

Developmental Action Inquiry: A Distinct Integral Theory That Integrates Developmental Theory, Practice, and Research In Action

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Introduction

In this paper, we offer an introduction to our work over the past 40 years of developing the distinctive integral theory, practice, and types of research known as Developmental Action Inquiry (DAI), including the most recent empirical and clinical findings using the **Harthill Leadership Development Profile (LDP)**.

We will first describe and demonstrate three distinctive features of Developmental Action Inquiry: 1) its basis in an ontology and epistemology that distinguish among four possible territories of experience; 2) its injunction to interweave 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-person research in the midst of one's practice with others; and 3) its recognition of three different types of research findings (single-, double-, and triple-loop feedback) and their impact on subsequent practices. We will follow this introductory section by describing the 3rd-person, psychometric instrument called the **Harthill Leadership Development Profile** and the ongoing validity-testing research we are performing on it in the fields of our practices. Then we will share some of the more provocative findings from recent research. In this section we focus on the potentials and limitations we observe in the Expert and Strategist action logics. We also introduce a few of the findings from two doctoral dissertations just completed this spring. (In the context of our "in action" presentation at the conference itself, we will be interrupting the presentation at several points in order to invite the audience into some 1st- and 2nd-person research exercises together.)

Theoretically Distinctive Aspects of DAI: The Deep Four

In one of his early books, *Learning from Experience: Toward Consciousness* (1972), Bill Torbert critiqued the positivist, objectivist theory-data model of modernist science and instead named four distinctive territories of experience that humans seek to coordinate and align both in theory and in practice: first, *the outer world* (as seen and otherwise sensed by a person or measured by an instrument [including others' actions seen from the outside – altogether, what modern science calls 'the territory']); second, *the self-sensing of one's own embodiment*, breathing, moving, perceiving, etc.; third, *one's own ongoing structures of thinking and feeling* (which in dialogue with others in a scientific community of practice generate what modern science calls 'the map'); and fourth, *the intentional attention* (which can be distinguished from the other three territories, can experience all three simultaneously, and can be voluntarily cultivated in adulthood, but rarely has been in our culture, up until the recent growth of adult development theories and practices [Kegan, 1994; Ouspensky, 1949; Torbert, 1976, 1987; Trungpa, 1970; Wilber, 2000]).

In the *Power of Balance* (1991), Torbert described how anyone can confirm for him or herself the reality of each of these four territories through thought and attention experiments, somewhat like Descartes' doubting procedure to establish the indubitable fact that we think. To highlight this difference between his 'theorizing about trans-theoretical experience' and Ken Wilber's (2000) effort to create a 'comprehensive intellectual map of all experience,' Bill sometimes calls these four, mutually-orthogonal "territories of experience" the *Deep Four* Ken's four-quadrant AQAL model the *Flat Four* (since Ken's four quadrants are all cognitive categories that tend to keep our attention fixated within the single 'thinking' territory [as most of you, our readers, are, likely, as you've been reading this; now?]). The words for the Deep Four territories of experience are obviously also cognitive categories, but, as the "deep" four, these terms invite us, not just to 'think' the categories, but also to experience – now, in each present moment – the pre- and post-conceptual realities to which they refer (e.g. the color and texture of the 'outside world,' the 'inner sensing' of our own breathing, moving, and feeling, as well as the kind of 'attending' that can "taste" this external text, one's own breathing, one's thinking (about these words now), and one's inquiring into the very source of attention all at once, simultaneously, e.g. now) (see Table 1).

Territory	Experience
First	Outside events: results of actions, observable phenomena
Second	Own sensed embodiment and performance: one's own behavior, breathing, skills, patterns of action
Third	Action Logics: cognitive/affective structures, models, meaning-making-in-the-present
Fourth	Intentional attention: presencing awareness, vision, intuition, inquiry-into-origin-and-consequence

Table 1. The Deep Four Territories of Experience

Described in these ways, the Deep Four territories of experience constitute what we think of as the 1st-person field of action inquiry, bounded by the current limits and usually-unexamined assumptions of the self's capacity for perception and sense-making (i.e. the specific developmental action-logic through which one currently encounters the world, as will be described below. Given these limits, a more full apprehension, understanding, and engagement of reality requires two additional aspects of all human lives -- the 2nd-and 3rd-person fields for 1st-person work and play.

1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-Person Fields of Inquiry

The process of inquiry or research in action is a means of attending to experience of the world, including our dynamic sense-making of that experience, as well as adaptive engagement. By adaptive engagement, we mean those times when we (the person, team, or organization) are intentionally attempting to assess whether our intentions, plans, actions, and outcomes are aligned with one another and with changing conditions... and are responding accordingly. For some, this process is very rare, for others quite regular. An important question is whether and how one tests the validity of the information one is processing in real time, and **DAI** is one of a broader family of recent efforts to begin describing and defining this world of methods for valid inquiry in the midst of action (two others are action science [Argyris et al, 1985]) and Senge's [1990] five disciplines).

The theory, practice, and research methods associated with developmental action inquiry (**DAI**) all point toward the capacity for individuals, teams or communities of practice, and larger organizations and institutions to conduct interweaving 1st-person, 2nd-person, and 3rd-person research (studying 'myself,' studying 'ourselves,' and studying 'them') *in the midst of their daily practice* (Chandler & Torbert 2003, Torbert, 2000). In contrast to modern science – which offers a model of 3rd-person research “on” “subjects” (who are, ironically treated as objects) – **DAI** is a model of research on oneself and with others that requires a high voluntary commitment by participants, as well as increasing mutuality and collaboration among them (McGuire, Palus, & Torbert, 2007).

A third distinctive feature of **DAI** is that progress occurs, not just by incremental single-loop hypothesis or market testing, but also by double- and triple-loop learning and change, whereby the very assumptions of one's organization's, team's, or personal action-logic transforms (double-loop learning) or aligns across all four territories for a moment (triple-loop learning). When, during our personal, relational, and collective actions and inquiries, incongruities are found across the four territories of experience (e.g. an unintended result, an ineffective performance, a strategy that feels inconsistent with one's integrity, a lie, etc.), action inquiry gradually generates, in the 1st-, 2nd-, or 3rd-person human system, the capacity for these three distinct orders of change.

The fourth distinctive feature of **DAI** (the D in DAI) is the developmental theory used to map the evolution of the action logics through progressive forms of increasing complexity, differentiation, and integrity at the personal, team, organizational, and institutional scales (Torbert, 2000a, 2000b). This theory hypothesizes a specific sequence of action-logics (Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, Achiever, Individualist, Strategist, Alchemist, Ironist, Elder are the names of the personal action-logics) through which any human system can (but may not) transform, as it gradually gains the capacity to monitor all four territories of its activity and to develop greater congruity, integrity, and mutuality among them. Single-loop, incremental learning is practiced increasingly regularly as a person masters the Achiever action-logic. Double-loop, transformational learning is first explicitly recognized at the Individualist action-logic and becomes a touchstone of the Strategist action-logic. Triple-loop inquiry in-moments-of-action is increasingly practiced in everyday life at the Alchemist and Ironist action-logics (Torbert et al., 2004).

Overall, **DAI** theory and method strikes a different balance from Wilber's AQAL model. **DAI** theory and method put primary emphasis on the four attentional and experiential territories of experience we can engage at each moment, rather than on four conceptual fields. **DAI** puts secondary emphasis on interweaving 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-person and practice, rather than bifurcating attention between the individual and the collective. And **DAI** puts tertiary emphasis on creating communities of living inquiry with single-, double, and triple-loop learning at their heart, rather than communities of shared belief.

In attempting to assess empirically who acts regularly at which action-logic and how persons at a given action-logic fare in the rough and tumble world of everyday life, let us look next at the historical evolution from the Loevinger SCT instrument to the Harthill LDP and then at some of the field research using the Harthill LDP.

The evolution from Loevinger's SCT to the LDP

Now let us explore how second-person conversation during a team meeting or at a family dinner may be more or less action-inquiry-oriented depending on its degree of openness to inquiry into its own status as an ongoing activity. Speaking is the primary and most influential medium of action in the human universe - in business and politics, in school and in science, among parents and children, and between lovers. Does a given conversation go on without testing its own efficacy until it is interrupted by accident (e.g. the phone ringing), or by pre-arrangement (e.g. class time is over), or by someone's exit? Or is there regular inquiry about whether the participants understand one another's comments (typically generating single-loop changes in what one says to get the point across)? Is there also occasional double-loop inquiry about whether other conversational strategies may improve the creativity of the conversation? Is there ever triple-loop inquiry into the basic premises of the conversation and the possibility of reframing them?

Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (SCT) is a language-based instrument, which delineates pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages of self-development originally designed to address women's issues. An example of this gender focus is evident in a handful of items included in the original test such as "The worst thing about being a woman...", "A good mother...", and "For a woman a career is..." (Loevinger, Wessler, and Redmore, 1970). This test includes thirty-six open-ended sentences that aim to measure a broad range of content: "moral development, interpersonal relations and conceptual complexity" (Loevinger, 1998, p.3) and correlate with eight stages of ego development (Loevinger and Wessler, 1970, p. 186-7). Loevinger called her latest stage of ego development "Integrated self-actualizing identity" and suggested, quite peculiarly, that "because this stage is rare in most samples and there are major differences among qualified raters both as to the description of this level and application of the description in specific cases, under most circumstances it is best combined with the (prior) Autonomous stage (p7)." She did not imagine, theorize, or research the possibility that integrity may be the fruit of developing a post-cognitive, observing, listening attention that registers ongoing transformation across all four territories of experience and all action-logics. Thus, for example, she offers neither theory nor method for scoring this developmental stage.

Working in tandem for many years, Torbert (1987) and Cook-Greuter (1999) set out to modify the SCT in several ways. First, they sought to increase its face validity and usefulness as a work-related, leadership development instrument by creating and validating work-related stems, starting from Molloy (1978) "A good boss..." Harthill has continued and extended this work, so that the Harthill LDP now has nine work-related stems, including stems about power, time management, and teams, that replace prior stems emphasizing gender or that had the lowest correlations to overall protocol ratings. This is a meaningful and unique contribution because it expands the scope of generalizability of the Harthill LDP test to better map management oriented topics that are at the heart of developmental action logic implementations in organizational contexts.

Another unique feature of the Harthill LDP is that the LDP has now twice refocused the Loevinger definitions and scoring manuals for the later action-logics. Cook-Greuter (1999) undertook the first revision. Herdman-Barker and Torbert have undertaken a second revision, aligning the scoring criteria more closely with the Alchemist and Ironist constructs found in Torbert's (1987, 1991, 2004) work and increasing the degree of difficulty of rating an overall profile as showing regular mastery of the Alchemist action-logic. One of the new criteria is whether the sentence completion "treats attention/conscience/ consciousness as a process distinct from thinking and acting." For example in a response to the "I am" sentence stem we see nuances of this criterion:

I am, therefore I think' – Descartes got it the wrong way round. Our thoughts and emotions are an inevitable aspect of our being – delightful, painful, exciting, infuriating – but can hide our inner depths from us.

In the above example we are illustrating how one person differentiates the thinking territory from the more inclusive attention/conscience/consciousness territory.

Another new criterion of an Alchemist sentence completion is whether it conveys "passionate, artistic self-expression, not hyper-rational." For example, in the following example of a response to the "I am" sentence completion stem we illustrate what we mean by the passionate and not hyper-rational.

I am... a riot of differing roles and impulses held together in a loose alliance by something I call me, I am mostly happy and amazed, by any rational analysis my existence is such a staggering improbability that delighted laughter is the only possible response.

In other words, our scoring criteria for the Alchemist are emerging from a theoretical perspective that treats it as critical to distinguish simultaneous experiential contact with the four territories of experience from sheer cognitive complexity and clever, fashionable, postmodern wordsmithing. We are looking for a weave between cognitive and relational strands and for a unique and glimmering oddness that shines through Alchemists we meet. In addition, based on our coaching, consulting, and workshop contacts with people scored at postconventional action-logics (to be described below), we have raised the number of Alchemist stems and the number of categories those stems must fall into for a total protocol to be scored early Alchemist or full Alchemist. All this, we believe, increases the construct validity of the Alchemist designation when it is used to summarize the center of gravity action-logic represented by a person's LDP.

Over the past twenty years of ongoing research and validity testing of the LDP in field conditions (e.g. executive coaching and organizational change projects), Harthill has shifted the focus from using the measure only for third-person adult development assessment to using it in the context of 1st- and 2nd-person adult development and transformation as well. In doing so, Harthill re-invented the key names and descriptions of the Harthill LDP to become more descriptive and actionable and less evaluative and abstract than those associated with the Loevinger SCT. Thus, we reconstructed such terms as 'from lower to higher stages' to 'from earlier to later action-logics.' We changed particular 'stage' names from Conformist to Diplomat, from Self-aware to Expert, etc. Likewise, we fully rewrote and continue to amend the 20-plus pages of action-logic related feedback that anyone taking the Harthill LDP today receives as part of the feedback package (along with introducing a 2/300-word commentary written for that particular protocol). All these changes make it feasible and effectual to use the instrument and to offer feedback on people's performance on it in action research situations. These changes seem to us an improvement in accuracy and objectivity. They also make it feasible to for us to give individual participants and the institutions involved in the action research useful feedback. This feedback at times generates or supports double-loop, developmentally transformational learning, in addition to testing the external validity of the LDP. We will discuss this in greater detail below. To further establish the value inherent in using Harthill LDP for research and adult development tasks we explore the reliability and validity of the LDP below.

Reliability Assessment of the LDP

To ensure the validity testing of this instrument, Harthill has invested in reliability assessment, which is an important first step in testing the psychometric value of the LDP, a prerequisite for measurement validity (Schutt, 2004). To assess the reliability of the LDP, we conducted two reliability tests. First, we tested the extent to which the set of 36 stems can be aggregated to one score reflecting profile action logic. To do so we tested the internal consistency by calculating the Cronbach's alpha score for the 36 stems. Cronbach's alpha values range from zero to one, one indicates perfect internal consistency and zero indicates no internal consistency. In general Cronbach's alpha values higher than .8 are considered satisfactory as indicators of internal consistency (Schutt, 2004). Our analysis of the internal consistency of Harthill LDP was built on 791 profiles and generated a Cronbach's alpha of .906, a relatively high value indicating good internal consistency that justifies the aggregation of stems into one score reflecting a single action logic.

Another dimension of reliability testing concerned the assessment of inter-rater reliability. As the majority of stems included in the current version of the LDP are built on prior validated work by Loevinger and Cook-Greuter, we have explored the extent to which the 6 novel business-related stems introduced to this version yield consistent scores. This type of reliability assesses to what extent two scorers scoring the same set of new stems generate similar or identical ratings. This type of reliability is especially important in this context as scoring profiles reflect a complex rating task (Schutt, 2004) that was not built on established scoring manuals (scoring manuals for the new stems are currently being constructed). Inter-rater reliability values ranges from -1 to +1. -1 indicates that the two scorers are strongly negatively correlated. Zero indicates that the scores assigned by the two scorers are not correlated and do not share a common ground. Finally, +1 indicates that the scores assigned by the two scorers are perfectly aligned. The initial, pre-manual inter-rater reliability test of the six newest stems on the Harthill LDP test included two scorers scoring 103 examples of each of the six stems separately. The inter-rater reliability of their coding was .74, excellent reliability for an initial test, though it will be important to show a correlation above .80 in the post-manual test with different scorers. A summary of the reliability test results are available in Table 2 below.

	Internal item-profile reliability	Inter-rater reliability
N included in analysis	791 profiles	103 examples of each of 6 new stems
Range of potential outcome	0 -1	-1- +1
Reliability score	.91	.74

Table 2: Summary of Reliability Test Results

Validity Assessments of the LDP

What follows is a brief discussion of the value of the LDP based on a research study that took place over the course of several years with a total of 791 participants who were profiled using the LDP and were engaged in the practices of DAI. To further establish the psychometric value of the LDP tool we present key findings concerning *factorial validity and predictive validity* that emerged from the data.

Factorial validity

Recent efforts to establish measurement validity included a factorial validity study. This study compared factor analyses among all 36 items in pre-conventional and conventional protocols (Achiever and earlier) against all 36 items in protocols scored as post-conventional (Individualist or later). Not only are the factors in the two sets different from one another, but the structure of the factors is different as well. For the earlier action-logics, stems load on eight factors, mostly each stem on a single factor (only two stems load on 2 factors). For the postconventional action-logics (Individualist and later), stems loaded on 11 factors, but loadings were not confined to one factor per stem. More than half (52%) of the stems loaded on two factors or more (9 stems loaded on 2 factors, 7 loaded on 3 factors, and 3 loaded on 4 factors). These results illustrate the fundamental difference between the conventional and postconventional action-logics and also echo the adult developmental theoretical foundation on which the Harthill LDP is built. The limited but focused loadings presented by the conventional sample represent a relatively simple mental map, with Aristotelian-ly distinct, independent categories (“nothing can be both A and not-A”), as one would theoretically expect of action-logics up through the conventional. In contrast, fewer factors along with complex sets of loadings suggest a systems-oriented, inter-independent mental map. Such a movement between personal “independence” and “inter-independence” (McGuire, Palus & Torbert, 2007) occurring in the movement between the conventional and post-conventional action-logics is predicted by all the currently-in-ongoing-revision developmental theories (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Torbert, 1999, 2004; Wilber, 2000, 2006).

Predictive Validity of the LDP

As readers familiar with validity research on the Loevinger SCT know, there is an extensive body of internal validity research about it (Westenberg et al., 1998), but there is still very little external validity data available. Our action research orientation integrates our own first-person efforts to use the theory to make our own leadership more timely, effective, and transformational and in our second-person teaching, coaching, and consulting efforts to help others become more effective. For these reasons most of our validity assessment efforts have been dedicated to generating and measuring the external validity of the LDP measure. What follows is a brief illustration of how we approach this external validity testing in the action of our research.

Offering feedback and coaching to people who take the measure has permitted one set of external validity tests. Developmental theory suggests that people at earlier action-logics are more likely to avoid feedback, especially of a double-loop nature that questions their current action-logic, whereas people at later action-logics will increasingly seek out such feedback and associated transformational opportunities. When we offered a purely voluntary opportunity for feedback on their measured action-logic to 281 adults who had taken the measure, we found that an increasing proportion of each later action-logic in fact chose to receive it. None of those measured Diplomat sought feedback, and only a small minority of those measured Expert did so. A bare majority of those measured Achiever sought feedback, whereas a large majority of those measured as Individualist or later) did so. This rank order correlated perfectly with the theoretical prediction and thus confirmed the validity of the LDP in a powerful, new, unobtrusive way (Torbert, 1994).

We have also found statistically significant differences that account for an unusually high proportion of the variance between conventional and postconventional CEOs in their success in leading organizational transformation over four year periods, with the support of consultants (Rooke & Torbert, 1998). Of the ten organizations studied, five were led by CEOs at the Strategist action-logic and five by conventional action-logic CEOs (two Achievers, two Experts, and one Diplomat). All five of the postconventional Strategist CEOs generated successful organizational transformation, but only two of the conventional CEOs succeeded. After the initial study was published, we reanalyzed the data, adding the consultants' action-logic scores (three measured as Strategists, one measured at Alchemist). The consultant measured as Alchemist had been the lead consultant in the two cases of conventional CEOs who generated successful organizational transformation, suggesting that (as the theory would predict) Alchemists are more effective at working with action-logic discrepancies than Strategists. The re-analysis showed that the combined action-logic scores of CEO and lead consultant in each case accounted for 59% of the variance (according to the Spearman Rank Order test, beyond the .01 level of significance) in whether the organization successfully transformed (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

Why and how would leaders' action-logics be so critical to successful organizational transformation, especially given the paradox that their intent is to generate more empowerment, more initiative, and more distributed leadership throughout the organization? A qualitative re-analysis of the ten organization study suggests that later action-logic CEOs and consultants tend to engage increasingly often in an increasing proportion of 27 types of action research (1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-person research x 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-person practice x past, present, and future) (Chandler & Torbert, 2003). This increase in, and intensification of, interpersonal and organizational Collaborative Inquiry (the name for the organizational action-logic analogous to Strategist) increases the likelihood of generating organizational transformation. In short, each later postconventional action-logic person or team engages in a more consistent inquiry process to determine what action is timely now, thus generating more instances of single-, double-, and triple-loop change in conversations, meetings, procedures, and strategies than does conventional action-logic leadership.

In general, what one sees in the transformational focus of the Harthill LDP is typical of developmental transformations from conventional action-logics to postconventional action-logics. First, the 3rd-person, Expert, Empirical Positivist (the name for the scientific approach analogous to the Expert action-logic [Torbert 2000a and b]) scientific base of the original Loevinger SCT instrument is preserved and enhanced. Second, new, post-conventional action-logics are conceived, defined, and operationalized through Cook-Greuter's, Herdman-Barker's, Rooke's, and Torbert's work. Third, the 3rd-person measure is re-oriented so that it can play a role in a wider field where the effort is to integrate it with practitioners' 1st- and 2nd-person research and practices in the midst of daily work and life. Thus, the LDP orients toward a relatively-late-action-logic Developmental Action Inquiry paradigm of social science, wherein a psychometric measure is developed as-part-of-an-integral-system-of-mutually-responsible-action-and-inquiry-in-the-present.

What follows are three illustrations of the implications of DAI in action, supported by the Harthill LDP. The illustrations are based on Herdman-Barker's coaching and consulting practice, and the research of McCallum and Nicolaidis. In the illustrations that follow we bring special attention to three unique contributions of DAI in action: first, Herdman-Barker explores the role of fear in catalyzing or inhibiting evolution across the action logics; second, McCallum attends to the phenomenon of fall-back, a temporary regression from optimal developmental capacity while in action under duress (do late action-logic leaders experience less fall-back than early action-logic leaders?); third, Nicolaidis explores how postconventional action logics relate to and benefit from the experience of ambiguity.

Fear and transformation in action: Expert and Strategist Leaders

Triangulating the findings of the LDP with a 1st-person estimate of one's own action-logic and a 2nd-person action-logic estimate (typically derived from a group analysis of a difficult conversation [Rudolph, Taylor & Foldy, 2008]) supports "seeing behind the curtain"; this process helps us to detect patterns of errors or gaps in perception and, for all concerned, to see "mistakes" in our conceptualizing the world where we have assumed none have occurred. By adding 1st- and 2nd-person inquiry to the LDP feedback we seek to "round out" the nature of the action logic – gauging how conceptual complexity relates to in-action behavior; and we seek to bring the individual face-to-face with his or her reality. Once incongruities or obstacles to action come into personal consciousness, they can be transformed– if this is desired.

Since fear is often understood as a basis of distortions in perception, judgment, and action, we turn attention to its implications for the action logics, in particular, the Expert and the Strategist.

Expert Action Logic

Although, as stated above, we have found that persons are more likely to initiate a search for feedback and transformation at later action-logics, we have also found that, when coached by LDP-authorized, postconventional consultants, managers scored as early as the Expert action-logic can move beyond initial resistance and fear of feedback to the notion of transforming beyond their current approach. The quality of reflecting, with positive regard, upon the structure and implicit limitations of one's action-logic frequently ignites a realization of the very presence of a structure, thus validating the LDP's finding. In observing one's tendency to be subject to an event, double loop insight erupts; for example, the nature of the Expert action-logic becomes visible and felt to the Expert. The fear holding the individual in its grasp is observed as the person feels safe to question his or her assumptions. Moreover, in workshops and coaching sessions, it is often the individuals profiling at this action logic who express heartfelt moments of realization and, it is about these individuals that we hear tales of change, redirection and hope feeding back from the organization.

For example, Herdman Barker worked with Michel (not his real name) two years ago, when he profiled at the Expert action-logic and was a Senior Vice President of Operations in the aviation industry. Initially, Michel expressed his resistance, in a workshop, to the LDP. Questioning its validity and reliability, he focused his attention on the technical accuracy of this 3rd-person feedback, effectively distancing himself from the inquiry. *"Explain the statistics to me....How do I have more scores in Diplomat but still profile at Expert....I did this in a rush how does that affect the rating?"* While such questions are helpful, there was an air of dismissal and defense around Michel. Whereas the rest of the group sat forward, intrigued by the framework, drawing on personal experiences, delving into the guts of the theory and engaging in robust inquiry, Michel, consistent with the Expert action-logic, first opposed and then withdrew.

Later, in a one-on-one conversation, it quickly emerged that he believed that it would not further him to go beyond a set way of working; an approach to management that he had held for many years. Eight years before, following an MBA and under the tutelage of a coach and mentor, Michel split away from old limiting habits by adopting a code, of sorts, that focused on personal mastery. It became, he believed, the mainstay of his success. By the time of the workshop, however, Michel was struggling to excel in an environment that required more than individual excellence. Although he was still improving incrementally (through single-loop feedback), he was standing still developmentally (i.e. in terms of double-loop change that could expand his capacity), and that, until this one-on-one conversation, had escaped his notice. The content of his code was irrelevant; its importance lay in its being a structure; an unquestioned and unquestioning way of relating to the world. Michel had stuck, for many years, to what he knew --preferring not to move outside of his comfort zone.

In the process of describing his approach and its limitation Michel began to make visible his assumptions and his fears-- he quickly seized the moment: *"I've not changed my thinking in 8 years... I've not questioned my approach despite new experiences. I've kept to a prototype... it didn't dawn on me to notice 'it.'"* Michel's way of organizing himself and his interrelationships moved on during the workshop; his manner of speaking began to invite feedback and he expressed personal vulnerability and doubt. One participant observed *"Most of us expected you to stand miles away from this type of discussion. I felt uncomfortable, at first, when you were so defensive ...I thought, here we go, Michel's going to block this... I could not have predicted your reaction and your support."* Eighteen months later, Michel was acknowledged as one of the more collaborative and supportive leaders in the organization and a strong performer. To an observer it would be difficult to imagine him otherwise.

Strategist Action logic

At first glance, many Strategists who operate in 'middle' roles in large organizations and within the shadow of 'top' conventional power seem to act very differently and very much like the Strategist CEOs from our earlier study, reported above, who successfully led organizational transformations. The mid-level Strategists often *begin* to seek more imaginative headroom by asking "What is it that we do not currently envisage or experience?" They also may be less likely than conventional action-logic managers to shy away from the risks of uncertainty and befuddlement. In addition, they possess the capability to notice the system of which they are a part, and akin to comedians, are more able than earlier action logics to touch the nerve of the organizational body. This, however, often becomes a mixed blessing as the organization develops an allergic reaction to their touch. Thus, when we listened deeply to their reflections and examined their spheres of influence, we observed that they also, in emotionally charged situations, became hamstrung in the midst of action. They displayed a hesitation in translating their insights to action, turning their backs on transformative intervention and quietly yielding to the organizational momentum. Their reactions were, perhaps, based on reason; conventional desires for acknowledgement, inclusion, community etc. In our assessment, this preference for safety in decision making pointed to a tendency for Strategists to defend their world and to fear exclusion. This is consistent with both McCallum (2008) and Nicolaidis' (2008) research described below. Strategists do not always succeed in generating spheres of mutual, creative power. They too may be brought to doing the bidding of fear.

Thus, while in general Experts tend to resist transformational change and Strategists tend to promote transformational change, we see that in certain environments (e.g. a skillful debriefing of the LDP by a coach) Experts will embrace such change and in certain environments (e.g. a mid-level position in a large, conventional organization) Strategists will cease seeking such change. This illustrates how our 1st, 2nd and 3rd person inquiries in action continue to identify and make increasingly explicit, barriers such as fear that hold back the potential for action and transformation.

Fluidity of Development in Action: Exposing Fall Back

While development is often understood as a process of moving from one stable action-logic to the next more open action-logic that transcends and includes the earlier action-logics, recent research indicates that development is actually a more fluid phenomenon, with more likelihood of falling back to earlier action-logics in action than has previously been imagined. Although theoretically the postconventional action-logics give persons or teams increasing capacity to influence their environment, in fact it appears that developmental capacity seems to fluctuate to some degree based on the context in which a person is situated and on the contingencies that they are facing in the moment. Indeed, using the LDP, observation, journals, and interviews with participants in a Tavistock style group relations conference, McCallum (2008) has recently found that participants at all action-logics experienced “fallback” periods during the stressful and ambiguous event, when they acted from earlier action-logics. The difference among the participants was that the later their action-logic, the quicker the recovery of one’s center of gravity action-logic. For example, the one Alchemist in the study described being aware of the regression as it was occurring and was able to recover and learn from the fallback within seconds.

Finding Potential in Ambiguity – exploring the later stage action logics

A final new study (Nicolaidis, 2008) helps us understand the relative context-dependence of Strategists by comparison to Alchemists. Nicolaidis conducted in-depth interviews with nine persons scored at postconventional action-logics about their relationship with ambiguity. Her study included one Individualist, two Strategists, two Late Strategists/Early Alchemists, three Alchemists, and one Ironist. She found that, unlike people at conventional action-logics who tend to try to avoid ambiguity, all of her postconventional sample saw creative potential in ambiguity. But within this broad similarity, she found four distinctive responses to ambiguity: the Individualist *endured* it; the Strategists *tolerated* it; the Alchemists *surrendered* to it; and the Ironist *generated* it. More generally, Nicolaidis found that the Individualist and the Strategists worked with ambiguity on particular occasions for particular ends; whereas, in a figure/ground shift, the Alchemists and the Ironist experienced ambiguity as the creative, ongoing element of all experience. This finding is consistent with the change from a primarily cognitive/structural approach to experience to a primarily attentional/spiritual approach in the shift from Strategist to Alchemist.

Conclusion

We conclude this chapter with the hope that we have provided new glimpses into the experiential, action-oriented, and empirical aspects of Developmental Action Inquiry. We also hope we have provided a useful introduction for fellow developmental researchers and practitioners to the evolution of the Harthill LDP, as well as to the many new 1st- and 2nd-person ways of ongoingly testing the validity of this measure while using it to support transforming leaders and transforming cultures. How to develop communities of inquiry in real time that offer and digest single-, double-, and triple-loop learning can become a primary question for the social sciences and social arts when one adopts a postconventional set of methodologies such as those in the Developmental Action Inquiry paradigm of the next several centuries.

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