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Growth and Change for Organizations

Transactional Analysis

New Developments

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Preface

Günther Mohr and Thomas Steinert

Acknowledgements

First of all we have to say thank you to the many people who have supported this book. After contracting the idea of this voluntary project for the TA community to the ITAA-Board officials Gordon Hewitt (2003-President) and Gaylon Palmer (2003-VP Operations) we started to ask organizational TA people around the world for articles about their work. A great deal of transactional analysis - people often are excellent practitioners, who do their best for their clients. We had the aim of inviting them to bring their work into the written form of articles. And we had nothing to offer but our time, our commitment and an opportunity for transactional analysis, thus giving people a chance to demonstrate and show their ideas and work in an article. A thank you goes to our authors who we sometimes draw into an intensive working relationship through our comments. The world map below shows the origin and the regional work foci of our authors.



And we especially say thank you to Katharina Tempel, a skillful organizer and lecturer who supported us along the way and had to envision with us a structure in the puzzling number of aspects we considered during the compiling process of the book. Thank you, Katharina Tempel!

Organizational TA

Transactional analysis in organizations has developed into organizational transactional analysis! This means that there are sources of thinking and dealing with organizations that focus on the organizational context of personal, interpersonal or team-facilitation work and that are also based in the identity of transactional analysis.

Our definition “Organizational Transactional Analysis” looks at the patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior in organizations, and also the methods of diagnosis and intervention that professionals in organizations use on a personal and system level (department, whole organization), all of which are based on transactional analysis identity and practice. It is related to economic and structural aspects, goal orientation, hierarchy, roles and systemic dynamics. (Mohr & Steinert, 2006, in this book)

So it is a context-oriented methodology and has the goal of designing an appropriate development process to accelerate learning on an organizational and personal level. Learning dimensions can, for example, be processes, culture or strategy. A proper organizational transactional analysis diagnosis in this respect is achieved if the context factors are considered, if process alternatives were designed and if the consultant chooses from at least two alternative process designs. At best the diagnosis process becomes a dialogued and contracted component of the client system. Context diagnosis consequently becomes a major competence. This means e.g. context levels like the company in its market, whether it is considered to be an over-performer, performer or underperformer. The aspects of performance could be e.g. the product(s), technology, IT, culture, HR system, personal and professional development of staff. In terms of diagnosis these are the relevant subsystems where a transactional analysis consulting could be realized. These aspects are discussed in the five basic articles on basic perspectives in organizational work.

Basic perspectives

The book starts with the five articles which enlighten the organizational field from different approaches. Servaas van Beekum shows us the psychodynamic approach on organizations. Bernd Schmid guides us to

the systemic perspective in his fundamental role thinking. Julie Hay draws us into a major paradigm about using transactional analysis concepts in the organizational world and the developmental approach. Thomas Steinert and Günther Mohr integrate psychodynamic, systemic and developmental thinking. Thomas Steinert focuses on the architecture of structural change processes and role management. Günther Mohr presents a model based on organizational dynamics for diagnostics and intervention for organizational development.

The challenge for organizational transactional analysis is to invent and negotiate a contracting process that locks on to individual understandings (e.g. problem as seen). Then it enforces a reality-constructive process (e.g. context and challenge as understood in clear thoughts) that enables the awareness to find the relevant focus in a multifocal world. It is then possible to integrate role aspects as well as dynamics and organizational structures in change design and intervention planning.

Different cultural and different economic challenges

We are glad to be able to compile in this book a rich variety of articles written under differing circumstances and from different cultures. So we invite you not only to look for content but also for specific understandings of economic circumstances and the described consultancy challenges as our authors use both implicit diagnoses and interventions. To speak in systemic terms: their explicit and implicit reality constructions helped to allow individual learning and learning on an organizational level.

We distinguished the following general worldwide social and economic situations. This means different implicit transactional analysis applications in and for organizations

- in developing and emerging economies or societies
- in reductive economies or societies
- in balanced economic growth
- in split economies or societies

Developing and emerging economic challenges

Here we present spotlights on and insights into learning processes (Jose Tafoya, Mexico), team integration (Suriyaprash and Mohanraj, India) as well as a training project (Colin Brett, South Africa). There is also a clear business developmental process (Radhakrishnan, India and Dhabar, India). This chapter finishes with two interviews about organizational transactional analysis in China (Thomas Ohlson) and in Costa Rica (Joaquin Granados).

The cognitive and emotional processes focus on personal development embedded in growth-oriented team processes and imply the overall allowance to individualize. This means that differences are o.k. and the existence of mutual acceptance of different viewpoints are seen as growth in the options a company can offer. This is coupled with the business needs that individuals are conscious of, the impact of cultures, religious belief systems and social limitations. Transactional analysis and its core values fit perfectly into these needs on all levels.

Challenges of economies with reduction processes

But what is the added value of consultants if growth cannot be promised and hope cannot be generated? What if adaptations to business challenges could not be aligned with personal needs? Does the positioning of the consultants permit balancing of the three-cornered contract when he has to work on acceptance for losses in a restructuring process? Or are interventions on a psychological level a support for messages “from the great powers”, as Fanita English called them in her famous theory of the three-cornered contract?

Does transactional analysis deliver a message under these circumstances? Or do we want to have a message in a limited world where growth is no longer the overall solution? How do transactional analysis consultants, trainers and coaches handle personal growth linked to new or downgraded social positioning in a limiting situation?

A lot of questions will come up, whereby people can also experience and learn. For example - “This is a learning process in which you adapt to a lower position and stabilize yourself on an emotional level.” And consequently “you are more flexible in different surroundings.” It is our emotional and ethical competence that changes processes when

under pressure and it does not deliver the implicit sarcastic message “This enables you to pass a grievance process at a higher speed”.

This requires a cultural development in the companies to take part responsibility and formulate a mission statement for sustained growth and qualitative developments rather than focusing on quantitative parameters.

Also transactional analysis could refocus on its social responsibility and the capability of its members to promote social development and progress in different specific ways by varying socio-economic surroundings. Society itself has to learn how to deal with reduction processes.

In this field we see a challenge and an opportunity for global transactional analysis to promote this and to deliver solutions for a limited world.

Miho Endo from Japan shows us how to use basic values and attitudes of the Japanese culture to support unemployed people. She shows us how to use the learning team and confront them on their way towards realignment to more mobility and flexibility and how to understand specific and new job expectations in new business cultures. Günter Mohr and Anette Dielmann (Germany) stress the staff reduction process from the TA perspective. Thomas Steinert (Germany) delivers a change management perspective that integrates cultural development as well as a methodology on how to cope with anxiety and uncertainty during change and restructuring processes. Servaas van Beekum (Australia) leads us into the mourning process and its relevance for change management processes. The psychodynamic perspective is introduced.

Challenging in variety - balancing economic challenges

This overall situation places emphasis on transitional processes. Sabine Klingenberg (Germany) presents an organizational diagnostic tool based on the racket system theory. Lucy Fredmann focuses on criteria for healthy organizations in the USA. Sam Lloyd shows us the application of the drama triangle in conflict situations in the USA. And Abe Wagner (USA) connects transactional analysis ideas to the Blanchard leadership theory. In the western hemisphere this social reality with a split between rich and poor was regarded as a social

“solution” for poor or emerging countries with a dominant ruling social group. The weaker the social systems in Europe become the stronger these specific social structures become in the western hemisphere. The social fact of “having a job or not” becomes more dominant as a factor in working life or in preparing people. Felipe Garcia (USA) identifies an increasing competitiveness. Rosza Kraus shows us a TA application in Brazil. M. Laugeri, Switzerland, outlines and thoroughly discusses the chances and challenges in working with the emerging ideas arising out of the developmental processes within a company. She gives an insight into how to balance and to pair up top-down approaches with bottom-up ideas. Anita Mountain (UK) focuses on the new role of women in the economy.

Transactional Analysis Writing Revisited 1995 to 2005

Literature Research

Re-reading the themes, topics, challenges and issues in the literature from 1974 to 1994 really attracts my attention. The majority of authors focused on the organization, expressed thoughts on reality construction either explicitly or implicitly. Only a few continue to think and diagnose in a linear causalistic manner. The solution is moreover a developing process. This is also true for the literature we found for the period of time focused on in the book at hand.

If this can be stated as state-of-the-art, then transactional analysis in and for an organization is quickly developing in the right direction.

During the literature research that took place in November/December 2005 as a pre-study for this book project, about 40 database sources were investigated with the aim of finding the most recent publications about transactional analysis in an organizational context. Here we like to say thank you to Velichka Dimitrova who has conducted the literature research with patience and intuition. You'll find the main results at the end of this book.

One-World Organizational Transactional Analysis

More and more groups of people are becoming aware of the effects of globalization on their life and work – whether it is by buying a laptop in America from Europe via eBay or working in a global team, conducting

telephone conferences via Skype or participating in an ITAA conference taking place in various different international locations.

Thanks to international certification, the work of transactional analysts has long since been internationally quality controlled and comparable, thereby being well ahead of the practices of other associations.

Work in the TA fields of clinical, educational and consultancy work takes place in practice on a predominantly national basis. However, as a result of globalization, the work and consultancy carried out in the field of the organization of transactional analysis is, even today, subject to global influences for all but the smallest companies, and for the national and global players it has long been managed and organized on an international basis.

English is becoming the standard language of management and for some time now the use of American versus British English has been a cultural issue in projects: in other words, it also becomes a power issue in international projects if one brand of English gives one party a "home" advantage. Enlightened international projects use so-called "mid-Atlantic English" and in European projects the authors even use and write contracts in "mid-European English", which allows all nations to make linguistic and formulating errors, but contractually records the objective and the contributions used to achieve the objective, so that subtleties of formulation cannot later be used in a power maneuver or succession game to the disadvantage of one party.

In organizations which work towards consensus, this kind of understanding is part of the everyday culture of the organization.

We believe that the work of the transactional analyst in the field of organization in the globalised company environment should include this aspect of mediating for the parties between different linguistic and cultural worlds, and contracts should be explicit. In relation to many of the texts in this book, we ask readers whose mother tongue is English for this linguistic cultural understanding.

To complete our introduction we would like to come back to the question of language, the clarity of what has been written and the organizational-cultural understanding that is woven into it and that we mentioned at the beginning.

An important German writer, Max Frisch, once said: "Even the simplest conversation can only succeed with the goodwill of the

listener." By this he meant what transactional analysis would probably call "think your way into your partner's frame of reference".

So please read the contributions in this book with such goodwill and understanding. We have only "smoothed" them into standard English to a limited extent, or not at all, since we see it as a very real and worthwhile ongoing task of transactional analysts to "want to understand" in international encounters.

We, the editors of this book, make the following offer to our readers: we want to continue to make sure that the voices of authors from all over the world are heard in future. Please send us your case histories and articles.

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