personal applications. The writing process allowed the authors to begin to see more of the separate parts that composed the whole of a complex experience.

The complexity of the integrating task itself was intensified by the difficulty the writing team had finding common time and territory to think together and play off each other's insights. Our work together was full of synergy and play, but our writing from separate geographical areas and different work and life stresses often deprived us of the synergistic stimulation. This seemed to increase our sense of the complexity of our work; Right at the point we were attempting to say more about integrating behaviors and their application to organizations. It clearly felt harder to integrate our ideas and apply them when we were working more separately than together. It is, at the least, an important metaphor pertaining to our theme of a third way.

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Group Relations and Organizational Consultation: Rediscovering Our Roots

Kenneth Eisold

Group Relations conferences were developed originally by an extraordinary group of researchers and organizational consultants working out of the Tavistock Institute in the post-war era. Stimulated by the experiences and opportunities of the war and the post World War II demands of rebuilding a shattered economy, Trist, Rice, and Bridger, among others, researched the complex interplay between psychodynamics and work. Using object relations theory as applied to organizations by Jacques, the group constructs of Bion, and the systems work of Lewin, they developed the key concepts of socio-technical systems, deriving them from and applying them to industrial organizations with whom they established consulting and research relationships. They laid down the foundations of our tradition (Trist & Murray, 1990).

As part of this series of efforts, they also designed and developed the first Group Relations conferences in conjunction with the University of Leicester, starting in 1957. At first building on the work of Lewin and others at the National Training Laboratory (NTL) in Bethel, ME where t-groups were first developed, they added a particular psychoanalytic cast to the study of group process and gradually developed additional dynamic, systemic events. They eventually arrived at the "Leicester Model" for Group Relations, which became the prototype for the conferences that began to be offered in the US in the late 60's (Miller, 1990).

As the stimulus provided by NTL suggests, there was considerable interest in bringing insight about human relationships into organizational management. It was generally believed that insight into the psychodynamic aspects of leadership and authority was a good thing for managers to have, whether or not the managers were under contract to consultants in their back home institutions. At the same time, of course, consultants could learn themselves, from managing the learning of others, about the covert aspects of larger systems in Group Relations conferences. And they could profit from working with managers who had more insight into the unconscious aspects of the systems they managed.

The critical point is that organizational consultants created Group Relations both as a tool to help their current work and as a contribution to the large field of organizational development. These consultants had the inspira-