New Dialog Methods for Broad-Spectrum Systems Constellations: Comments on the Milano Workshop on Intelligenza Collaborativa Nel Team

Otto Laske, IDM, 2017

As seen at http://altroove.it/intelligenza-collaborativa-nuovi-strumenti-dialogo/ and also, on this website, at the IDM Services page, http://www.interdevelopmentals.org/?page_id=4321, new dialog methods will be demonstrated by Lorenzo Campese. Alessandro Rossi, and Otto Laske during a two-day workshop in Milano, under the Sponsorship of ONE, Consulenza Evolutiva, on January 30-31, 2018.

What are these methods and what is their origin and purpose?

The dialog methods used in the workshop come from two sources: first, from the established discipline of Systems Constellations and second from Harvard University research in adult development, specifically Otto Laske's *Dialectical Thought Form Framework* (CDF, 2008, 2017).

Both of them are the fruit of thinking about what in response to the new communication methods provided by the internet and apps such as Twitter could regenerate more personal dialog forms in 21st century institutions and commercial organizations. Both methods respond to the requirements of real-time dialog focused on reaching goals, including the meta-goal of changing the culture of dialog and work.

The focus of the workshop derives from novel ways of thinking about a new kind of Systems Constellations that cover the entire spectrum from physical being to emotional experience on to cognitive design. "Broad-

Spectrum Systems Constellations" create new real-time experiences in groups and teams, especially those giving rise to reaching goals through physical and mental effort. In more general terms, the focus of the workshop is the transformation of the nature of work based on dialog.

The concept of WORK employed in the Milano workshop is very broad. It comprises all efforts to bring one's personality to bear on work commitments, both in the sense of doing work (referred to as *job 1*) and developing oneself by way of doing work (referred to as *job 2*). Given that work is unthinkable and undoable without internal dialog as well as dialog between work partners, this holistic notion of Work requires an equally holistic repertoire of dialog methods.

It is the purpose of the methods used in the workshop to create a *continuum* of experience based on listening and dialog. This entails that the methods are united by the same holistic purpose as conveyed in Fig. 1 below :
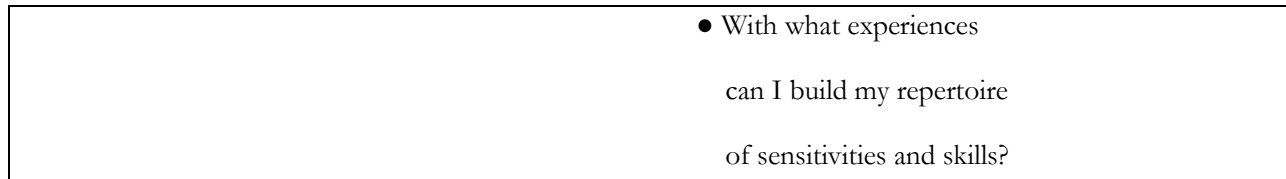
● With what experiences can I build my repertoire of sensitivities and skills?
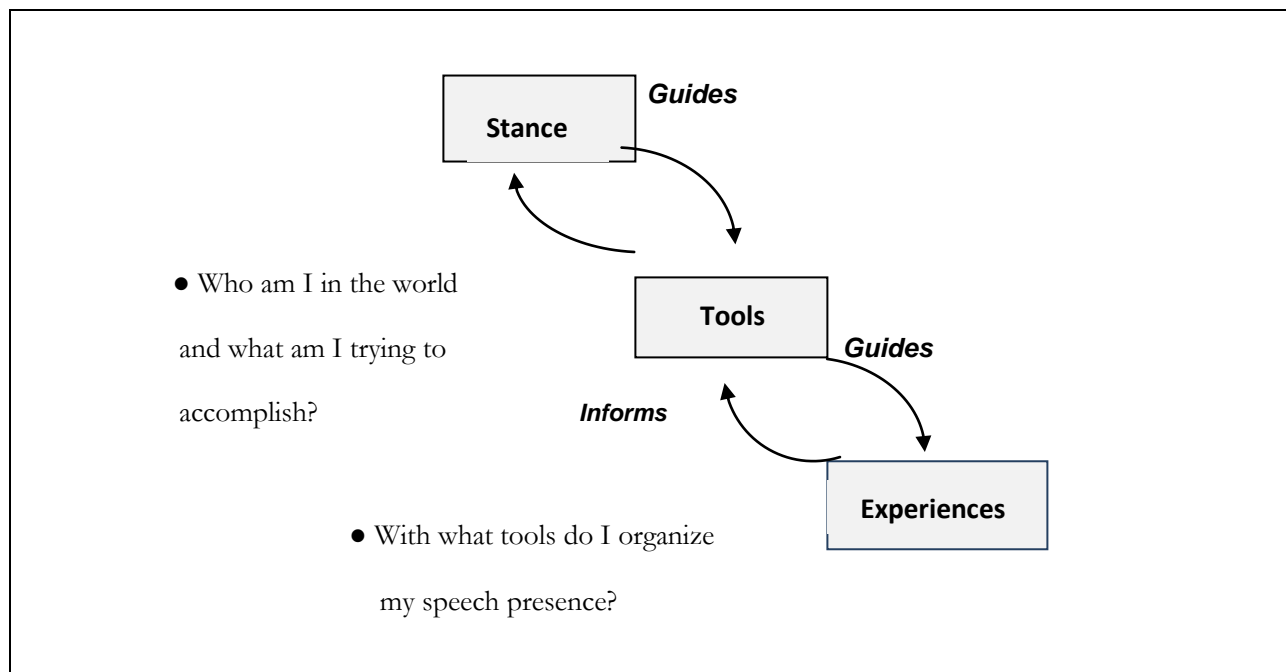
Fig. 1. Feedback Loop Involved in "Making Experiences"
(from Laske DTFM (2017) p. 39)

As shown, the methods of the workshop address three strongly linked issues that come up for anybody when delivering work:

A. **Stance:** who am I in the world, and what am I trying to accomplish?

B. **Tools:** With what tools do I organize my speech presence and thinking?

C. **Experiences:** what experiences are needed for building my repertoire of sensitivities and skill when functioning in a group or team?

As seen in Fig. 1, each of these three components of "making experiences" guides and informs the other two in a continuous feedback loop. None can exist without the other, and all take place in physical space and real time. The process starts in the speaker's physical system located in a particular social environment in which s(he) takes a certain stance. It is continuously shaped by the speaker's cognitive tools enabling him/her to generate complex thoughts initially based on pre-conceptual intuitions.

In more detail, the experiential process has the following three components.

STANCE is personal as well as cultural and linguistic. It points to the process of how I internally position myself toward others in the social world, which includes my physical body, my speech presence, and my way of making meaning of the presence of others. My awareness of me as "this person (speaking)" is indispensable when it comes to being engaged with others in life and work projects.

TOOLS comprise all of the methods by which a person organizes his/her speech presence, whether they are linguistic, logical, or cultural. Tools are the means by which the speaker transitions from ego-centric, purely sensory, emotional and pre-conceptual understandings of the real world (including the social world) to logical design and on to the formation of complex thoughts sharable with others. The use of Tools as a process is exercised during the workshop by paying attention to a pre-selected and agreed upon 'system', whether it be personal, organizational, or cultural, with the understanding that focusing on a particular system is a potent way of obtaining clarity and new insights also into oneself relative to the system in question.

EXPERIENCE points to the dynamics by which one participates in a system including one's own personal one. Experience is much more than a mere outcome. It is also the origin of further experiences which give feedback on Stance as well as Tools and develop them further. Experiences, including those of oneself speaking to oneself and in a group, influence the development of Stance as well as Tools. They are also the *testing ground* for how effectively Stance and Tools work together, and how the latter might need to be changed to become more effective. Transcending previous experiences requires a new Stance and new Tools.

A comment regarding the uniqueness of the Milano workshop. It is unique in the breadth of experiences it opens up, which follow the spectrum from physical ➔ emotional ➔ pre-conceptual ➔ to conceptual. Within 'conceptual' a further broadening occurs which is depicted in Fig. 2, below:

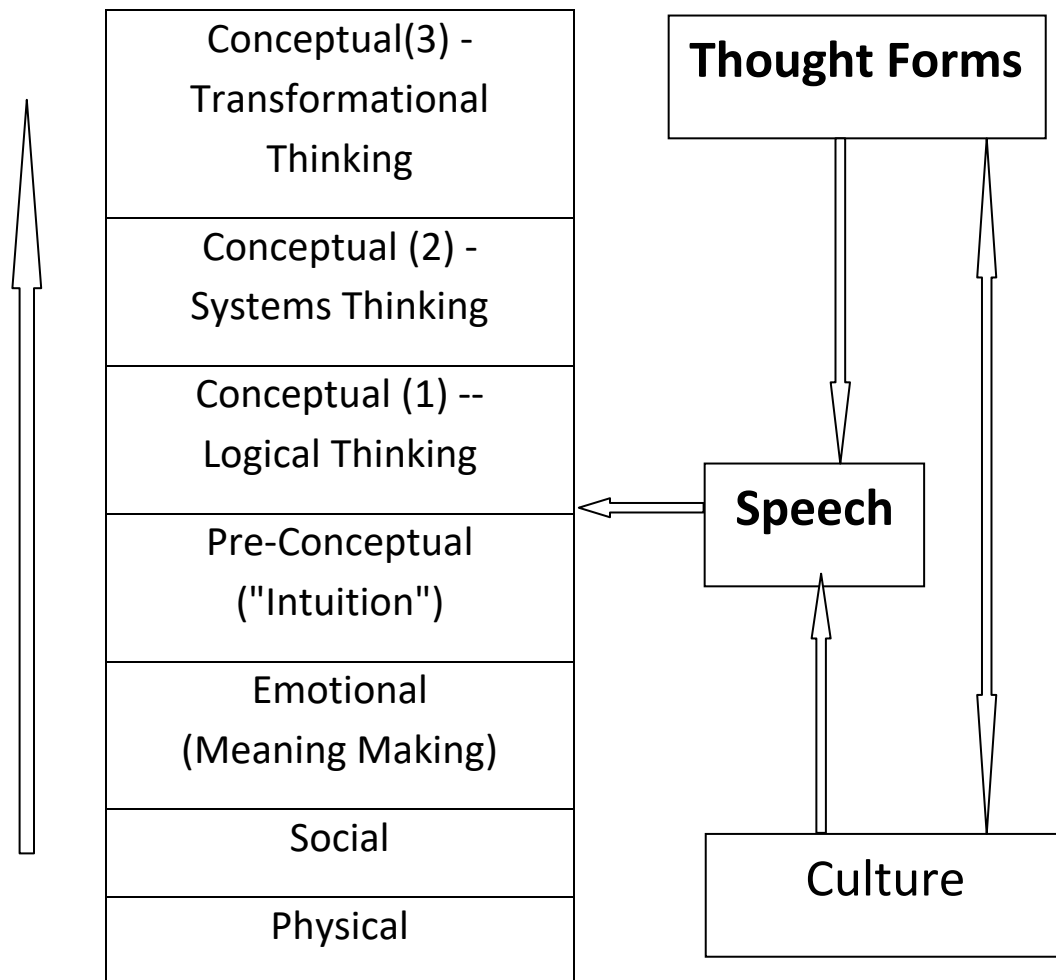|	
Conceptual(3) - Transformational Thinking	**Thought Forms**
Conceptual (2) - Systems Thinking	
Conceptual (1) -- Logical Thinking	**Speech**
Pre-Conceptual ("Intuition")	
Emotional (Meaning Making)	
Social	**Culture**
Physical	

Fig. 2 Dimensions Comprised
by *Broad-Spectrum Systems Constellations*

Fig. 2 shows the expansion of conventional to broad-spectrum systems constellations which require a few further comments.

We assume in broad systems constellations that all dialog is embedded in the real physical and social world. It is this world which, ultimately, is to be "understood". Speech itself is the physical link between the four lower dimensions and the conceptual ones. Speech is "based on thought", linking what so far has remained outside of conceptual understanding to higher forms of thoughtful understanding.

The transition a speaker makes from emotional to pre-conceptual experiences is presently not well understood and is often simply referred to as an 'intuitive' step. Once people have an intuitive understanding of a subject matter, it becomes helpful to them to proceed further by choosing *concepts* since these bring clarity into what they feel, sense, and imagine. In addition, a focus on concepts raises a flag that conveys: "we are actually thinking here", something that is typically taken for granted, -- a deep detriment to understanding.

In transformational systems constellations as exercised in the Milano workshop, the transition

pre-conceptual ➔ logical ➔ systemic ➔ transformational

is thought to be of particular salience for work in teams. We follow the notion that speaking is based on "thought forms", and that speakers who know and are guided by consciously used thought forms find it easier to make the transition to complex and holistic thought.

Pragmatically, this transition in speech is easier to follow if we speak of the PEL or "pointing, elaborating, linking" sequence in group dialog

(p➔e➔l). This sequence is learned by all workshop participants, and is outlined abstractly below.

| Context	Process	Relationship	Transformation
Cp Relationship between part(s) and a whole	Pp Emergence and inclusion of opposites	Rp Bringing elements into relationship	Tp Limits of system stability
Ce Structure and stability of a system	Pe Patterns of interaction	Re Structure of relationship	Te Developmental movement of systems
Cl Multiple contexts and frames of reference	Pl Embeddedness in process	Rl Patterns of interaction and influence	Tl Comparison and coordination of systems; emergence of new entities

INTEGRATION
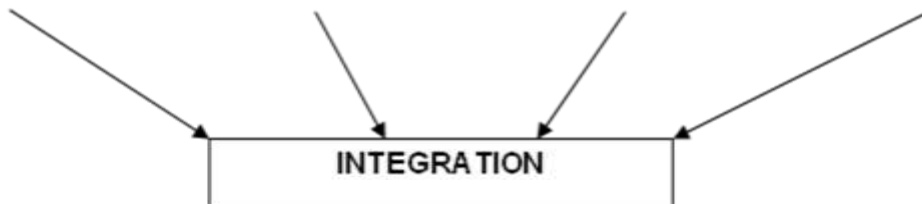
Table 1. The PEL Sequence (p-e-l)
for use in Broad-Spectrum System Constellations

Table 1 outlines the PEL sequence which leads from pointing to something in speech by using a concept to elaborating the concept further and arriving at a deeper understanding of the system chosen to focus on by linking concepts. Correspondingly, all thought forms in the table are marked by either "p", "e", or "l".

A more intuitive and holistic way of describing this process is to see it as a combination of two kinds of search-in-thought, one followed by the other:

     1. A *breadth-first search* proceeding sideways (horizontally) in the Table from Context to Process to Relationship to Transformation (C➔P➔R➔T); we speak of expanding C to P, R, and finally T.

     2. A *depth-first search* proceeding downward (vertically) in order to elaborate and eventually link concepts (P➔E➔L) into constellations that provide a holistic view of a subject matter that is both personal and conceptual.

The first kind of search leaves behind merely static-logical perspectives and broadens understanding by inclusion of processes and relationships which, together, make possible an understanding of transformation in the physical and social reality.

The second kind of search is an expansion of the first in that each of the four "moments" of breadth-first search (CPRT) are further detailed by distinguishing individual thought forms (TFs) whose stepwise use leads to a gradual refinement of holistic thinking.

For example, a subject matter being focused on in a work group is first pointed to by CPRT thought forms of type p, and is then refined by elaborating important aspects found through TFs of type e, finally leading to an integration of all aspects understood conceptually by way of linking thought forms (TFs) into constellations.

Importantly, in light of Fig. 2, above, "TF constellations" arrived at through the two kinds of search beyond the pre-conceptual level are

not only intellectual but embodied as emotional and social constellations. In teams, such constellations are "collaborative", not just "consensual". Such constellations are a part of the real world and not "just thoughts". They can therefore articulate any group process that starts with a particular focus of attention and proceeds, on the basis of Stance and TF Tools, to achieving an integration of all aspects of a chosen subject matter present in the focus of attention.

Aside from pointing to the cultural conditions of spoken verbal language (see Fig. 2), any conceptual integration achieved through dialog is also inevitably culture-shaping. This is the case since while thought forms (TFs) are "logical", the way they are USED cannot but reshape the culture from which them stem.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

At this point, the reader and potential attendee of the Milano workshop will have an inkling of what it is about and what it is meant to achieve.

The workshop will unfold as a **process of awareness-raising** in regard to the way participants follow their emotion, intuition, pre-conception, and thinking. Attendees will experience how the workshop, initially rooted in pre-conceptual intuitions, amplifies emotional and cognitive capabilities, enabling them to engage with complex -- holistic and systemic -- thinking about themselves and the real world, especially the world of work in organizations.

In addition, attendees will be able to experience how collaborative intelligence actually crystallizes in teams based on thought forms, and how it provokes, beyond merely local effects, cultural transformations

at all levels of an organization. This is so since dialog, once expanded into the conceptual domain, morphs into **a different culture of discourse** wherever people communicate.

What may not be immediately apparent is that the approach used in the Milano workshop sheds a bright light on how especially logical thinking tends to keep in the dark ('under wraps') the hidden and invisible functioning of real-world systems, whether they are found inside or outside of the person speaking.

In reference to Fig. 2, above, this is so since purely logical thinking is outcome-, not process-oriented. It therefore makes it easy to forget that the *processes* ongoing in the speaker as an embodiment of the real world largely determine the outcome groups and teams are striving to achieve. Attendees will most likely experience how purely logical thinking is actually more highly "abstract", or unconnected to intuition and emotion, than is transformational thinking based on TF constellations.

This, however, has to be experienced rather than merely believed.

With these thoughts, you are invited to attend the Milano workshop at the end of January 2018. To do so sign up at http://altroove.it/intelligenza-collaborativa-nuovi-strumenti-dialogo/.

Come and convince yourself of what this blog is only hinting at!