

Developmental Tools for Executive Coaching:

An Introduction to Its Cognitive Dimension

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Reaching into Clients' Experience Using “Thinking Tools”

- In the first part of this course, we became familiar with adult “meaning making”.
- In this second part of the course, we will delve into adults’ “thinking”, especially the way it shapes their work.

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DC-2015 Part 2, Session no. 1

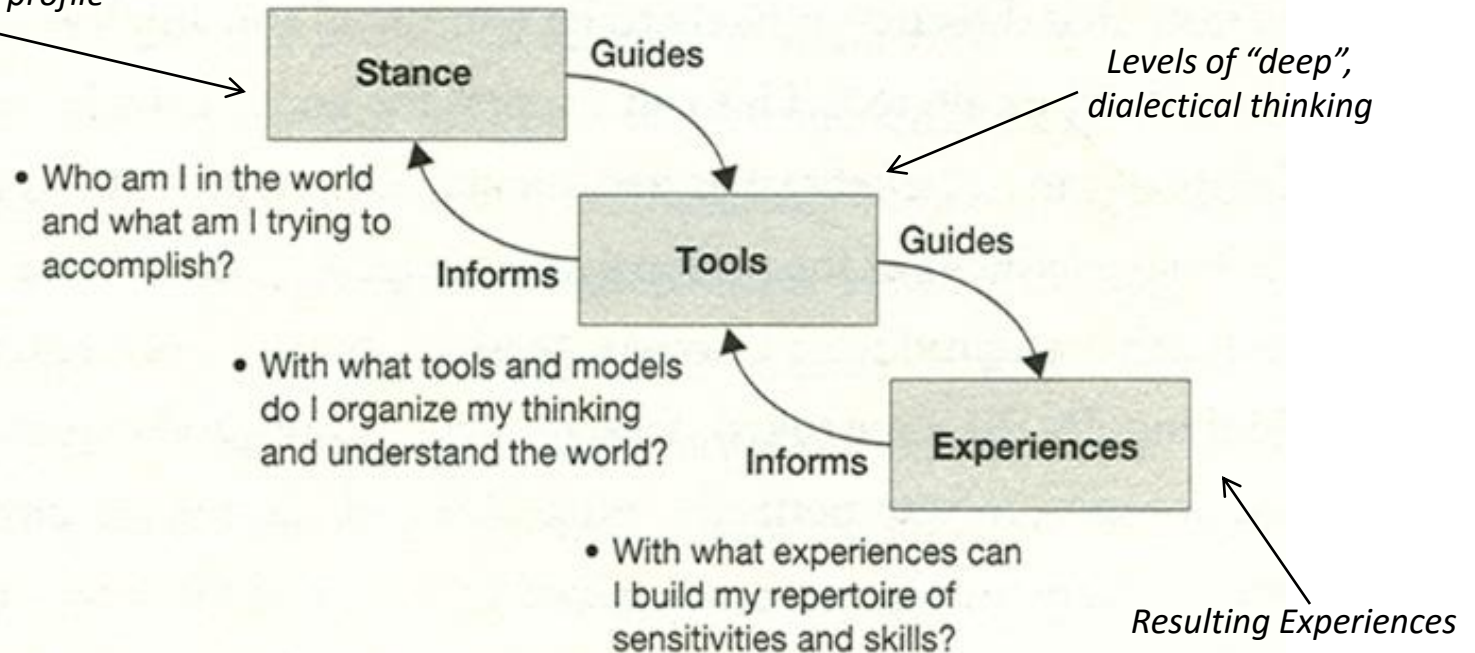
Coaching: A Structured Conversation

Cognitive Coaching is essentially a professional conversation focused around a client's work.

- A coach familiar with adult cognitive development can read from a client's use of concepts (when speaking or writing) to what degree s(he) is able to experience his/her own thinking, and how expertly, therefore, s(he) can handle complexity. That is a developmental issue.
- **A fundamental issue in cognitive coaching is for the client to understand that the way s(he) “thinks about”, and thus formulates, an issue is part of the problem the issue poses.**
- In this course, we focus on helping along clients' thinking by introducing new **tools for thinking**, namely:
 - *A set of mind openers* called “dialectical thought forms”
 - *A framework for holding cognitive coaching sessions* called the “Three Houses”
 - *A session protocol* in which we duly separate the Three Houses from each other for the sake of clarity and deep thinking, taking on one House after the other.

Thinking is Not What You “Think”: It Shapes Not Only How You See the World, But Also Your Emotions

*Socio-emotional position
and psychological profile*



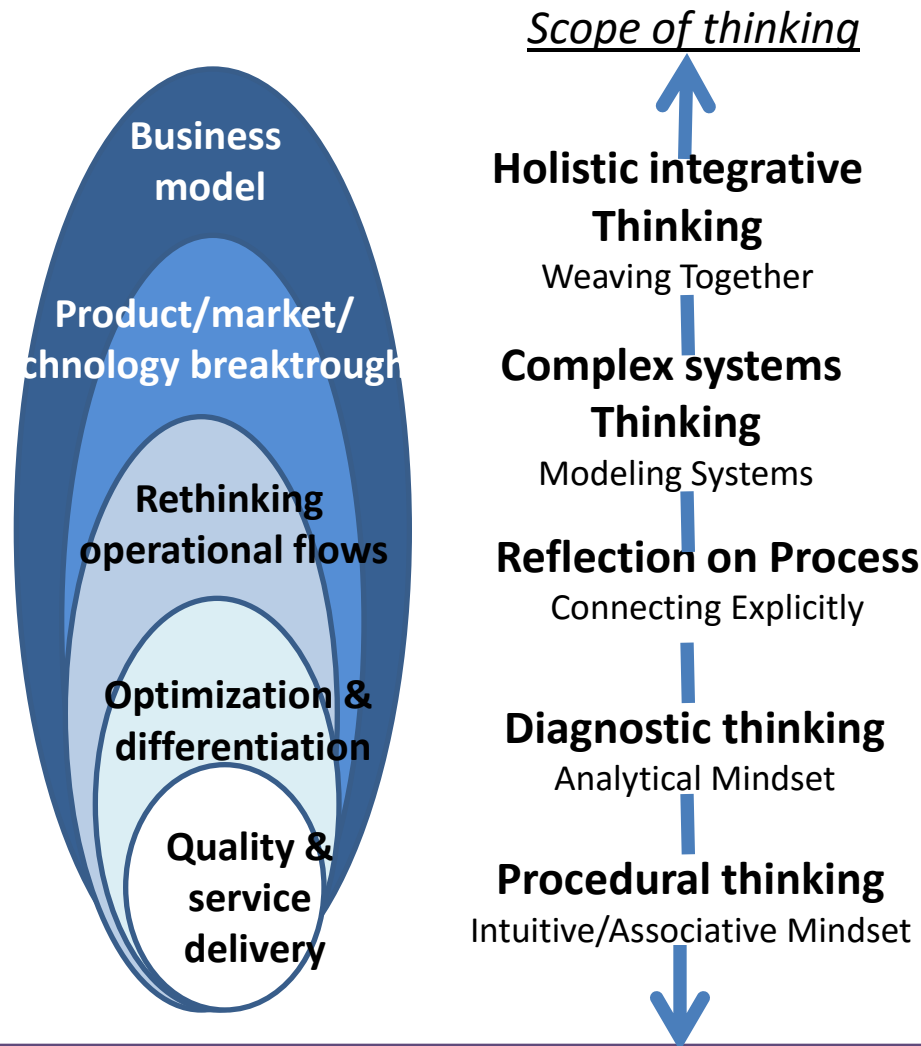
The Special Role of *Thinking* in Executive Coaching

- In present-day coaching, the relevance of adults' cognitive development is disregarded or underestimated, not only in executive coaching.
- It is not understood that enhancing fluid thinking is a way of boosting social-emotional meaning making (autonomy); these two dimensions are closely related.
- **Executives manage the future, not the present.** Doing so requires a high degree of fluidity of systemic and holistic thinking.
- Executives' thinking is by nature systemic. However, as coaches, we want executives go beyond conventional systems thinking, by using complex, dialectical thought forms.
- Thought forms allow for different levels of systems thinking; they are also used in cognitive assessment.
- In this course, we use thought forms as *Mind Openers* in dialog with clients since they challenge clients to adopt, not only more fluid, but broader and deeper, kinds of thinking.

Work Is Done In an External and Internal Work Place

- **Work** is not any activity but rather an activity that is carried out for reaching a goal (“what by when”) within a certain time window, and is autonomously rather than as a replica of has been done before.
- In this sense, Work is inherently creative, and happens in a *mental space*.
- There are two mental spaces of work, an external and an internal one.
- While the external work place is a physical and social environment, the internal work place is defined by the way in which an individual and/or team constructs its work *internally*, by way of meaning and sense making.
- For this reason, the internal work place of an individual or team can be more or less mature.
- The cognitive interview taught in this course is an exploration of the cognitive aspects, in contrast to the social-emotional aspects, of a coachee’s internal work place.
- We focus on the way in which clients conceptualize their work, the concepts they use to do so.
- In short, we observe, analyse, and improve “how work shows up for them”.

Work Places Can Be Found at Different Levels of Thinking and Cognitive Development



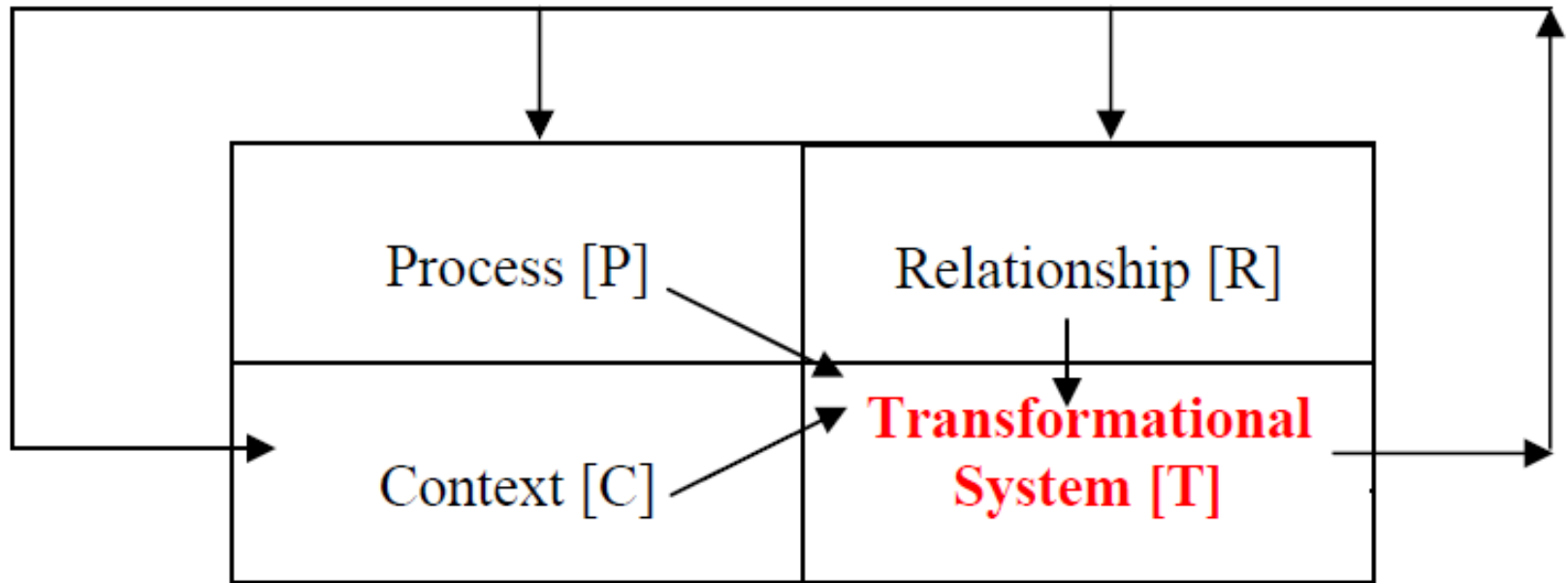
What Is Cognitive Coaching?

- Coaching is ineffectual if its cognitive level does not match the level of the coachee's internal work place.
- Cognitive coaching has the purpose of helping coachees realize that the problems they assume they "have" are constructed by them internally in their internal work place.
- A coachee benefits from cognitive coaching if it makes him/her realize **that the issue s(he) is bringing forward in coaching is inseparable from the way s(he) thinks about it and formulates it.**
- A cognitively more highly developed coachee conceives of the same issues differently (see the Four Managers, below).
- If the coach can show the coachee that the issues brought forward are **his/her own construction**, the coachee will readily understand that s(he) could take a different perspective on the issue in question.
- This "re-thinking" of issues is more important in coaching than "solving" a coachee's problem.
- Issues brought forward in cognitive coaching "dis-solve" into something not previously seen or understood by the coachee; they constitute an "aha" experience.

How Thoughts Hang Together

- In any coaching conversation, one thought follows another either associatively (as in stories) or logically (in systemic thinking).
- Different thoughts together form an ensemble that has a certain cognitive structure.
- In cognitive coaching, we focus on this structure in terms of four classes of thought forms called *Context, Process, Relationship, and Transformation* (C, P, R; T for short).
- Each of these classes comprises a certain number of thought forms (TFs). In this course, we'll use only a small number of them, precisely $4 \times 3 = 12$ TFs.
- The purpose of using TFs is to show coachees **that the way in which they formulate their issues are part of the problems the issue seems to pose for them.**
- A cognitive coach mastering dialectical thought forms can help a coachee “re-think” an issue, but cannot “solve it” for him or her; only the coachee can ...

A Simple Framework For Understanding and Strengthening Our Own and Clients' Thinking



Example


- Your coachee needs help for developing a better relationship with his/her boss. Up to now, this issue has been seen by the coachee mainly emotionally, as one of “the boss does not like me” (Kegan level 3) or “my boss and I never see the world eye to eye” (Kegan level 4).
- In dialectical thinking we can rework issues like that by dealing with them in light of four different but related perspectives:
 - Of context
 - Of process
 - Of relationship
 - Of transformation
- In each of these perspectives, articulated by classes of dialectical thought forms, the issue takes on a different character.
- That is exactly the point in cognitive coaching.
- This course teaches you a way of helping coachees cope with a particular issue by helping him/her utilize four different perspectives from which any issue can be looked at.
- In short, the coach is REFRAMING issues for the coachee.
- The coach is not in the business of solving coachees’, and anybody else’s, problems, only your own!

The Mental Space of Coaching

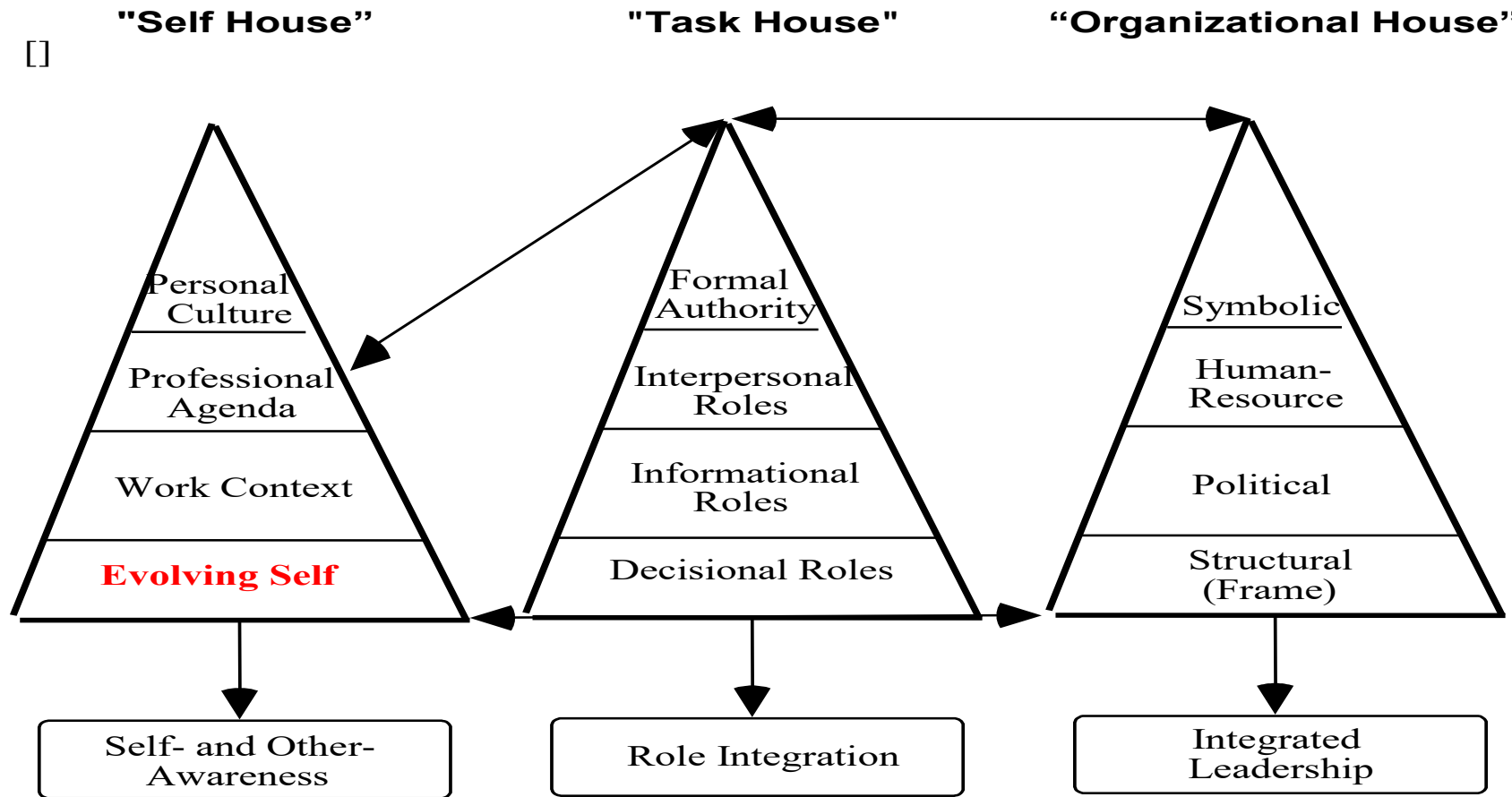
- In this course, we focus on our own and on client's tools for thinking complexly.
- In executive coaching, this is a necessity, not a nicety.
- We do so by conceiving of coaching as happening in a specific mental space, called the "internal work place".
- **This space is defined by three dimensions or "Houses" called the Task House, the Organizational (Environmental) House, and the Self House.**
- Once we distinguish these Houses, we are able to go beyond merely listening to the *content* of clients' speech, and can open our ear to the *structure* of their thinking.
- The structure of a person's thinking is defined by *thought forms*, and these thought forms fall into four classes, of:
 - *Context*
 - *Process*
 - *Relationship*
 - *and Transformation.*
- We can think of these classes as different perspectives both coach and coachee are taking on the *real world*.

What People in Organizations Talk About Differs According to Different Cognitive Levels (Strata)

Type of Team	Focus of Universe of Discourse	Dominant Moment of Dialectic	Need for Deep Thinking
Stratum 1	Service and Execution Excellence	Context thinking: Focus on Present	Present
Stratum 2	Service Differentiation and Optimization of Practices	Start of Process Thinking Working with Difference Negativity	
Stratum 3	Rethinking Operational Processes; New Value Streams; Change Management	Advanced Process Thinking; Beginnings of Relationship Thinking	
Stratum 4	Creating Breakthrough by Developing and Testing Alternative Strategies	Strengthening of Relationship Thinking; Beginning Coordination of C, P, R Thought Forms	
Stratum 5	New Business Models, Reshaping of Competitive Position	Increased Coordination of Thought Forms Leading to Transformational Thinking	
Stratum 6	Repurposing Industry by Provoking Unconventional Uses of Services and Tools Offered	Equilibrated Thinking in Terms of All Classes of Thought Forms	Future



Coachees' and Coaches' Internal Work Place Comprised Three Different Dimensions Called "Houses"



Difference Between the Three Houses

- Each House defines a Universe of Discourse with its own central topics.
- When we separate them, we get a chance to listen to clients in depth since we are restricting the scope of the content that can be fruitfully discussed.
- The central concerns of the Houses is as follows:
 - *Self House*: the clients professional agenda, career goals, work context, and personal culture.
 - *Task House*: the client's function (role in the organization) and level of responsibility
 - *Organizational House*: the client's impact on the organizational environment and that environment's impact on the client's work
- Because every adult can easily – and without great emotion – speak about his/her *tasks*, we typically start in the Task House (where things get done).

Coaching Emphasis in the Different Houses

- In the Self House, emphasis is on the client's uniqueness ('self') in all of its facets, behaviorally and developmentally, as it informs the client's *Professional Agenda*.
- In the Task House, emphasis falls on the role(s) the client functions in which deriving from his/her formal status and authority; secondly, emphasis falls on the client's concrete tasks in a particular role.
- In the Organizational House, emphasis falls on the *mental frames* used by the client in conceptualizing the organization:
 - emphasis on command structure, division of labor, and internal business process [structural perspective]
 - emphasis on partaking of political coalitions [political perspective]
 - emphasis on the relationship between individual and organizational needs [human resources perspective]
 - emphasis on organizational culture, including multicultural issues [symbolic perspective].

The Position of the Coach in the Houses

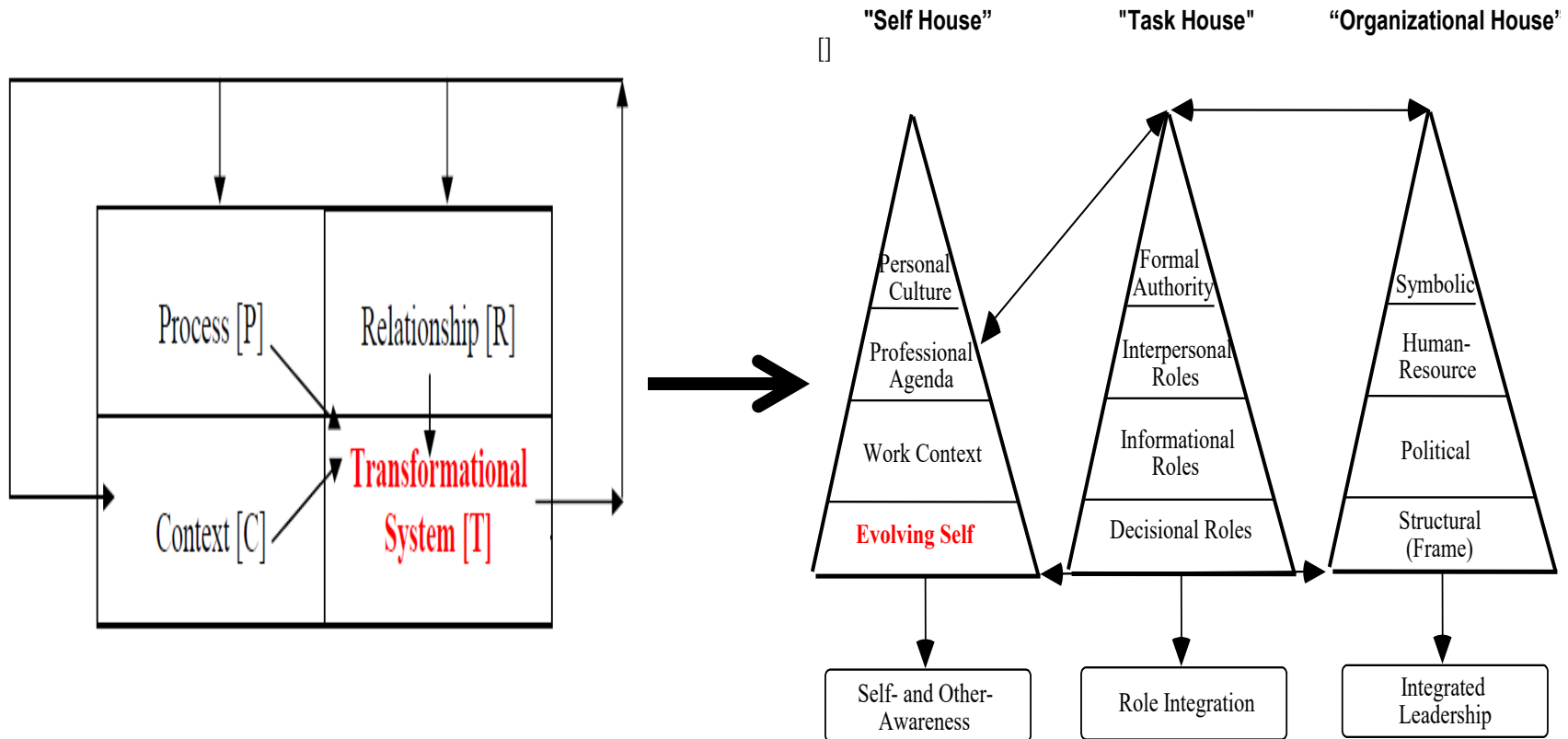
- In light of the foregoing, we can think of the coach as an observer of the client's movements in and between the Houses (in which s(he) partakes in his/her own way).
- The coach's position in the Self House originates in his/her personal uniqueness, culture, and present developmental level. From these elements derives the coach's *Professional Agenda*.
- In the Task House, the coach's status and authority is that of a neutral supporter (supervisor) with extensive interpersonal and informational roles to play. (Decisions here are those regarding coaching strategy.)
- Except for the case where the coach is also a management consultant, the external coach knows the client's Organizational House only *indirectly*, **through the client**.
- **However, it behooves the coach to know as much as possible about the client's wider work environment, and the company's industry position.**

See Otto Laske, An Integrated Model of Developmental Coaching, Coaching Psychology Journal, 1999, vol. 51.3.

Why In Coaching Sessions We Take One House At a Time ...

- Separating the three Houses from each other and attending to them selectively (even in a particular order) has the following advantages for both coach and client:
 - We can go into depth about a limited, well circumscribed topic, rather than running all over the place.
 - Deepening the conversation means *making it structured*, where the structure is provided by a cognitive, rather than a social-emotional or psychological (behavioral) coaching approach.
 - This approach focuses on the mental space of coaching in terms of clients' "thinking", that is, their use of concepts.
 - The goal of this approach is twofold:
 - Understanding the client's thinking better
 - Helping clients improving their ability to handle complexity
 - Since our own and clients' thinking is determined by thought forms, in cognitive coaching we use a discipline called DIALECTIC.
 - This entails that we study the four moments of dialectic or four classes of thought forms and use thought forms for leading *structured conversations* with clients in each of the Three Houses.

Cognitive Coaching Map



The cognitive coach observes *how the coachee moves in and between the Three Houses*, working to understand the coachee's internal work place in terms of the four dialectical perspectives.

Practice Reflections

- When you hear the term “thought forms”, what comes to mind for you?
- What, for you, gives a conversation “structure”?
- Does it make sense to you to assume that the client’s thinking has a “structure” that the cognitive coach is to explore and improve?
- When in a conversation with a client, how do you presently recognize levels of complexity of thinking?
- **Regarding the Houses, in which of the Three Houses are you most *at home* as a coach?**
- **What floors of which Houses do you hesitate to enter?**
- In what way is how you presently coach different from what I have outlined as the discipline of “cognitive coaching”?

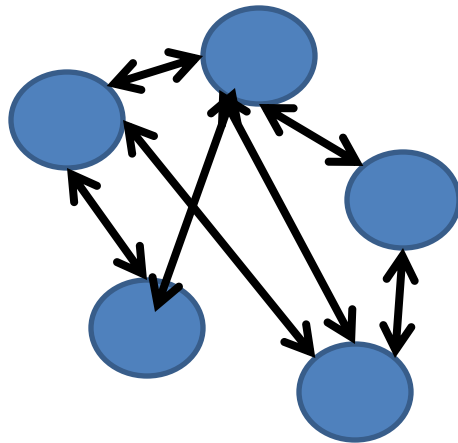
DC-2015 Part 2, Session no. 2

What is Deep Thinking?

- *When you open your mouth to speak, you have always already chosen a focus of what you intend to say ...*
- *You have unconsciously chosen a perspective on the world that determines the thought forms you will be using ...*
- This course is about becoming aware of that fact and making good use of it when coaching.
- We use thought forms, both to clarify our own thinking and understanding coachees' thinking at a deeper level, that is, *structurally*.
- **Since it is hard to investigate one's own thinking in isolation, we start investigating our client's thinking.**
- We do so by listening to coachees in terms of the *four moments of dialectic* (also referred to as "classes of thought forms"): **Contest (C), Process (P), Relationship (R), and Transformation (T).**
- In doing so we learn dialectical thinking, a kind of systemic and holistic thinking more powerful than conventional logical thinking.
- In coaching sessions, our focal question is: **"from what dialectical perspective is my client looking at the real world, and what concepts is s(he) using (right now)?"**
- Once this is understood by the coach, s(he) can assist the client's thinking.

What Are Concepts?

- Concepts are usually expressed as nouns. (In English, it is easy to turn a verb into a noun ...).
- A single concept means little; concepts begin to make sense only together with other concepts.
- We can speak of networks of concepts forming a the basis of discourse.



For example: there is no “house” without “doors” and “windows”, a “roof”, and a “chimney”. They are all nodes in a network comprising them.

Concepts Both Establish and Manifest Relationships

- At different points in their development as adults, coaches as well as clients differ in their ability of using and linking concepts.
- We can say that every individual has, at any point in time, a particular *cognitive profile*. (It can be precisely assessed using DTF, the Dialectical Thought Form Framework).
- A client's cognitive profile directly determines the problems a client "is having" because there is no other way to bring forward problems than to think and formulate them in terms of concepts.
- **We can say, therefore, that cognitive coaching is an exploration of a client's present cognitive profile, not simply an exploration of "what", but of "how", a client thinks.**
- As long as a coach focuses only on the content of a client's speech, this can not be done!
- The reason for that in cognitive coaching is that it is only by focusing on concepts can one discern the present STRUCTURE of a client's thinking.
- This structure is built out of *thought forms*.

How to Better Understand Your Own and Clients' Thinking

- When you REFLECT on your own thinking, you will find that there are THREE different aspects you can choose to emphasize when you speak your thinking:
 - You can choose to see the world as a static, unmoving configuration in a “logical” way (whereby you are “freezing” occurring changes) → Context (C)
 - You can pay attention to the constant changes that occur in the world, inside and outside of you → Process (P)
 - You can focus on the relationships that link one event, situation, idea to another → Relationship (R)

You will find that it is hard or impossible to separate these aspects from each other when you think about a certain subject matter or topic.

-- This is because all three aspects are united in a fourth aspect, that of TRANSFORMATION.

You can think transformation and “see” the world as a living being only when you can coordinate C, P, and R in your thinking.

This is done by using THOUGHT FORMS.

Developmentally, Logical Thinking Gives Rise To Dialectical Thinking

Holistic and Systemic, i.e.,
“Dialectical” Thinking

Systems in Transformation

Process

Context

Relationship

25-100 years

**Formal Logical
Thinking**

*Seeing the world as
a static context,
neglecting process
and relationship*

10-25 years

When Thinking, People Use Thought Forms

- When clients speak to you, they “think” and thus use “concepts” (crucially in the form of nouns).
- Using concepts means articulating thought forms.
- In cognitive coaching, the coach works from a knowledge of different classes of thought forms.
- An example of a thought form (TF) would be: “unceasing change”. This TF can be expressed through many different concepts (time passing, structures collapsing or emerging, ...).
- In cognitive coaching, the coach is focused on the concepts clients use, inquires into them, and makes an effort to make them “more clear”, and to “deepen them”, etc.

Short Table of Thought Forms

Context Themes	Process Themes	Relationship Themes	Transformation Themes
Cp: Relationship between Part(s) and 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 Relationships	Te: Developmental Movement
Cl: Multiple Contexts and Frame of Reference	Pl: Embedding in Process	Rl: Patterns of Interaction and Influence	Tl: Comparison and Coordination of Systems

Integration/Listening

Classes of Thought Forms

- Following philosophical tradition, we distinguish four classes of Thought Forms: Context, Process, Relationship, and Transformation (C, P, R; T).
- We will work with classes comprising 3 thought forms that are easy to learn, and will refer to them in terms of the *degree of depth of insight* they yield, e.g., Cp, Ce, Cl.
- In Cp, the speaker – here, the client – is “pointing to” a particular context (event, situation, process, theory, thought item such as a goal) without detailing it much further.
- In Ce, the client goes deeper into the context of concern to him or her, “elaborating” it.
- In Cl, the client “links” what s(he) says about a context to other perspectives such as P, R, T.

Classes of Thought Forms as *Perspectives* Taken on the World

- **Context:** the world is stable, and a snapshot (photograph) of it suffices for understanding it; facts, description of facts, third person observations written down. This is the real world of FORMAL LOGIC.

- **Process:** since the world is in constant motion, it is difficult to know it fully, and one must be aware that it has many aspects and missing pieces that will only emerge in the future (or perhaps never ...).
- **Relationship:** since nothing in the world is separable from what is next to, inside of, above or below, it, we need to go beyond seeking a “big picture” (as in Context) and look instead for the *Common Ground* disparate things share. This is what is meant by “relationship”.
- **Transformational System:** humans themselves are systems built of systems that are under constant transformation; we need to investigate how a thing or person AS A WHOLE from day to day imperceptibly transforms itself into a *different* system – older, smaller, larger, more complex, breaking down, unfolding, turned inside out or outside in.

Thinking Means Different Things Depending on the Class of Thought Forms Used

- In **Context**, it means “getting the biggest picture possible of a situation or experience”.
- In **Process**, it means “becoming aware that not only what can be seen but also what is not yet seen – what is absent – is *real*”.
- In **Relationship**, it means: “becoming aware that what we logically separate is often not only externally, but intrinsically, related, and thus shares a common ground”.
- In **Transformation**, it means: “being aware that what is real, social or physical, is in unceasing transformation, and therefore does not simply *change* but *transforms*, including your own life”.

Nobody can think in terms of transformation if s(he) cannot coordinate thought forms of Context, Process, and Relationship. In short, it's impossible to “jump into” transformational thinking.

DC-2015 Part 2, Session no. 3

Understanding the Four Classes of Thought Forms More Deeply

- Changing one's thinking takes time, even with the best mentor.
- In this course, we are merely making a beginning in “thinking about” the real world *differently*.
- We do so by focusing on HOW COACHEES THINK, not what THEY think.
- We can do this by using the four classes of dialectical thought forms.
- This in itself is a big change.
- In what follows, I present more detail about what it means to think in terms of four different classes of thought forms.

The Context Class of Thought Forms

This is the class of thought forms most coaches and clients use. It is not the most powerful one, however ..., since it cannot account for change ...



What is Context?

SUMMARY

Dialectical image: “big picture” in the sense of a whole encompassing parts, and built in layers.

Figure: what appears as a stable, well-balanced form.

Ground: unified by the category of differentiation that introduces variety and depth into what is real, making it alterable.

Relationship to System: pre-figuration of a system in static form.

Scope: equilibrium of what exists.

Theme: multiplicity of entities and thoughts partaking in a common frame of reference.

Dialectics: parts of a whole shifting their balance, stratification, and generative mechanisms.

The Process Class of Thought Forms

When using this class of thought forms, we can understand and deal with opposites, changes, part-whole issues, instability of systems, etc. ...



What is Process?

SUMMARY

Dialectical image: emergence from a void.

Figure: what is “not there” but is emerging through unceasing change.

Ground: unified by the category of absence [and potential] from which the whole circuit of the four moments of dialectic derives.

Relationship to System: always embedded in system.

Scope: spanning negation, contradiction, critique.

Theme: the presence of the past and future in the present; motion in thought and reality.

Dialectics: process, transition, interaction, opposition (including reversal).

The Relationship Class of Thought Forms

When using this class of thought forms, we can understand and deal with intrinsic relationships, common ground of opposites, interactions, ...



What Is Relationship?

SUMMARY

Dialectical image: common ground (totality).

Figure: what is “not there” other than as held within a totality of (possibly oppositional) links and connections.

Ground: unified by the category of totality, thus of holistic causality.

Relationship to System: living core of any system.

Scope: all parts of a whole, however split and split off; center to periphery.

Theme: unity in diversity, internal relatedness, illicit separation and fission, error of fixating on unrelated (isolated) elements and multiples.

Dialectics: reciprocal, intrinsic, based on constitutive relationship (logically preceding parts of a whole), and common ground.

The Transformational Class of Thought Forms

When using this class of thought forms, we are dealing with the disequilibrium of situations in order to support transformation.



What Is Transformation?

SUMMARY

Dialectical image: “living” (transformational) system (e.g., a beehive).

Figure: what is in constant transformation seeking equilibrium, through mental growth, shift, synthesis, sudden reversal, collapse, breakdown, and pain.

Ground: unified by the social category of transformative praxis or agency.

Relationship to System: itself under constant transformation.

Scope: all of reality.

Theme: stability through developmental movement, attention to problems of coordination and change in a developmental direction, multiplicity of perspectives defining reality concretely, acknowledgement of human agency as intentional causality in the cosmos.

Dialectics: special affinity with Process as social change.

Thinking About the Real World

- The real world of which we are a small part has a definite “ontological” structure that we are trying to understand through “thinking”.
- Depending on the thought forms we use, we either come rather close, or remain far removed from, what is “real” about the world.
- Logical thinking, for instance, has little to do with the real world, which is not “logical” at all.
- Rather, the real world is something that is in constant transformation that only dialectical logic can capture.
- For this reason, we need “dialectical” thinking to keep up with the real world.

The Tools of Cognitive Coaching: Classes of Thought Forms

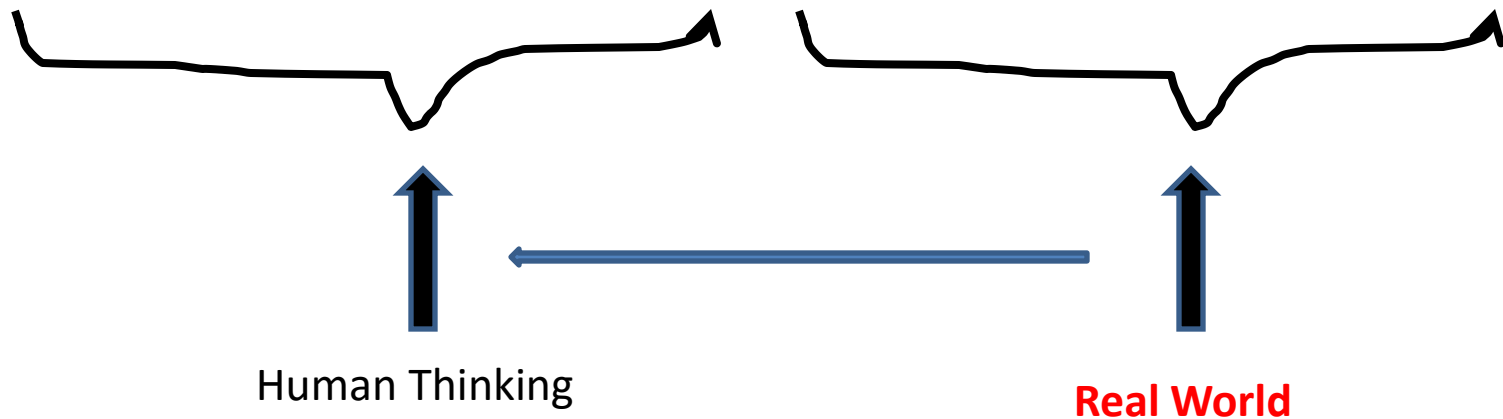
The real world is complex, requiring systemic and holistic thinking.

Classes of Thought Forms (Laske)

C	Context
P	Process
R	Relationship
T	Transformation

Moments of Dialectic (Bhaskar)

1M	<i>Non-identity (multiplicity)</i>
2E	<i>Negativity (change)</i>
3L	<i>Totality</i>
4D	<i>Transformative practice</i>



We Can Use Thought Forms at Different Depths

Legend: “p” = pointing to → “e” = elaborating → “l” = linking

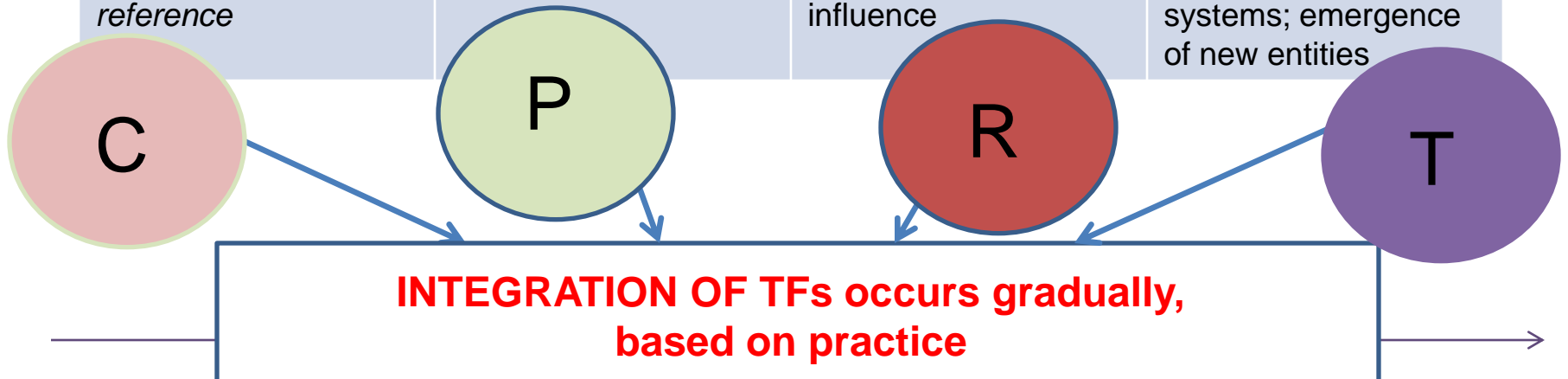
Phase 1

Phase 2

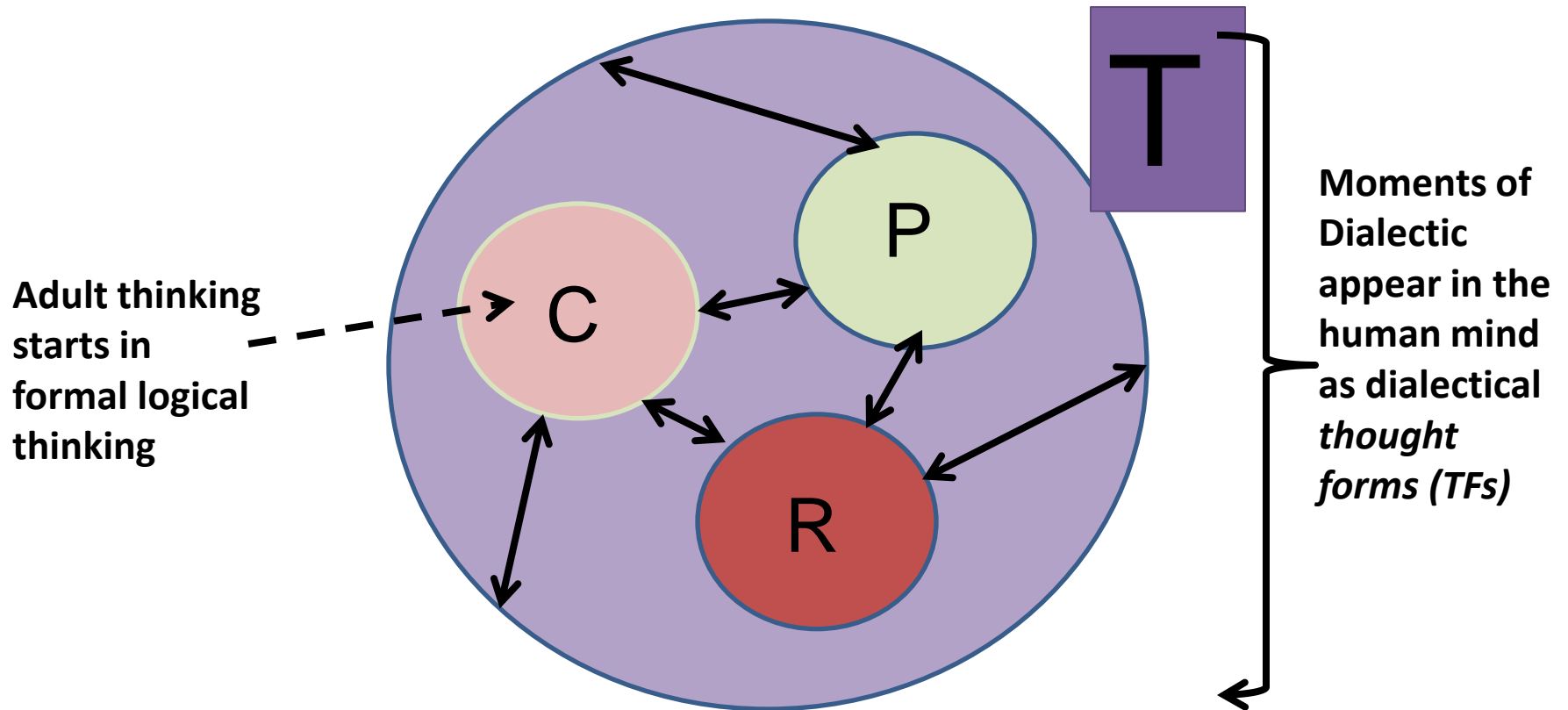
Phase 3

Phase 4

CONTEXT (Purely logical thinking)	PROCESS (1 ST step beyond formal logic)	RELATIONSHIP (2 ND step beyond formal logic)	TRANSFORMATION (Fusion of logic and dialectic)
Cp , <i>Relationship between part(s) and a whole</i>	Pp, Emergence and inclusion of opposites	Rp, Bringing elements into relationship	Tp, Limits of system stability
Ce , <i>Structure and stability of system</i>	Pe, Patterns of interactions	Re, Structure of Relationship	Te, Developmental movement
Cl , <i>Multiple contexts and frames of reference</i>	Pl, Embeddedness in process	Rl, Patterns of interaction and influence	Tl, Comparison and coordination of systems; emergence of new entities



Linking Thought Forms of Different Class Creates Fluidity of Thinking



C=Context: getting at the bigger picture

P=Process: understanding emergent change

R=Relationship: understanding interdependencies

T=Transformation: understanding imbalance, shifts, development ...

Example

- Coach and coachee can look at situations in four structurally different ways:
 - as a configuration of elements that essentially is at rest and does not move or change
 - as a configuration that changes unceasingly, moving into its opposite (that which is totally other than what it was)
 - as a configuration whose meaning emerges from the relationship of its elements for which it is their common ground
 - as a configuration that is the more fragile than it is complex, due to being in constant development or transformation.
- Example: clients' performance issues
- Work is part of life, and so is performance at work. Consequently, thinking (and speaking) about one's performance, when focusing on abstract "skills", treats performance as a static context out of touch with how work actually unfolds; how one part of it relates to other parts of one's own work and that of the organizational environment. Only when we embrace all four classes of thought forms can we hope to deal with the complexities of work.

DC-2015 Part 2, Session no. 4

Two Functions of Dialectical TFs in Coaching

- Cognitive coaching is based on the coach's ability to *de-construct* a coachee's view of the world by using four classes of thought forms.
- Thought forms are essentially mind openers; they help coachees take multiple perspectives and move away from limiting beliefs.
- As coach, we have to master two things:
 - *Recognize* the four classes of thought forms, **also referred to as moments of dialectic**, in how coachees describe their issues
 - Introduce thought forms into coachees' thinking, by using them in the coaching session.
- Both activities require LISTENING.
- We call it "deep listening" or "dialectical listening".

Learning Thought Forms by Listening to Clients

- The best way to learn thought forms is by listening to others..
- Let's assume that coach and coachee embody in their mind a "thought form generator".
- Your task as coach is to determine:
 - what is the specific class of thought forms a coachee is presently articulating?
 - if possible, what specific thought form within this class is the coachee presently using?
- Once you formulate a *hypothesis* about this, your task becomes to help coachees "de-construct" what they are thinking/saying:
 - either by employing the thought form used by the coachee more deeply and explicitly (p→e→I)
 - or by moving to a different class of thought forms in order to achieve a deeper kind of thinking than s(he) is presently manifesting.

Let's make a start by listening to four coachees, asking ourselves the following questions:

- 1. In what moment of dialectic (class of thought forms) has the coachee speaking positioned him- or herself?**
- 2. Which of the 12 thought forms in the table is the speaker using?**

Example 1

CONTEXT (Purely logical thinking)	PROCESS (1 ST step beyond formal logic)
Cp , <i>Relationship between part(s) and a whole</i>	Pp, Emergence and inclusion of opposites
Ce , <i>Structure and stability of system</i>	Pe, Patterns of interactions
Cl , <i>Multiple contexts and frames of reference</i>	Pl, Embeddedness in process

The coachee may start out describing a situation in static term, without an awareness of change occurring or the situation being the result of a process. S(he) is mentioning different elements in the scene, but does not make them very explicit , only pointing to them (Cp).

Your task as a coach is to proceed further within Context, using thought form Ce or even Cl.

Another option you have is to focus on the process aspect of what the coachee is describing, moving to Pp in your thinking.

Example 2


CONTEXT (Purely logical thinking)	RELATIONSHIP (2 nd step beyond formal logic)
Cp , <i>Relationship between part(s) and a whole</i>	Rp, Bringing elements into relationship
Ce , <i>Structure and stability of system</i>	Re, Structure of Relationship
CI , <i>Multiple contexts and frames of reference</i>	RI, Patterns of interaction and influence

In another coaching session, you might find it more important to deepen the coachee's thinking by moving from Context to Relationship.

Let's say that after exploring the coachee's understanding of systemic aspects of the environment s(he) is in (Cp→Ce) you decide that the coachee needs to pay more attention to the relationships s(he) is only implying but not explicating. In this case, by using Rp, you can draw the coachee's attention to the relationships s(he) is presently neglecting.

By doing so you are opening the coachee's mind and thereby provide new thought possibilities.

Warning



PROCESS (1 ST step beyond formal logic)	RELATIONSHIP (2 nd step beyond formal logic)	TRANSFORMATION (Fusion of logic and dialectic)
Pp, Emergence and inclusion of opposites	Rp, Bringing elements into relationship	Tp, Limits of system stability
Pe, Patterns of interactions	Re, Structure of Relationship	Te, Developmental movement
Pl, Embeddedness in process	RI, Patterns of interaction and influence	TI, Comparison and coordination of systems; emergence of new entities

Be aware that the use of transformational thought forms requires that Process and Relationship thought forms have been previously used. It gets you nowhere to “jump” into a thought form such as Tp – limits of stability – before the coachee is sufficiently secure in using Context thought forms and a fair amount of Process and Relationship thought forms.

Otherwise, you may speak of “transformation” but only in a hollow way, far removed from the complexity of what transformations involve...

Practicing the Moments and Thought Forms

- There is no better way to understand coachees' level of cognitive development and thinking than to listen to them deeply.
- In what follows, let's practice deep listening by:
 - Trying to determine in what moment of dialectic a coachee is positioning him- or herself
 - If possible naming the thought form the coachee is using, by referring to the Short Table of Thought Forms.
- We will listen to four managers, A, B, C, and D who are increasingly more capable of thinking complexly, that is, "dialectically".

A Note on the Stories That Follow

- Keep in mind the following points when reading the stories following here:
 - All four managers are addressing the same situation.
 - They not only think about it differently in terms of *content* (“what”), but in terms of the *structure* of their thinking (“how”),, which determines how *complex* is their thinking.
 - Each manager unconsciously selects a way of thinking about the situation in question, placing himself into a particular “moment of dialectic” (C, P, R; T).
 - All managers use Context thought forms, but the better they think the more they are able to make use of Process and Relationship thought forms. This indicates more complex thinking.
 - Try to spell out why B is more developed than A, C than B, D than C.

Client A

“When we bought Acme’s service business, it was clear that if we didn’t build efficiency into the combined network, we’d fail. Efficiency means reduced overall costs, more revenue from our customer base, and less work overlap. Now we can price our products more competitively, knowing we can continue to build our revenue stream through service contracts. And providing that service will keep us close to our customers for equipment lifecycle planning and utilization analyses. If we can keep our eyes focused on managing costs and delivering quality, the results will be there.”

Client B

“When we bought Acme’s service business, it was clear that one of the immediate advantages would be in building a more efficient network. By integrating product and service sales, we become a more complete operation, and customers will see us in a new light. However, we also become more vulnerable to a lack of integration until we can define that new business model, and manage re-training and re-directing our sales force. Even then, perhaps customers may feel we’re not as focused on our huge new service operation as was Acme. And Engineering is committed to reducing maintenance and Manufacturing to driving up quality; that may mean we’ll have to branch out to include servicing competitors’ products to justify the new service infrastructure and manage the overhead. Would customers see that as a dilution of our commitment to our own products? We’re juggling many more things than before, and risk over-extending ourselves. How we balance customer perceptions, cost efficiencies, and product development will be a challenge, but we can succeed if we plan carefully and give it our best shot.”

Client C

“Once we decided to buy Acme’s service business, we knew that there were a lot of ramifications to consider that could only incompletely be foreseen right away. We knew that in many ways we had considerably complicated not only our in-house way of working, but also the market environment in which we would have to function. While on the one hand, we were clearly striving to become a more complete operation, we had previously been on safer ground since our business model had been thoroughly tested and validated, and we had a reasonably clear view of who our customers were and what they expected of us. But once we integrated Acme’s service business, we had to rethink almost everything we had learned to take more or less for granted. There were questions of attunement of our workers to the company’s new mission, but also of customers to the broader agenda we now came to be identified with. We were also introducing new goals for our internal business process, and put in jeopardy the balance of the parts of our operation which had already been quite complex when focusing on product sales alone. So, there now many different contexts to consider that were only partly known to us initially. Essentially, the effect of this was that we became much more sensitive to relationships, not only between parts of our operation, but to relationships between product and services, work force and customers, business process and financial process, not to speak of systemic interactions that tested the limits of stability and harmony of our operations. We now had to coordinate a larger number of subsystems, and these subsystems tended to transform in a way that was not initially foreseen or even foreseeable. As a result, we felt we would lose out if we did not succeed in developing multiple perspectives on almost every aspect of our organization.”

Client D

Once we had bought Acme's service business, it seemed to me that we had relocated in a very different environment where we had to think much more globally. We were, after all, only a part of a large whole, a market that I came to feel we hadn't quite figured out for ourselves. We knew that this market was not stable, especially for companies bringing together products and services, as we now began to do. So the question arose of how we could best use our combined product and service business to do better than our competitors.

Another issue that became more urgent for us was the sudden emergence of competitors that were quite small but quite vicious in their way of proceeding. They followed a very different talent management practice than we did by which they put teams together which seemed to be much more collaborative. Especially in the services field, these competitors, using social media, worked with clients in a way we were not used to. They not only used the internet to create more of an ongoing process of interaction with their clients, they also saw clients' needs embedded in other, related needs that were changing for them, and so their notion of interaction with clients was much more fluid than was ours.

But these competitors not only paid attention to rapid changes more than we did, they also seemed to understand more deeply that in the new market we were in we needed to pay more attention to the intrinsic relationship between our products and services, the fact that they formed a whole and that we had to convince clients of the superb way in which we mirrored product changes in the way we were serving them. (For instance, when a product came to include new options we were offering clients a service that would teach them make use of these.) We also began to think more about how to get input from clients that would help us redesign our products based on the changes they wanted to see, instead of just servicing a product more or less in the same way as we had done before.

All this brought us to a greater awareness that our company was really quite fragile, given its complexity, and that we would have to get used to a developmental movement for which the merger was only the first step. It now became a matter of not only surviving, but flourishing, in the coming business year. This meant that we not only had to analyze the market more assiduously and carefully, we also had to anticipate where it might be in a year from now, even if that meant that it had changed almost completely.

Levels of Cognitive Flexibility and Complexity

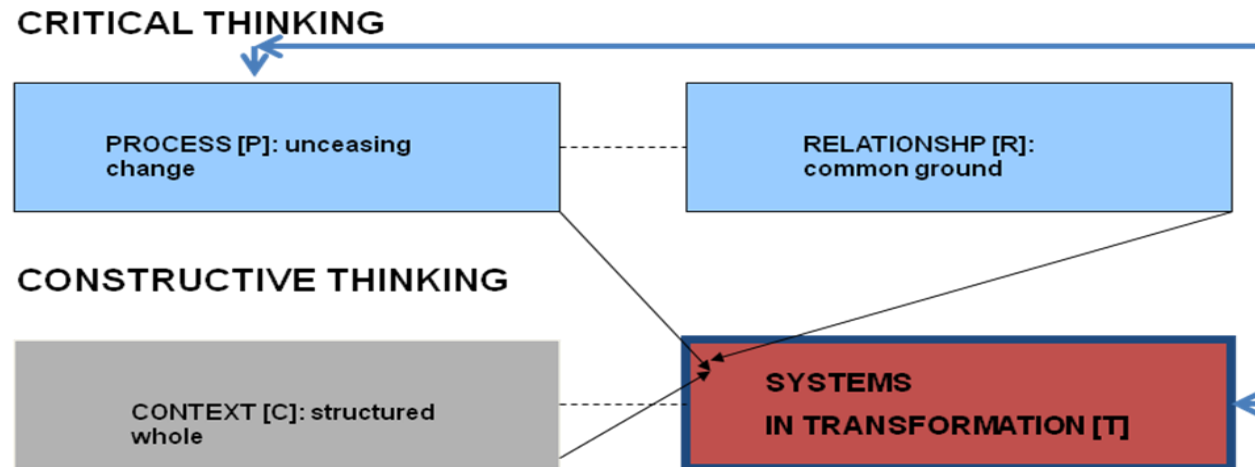
- Clearly, Client B is cognitively more highly developed than is A, C is more highly developed than Client B, and D more developed than C.
- We can express the differences we find in the managers' speech by naming the dialectical thought forms they are trying to articulate.
- These moments are called **Context** [C], **Process** [P], **Relationship** [R], and **Transformation** [T], as shown below.
- Based on these four perspectives for viewing the world, we distinguish in our clients different levels of systems thinking and phases of cognitive development.

Homework

1. In about 50 words for each, explain why:
 1. B is more developed than A
 2. C is more developed than B
 3. D is more developed than C (in terms of their thinking),
by giving a few examples from each and, if possible, pointing to thought forms used by the manager.
2. Try to remember a coaching conversation with a client who was unable to think in terms of Process and Relationship thought forms. How did you proceed?
3. Generate 2-3 questions about what you still don't quite understand about the four classes of thought forms, and bring them forward in the next class.

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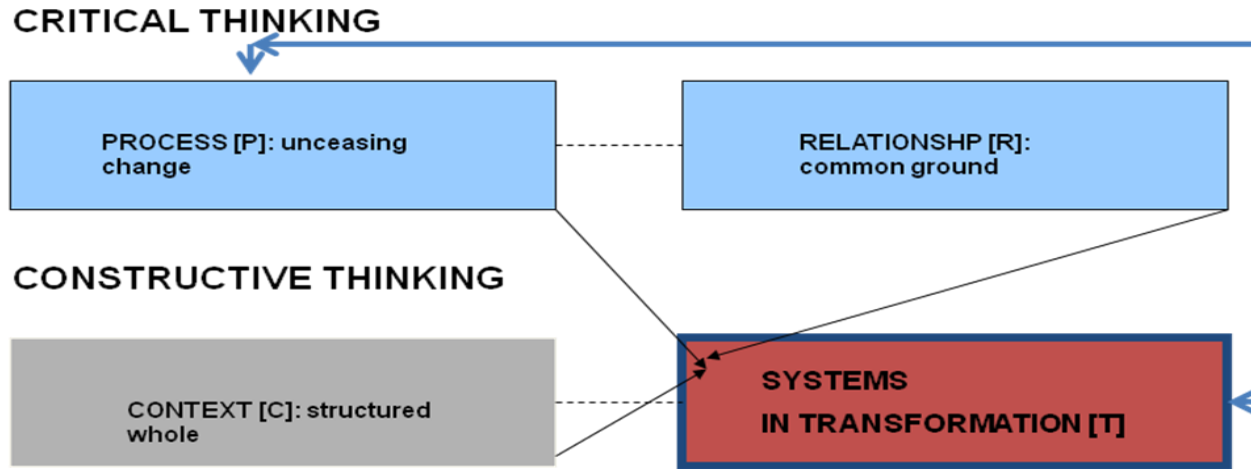
Reflection 1



When you think about it, using Process thought forms amounts to thinking “critically” because you no longer take what is presented to you for granted but are asking “how did it come about?”, “how might it develop?”, “what are the patterns of interaction shaping this subject matter?”, etc. You are developing a dynamic world view.

A second way to be a critical thinker is to think in relationship thought forms. In doing so, likewise you do not take things presented to you for granted but are searching to understand better what is going on, by inquiring into relationship between outwardly different things or aspects of a subject matter.

Reflection 2



What kind of thinking, then, comes from thinking in Context and Transformation thought forms? In contrast to “critical” thinking, we might call such thinking “constructive”, in the sense that in both cases we are constructing a context, either static or in unceasing transformation. We are dealing with WHAT it is that changes, develops, and transforms.

In DTF, the Dialectical Thought Form Framework, coaches can actually assess their clients’ cognitive profile in terms of the proportion of critical and constructive thinking they show in a 1-hr interview.

The most complex thinking results when we unite both kinds of thinking.

Reflection 3

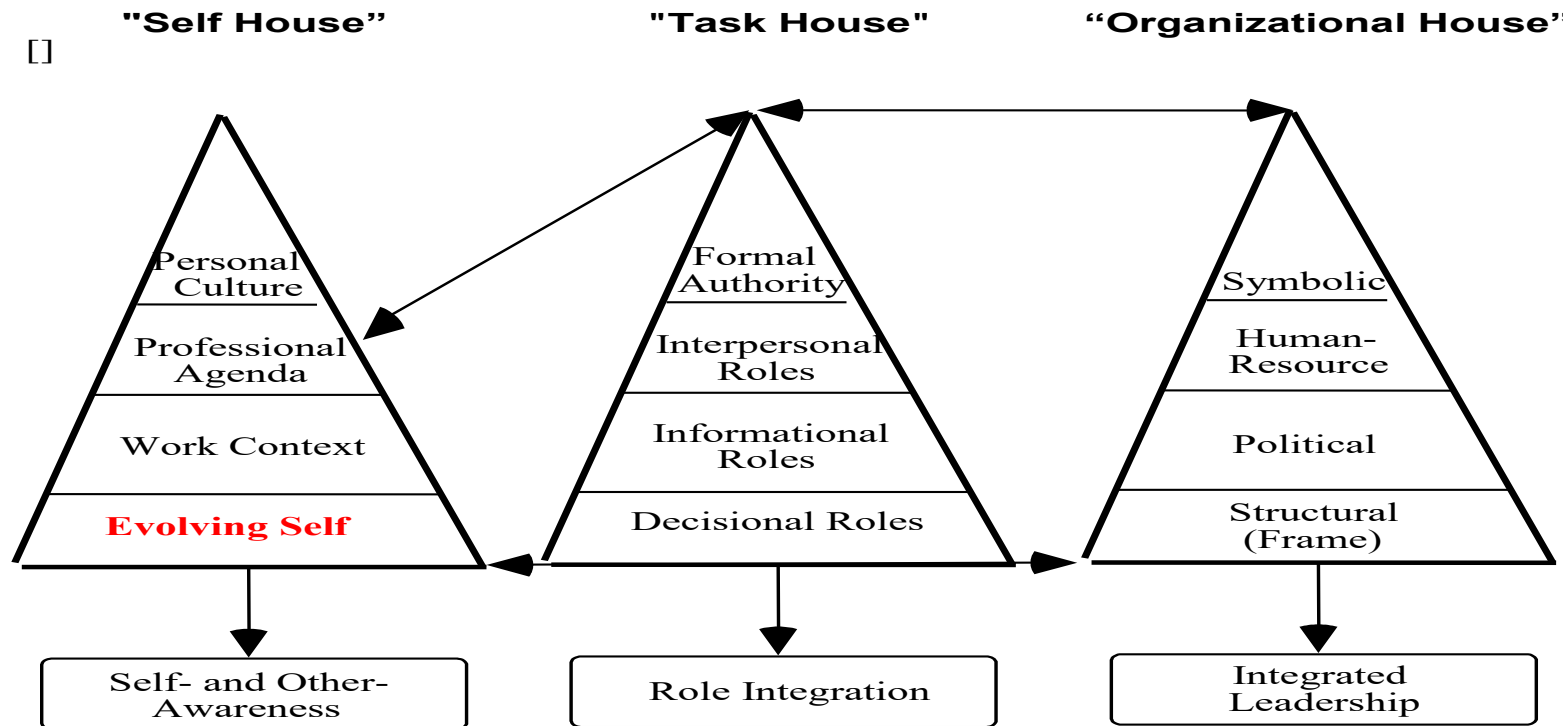
- We are now ready to understand what it means to “coordinate” thought forms (from which dialectical thinking springs): to use thought forms from more than a single class in order to articulate a thought, issue, question, comment, etc.
- What would that look like? A coachee says, e.g.:
- *I am presently the manager of a team of 7 that is linked to other teams in the company, for the sake of achieving a strategically positioned service by next year. The difficulty in this is there is no team coordination other than by individuals of each team trying to keep each other up to date. As always happens the goal each teams strives to achieve is a moving target so that every week the landscape in which the teams work changes, often in an unrecognizable way. You can never anticipate how results of one team will change the situation in which other, related teams have to work. Even if we appointed a particular person to be a coordinator for all of the teams, this would not guarantee that the work of the teams stays in sync.*
- In the above quote, the speaker describes a group of related teams each of which works independently but nevertheless needs to be coordinated with all other teams. This is a context that comprises many different activities and processes. The context also is full of relationships that here are only pointed to (Rp) but not spelled out. Nor are the activities of different teams spelled out clearly (Pp). A dialectically thinking coach, using the four classes of thought forms, can help the manager understand better what might be going on in the situation, and can strengthen the coachee’s dialectical thinking about the matter.

Recording a Cognitive Coaching Session

- We are ready to appreciate a cognitive coaching session modeled by the instructor.
- Your task will be twofold:
 - To volunteer to be the coachee
 - To become a witnessing audience that can give feedback both to the coachee and the coach.
- To do this, you first have to do some deep listening.

The Houses in Action

Let's record a cognitive coaching session and discuss it in the next class. To keep the session time-limited (15-20 minutes), let's focus on coaching in the *Task House*. In this House, the emphasis falls on learning about the coachee's level of responsibility, roles played by him/her, and tasks associated with his/her roles.



Homework

Go back to a recent coaching session you can remember. Think about how the four classes of thought forms played a role in it.

In your judgment, was the coachee able to go beyond just pointing to contexts? How articulate was s(he) about occurring changes, existing relationships, etc.?

In at most 100 words, reconstruct what s(he) said to you, using the table below.

Context (M)	Process (E)	Relationship (L)	Transformation (D)
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

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Understanding a Cognitive Coaching Session

[For example the session we recorded last time ...]

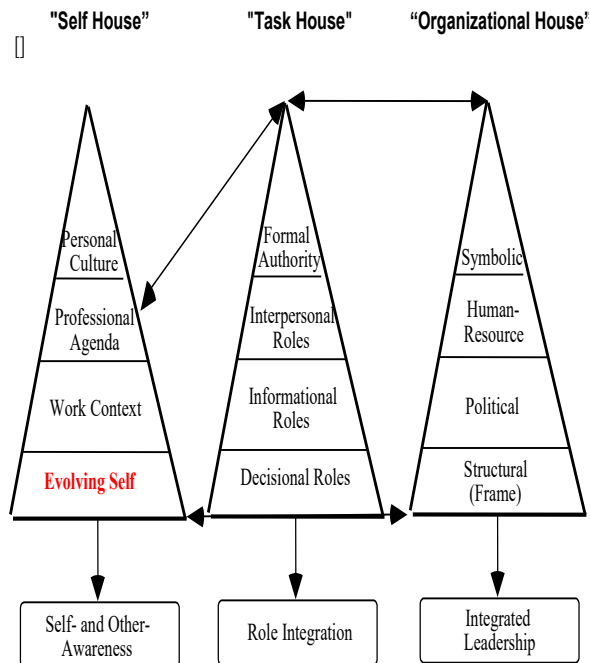
- You can judge a cognitive coaching session by how far the coach has helped the coachee to be conceptually clear (transparent) in his/her thinking about a chosen issue, and how far s(he) has left behind cliché and models not of his own thinking.
 - This requires the coach to listen intensely and deeply, to find out in what places what thoughts uttered by the coachee could be refined, by asking pertinent questions based on thought forms.
 - Important also is to assess how far the coachee was able to follow thought forms suggested by the coach, and what the coach has done where that was not the case. (How did s(he) reinforce a particular class of thought forms or an individual thought form?)
 - In contrast to a social-emotional coaching session, in a cognitive session the emphasis lies on CLARITY and “better thinking”, especially in executive coaching where good thinking is of primary value.
 - **What was your impression of the degree of clarity in the recorded coaching session:**
 - on the side of the coachee
 - on the side of the coach.
-
- Be as clear as you can.

Carrying the Listening Into Your Own Coaching

- When you first listen to a cognitive interview, you will notice that the coach pays much attention to the concepts used by the coachee. This is done because thinking has to do with how concepts are used and linked.
- Focusing on concepts amounts to switching attention from speech *content* to the *structure of the coachee's thinking*. This can be done because the problems brought forward by the coachee are his/her own *construction* (i.e., another person would construct the same problems differently ...).
- When the concepts used by the coachee to construct a problem are inquired into by the coach, the coachee realizes and learns that s(he) could have framed the issue in question differently.
- Once the coachee understands that **the way s(he) formulates a problem is part of the problem focused on and can hinder the “solution” of the problem**, it becomes easier for the coach to help the coachee use dialectical thought forms.
- As a result, the coachee can begin to see the issue in question from different perspectives, which is really all the coach can do to help the coachee anyway.

Holding a Cognitive Coaching Session Yourself

- Now that you have witnessed and analyzed a cognitive coaching session, prepare yourself for holding one yourself, either with the instructor or a volunteer in the class (15-20 min.). For that purpose let's switch to the Organizational House. In this House we need to explore with the coachee four perspectives, shown below:



When coaching in the organizational house, the coach is focusing on how the coachee's work is situated within an organization as a whole. The coach's task is to **REFRAME** how the coachee is viewing the organization, which has an immediate impact on how the coachee works and manages others.

The organizational house is focused on four different perspectives:

1. The structural perspective
2. The political perspective
3. The human resources perspective
4. The symbolic perspective.

More about this below.

The Four Perspectives of the Organizational House

1. *The structural perspective*: here, the coachee is speaking about the division of labor in his/her company, i.e., differences between the companies departments and divisions, and how these affect his/her work.
2. *The political perspective*: here, the coachee is focusing on the different groups striving for power in the company, and whether s(he) is part of one or more of these groups, and how that affects her work.
3. *The human resources perspective*: here, the coachee is targeting the relationship between management and employees in her company, the culture climate that derives from the top-down and bottom-up arrangements that determine work.
4. *The symbolic perspective*: here, the coachee looks at her company as a kind of play on stage, focusing on the rituals that keep people in the company together, and in what way these rituals and conventions have a direct influence on her work.

ARE YOU READY to listen to a coachee dealing with these issues and listening to him/her in terms of the four classes of thought forms (moments of dialectic)?

Pertinent Issues In a Coaching Session Focused on the Organizational House

- In this session, the coach makes the coachee aware of how the organizational environment influences his/her work. After explaining the focus of the session – to learn more about the coachee's relationship to his/her work environment – the following questions should help the coach to get started.

Question: If you were to reflect on how the org. environment influences the work you presently do, what comes to mind first? (Here, the coach will have to determine from which of the four perspectives the coachee is speaking about the organization!)

Comment: if the coachee chooses the structural perspective, she will most likely talk in Context terms. If she takes on the political perspective – power groups, political conflicts – she may get into Process territory. When focusing on the relationship of management to employees, she may get stuck in context thought forms. The task of the coach then becomes to move the coachee into the Process or Relationship moment of dialectic. The same is true for the symbolic perspective except it is from the start a systemic one: the coachee is speaking about the organization as a whole, its “culture”, and how it determines the way work is done in the company.

As this shows: once you launched a question in the Organizational House, your task is to help the coachee use as many thought forms as possible in discussing one or more of the four perspectives previously outlined. In that way, the coachee is challenged to show the highest degree of thought fluidity.

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Analyzing the Second Coaching Session

- Let's reflect on what happened in the second coaching session in terms of:
 - What was noteworthy for you in how the coach worked?
 - How close did s(he) stay to what the coachee was saying?
 - What could the coach have done better?
 - What was noteworthy for you in how the coachee came across?
 - Did the coachee follow the thought form suggestions of the coach, and if so, to what extent and in what way?
 - Did both coach and coachee manage to focus on concepts and their relationship, or did concepts evaporate in anecdotal content?
 - Was this coaching session clearly cognitive, or a mix of social-emotional and cognitive? Please give some reasons for your evaluation.
 - What do you think were the benefits of the session for the coachee?
 - What quality did the relationship between coach and coachee have for you?
 - How would your own way of cognitive coaching have been different?

Name some utterances from coach and/or coachee, using the quote in order to make a point in answering some of the questions posed.

Concluding Summary of the Cognitive Module



***Cognitive Coaching* Focuses on Changing Clients' Cognitive Frame of Reference**

- We learned in this course that developmental coaching focuses on changing clients' way of seeing the world (frame of reference), not directly their performance, behavior, competences, etc.
- Changing a Client's Frame of Reference (the way the client makes meaning and sense of experiences and situations) results in:
 - helping the client to reflect on his/her own experiences and use of concepts
 - helping the client to acquire a bigger picture of the elements and details that decision making must integrate
 - helping the client become able to take multiple perspectives following the four moments of dialectic
 - In general, results in helping clients **behave more effectively in better understood situations**, especially at high levels of organizational responsibility (e.g., rethinking operational flows; technology breakthroughs; inventing new business models).

What Follows For Working With Clients

- The clients we encounter, just as our coaching colleagues, reside in different phases of cognitive development, and often in different universes of discourse (called “NLP”, “ontological coaching”, etc.) as well.
- The flexibility (fluidity) of their thinking, in terms of how they use concepts, differs from one to the other, regardless of the particular models they are using.
- The better an understanding we as coaches have of the present structure (profile) of a client’s thinking (discerning the moments of dialectic they never use), the more effective can we be.
- **Why?**
- If we can discern what classes of thought forms and individual thought forms a client is (predominantly) using, we can:
 - meet him or her at his/her present level of thinking
 - make him or her aware of what is presently missing from his/her thinking, that is, of what they presently “don’t see”
 - give them tools by which they can boost (improve) their thinking and make it conceptually more fluid.

On the Unity of Social-Emotional and Cognitive Development

- Since individuals have only one consciousness, opting for either social-emotional OR cognitive coaching makes little sense.
- Ultimately, a developmental coach needs to master of social-emotional prompts as well as dialectical thought forms.
- When achieving this, the coach has enormously many options since s(he) can decide, at any moment in the coaching session:
 - when to switch from social-emotional to cognitive coaching and vice versa
 - How to switch from behavioral to developmental coaching.
- It's a brave new world!

Homework

Your client:

1. is unable to grasp the complexity of issues
2. frequently misjudges next steps to take in a situation
3. does not see clearly the outcome of such steps
4. fails to have a long term view on his own activity
5. Is not aware of opposites (obstacles, inherent contradictions, unforeseen circumstances) that arise or are implied in by a situation.

How would you work with him or her using cognitive coaching as here taught?

Specifics in Doing the Home Work

- Start by thinking through the situation presented, referring to your own coaching experience, in terms of whether the issue is primarily one of meaning making or sense making (thinking).
- Recall what you have so far learned about a) moments of dialectic, b) thought forms, c) phases of cognitive development.
- Then, *and only then*, develop your answer.
- Write no more than a paragraph or two to answer the questions (about 100 words).

DC-2015 Part 2, Session no. 8

Preparing For the Final Test of This Course

- We now have acquired the theoretical foundations of evidence-based developmental coaching (of individuals, not teams).
- **All we need to add is actual practice.**
- Although we have little formal assessment experience, we should now be able to assess a client *informally* through an “intake interview” of a cognitive nature.
- Kindly record a 20 min. session as an mp3 file you can submit to ICC.
- **It is the purpose of the Final Test of this course to help you show yourself and the instructor what level of competence in cognitive coaching you presently have, and what you might need to achieve greater mastery.**

How the Test Will Be Conducted

- You have previously submitted answers to a social-emotional test. To obtain a first ICC/IDM Certificate in developmental coaching, you are asked to hold a 20-minute cognitive coaching session.
- In this session please focus on your client's use of concepts in understanding tasks, or environment, or self (depending in which of the Three Houses you conduct the session).
- Kindly record your session and submit it as proof of your developmental competences.
- The instructor will give you feedback on how effective you were in coaching your client, single out present challenges, and make recommendations as to advanced courses you could pursue.
- **You will obtain a "Certificate of Achievement in Developmental Coaching" underwritten by both ICC and IDM.**
- **This certificate serves as a foundation for establishing yourself as a developmental executive coach.**

How Test Outcomes will be Evaluated

- Please submit to ICC an mp3 file of your coaching session in English, German, or French.
- The instructor will listen to your recording, to determine the degree of your ability to understand and recognize dialectical thought forms in your client's speech flow.
- The instructor will make a simple "pass/fail" judgment.
- "Fail" means you might want to repeat the introductory course.
- "Pass" means you are now ready to work developmentally, and eligible for an advanced course in this field.
- Whether pass or fail, you are eligible to be mentored one-on-one by the instructor or another experienced member of the Interdevelopmental Institute in order to deepen your developmental coaching practice.

Two Useful Appendixes

Appendix 1: Detailed Overview of Thought Forms

Appendix 2: How to work with clients in different phases of dialectical thinking development

Appendix 1

It will take you some time to learn to use each of the 12 thought forms ...

The presentation of the thought forms shown below is therefore a something you will often return to.

The tables that follow are thus a *reference*, not something to learn by heart the first time.

You will start with a vague understanding of each thought form, and by using a particular thought form again and again, will learn to make better and better use of it.

Context Thought Forms: Unchanging Forms

CONTEXT
<p>Cp – Relationship between part(s) and a whole: In using this TF, the coach or client points to what is the “big picture” of a situation or problem. Either part of the picture or the whole may be emphasized. Usually, there is no attention paid to the equilibrium between parts and whole. The coach should challenge the client to describe the biggest picture of a situation possible.</p>
<p>Ce--Structure and stability of a system: Using this TF, the coach insists on a higher degree of clarity about the structure of the situation spoken about. This TF challenges clients to become more specific about what they observe or hypothesize, both to explain the nature and stability of the situation they describe, and to entertain thoughts about why a particular situation tends to reoccur unchanged, thereby preparing further thoughts about how it could be changed, and also what action the client could take to change stressful and unproductive situations.</p>
<p>Cl-- Multiple contexts and frames of reference : This thought form opens up possibilities for seeing situations and problems, even ideas, from different vantage points, and also to become aware of the “world view” or Frame of Reference that underlies the description or evaluation of a particular situation. This TF schools taking multiple perspectives on situations or oneself, rather than only a single one. It may also challenge clients (and coaches) to link different perspectives to each other in order to obtain the biggest possible picture. This picture would include the different dimensions or layers that merge to form a particular situation.</p>

Example of Context Thinking

Pointing to [Cp; with a hint of Cl and Rp]

“A company’s HR strategy is certainly an important part of an organization’s strategy as a whole. One cannot be without the other. Given this insight, how concerned would you be if your HR strategy fell into the competitors hands? If your answer is “not very”, can your organization be making world class decisions where talent matters most to your strategic success? “Not very” might also mean that your focus is too much on delivering products, like a good competency framework, a training program, a remuneration policy, and so on. But what defines critical jobs or competencies? What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for performance and learning? The essence, in my opinion, lies in a common language that enables HR and business leaders to streamline and refine their strategic conversations about talent and organizational decisions. And to achieve such a common language, HR has to understand a whole lot more of the entire organization than it does in most cases today. Each business, and even each operational function, has its own set of mental models that are used to guide discussions, establish measures, and make decisions. Some of these are common across most organizations, such as operating profits, return-on-net assets, and economic value added. Others are unique and specific to a particular industry or even a particular organization. As an integral part of an organization, In systemic terms, the effectiveness and impact of HR is based on there being an equilibrium between its own performance indicators and the ones of the organization, and the latter need to be embedded within the former. There are of course different ways of safeguarding the balance between the whole and its parts. One of them would be to hold line managers accountable for HR measures. A more principled and holistic way would be to redesign the HR planning process, teaching leaders a new language to talk about talent. One thing is clear, you will need to have a pretty clear notion of what is happening in the organization as a whole and adapt the way you talk about, and direct HR, in light of this.”

Process Thought Forms: Motion & Change

PROCESS

Pp -- Emergence and inclusion of opposites: In using this TF, the coach draws the client's attention to what does not fit his/her description of a situation, as well as the contradiction that show up in the situation as described. It also refers to what is not (yet) seen or is consistently kept hidden. The coach can also state the opposite of what is being said as a challenge to the client's thinking, in order to foster a more synthetic view of things, or of the client him- or herself. This antithesis stated – whether a logical falsehood, contradiction, or “paradox” – is meant to set in motion a more intense way of thinking on the side of the client, and also to point to the fact that formal logic does not suffice to understand what happens in the real world.

Pe -- Patterns of interaction: This TF challenges coach and client to see static situations as dynamic and changing ones, thereby instilling process thinking for which everything is in motion. More than pointing to process is required here; rather, the motions or changes that are occurring, once recognized, should be more highly detailed and clarified as to their nature and influence. The interactions referred to can be those among individuals, things, events, as well as between individuals, things, and events.

PI -- Embeddedness in process: This TF challenges both coach and client to see situations are part of larger ongoing processes in which they are embedded. Use of this TF energizes thinking so that situations are seen as being part of ongoing changes that transcend single situations and problems described. The TF challenges both parties to face the unceasing motion that we partake of in the real world. The TF implies a critique of linear causality in which B is caused by A; rather, A and B may be part of a group of factors that never work in isolation.

Example of Process Thinking

Pointing to [Pp; with a touch of Rp]

“I have always been interested in how businesses evolve and create value. One of the interesting findings is that the average corporate life expectancy in Europe is around 12.5 years. In my opinion, companies that have a significant longer life expectancy have been willing to break with traditional trade-offs. One of these trade-offs is one between greater productivity and putting meaning into people’s work experience. Neither one of these is cause or effect in achieving extraordinary results. While opposites, they are at the same time

complementary. Therefore, it is a continuous investment in both that drives high performance. If one looks at the history of extraordinary companies, one will always see a focus on realizing process improvements and cost efficiencies, and at the same time creating a culture of partnership in which employees take psychological ownership of their work and the company’s mandate. Most people think of success

in terms of how technological and process efficiencies come together. I believe there is another convergence that needs to be considered. Companies can no longer defend putting profits ahead of winning share of customers’ heart because customers and investors increasingly believe one doesn’t go without the other. Although seemingly opposites they have to be equally attended to in the company’s strategy.

Companies only succeed in building value when they focus on building value for all stakeholders. They gain more loyal customers by way of creating meaningful customer experiences and more engaged employees through building more trust between labor and management.”

Relationship Thought Forms: Common Ground

RELATIONSHIP
<p>Rp -- Bringing elements into relationship: This TF urges both coaches and clients to overcome black and white separations between things and see them as not only externally but intrinsically connected. The TF supports efforts of linking and separating at the same level of detail because what has not been explicitly separated can also be linked. However, the linking in terms of Rp is weak in that relationships are here only pointed to, not spelled out in detail.</p>
<p>Re -- Structure of relationship: In order to truly understand and work with relationships one has to detail them as much as possible. This TF challenges coach and client to be specific about the nature and structure of a relationship that is the focus of attention. While logical relationships are external in that they do not change the nature of what they connect, dialectical relationships as meant by this TF are intrinsic, meaning that the elements connected could not even exist without each other. The elements share a “common ground” and are the same and different at the same time.</p>
<p>RI -- Patterns of interaction and influence: If things and people are elements of a relationship, there will not only be interactions between them but even (partially predictable) patterns according to which such interactions occur. This TF challenges coach and client to spell out the interactions that occur and the patterns they form. Doing so contributes strongly to the flexibility and fluidity of one’s thinking, and helps entering into the intrinsic nature of relationships that are the focus of attention.</p>

Example of Relationship Thinking

Pointing to [Rp; with a touch of Re]

“I am beginning to see the need of an architecture that integrated the strategy and operations of our diverse units. However, in using the methodology we focused too much on trying to rephrase the strategies of all units into the four perspective frameworks (financial, customers, internal organization and learning) so that the strategy of the functional units, such as human resources, information technology, and finance got linked to the corporate strategy. What we missed was an integrated strategy perspective, an enhanced vision statement that provided a more comprehensive picture of the strategic difference we wanted to make. Let me give you an example. We are in the business of well-being and treatment for children. It gives us quite a different focus if we define our mission as ‘providing integrated health care for children’ or as ‘providing freedom from disabling conditions’. The latter gives us a very specific strategic agenda to guide the creation of our strategy maps. The different units were more actively engaged in how they could strengthen the internal collaboration between the units to make this vision become true. There is clearly a lot of value in bringing the strategy map perspective together with the vision statement. This seems logical, but we could not see that initially. In the beginning we were too focused on creating aligned performance indicators, without worrying too much about the overall vision. Now we have structured our yearly meeting agenda to review our progress in a different way. We start with an in depth discussion of our mission and what this involves given macro-industry trends (such as input factor prices, regulations, technological developments, etc....) -- before we engage in a deep review of our performance indicators. We are, after all, part of a common ground that we neglect only at our peril”.

Transformational Thought Forms: Realized Potential or Looming Breakdown

TRANSFORMATION
<p>Tp -- Limits of system stability: A world in transformation forms a system of systems of limited stability (as, e.g., the human body). Most situations focused on in coaching are of this kind. Therefore both coach and client are challenged by this TF to consider that the past “lives” in the present, as does the future, and that a situation discussed today could look dramatically different tomorrow. This is a useful vantage point for dealing especially with high-risk situations and volatile scenarios but also applies to ordinary situations.</p>
<p>Te -- Developmental movement of systems: Systems in transformation are systems “under development”, either toward breakdown or the full realization of potential. In the real world, both are often equally possible. This TF challenges coach and client to pay attention to unrealized potential, to what is not seen but may emerge tomorrow, as well as what may no longer be in existence tomorrow.</p>
<p>TI -- Comparison and Coordination of systems; emergence of new entities: This TF challenges coaches and their clients to see situations as systemic and under transformation and to coordinate situations as parts of a larger systems not yet perceivable. Rather than only logically dividing systems, coach and coachee are challenged to adopt a systemic world view in which transformations are the rule, not the exception. This TF requires bringing together all TFs learned so far and critique attempts at separating what is intrinsically connected by nature.</p>

Examples of Transformational Questions

- What would we like to remain the same?
- What contradictions and oppositions may occur?
- Are there limits to predictability?
- Have we considered the value of conflicts that may arise?
- Is there an in-built developmental movement that we are failing to consider?
- In what conflicts, dilemmas, or contradictions is the issue embedded?
- What are more apt comparisons than those we are using?
- Are disproportional factors involved that make prediction difficult or impossible?
- What is the best way to test the limits of the system of which the issue is a part?
- What would be a more inclusive solution and what is the path to it?
- If untoward issues (conflicts) arise how would we deal with them?
- What are the disadvantages of solutions we are thinking of?
- What is the extent of agreement or disagreement regarding how to think about, what to do about, and how to reach a solution to, our problem?

Appendix 2: How To Work With Clients in Different Phases of Dialectical Thinking Development

As all coaches, a developmental coach needs to meet the client where s(he) is developmentally, whether social-emotionally or cognitively.

In cognitive coaching, we can distinguish three phases, as follows:

1. Focus on Context thought forms (Phase 1)
2. Inclusion of Process thought forms (Phase 2)
3. Integration of Relationship thought forms (Phase 3)

The fourth phase, where transformational thought forms come into play, is too advanced for this introductory course, and are therefore not dealt with.

Below, each of these phases is detailed.

How to Work With Phase 1 Clients

- Phase 1 clients are good logical thinkers who have not yet experienced the limits of their own thinking, and therefore probably don't know either how to "experience" their own thinking.
- Such clients may speak of "process" and "relationship" but all they mean is "change" and "logical relationship".
- We can say that these clients are "contextualizing" everything they come upon, turning it into a thing or entity. As a result, these clients cannot think "out of the box" of logical thinking.
- As a coach, you want to help such clients acquire a more complex view of the world than they presently have as purely logical thinkers.
- To do so, YOU YOURSELF need to be further advanced in your thinking than your clients.
- You also need to develop (or have developed) a higher degree of dialectical listening that enables you to HEAR THOUGHT FORMS IN CLIENTS' SPEECH.
- This is a matter of your own fluidity of thinking at this point in your cognitive development.

Three Steps in Using Context TFs

CONTEXT
Cp – Relationship between part(s) and a whole: In using this TF, the coach or client points to what is the “big picture” of a situation or problem. Either part of the picture or the whole may be emphasized. Usually, there is no attention paid to the equilibrium between parts and whole. The coach should challenge the client to describe the biggest picture of a situation possible.
Ce--Structure and stability of a system: Using this TF, the coach insists on a higher degree of clarity about the structure of the situation spoken about. This TF challenges clients to become more specific about what they observe or hypothesize, both to explain the nature and stability of the situation they describe, and to entertain thoughts about why a particular situation tends to reoccur unchanged, thereby preparing further thoughts about how it could be changed, and also what action the client could take to change stressful and unproductive situations.
CI-- Multiple contexts and frames of reference : This thought form opens up possibilities for seeing situations and problems, even ideas, from different vantage points, and also to become aware of the “world view” or Frame of Reference that underlies the description or evaluation of a particular situation. This TF schools taking multiple perspectives on situations or oneself, rather than only a single one. It may also challenge clients (and coaches) to link different perspectives to each other in order to obtain the biggest possible picture. This picture would include the different dimensions or layers that merge to form a particular situation.

1. There are three simple steps in using Context TFs and to recognize them in what clients say:
2. Cp is “just pointing to”, but does not elaborate the parts that make up a larger context (situation, event, idea, problem).
3. Ce is used by clients in order to go beyond naming parts of a whole and can further detail the internal structure of parts. Perhaps they can also explain what makes the whole hang together and remain stable. This detailing can go very far. When a large number of details emerge, the question becomes: can the client tie them together into a whole or “system”.
4. CI is used when the client is able to invoke several different contexts or scenarios all of which are present in combination. The issue then becomes whether the client can see them as different frames of reference (vantage points) that give rise to different pictures of what is being described.

Review of Phase 1; Context TFs

- I, the instructor, imagine the following difficulties some of you might have encountered in using Context TFs:
 - Cp: when Context – descriptions of situations, events, scenarios, outlines of an idea – is only pointed to, it is often impossible to know what is the whole (big picture) because there is always a bigger picture than the one just described, and the speaker is not aware of that. S(he) sees no alternatives for thinking more broadly or deeply.
 - Ce: when Context is elaborated, to know whether it is elaborated in terms of a) structures, b) functions, c) layers (strata), or d) reasons for its stability, e) intellectual traditions (of ideas); such information is usually missing, and the coach needs to challenge what the client is saying.
 - Cl: when there is a multiplicity of contexts -- a) whether these are seen by the client as different frames of reference (vantage points), and b) to what extent these different frames of reference are linked by the client contextually, or c) whether the client is using other than Context TFs to explain a particular situation – the coach should pay attention to how the client relates (links) the different contexts s(he) is speaking about, and how thoroughly these different contexts have been separated, because that will determine how far and correctly they can be linked.

Example of a Beginner in Dialectical Thinking

- **Coach:** *In order to understand a little more of your present situation in this company, tell me more about how the merger is affecting you right now.*
- **Coachee:** When we bought Acme's service business, it was clear that one of the immediate advantages would be in building a more efficient network. By integrating product and service sales, we became a more complete operation, and customers are likely to see us in a new light. However, we also became more vulnerable to a lack of integration until we can define that new business model, and manage re-training and re-directing our sales force. Even then, perhaps customers may feel we're not as focused on our huge new service operation as was Acme. For instance, if we decided also to service competitor's products, would customers see that as a lessening of our commitment to our own products?
- **Coach [steering the client in the direction of unsolved issues]:** *It seems that you are juggling many more things than before the merger and may risk overextending yourself. How are you and your boss coping with this situation?*
- **Coachee:** My boss is leading the way in this but I am increasingly involved in thinking through with him how to come to a better understanding of how we might more closely engage our clients. We want our clients to share with us what link between products they need and services they want would be most important to them.

Analysis of What the Beginner is Saying

- The speaker (in the example) resides at a level of cognitive development where s(he) tends to see his/her company as a static, unchangeable configuration.
- However, s(he) recognizes important relationships both inside and outside the company (e.g., with customers), and so has made a step toward dialectical thinking.
- Moreover, s(he) indicates by the structure – not just the content – of her thinking that the situation requires taking multiple perspectives in order to produce an optimal outcome.
- Although s(he) only weakly expresses an understanding of unceasing change and the emergence of unexpected “otherness” (Process), s(he) has a beginning understanding of “transformation”; this means that s(he) can appreciate that the more complex a system (situation) is, the more fragile and prone to breakdown or reversal it is.

Cognitive Coaching Example (Individual Coaching)

Coach [phase 2 or 3]: Tell me a little about the focus of your present work.

Coachee [phase 1]: My present work is focused on our recent merger with the Acme company. When we bought Acme's service business, it was clear that one of the immediate advantages would be in building a more efficient in-house network. By integrating product and service sales, we became a more complete operation, and customers were likely to see us in a new light.

Coach (trying to open up client's thinking to "critical" thinking using Process (P) thought forms, e.g., **Pp** (emergence and inclusion of opposites): *what do you mean by "integrating product and service sales"?*

Coachee: well, selling our products and services is quite different for us since we have always sold products but are just now re-orienting to selling services as well ... Often, selling both products and services is seen as a clash, or diminution of the company's interest in one of them.

Coach: *okay, so there may be really different strategies to follow in this if you consider that the interactions seen by the customer will be different from what you and the boss are focused on (RI; patterns of interaction and influence)*

Coachee: I'll have to think about what you call interactions more deeply, I don't have an immediate inkling of what we are talking about here ...

Coach: So let's take one of these interactions that come to mind as an example to think this through together ...

How to Work with Phase 2 Clients

- Phase 2 clients are beginning to have a more complex notion of Reality because they
 - can see opposites (systemic obstacles, contradictions, absences [what is missing] emerge in what they describe
 - are (dimly) aware that opposites emerging in a situation need to be “contained” and ultimately included to fully understand the situation
 - are also aware that a situation may embody opposing and contradictory tendencies that merge with each other, or are correlates of each other
 - can see that elements composing a situation interact as factors (elements) of the same situation, and may interact with each other in terms of a specific pattern
 - may feel that to understand a situation fully it is important not to neglect counter-tendencies
 - may be aware that a process they describe is embedded in a larger process that may be largely invisible (not having emerged yet).
- **One thing should be clear: only a coach who understands Process TFs can work with such a client effectively.**

Three Steps in Using Process TFs

PROCESS

Pp -- Emergence and inclusion of opposites: In using this TF, the coach draws the client's attention to what does not fit his/her description of a situation, as well as the contradiction that show up in the situation as described. It also refers to what is not (yet) seen or is consistently kept hidden. The coach can also state the opposite of what is being said as a challenge to the client's thinking, in order to foster a more synthetic view of things, or of the client him- or herself. This antithesis stated – whether a logical falsehood, contradiction, or “paradox” – is meant to set in motion a more intense way of thinking on the side of the client, and also to point to the fact that formal logic does not suffice to understand what happens in the real world.

Pe -- Patterns of interaction: This TF challenges coach and client to see static situations as dynamic and changing ones, thereby instilling process thinking for which everything is in motion. More than pointing to process is required here; rather, the motions or changes that are occurring, once recognized, should be more highly detailed and clarified as to their nature and influence. The interactions referred to can be those among individuals, things, events, as well as between individuals, things, and events.

Pl -- Embeddedness in process: This TF challenges both coach and client to see situations are part of larger ongoing processes in which they are embedded. Use of this TF energizes thinking so that situations are seen as being part of ongoing changes that transcend single situations and problems described. The TF challenges both parties to face the unceasing motion that we partake of in the real world. The TF implies a critique of linear causality in which B is caused by A; rather, A and B may be part of a group of factors that never work in isolation.

There are three simple steps in using Process TFs and to recognize them in what clients say:

1. Pp is “just pointing to”, but does not elaborate what is meant by “process”. The speaker may not understand the Process does not simply refer to change but to opposition, obstacles, things missing, things invisible and hidden that form obstacles. The coach needs to ask: “what is the nature of the motion you seem to be describing?”
2. Pe: here, changes, motions, variations, oppositions are somewhat elaborated; this can be deepened by the coach asking: “tell me a little more about how precisely the motion you are describing unfolds from step to step”.
3. Pl: in what the client says, s(he) is focused on events, situations, inner states being in unceasing motion; this can be deepened by focusing on how the client links one process to another, one change to another. It may also be that the client is beginning to use an R or T TF, and this can be deepened, too. There are many different ways for a coach to deepen the client's understanding of being embedded in unceasing motion ...

Example: Using Process TFs with a Client

- Client: “My work is difficult because it can change rapidly from week to week in unforeseen directions ...”
- Coach: “That must be hard to cope with. Can you be more specific about the changes that occur?”
 - Asking this, the coach needs to LISTEN for whether the client is using Pp, Pe, or Pl. If the client is only vaguely pointing to changes, the coach should challenge the client to use precise concepts that shed light on a) what the changes are, b) how they affect the client, c) what might be done to cope with changes better, d) how it might be determined whether the changes that seem external are perhaps internal, or caused by perceptions of the client’s internal world.
 - The coach needs to anticipate what a client thinking in Process TFs would be able to say, distinguish, elaborate, see as alternatives, reflect on as hiding potentials or possible breakdowns.
 - The client should feel invited to “think more deeply” about what is actually going on, using precise concepts rather than articulating emotions.

How to Work with Phase 3 Clients

- Phase 3 clients are beginning to have an idea of “common ground”, that is they can focus on different, even opposite, things and events as being intrinsically related and thus “sharing a common ground”.
- Such clients “see” what opposite experiences, events, situations, people SHARE, and look at them as intrinsically related.
- In order to be effective with such clients, the coach him- or herself needs to be a dialectical thinker who can anticipate what clients see as connected and intrinsically linked. Only then will the coach know how to not only understand what the client is saying, but also how to challenge the client to become very specific about the internal linkages s(he) is speaking about.
- The coach must also be able to clearly distinguish the moments of dialectic (classes of thought forms) that are involved, and help the client makes clear distinctions between them.
- Both coach and client will then be “interlocutors” who deepen each other’s thinking and can “think together”, not just “with each other”.

Three Steps in Using Relationship TFs

RELATIONSHIP
<p>Rp -- Bringing elements into relationship: This TF urges both coaches and clients to overcome black and white separations between things and see them as not only externally but intrinsically connected. The TF supports efforts of linking and separating at the same level of detail because what has not been explicitly separated can also be linked. However, the linking in terms of Rp is weak in that relationships are here only pointed to, not spelled out in detail.</p>
<p>Re -- Structure of relationship: In order to truly understand and work with relationships one has to detail them as much as possible. This TF challenges coach and client to be specific about the nature and structure of a relationship that is the focus of attention. While logical relationships are external in that they do not change the nature of what they connect, dialectical relationships as meant by this TF are intrinsic, meaning that the elements connected could not even exist without each other. The elements share a “common ground” and are the same and different at the same time.</p>
<p>RI -- Patterns of interaction and influence: If things and people are elements of a relationship, there will not only be interactions between them but even (partially predictable) patterns according to which such interactions occur. This TF challenges coach and client to spell out the interactions that occur and the patterns they form. Doing so contributes strongly to the flexibility and fluidity of one’s thinking, and helps entering into the intrinsic nature of relationships that are the focus of attention.</p>

- Pointing to relationships that are merely logical does not count here. We are concerned with insight that two things are intrinsically related, to the effect that one thing could not exist without the other so that they are both co-defined.
- Pointing to this kind of inner connectedness (Rp) is only a beginning.
- The coach would want the client to elaborate the intrinsic connection pointed to (Re) in the greatest possible detail, to specify the “structure of relationship” that exists.
- Finally the question arises: “is there a patterns according to which the relationships talked about occur in real time, again and again, and is there a “logic” to how these patterns play out.

Example of Using Relationship TFs in Coaching

- Client: “For me, there is a relationship between the problems I having at work and the culture of the organization”.
- Coach: “That makes total sense to me. Can you please give me more details regarding how this internal connectedness works out for you; what element or dimensions of the organizational culture is it that makes it difficult for you to be effective?”
 - To be effective in this, the coach needs to be able to discern by LISTENING whether the client is using Rp, Re, or RI.
 - If the client is only pointing to relationships between his/her work and the culture, that is not good enough.
 - Rather, client needs to be or become able to be very exact in spelling out what part of dimension of his/her work is impeded by the organizational culture in place.
 - If the client can do that, coach and client can “think together” about how the existing culture is structured in a way that impedes what would be the client’s natural inclinations toward working in this or that particular way.

Useful Links

- <http://interdevelopmentals.org/publications/books/>
- <http://www.integralpatterns.com/dialectical-thoughtforms.html>
- <http://watersfoundation.org/systems-thinking/habits-of-a-systems-thinker/>
- <http://www.connecttransform.be>
- <http://www.ilume.co.nz/>
- http://www.amazon.com/Dialectic-Freedom-Classical-Critical-Routledge/dp/0415454913/ref=sr_1_10?ie=UTF8&qid=1464704484&sr=8-10&keywords=roy+Bhaskar

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