

2023 Amazon description of Laske's volume 2 of 'Measuring Hidden Dimensions' (2009), presented to Springer as a *revised* three-part monograph under the title of *Cognitive Foundations of Requisite Organization*.

Below, editorial reviews of the original publication written between 2009 and 2016.

https://www.amazon.com/Measuring-Hidden-Dimensions-Human-Systems/dp/0977680061?ref=ast_sto_dp

The book is a textbook written for leaders, managers, and process consultants working with individuals, groups, and organizations. It is the first book making dialectical theories of knowledge useful for day-to-day problem solving, updating Frankfurt School insights for the 21st century. The book addresses issues of business leadership for an evolving planet and the need for transformational thinking in intercultural and international environments. It unravels the cognitive dimension of human work, by introducing a cognitive theory of work and of organizations, and lays the foundation for the requisite organization of companies and public institutions through capability management focused on level of adult development and the capabilities associated with it.

A short introduction to the book is Otto Laske's 2015 publication entitled "Dialectical Thinking for Integral Leaders: A Primer", published by Integral publishers, Tucson, AZ, US.

From the Author

This book, still little known, is the first that re-introduces into the culture, especially business culture, the notion of dialectic, updated from Frankfurt School teachings through empirical research in adult cognition (M. Basseches and myself) as well as through the work on dialectic by Roy Bhaskar (1993; *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*). The book considers formal logic as a world order that hampers creative breakthroughs, not only in business. It presents a theory of adult cognition beyond formal logic and the theory's empirical underpinnings, plus exercises for the reader, and the only Manual of Dialectical Thinking in existence today. The book is aimed at managers, coaches, and consultants.

An easy introduction to this 2008 publication is Laske's 2015 "Dialectical thinking for integral leaders: A primer", published by Integral Publishers.

Editorial Reviews

(1) Review by Greg Welstead, Oregon, USA, 2009, Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

I am a coach and management consultant and could not put down this book! Why? It's a totally original book that helps make decisions regarding human resources based on empirical evidence of executives' and employees' fluidity of thinking. Not only that, it places the decision theory it unfolds into the conceptual framework of Elliott Jaques' Requisite Organization theory which is

focused on bringing into balance "size of person" (individual capability) and "size of role" (level of role and work complexity). For this purpose, the book introduces a new form of integrative thinking going far beyond Roger Martin's (2007) message that because thinking precedes doing, we need a better knowledge of how people in organizations "think." Providing such a mode of thinking is made possible by introducing a venerable philosophical tradition, that of dialectical thinking (first used by Socrates and elaborated by Plato). The book actually provides empirical evidence that the resources for dialectical thinking are part and parcel of everybody's adult development, and that every logical thinker can learn to get out of "closed systems thinking" into "transformational thinking."

Dialectical thinking is integrative thinking to the power of 10. Research evidence shows that it grows out of formal logical thinking beginning in late adolescence and matures to greater and greater fluidity over adults' life span. About a third of the book is a Manual of dialectical thought forms which can be used as "mind openers" in all communication with clients, even in psychotherapy, mediation, and social work. The book shows that these thought forms are best learned by practicing what it calls "cognitive interviewing." In such interviewing (described in chapters 9 to 13 of the book's 15 chapters), a semi-structured interview is used to "make the client shine" cognitively and give feedback to him or her about what in their thinking might be improved. The book helps the reader to gain insight into the structure of his/her own thinking.

(2) Review by Karin Ulmer, Brussels, Belgium, 2015

Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

The hidden dimension of human systems is that the truth of the world is something we make up in our minds. We imagine things we would like and then bring them about. They exist because we keep producing them. Hence, the way we think and imagine the world is critical.

Perhaps, dialectical or development thinking can be compared to imagining and creating a beautiful forest garden, a landscape that is structured in a way that aims at restoring a self-sustaining ecosystem. A forest garden consists of different layers of trees and perennial bushes with edible nuts and fruits, windbreaks and ground covers to protect the soil and mycorrhizal structures. Wildlife ponds attract biological control and open pollination for diverse species and plant varieties to harvest from. All interventions are geared towards increasing biodiversity and resilience as part of the ecosystem functions as well as producing yields. In contrast, formal thinking can be visualized as a flat, open barren field used for intensive monoculture agriculture, exposed to the winds and the sun, subject to soil erosion and depletion, entirely dependent on external inputs of energy, fertilizers and pesticide to produce any yields.

Otto Laske's book introduces us to a design process that can invigorate and vitalise our mental landscape gardens. The assumption is that thinking is a craft like gardening that can be learned. Easily, our thinking is full of opinions lingering around and crowded with thickets of content

matter that take a life on their own. Laske invites us to subject our thinking to inquiries, to scrutiny and attention, and to join the walk for a lifelong learning process on the art of critical thinking. A prerequisite for this journey is to be on the move, to accept that there are no short cuts or quick fixes, and to embrace humility. This way, emerging thought forms and thinking patterns can bring about a beautiful mind.

(3) Review by Dr Thomas Binder, Berlin, Germany, 2016

Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

This is a book for all those who really want to understand cognitive development in all its various aspects.

As one of Theodor Adornos pupils Otto is very adept especially in dialectical thinking. He explains in this book the various aspects of cognitive development such as Jean Piaget, Elliott Jaques, Patricia M. King & Karen Strohm Kitchener. Besides being a phantastic comprehensive overview this work is also full of examples and exercises. Otto shares his huge knowledge with you and shows the methodology for working with these models in coaching or leadership development.

For those who want a short introduction the following book would be a perfect start: [Dialectical Thinking for Integral Leaders: A Primer](#)

I really recommend this book.

(4) John Steward, Sydney, Australia, 2014

Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

[5.0 out of 5 stars The Most Important New Book on Dialectical Meta-Systemic Thinking & Decision Making - Maybe Since the 1600's Enlightenment](#)

Reviewed in the United States us on January 18, 2014

In the 1600s during the Enlightenment there was a major breakthrough in thinking; rational, logical thought and its accompanying scientific methodology came into being. This allowed for a new way of conceptualizing and managing the world. Even now, 400 years later, we continue to reap the bountiful benefits of that great breakthrough in a new way of thinking. Today we are also on the brink of what might be considered an even greater Second Enlightenment. It is coming into being aided in great part because of a new integral dialectical meta-systemic thinking process that is far more capable of managing today's personal, economic and political interacting and evolutionary complex adaptive systems.

With the existing knowledge of the integral and evolutionary movements and the new integral complex system dialectical meta-systemic thinking tools in Otto Laske's new book Measuring

Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, we will get there far sooner. Within its pages readers will find an effective, near-complete overview of the newest "Integral/Evolutionary" dialectical thinking processes that may be applied to today's problems and to the interaction of the complex systems of our world.

While the rational logical thinking of the first Enlightenment was two-dimensional and linear, the new dialectical complex meta-systems thinking elucidated in Laske's book is what I call four-dimensional thinking. (Three dimensions plus time.) It also allows one to deal with the unpredictable spontaneities, nonlinear and unknown feedback loops and a host of other issues that arise with multiple and single interacting complex systems.

The information in Measuring Hidden Dimensions shows a person how to step outside of their own thoughts, problems or issues in order to consider them objectively by using twenty-eight different thought forms for redirecting attention creating four dimensional dialectical thinking. The ability to think this whole-systems way is clearly a huge advantage in all areas of life, and is far more effective in dealing with today's problems than the two-dimensional linear thinking of the first Enlightenment. It is an essential tool in understanding the complexity of the universe's evolutionary processes.

It's no exaggeration to say that Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems may be the best book yet written about the evolution of cognition and evolution and development of human thinking in general and integral post-postmodernist thinking systems for the twenty-first century. While Laske stands on the shoulders of the giants of dialectical thinking like Hegel, Adorno, and Jaques he is a rare genius who has not only explained the development of thought through the seamless integration of multiple perspectives and frameworks, including psychology, science and, indirectly, the mystical core of theology, he has also advanced it. Powerful life and world-rearranging epiphanies by the bucketful await the conscious reader of this 4D revolution in integral dialectical thinking.

In addition to providing the most complete integral four-quadrant complex dialectical thinking system to date, Laske's book guides the Integral/Evolutionary movements toward an important new focus for future development. Many of today's Integral and Evolutionary leaders focus almost exclusively on consciousness-training or on how to be a spiritual evolutionary. Yes, consciousness creates a thought space and communion of the individual to and with the environment. In many ways consciousness-creation runs parallel to the concept of communion in the Integral agency/communion pairing. But integral/evolutionary consciousness-development or holding without the tool of well thought-out and planned action lacks the needed agency balance. And this new dialectical thinking is definitely action!

Laske's complex systems dialectical thinking process provides a well thought-out "thinking" agency that is needed for any optimized decision-making process that results in wise action, thus creating the better future we all seek. There is little doubt that someday learning the integral dialectical thinking skills using the Laske's 28 attention-redirecting thought forms will be an

educational requirement for all!

This book has personally allowed me to move with effort and attention from mostly two-dimensional thinking to much more of the new four dimensional thinking. It has also helped me to integrate a vast amount of observations about my life and work in less time than I ever imagined possible. It even helped me to evaluate complex personal situations in my life in a whole new way, either saving me untold trouble and cost or more quickly motivating me to take wise risks and seize new opportunities that hold real dialectically- evaluated benefit.

Adoption of this new dialectical thinking system would work wonders for the Integral/Evolutionary movements as well. A well-defined and complete integral/evolutionary dialectical thinking system has been until now a main element that has been lacking to effectively resolve the challenges of the complex systems interacting in our world today. Laske's new book provides exactly that missing element. There is little doubt that this work is going to spread within our movement and within other progressive social and activist movements as well.

It is my sincere hope that the Integral/Evolutionary Movement quickly picks up both Laske's complex-systems dialectical thinking processes and couples them with the consciousness-teaching processes found in our movement and more active social service. This would finally establish another deeper, much-needed agency/communion balance that could more readily build the better future we all are seeking.

Laske's book is nothing less than a true gift to humanity! In time, he will be eventually recognized as the man who did much to help bring about the second Enlightenment. As amazing as it is, however, this book also poses a few challenges to its readers.

Although Laske says that anyone can be taught complex systems dialectical thinking, I think that this book is a difficult read for many individuals. Laske's writing style is concept-dense and demands that you pay careful attention to each initial definition that he uses. In one paragraph alone he may take you through a dozen or more interrelated or sequential new thinking conceptual spaces. In addition to the implied cognitive capacity requirements there may be social and emotional development requirements that also play a part in one's ability to understand and "get" this amazing new dialectical thinking training manual and tool.

Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems is written more as an aid to human resources staff and as a training manual for coaches who will use this new kind of thinking to help their clients see the world much differently. That said, anyone with a little extra observational effort will find it useful as a manual for learning the new dialectical thinking processes.

Individuals with a strong background in developmental psychology will be in heaven and probably find the book considerably easier to understand. "Getting" Laske's new book on integral dialectical thinking will quickly separate the Integral/Evolutionary beginners and aficionados

from the experts, qualified teachers and dedicated practitioners.

Whether you're an integral evolutionary, spiritual evolutionary, or eco-evolutionary, or a corporate, government or non-profit sector leader, I wholeheartedly recommend that you get this book fast. Once you read it it is not hard to see savvy Integral/Evolutionary entrepreneurs will be quickly and discretely scampering to make teaching deals with Laske.

Most of the staff at our organization have already ordered it or are reading it now. The news is spreading via word-of-mouth: this book is a must-read for anyone, as optimized thinking is the best way to create success in most any area. This book plus *Dialectical Thinking and Adult Development* by Michael Basseches will find their way into all of the planet's most critical thinking applications where one is dealing with analysis of complex systems. Don't be surprised if you find them both soon out of stock at Amazon.com or other online booksellers as this work becomes part of the essential reading of the best and brightest Evolutionary minds on the planet.

(5) Sean Esbjorn-Hargens PhD, Executive Editor of the Journal of Integral Theory and Practice., Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

I highly recommend Dr. Laske's work for integral theorists and practitioners. His research represents a truly integrative approach to a number of key aspects of human development and transformation. He has a great grounding in Kegan's subject-object theory as well as the powerful European tradition of dialectics. This book is dense but it is worth the effort.

At the bottom of this page I've included links to two other independent reviews of *Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems* so that you might see from other perspectives how important this book is to the future of the Integral/Evolutionary movements.

The first is a brief review by John Stewart that has just been completed and has not been published previously. The review begins by identifying the reasons why Laske's work is highly significant. It then focuses on how Laske's approach can be greatly enhanced by integrating it with some of the methods for developing consciousness that can be found in the world's spiritual and religious traditions. John is one of the founders of the Progressive Evolution Movement and he is the author of *Evolution's Arrow* and the *Evolutionary Manifesto*, both of which are essential reading for the more informed members of the Integral/Evolutionary Movements.

(6) John Stewart, Sydney, Australia, 2011, Review of Otto Laske (2009) Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems, vol. 2

Otto Laske's work is a very significant contribution to the emergence of a new and higher level of cognition amongst humans. This dialectical/systemic cognition will give humanity a much-

needed capacity to better understand and manage complex systems and processes.

Laske's book, *Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems*, promotes our cognitive development by assisting us to see the limitations of our current levels of thinking. In particular, it helps us to 'stand outside' our analytical/rational thinking and to see it as an object. This enables us to see the limitations of this form of cognition. It assists us to see why analytical/rational thinking fails to adequately represent and understand complex systems and processes. Laske's book then goes on to identify the new forms of thought that are needed to represent and understand those aspects of reality that cannot be adequately represented by analytical/rational thinking.

Analytical/rational thinking is the cognition that spread with the European Enlightenment and now dominates in Western societies. However, it can represent mentally only those limited aspects of reality that are relatively mechanistic. It is incapable of representing complex patterns and processes, non-linearities, transforming systems, emergence and complex relationships. Cognition that is unable to represent or model something is incapable of understanding or managing it, or even of 'seeing' it.

Dialectical/systemic cognition continues to use analytical/rational cognition for understanding mechanistic aspects of reality. But it also models and represents those many aspects of reality that are more complex and fluid. It represents and models complex patterns, transforming systems, non-linear processes etc. The use of these representations is experienced as intuitions and insights.

The spread of systemic cognition is of critical importance because:

- Systemic cognition is essential if an individual is to be able to fully understand the large-scale evolutionary processes that have shaped humanity and other life on this planet and that will determine our future. It is therefore a pre-condition for fully 'getting' the evolutionary worldview and for experiencing the transformative epiphanies that accompany this;
- The global crises and challenges that are confronting humanity cannot be understood and cannot be solved without a cognitive capacity that enables the management of complex systems and processes. Analytical/rational cognition cannot do this;
- True systemic cognition is currently almost non-existent. Most 'systems thinking' is done with mental/rational representations and cognition. Post-modern cognition ('green' in Spiral Dynamics terms) is incapable of rigorously understanding complex phenomenon, and people at this level are commonly anti-cognitive.
- It seems unlikely that systemic cognition will develop quickly enough to meet global challenges unless it is spread intentionally and consciously.

What is needed is a New Enlightenment. It will be similar to the first Enlightenment in that it will be driven by a shift to higher cognition. But this time the shift will be from the analytical/rational thought of the first enlightenment to systemic cognition. And the shift will be developed and spread intentionally and consciously.

Currently there are no widely-accepted approaches to training and developing higher mind and systemic cognition. The Integral Movement and spiritual progressives tend to focus on the development of consciousness, not the development of higher cognition. Since these movements are almost universally 'green', cognition tends to be part of their shadow.

Most members of these movements do not have the cognitive development to see that effective responses to global challenges require a higher level of cognition, not just higher consciousness. The failure of the Integral Movement and spiritual progressives to make any significant contribution to resolving major crises such as global warming is due to their cognitive limitations. The 'missing piece' that is limiting these movements is systemic cognition.

As outlined in his book, Otto Laske has developed courses and supporting materials aimed at training and developing systemic cognition. The book includes an extraordinarily valuable Manual of Dialectical Thought Forms that builds on the work of Michael Basseches and others.

The Manual identifies the classes of things that we have to represent in our thinking if we are to adequately represent and understand complex phenomena and processes. It shows us the things that analytical/rational thought is unable to represent and understand effectively. It identifies the sorts of processes to which we must direct our attention if we are to build adequate mental models of complex systems.

Although Laske's work shows us where we have to direct our attention to think dialectically and systemically, it does not include practices that train the ability to freely move attention to where it is required. It is here that the 'consciousness movement' can contribute significantly to programs that aim to train and transmit dialectical/systemic cognition.

More specifically, the development of higher mind can be greatly accelerated by the use of the kinds of practices promoted by the world's spiritual and contemplative traditions that develop consciousness. These practices train the capacity to dis-embed from lower forms of cognition, freeing attention and consciousness to access and build higher cognitive structures.

Together with Victoria Wilding of Symplicitus ([...]/), I have been working on the development of an approach to training higher cognition that synthesizes Laske's approach with practices appropriated from the spiritual traditions. These 'spiritual' practices train the ability to:

- Dis-embed from analytical/rational thinking;
- See analytical/rational thought 'from the outside' as an object that can be contemplated and

evaluated

- . Eventually this enables systemic cognition itself to be seen as an object that can be contemplated, evaluated and improved;
- Gain conscious and intentional control over attention so that it can be moved freely around the aspects of complex phenomena that are not represented effectively by analytical/rational thinking; and
- Access and develop non thought-based cognitive resources, including pattern recognition capacities and intuition.

These capacities enable the individual to identify the critical aspects of complex phenomenon that are not represented adequately by analytical/rational thought. It also enables them to build new cognitive representations that include what is left out by analytical thinking. This makes possible the construction of new mental models that are not solely thought-based and that can adequately represent complex systems and phenomenon as they evolve and transform through time.

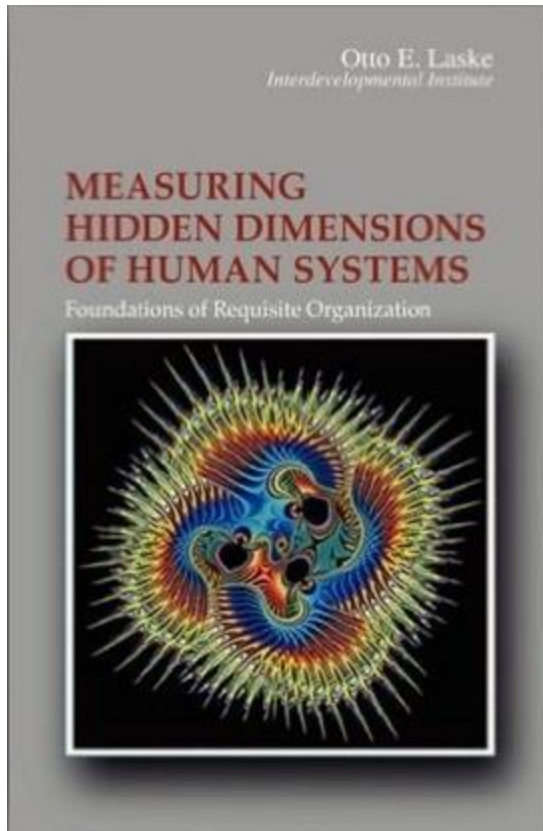
(6) Nora Ross, Ph.D., president of ARINA, publisher of The Integral Process for Working on Complex Issues and of the journal Integral Review: A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research, and Praxis.

Book Review: Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems

Book Reviews / June 2009

**Step into the Service and Challenge of Dialectical Thinking:
A Brief Review of Otto Laske's Manual of Dialectical Thought Forms**

<http://integralleadershipreview.com/4708-book-review-measuring-hidden-dimensions-of-human-systems/>



How we think. For many people, this may be a mysterious black box to consider. Most of the time, most of us are so busy thinking what we think that we are not observing how we do our thinking. In many life settings, what we think is on the surface more important than being aware of how we think. I daresay most of us probably operate on the belief that the ideas—the content—of what we think and say is most important for influencing, instructing, coaching, and/or leading others in our personal and professional lives.

Content—the subject matter of our thoughts—is not all there is to consider, however. How the thoughts are dynamically constructed—that is, structured—lies beneath the surface of thoughts'



subject matter. The structure of thought, some of us in the developmental field would argue, is vitally important to understand, oftentimes more than the surface level content it gives rise to. Yet, we have to acknowledge that it takes a different analytical lens to see the underlying structures of thought. To “see through” content’s flesh down to its “skeleton” of underlying structure is a capacity that, with appropriate support, can be

developed into a skill, and the skill further developed into an art. If we take the path of learning to see the structures of thought and how they work, we can expect our efforts to help others (and ourselves) increase their learning and effectiveness to extend well beyond the norm.

One of the structures of thought is called dialectical thinking. With relatively few exceptions (and there are exceptions), dialectical thinking is the most complex, most comprehensive, and most transformative way of thinking possible at this stage of human evolution. What makes dialectical thinking so complex, so comprehensive? In fully developed form, it is “systems-of-systems thinking.” But it does not just suddenly show up in that form. Rather, dialectical thinking is the result of dialectical processes of constructing itself.

The skill to observe how we think—and to use the resulting knowledge to serve others constructively—is not a simple one to develop, but it can be developed, with much reward. Otto Laske has dedicated himself for many years to explicating what is involved and to developing training materials and tools. He pursues this passion because he recognizes how essential dialectical thinking is. For example, if humans had always had and used this kind of thinking, we would never have operated in all our historical ways that generated global climate change and economic crises. We would have foreseen the systemic interconnections of behaviors, beliefs, social structures, and unsustainable pressures on social and natural systems, and behaved otherwise. At this point, we should be ratcheting up the amount of dialectical thinking that operates in our world. If we are to mitigate the damage we have caused and stop digging ourselves into the same holes, dialectical thinking is essential.

Dialectical thinking processes are essential because they continually receive, create, and process additional information in more complex ways than happens at pre-dialectical thinking stages. Open to the constant flow of additional information to consider, we can construct conceptual systems of understanding about our complex world. These are functions of our cognition’s dynamic systems nature. When we are consciously interacting with the environment—including our social-emotional one—to understand our world, we are free of the constraints of closed-loop linear logics that fool us into thinking we understand how the world works and we have “the” solution for each problem. As Laske stresses, this is open systems thinking, rather than closed systems thinking. It rises to the occasion Einstein spelled out succinctly: we cannot solve problems with the same level of thinking that created them.

To foster dialectical thinking, Otto Laske has recently published *Measuring Hidden Dimensions of Human Systems: Foundations of Requisite Organization, Volume 2* (IDM Press, ISBN 978-09776800-6-1) for the audience of process consultants. It introduces knowledge to undergird cognitive-developmental coaching and management consulting. As he told me, “It is the first comprehensive book in English on dialectical thinking in process consultation, and in its manual the largest repertory of dialectical tools.” The book and its manual, part of Laske’s Constructive-Developmental Framework, are used in learning modules offered by his InterDevelopMental Institute (<http://www.interdevelopmentals.org/>). The book itself is available at <http://www.interdevelopmentals.org/publications-idm-press.php>.

The repertory of dialectical tools is the focus of this review: the Dialectical Thought Form Manual, which comprises the last third of the volume. I admit to regret that I confine myself to that scope, because the volume as a whole is rigorous, insightful, processual, and integral in its approach. Yet, because the manual is eminently practical and also like a book unto itself at 175 pages, I want to do it as much justice as possible in the space available here.

To begin, I share a consistent finding from my action research and teaching over the years to set the stage for understanding what the use of this manual entails. Cognitive and language sciences, as well as lived experience, already tell us that we humans are incessant classifiers of information. We classify types of objects, events, organizations, and other people in countless ways. Until we develop habits of increasingly more mature critical thinking (see stages of critical thinking at www.criticalthinking.org), what we do not tend to do is reflect on and classify the “outputs” of our thought.

For example, when asking people in groups to identify their concerns about a particular issue—that is, what worries them about it—I consistently hear a range of “outputs” that rarely includes such concerns. Instead, it is common to hear a collection of blame statements, opinions about the problem, diagnoses of the problem, solutions to the problem, and stories about what some person or group did. In such settings to date, almost never does a person initially express concern about impacts of an issue on themselves, their households, their businesses, or their communities. Rather, people begin to notice and filter their thinking and generate expressions of concern only when the uneven nature of the initial outputs is highlighted and examples of concerns are offered to show contrast.

The lesson here is that many of us do not have well-developed skills for paying attention to the nature of what we think and say. Without support, we tend to be so busy generating ideas that we do less well classifying our own thoughts into their “like types” or categories, even when asked for one such category, such as concerns about an issue that troubles us.

That prelude is meant to introduce the idea that to learn about dialectical thinking—and thus learn how to use it, measure it, and help others to develop it—involves critical thinking abilities to identify the nature of individual “chunks” of speech/thought and classify them. As Laske states, bluntly, the manual “is not a tool for dummies, but rather for those who have mastered formal logic and are ready to feel the pulse of their own thinking” (p. 450). The gift of the manual is that it uses effective pedagogy to assist in finding that pulse, with the expectation that participation in the Institute’s training modules is also essential. Independent reading of the manual is asserted as insufficient instruction and counterproductive insofar as scorers of dialectical thinking must learn how to play (a dialectical) devil’s advocate role toward their own scoring. This requires instruction by proficient teachers and practice because “learning dialectical tools presupposes a stance that cannot be taught and is developmentally determined, and thus is different from individual to individual” (p. 455). Similarly, this review cannot convey a snapshot of what dialectical thinking is and does, but rather a snapshot of the manual’s methodology.

The manual’s stated purpose is to facilitate the learning and practice of dialectical thinking. Its ten-page introduction iterates in summary form some of the key explications given in the main

body of the book. For example, it is a reminder to the reader of the earlier philosophical and adult development studies of dialectical thinking upon which Laske's work is based, notably the Frankfurt School's roots, Theodor Adorno's work in the 1950s and 1960s, and Michael Basseches' in the 1980s. The manual's origin is closely linked to the scoring manual first developed by Basseches' student M. Bopp to systematize Basseches' explication of dialectical thought forms. Thus the introduction iterates the quadrant organization Laske gives to Basseches' four categories of thought forms—those of Process, Relationship, Context, and Transformational System. It relates them to the scoring system used in Laske's Constructive-Developmental Framework of which the manual is a part. These scores derive from and elaborate Basseches' original "fluidity index" for measuring dialectical thought: Fluidity Index (F-score), Cognitive Score (C-score), Systems Thinking Index (STI, an element of the C-score indicating the strength of metasystemic thinking), and the Discrepancy Score (D-score). Finally, the introduction outlines the structure of the manual, which is divided into two parts: the first instructs, and the second supplies assorted study and scoring materials.

Instructional Part A's four sections unpack thought forms in the "Quadrants of Dialectic": Process, Relationship, Context, and Transformative System. These are the four quadrant-based classes of thought forms to be learned and used in scoring narratives, such as those generated from client interviews. Within each section are five subsections.

1. Statement of the main aspects of the Quadrant—its essence, and its sequence of thought forms
2. Overview of the class of thought forms therein
3. Presentation of each individual thought form, including examples, interpretation, and contrasts with other thought forms (so one can play devil's advocate and score accurately)
4. Listing of "mind opener" thought forms, with descriptions
5. Ten exercises for practicing each thought form in the quadrant.

Thought forms unfold in a predictable sequence, because "in dialectics...we are dealing with a network of concepts, each of which presupposes the other. Human concepts form an organized whole, just like the Quadrants, which cannot be ripped apart into isolated entities (although that is how thought forms are listed in a table and learned). In true dialectical fashion, human concepts are thus separate but inseparable, just as the pieces of the real world thought is trying to capture" (p. 473). By learning the thought forms, then, one is able to watch the organic unfolding of postformal thought and understand how and why it is constructed.

Once one learns that there is a natural sequence of thought forms and how and why they are cognitively formed, then the purpose of "mind openers" becomes evident. Used to frame probing questions, and usable anywhere from coaching sessions, to interviews, to everyday conversation, they invite openings to scaffold the move from one thought form to the next. Mind openers are open-ended questions designed for generic use. When we can predict the nature of thought forms, such generic questions are easy to develop independent of specific content. Fortunately,

the manual provides a wide range of such questions, making it easy for learners to experiment and practice with them. When a mind-opening question prompts a movement to a next thought form, each such “move” increases the complexity of thought by one degree, so to speak. One cannot skip over any of those steps in the process to more complex thinking. Thus, well-used mind openers help challenge others’ thinking to become more highly dialectical, a process that unfolds by degrees.

To use mind openers with oneself and others means becoming intimate with the dialectical thought forms. Toward that end, Part B materials include an array of compact and detailed tables and scoring assistance forms.

Despite the perfunctory-sounding nature of the manual, it is an incredibly rich read. The examples of each thought form in weak, medium, and strong forms are excerpted from interviews with people discussing real world concerns about organizational and personal life. They put meaningful flesh on the skeletons of thought forms introduced, and illustrate how thought becomes incrementally more complex, more nuanced, more comprehensive, all in dialectical interplays masterfully elucidated by Laske.

It is true that Laske’s manual on dialectical thinking is not for dummies. But in conjunction with formal training, it is for the curious, the dedicated, the serious, those impassioned to learn about adult development in ways deep enough to perform transformative levels of process consultation with those they serve.

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