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Editorial

*There's vitality in you that comes through you into the world.
If you don't let it come through, the world won't have it.
It is up to you to keep the channel open and to close the channel
when there are beliefs that limit your potential.
When the beliefs empower you, keep them open.
—Martha Graham*

This issue comes to you just after the 2007 conference held in Austin, Texas. The conference this year was not only successful due to the high caliber of the presenters, but also due to innovations such as the Starter Certificate Course, which involved the co-operative work of certified Level III trainers. As one of the trainers involved in conducting the course, I was thrilled to see how well we could work together and how smoothly it ran.

On a more personal note, you will enjoy reading Julie Ray's own perspective of the conference in "Deep in the Heart of Learning."

This issue of Imagine is very exciting because it is built around a group of contributors who are all working in their own way on a higher spiritual level. I feel that the three main articles represent the very spirit of what Accelerated Learning is about and what IAL stands for.

Our interview this month is with NLP master Robert Dilts, who was one of the plenary speakers at the conference. His talk was developed around his model, Logical Levels of Thinking, which shows us a way we can support other people at different levels. He gave us this model for sponsorship:

- Guide/caretaker: Provides information and resources.
- Coach: Gets a specific behavior.
- Teacher: Shows a mental model.
- Mentor: Touches a person's heart; they transmit by example of who they are.
- Sponsor: Cares deeply about someone. Gives them a blessing.
- Awakener: Recognizes something bigger than oneself. You have to be awake yourself.

How do we support people? Gandhi expresses the solution well when he says: You have to be the change you want to make in the world.

From Japan, David Howland shares with us his personal use of the Portfolio as a tool for reflection and self-knowledge. This goes along with the thinking about how important one's own personal development is.

Doug Zahn, a respected and long-time member of IAL, shares with us his personal, humanistic way of creating a relationship with his students and trainees.

Finally, my teacher and renowned Feng Shui specialist, Lucy Harmer, contributes an article about how Feng Shui principles can enhance the classroom atmosphere and environment. I believe such information represents a vital part of AL in that it lies in the realm of de-suggestion and helps us dissolve negative energy, which often lingers in a classroom.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of IMAGINE and wish you all an excellent—if belated—2007!

Bonnie Tsai
(IMAGINE Editor)

Inside the Heart of Learning: Impressions of a Conference

By Julie Ray



More than 280 people gathered together for IAL's 32nd annual conference, held January 11-14, 2007 in Austin, Texas. They came from dozens of communities across the United States and from over 18 nations, including Singapore, New Zealand, Nigeria, Mexico, the Netherlands and Peru. Together they found themselves *Deep in the Heart of Learning*.

The conference gave participants the opportunity to share, explore and experience Accelerated Learning (AL), a delivery system for learning that is revolutionizing the way knowledge is acquired by people of all ages. The broad scope of topics and sheer number of general sessions, concurrent sessions, and pre-and post-conference workshops confirms that AL is a fact of life in many classrooms, training centers and language labs around the world. It also confirms that AL is continuing to evolve, as scientists offer new research findings on brain function and the process of learning.



A lifelong adventure

In the words of Gail Heidenhain, IAL president, "Accelerated Learning is about a lifelong adventure. We hold the keys to motivating people to enhance their worlds. Those of us who have seen the results know that learning can be a continuous and joyful aspect of life for anyone of any age, regardless of geographical location or cultural background."

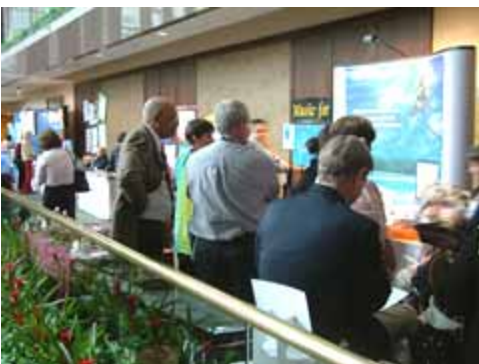
How does this work? As conference newcomers soon discovered, AL is a design that respects learner differences and acknowledges multiple intelligences. It is built upon a cycle of learning that welcomes, prepares and engages participants in learning while ensuring that they also have time to practice, demonstrate and reflect on it. As a result, learning often happens in a shorter amount of time and with greater impact than it can when information is force-fed without regard for an individual's comfort level or preferred style of learning. AL's test of effectiveness is whether or not a learner can apply what has been learned, and in this it succeeds beautifully.



Success spoken here

Keynote speaker Dr. Shirley Neeley, Texas Commissioner of Education, opened the conference. Speaking without notes, the dynamic Dr. Neeley praised the philosophy of Accelerated Learning because it gives every student the self-confidence and skills to succeed in today's world. She urged the audience to "Go out there and make it happen for all the children!"

As a demonstration of this mandate, Dr. Neeley invited a dozen elementary school students from the New Arrivals Academy to join her on stage. The Academy, which is located in the McAllen Independent School District, offers an innovative language immersion program for immigrant children in grades 2-5. As children gain language proficiency, they move into regular classes. Standing straight as arrows in red shirts and jeans and wearing broad smiles, the children explained in English where they had come from and why they loved their classes at the New Arrivals Academy.



A graduate of the Academy who is currently studying at the University of Texas at Austin told the audience that she did not speak one word of English when she and her family arrived in McAllen. "I am grateful that the New Arrivals program gave me not just language skills," she said, "but also the confidence to pursue a college education and any career I might choose."

Multiple Tracks

With a farewell song from the Academy children still echoing throughout the room, conference attendees headed for breakout rooms. Concurrent sessions were categorized by tracks, including Education, Foreign Languages, Corporate, Research and Transformation. The final track, AL Starter Certificate, consisted of a set package of sessions taught by Level III trainers. By attending each session, participants fulfilled requirements for the first week of a 3-week training leading to Level-1 certification in Accelerated Learning.



Not surprisingly, most sessions were filled with lively activity. Participants cheered, laughed, moved to music—and plunged into shared learning activities with old and new friends. They scribbled ideas onto posters and floor puzzles, tried a phrase or two of foreign language, learned to juggle, and shared stories of what worked and what didn't in their environments back home. Throughout the conference, presenters were also learners, moving easily from leadership in one room to group participation in another.

Between sessions, participants had time to network and relax. A frequent remark overheard at the coffee bar was "Great cookies!" As names and business cards were exchanged, AL's diverse nature and advocates became readily apparent:

"I train reservations agents for American Airlines. We believe in the philosophy of Accelerated Learning. I'm here to take my teaching skills to a higher level, but I'm also interested in this for my own lifestyle. I even brought my husband, because I think he will find new ideas here."

"I teach statistics at a community college. I've been coming since 2000 because I always learn something."

"After so many years in the learning field, I wanted to give something back. So my husband and I developed a package of materials for parents to show them how they can help their children learn. We are offering it free to any interested community group if they promise not to charge anyone when they pass this along!"

"As a corporate facilitator, I'm eager to learn the principles of AL and how to connect the dots."

"The young mothers we work with in our Health Department courses on parenting and nutrition respond to multi-sensory training. Many are not auditory learners. So visuals, music and interactive activities help us connect with them."

"With generally low birth rates in the European Union, it's important to motivate older workers to keep on learning. They need appropriate opportunities so their skills continue to grow with the times. The AL philosophy can be an important part of the process and I'm here to promote that idea."

"I was exposed to Accelerated Learning when I first became interested in teaching Spanish to children. But it has impacted me as a person, too. I have learned you can do whatever you want to do."

"We apply AL structure as we train our sales people and dealers on the philosophy of Herman Miller as well as its products. We're also here at the conference because the company will be expanding into global markets and this is a great networking opportunity."

Too much fun?

For some attendees, Accelerated Learning was a new approach. To those accustomed to traditional training and teaching formats, the high-energy games, music and "fun" of many of the interactive sessions were puzzling, at least initially.

"I didn't know I was going to be standing here trying to juggle three scarves...but I didn't do too badly. And I got the point once I tried it: You have to tell yourself you can do something."

"In a session on program design, we did an exercise they had used in a Shell program for new college graduates. We were asked to list the five most important values we live by. No one had ever asked me that before. Then we had to start eliminating the least important values. Wow! It made me really think. I wasn't the only one, either. Everyone was into it."

"Some people new to AL may go to a session that's mostly about play and assume that's Accelerated Learning. I hope they will recognize these activities are a means to an end. I teach at a technical college, and I know the real benefits of the



AL cycle combined with interactive activities. You get greater retention of information (and my lectures are mini-lectures under 20 minutes). You get new skills learned more quickly. You can shorten classroom time. For example, we offer a strategic planning course in six weeks that used to last 18 weeks. Shorter classroom time in a corporate setting means cost reduction!"

Change Projects

In an informal lunchtime presentation, Charlotte LeHecka, Ph.D., and Bill Wilson, both past presidents of IAL, described their three-day consulting project in the Dutch protectorate of Aruba in November 2006. Their mission was to help Aruba start to transform its outdated educational system; to accomplish this they established six design principles based on Accelerated Learning.

According to Wilson, Aruba's population of 100,000 makes it an ideal place to demonstrate how change can happen. "We were working with people who were very responsive," he said. Dr. LeHecka added, "This is an ongoing project, and it was very rewarding to be involved in it. We feel we have at least set the intention there to embrace the principles of Accelerated Learning."

Resources

The conference also offered a variety of resource materials and books—from IAL's bookstore to an interesting selection of vendors. And an interactive gallery prepared by IAL Executive Director Roland Boettcher brought the process of Accelerated Learning to life through colorful posters that invited personal written responses by viewers.

The week began with sunny days and temperatures in the 60s and ended with predictions for snow and the threat of cancelled flights and missed connections. But even the incoming ice storm could not dampen the spirit of this event. It's always warm in the heart of learning.

About the author

Julie Ray is a Texas-based writer and communications consultant. She was introduced to Accelerated Learning in 2005 by Mary White Kennedy prior to work on a Shell project.

Interview with Robert Dilts

By Bonnie Tsai

Robert Dilts led a 3-hour General Session at the Austin conference on "Promoting Different Levels of Learning and Change." Dilts is a worldwide leader in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), or "the art and science of excellence." NLP began in the 1970s when John Grinder, a linguist, and Richard Bandler, a psychology student, decided to study how top people in different fields obtain their outstanding results.



The questions they sought to answer were: "How do successful people communicate so effectively?" and "How can other people use these strategies to enhance their own communication skills?" For the last three decades, their answers have enabled people to achieve excellence in personal development, counseling, business and education.

As a trainer, practitioner, developer and prolific author, Robert Dilts has made tremendous contributions to NLP and is known to be a man of great honesty and integrity. He generously agreed to an interview with me during the conference. Following are highlights (edited for clarity) from our conversation.

How has NLP evolved since its creation in the '70s?

In the beginning it was based largely on thinking strategies. Now that it is in its third generation, it has transformed into a system that works more on the level of beliefs and how they enhance or limit our needs and wants according to whether they are positive or negative.

What is the future of NLP?

NLP is working in a more symbolic, metaphoric way, and it is moving towards a deeper level of change and transformation. For example, we are finding even deeper connections between the mind and physiology of the human being. And there is evidence of a collective mind that is able to think together. This group mind, which generates collaboration, is based on the concept that the whole is greater than the parts.

How do you account for the differences in attitudes towards NLP in Europe and the United States?

NLP started in the United States in an earlier age. The time was kind of like the Wild, Wild West—without any controls or standards—so unfortunately it became watered down and distorted. It also became very competitive and less refined and was often used as a way to get “a quick fix.” This led to a lot of disappointed people who paid a lot of money for training and got little or no return for their investment. Even today, the United States still has no official organization to control standards. In contrast, many countries in Europe, such as Germany, have created standards.

Another difference is that NLP reflects American culture and consciousness because it was developed here. Therefore when Americans come into contact with it, it seems obvious to them. For other cultures, however, NLP is a revolutionary new way of thinking about the world and ways of communicating.

How do you stay so young looking?

It is a question of using what you teach other people: eat healthy food and exercise every day. I also have a purpose to what I am doing that gives me energy, and I work in positive belief states.

Beyond Journaling: The Life Portfolio

By David Howland

The portfolio—once the domain of stockbrokers and artists—is now an accepted tool for learning assessment in the mainstream academic environment. Yet its potential uses are far greater than this.

The portfolio can help us chronicle our life journey by representing the many facets of our lives, both analytical and creative. In contrast to a journal, which often limits us to the written word, a portfolio contains elements of our cognitive and emotional growth that better represent who we are and what we do. It shows examples of the breadth of our uniqueness, and it helps us see connections as we work to understand ourselves and our place in the world.

Traditionally, the portfolio has been a collection of representative pieces of academic or professional work used for assessment where more quantitative instruments, such as tests, would not be appropriate. But going one step further, the role of the portfolio is to “reach out beyond assessment and engender changes that could not have been foreseen” (Belanoff and Dickson, 1991, p. xxiii). This is our point of departure for examining the life portfolio.

Uses of the life portfolio

The life portfolio may be used by anyone who would like to understand the diversity and richness of his or her own life. Therapists, teachers, life counselors, and human resource specialists may find life portfolios particularly helpful as a way of stimulating creative thought about the self and understanding the strengths, needs, hopes and fears of the portfolio compiler.

However, the portfolio compiler does not need to work with a mentor, nor should s/he feel that the contents of the life portfolio must be shared with anyone. The contents and their analysis can be used exclusively for personal reflection and growth. Contents can be added and deleted from the portfolio as needed, and they can be organized and reorganized within the portfolio as a way of sifting through life experiences and finding ways to juxtapose them with personal meaning.

Organizing the life portfolio

Although the life portfolio can be simply a collection of life artifacts representing the compiler—such as photos, recordings of musical performance, poems, and mathematical computations—organization of the individual elements can help in a variety of ways, especially as the portfolio grows. To begin with, we will consider two types of organization: horizontal and vertical.

Horizontal organization can be represented by two types of processes: diachronic and synchronic. In a diachronic portfolio design, items are entered chronologically and remain documented in that way within the portfolio. This type of design is important if chronology and its implications, such as growth and development over a period of time, are important to the compiler.

Synchronic organization refers to a collection of items that hold equal importance to the compiler where growth and development over a period of time is unimportant. The compiler may choose, for example, to assemble a portfolio of pre-decided elements and no more. In this case, the portfolio's contents are more or less complete, and the next step would be vertical organization followed by analysis and/or reflection.

Multiple Intelligences

For vertical (or category) organization of the life portfolio, Howard Gardner's (1999) model of multiple intelligences is a comprehensive way to understand ourselves in terms of the wide range of abilities we all possess. Human beings are emotional and intellectual composites with multiple, complex needs for outlet. Therefore, a journal may not represent all of our strengths and expressions accurately. Because Gardner's model reflects this, using it to construct a life portfolio is extremely helpful.

Multiple intelligences (p. 72) include:

- **Musical:** understanding music (not necessarily a technical expertise)
- **Logical-Mathematical:** understanding numbers and symbols and their logical use
- **Linguistic:** understanding and effective use of spoken and written language
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic:** understanding of expression with the entire body
- **Spatial:** understanding and sensitivity to form, color, line and shape
- **Interpersonal:** understanding human interaction
- **Intrapersonal:** understanding oneself
- **Naturalistic:** understanding nature and the environment

Nuts and bolts

The physical shape of the life portfolio can take many forms. For example, it can be a cardboard or wooden box, a plastic file folder or accordion folder, or even a piece of fabric that bundles the various elements together.

The first step is to select the horizontal organization. Will it be a set collection of pre-decided pieces or a work in progress that grows over time? The next step is to select the vertical organization. One way to do this is by making separate sections in the portfolio and labeling each one according to the multiple intelligence categories described above.

Note that sections and their elements can change; in fact it is the reflection on the organization process and not rigid categorization that is important. Some elements may fit into several sections; therefore, it is up to the compiler to decide how the organization best represents the way in which s/he wishes to represent her/himself.

Following is a list of suggestions for elements that can be included in the life portfolio, but it is not exhaustive. The compiler should be creative and add any elements that are uniquely hers/his.

Musical: compositions written with or without musical notation, lyrics written especially for an original song, recordings of a musical performance or improvisation

Logical-Mathematical: original puzzles, flow charts, accounting/bookkeeping records, manuals or directions for projects, budgets

Linguistic: original word games, essays, letters (written by, to or from the compiler), short stories, novels, poems, language doodlings, academic papers, business reports, any drafts of written work, audio and/or video recordings of storytelling, speeches or presentations

Bodily-Kinesthetic: dance notation, playing strategies for a sport or game involving movement (such as Dungeons and Dragons), video or still photography of dance/movement or sports activities

Spatial: paintings, sketches, calligraphy, sculpture, cartoons/animation, original film work, video or still photography of any of these

Interpersonal: written communication between the compiler and others, original case studies, original written dialogue chronicling or depicting actual communications, reflections on interpersonal communication

Intrapersonal: traditional journal entries, character sketches of oneself, clay work depicting oneself, artistic work involving handprints or footprints, masks of oneself

Naturalistic: garden or living space design, video or still photography of flower arranging or gardening accomplishments, arts and crafts involving natural materials (such as dried flowers)

Organizing and reflecting

After assembling the life portfolio, the compiler can begin to see his/her emotional and intellectual life unfolding as a mosaic of personal, academic or professional artifacts that have come together for a purpose. They are testimony to a rich inner life that is ready for examination and reflection. The next step is to look candidly at the life portfolio and consider its significance. The following questions can serve as a guide, but ultimately the compiler is responsible for interpretation and projection.

The life portfolio compiler can ask any or all of the following questions again and again as elements are added to or deleted from the portfolio and as the portfolio begins to take shape.

1. Why have I chosen these particular artifacts of my life?
2. Why have I arranged them in the way I have chosen? What are the connections?
3. What story does this tell about me?
4. What are the implications of this story?
5. If I were to look at this story as someone else, what conclusions would I draw?
6. What are my strengths, weaknesses, hopes, dreams and fears?

7. What areas of my life would I like to develop more?
8. What, if anything, am I searching for?
9. Should this portfolio change? If so, how and why?
10. What's next?

The compiler should ask and answer only those questions that seem to be appropriate for reflection at the time. Questions that might seem too painful or taxing should be noted and saved for a later time that is more conducive to a response. The compiler can even save written or recorded reflection responses and make them part of the life portfolio.

As questions are asked and topics come to light, more and more elements can be added to the life portfolio. As it grows, it becomes a more intimate medium for exploration, self-reflection and self-awareness.

Conclusion

As with any reflective process, life portfolio analysis can only be as effective as the compiler's input allows it to be. It is up to the compiler to decide how to use it, and to what end. Practically speaking, the life portfolio can be an extremely useful vehicle for demonstrating self-expression and affirming creativity and intellectual abilities.

Parents may want to use it to demonstrate their children's talents and strengths in addition to a more traditional academic record when moving to a new school. Job hunters or employees seeking new positions can use it to show dimensions of their potential that might not be easily explained in other ways. Friends and family members can use it to reaffirm themselves in their relationships or to reach new depths of communication as they share and reflect on a portfolio. Clients may use it as a component of a therapeutic process, with or without a therapist.

Ultimately, the life portfolio is a celebration of the self, a window for looking outward and inward, and a life tool for knowing.

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About the author

David Howland is an expressive arts therapist, teacher, teacher trainer, and professional musician. He is an avid traveler and collector of musical instruments. He lives in Japan with a ferret named Habib.

Relationship is Job One in Learning

By Doug Zahn

Although I have resisted it many times, I continue to see that the quality of my work in any environment is directly related to the quality of the relationship I have with the person or persons with whom I am working. Therefore, my guiding principle is: "Relationship is Job One in Learning."

Yes, the technical expertise I bring to the course, workshop, or consultation is a necessary component for success. However, if I do not create at least a *working relationship* with my students or clients, the event is likely to be ineffective.

Working relationship

Two agreements are necessary in a working relationship:

1. Both parties agree to tell the truth.
2. Both parties have aligned goals.

Since we are dealing with human beings, we can assume they will inevitably tell lies—either intentionally or unintentionally. Hence, a third agreement is required:

3. Both parties agree to clean up any lies they have told as soon as they become aware of them and then work to address any difficulties these lies have caused.

I am talking about intrapersonal truth here, or what one personally knows to be so, not Truth, as in a Law of the Universe or a Truth known by a Deity. One is speaking one's intrapersonal truth if one is fully disclosing what one knows to be so.

By this definition, what one must disclose to tell the truth is only information relevant to the other and the project at hand. I am not advocating attaching a loudspeaker to one's brain and broadcasting all thoughts that pass through it. Doing so gets one an admission ticket to a psychiatric ward.

The aligned goals need not be identical; in fact, they generally are not. What is necessary is that they not conflict. Some lies are easier to clean up than others. Some can only be resolved by the other gracefully forgiving them. In a working relationship, promises are kept and results are produced—hence the name.

Aligning on goals: The wanted conversation

Aligning on goals involves having a complete *wanted conversation* with the other. This is one in which I ask the other what s/he wants from the consultation, course, or workshop. I clarify what I hear as wanted until the other says I have accurately heard what s/he wants. We continue this process until all things s/he wants from the event have been identified and clarified.

Synergistic relationship

Even more results are produced in a *synergistic relationship*. This is a working relationship in which the parties make additional agreements:

- Both parties unilaterally give up the right to put the other person down (berate, belittle, insult) either overtly or covertly.
- The relationship has a larger purpose than its own survival.

Once again, the humanness of both parties will result in the first of these agreements eventually being broken. Thus, there is another agreement:

- Both parties agree to clean up any put-downs they utter as soon as they become aware of them.

Synergy is a Buckminster Fuller label for the phenomenon of the result being greater than the sum of the inputs. Most of us have had a relationship where this has occurred. We love to work with this person and look forward to our meetings, which produce as much in one hour as is produced in three- or four-hour meetings with others. The environment Caine and Caine (1994) label “relaxed alertness” is also present in a synergistic relationship.

Put-downs are the kiss of death to risk taking, creativity, and honesty in a relationship because they destroy any chance of it being synergistic. As with lies, however, some put-downs are more difficult to clean up than others. If a relationship’s primary purpose is to preserve itself—rather than make some contribution to the quality of life on the planet beyond the lives of the two participants—this is a recipe for disaster.

Eventually one party will withhold a key piece of information for fear that revealing it would cause the other to leave. As soon as this occurs, truth is no longer being spoken in the relationship, and it ceases to function. This is often an issue in romantic relationships, less often in working relationships, although it can also arise in this context. For example, this may happen when an employee decides everything must be done to continue working for the current boss forever.

Creating a working or synergistic relationship

Creating a working, or synergistic, relationship is the hard part, and I do not minimize the difficulty. When reading the above

definitions, people often respond with, “Sure, these relationships would be nice, but I work in the real world. Not Fantasy-land!”

I, too, work in the real world. And I admit that not all of my relationships are working or synergistic. In fact, few of them are because their creation and maintenance are hard and time-consuming. But I do find it worth my while to do this with important relationships in my life.

Working or synergistic relationships can be intentionally created. Doing so requires the courage to have some direct and admittedly unusual conversations at the start of working together. My approach to this is to let the other know what I promise to do in this relationship:

- Tell my truth (fully disclose my position, rather than being economical with the truth by leaving out key pieces of information that may influence the other).
- Clean it up when I realize I have not done this.
- Align on goals with the other and tell the truth if I am not willing or able to maintain the alignment.
- Treat the other with respect by never putting the other down, overtly or covertly.
- Clean it up when I do.
- Identify a purpose for the relationship that is separate from and larger than the survival of the relationship.

Creating a working or synergistic relationship in a consulting environment

In consultations, my goal is to communicate these promises during our first meeting. This generally stimulates some conversation about exactly what I mean. I answer these questions and address whatever concerns show up. Then I explain my strategy for making these promises by describing working and synergistic relationships and telling of my desire to work within relationships like these.

I emphasize that this is not an attempt to manipulate my clients into making comparable promises to me. Rather, I invite them to join me in these promises to see how the relationship evolves. I repeat as clearly as I can that this is a choice, and that I will work with them in this way regardless of their choice.

I also communicate that I know this is an unusual way to start a consulting relationship and assure them it is not my intention to make them uncomfortable. What I am interested in is working with them to create a relationship in which we will be able to do great work together.

I also emphasize that:

- Trust in the other to keep their promises is at the heart of such a relationship.
- This trust does not appear instantly, but will take time to develop.

Creating a working or synergistic relationship in a classroom environment

When I was teaching university statistics courses of 5-250 students at the graduate and undergraduate levels, I discussed these relationships on the first day of class and included a description of working and synergistic relationship in my hand-out. Then I invited the students to join me in creating them, rather than the traditional adversarial and hierarchical relationships found in the classroom.

For the first assignment, I asked them what three results they hoped to produce in their career, how they saw this course being of assistance to them in achieving their career goals, and if they were willing to join me in making the promises to create a working relationship. Almost all of the 1000 + students I had in my later years at Florida State University accepted this invitation, often with statements about what a delightful surprise it was—especially in a statistics course!

A key part of the assignment was asking students about the connection they saw between this course and their career goals. This was how I conducted the wanted conversation in large groups. I invited students who did not see a connection to come to my office hours for a conversation to help them see the connection. I also held some of these conversations the first day of class with resident skeptics who were certain an introductory statistics course had no relevance whatsoever to their planned career.

Finally, I offered to accompany any student to the Dean's Office and petition for a waiver of the course requirement if we could not identify a real connection between what was available in the course and their career goals. However, introductory statistics is such a great course to teach that I never had to make a trip to the Dean's Office!

I spent all of this time and energy on this topic at the beginning of the semester because of my belief that motivation is not something we do to students. Students do it to themselves. Motivated behavior in a course (reading assignments before class, doing homework, coming to office hours) appears at the point when students see a connection between what is available in the course and what they are committed to accomplishing in their careers. Thus, aligning on goals for the course is critical, both for motivation and for the quality of the relationships in the course.

Breakdowns and typical responses to them

Breakdowns (failures to produce intended results) will naturally occur, even if a working or synergistic relationship is created. Many of our initial, reflexive reactions to breakdowns (e.g., I did nothing wrong here; no breakdown occurred; the breakdown is your fault) are not useful. I refer to these responses as "cursing the breakdown." Responding to breakdowns in this way will not preserve the relationship. Another approach is required.

Resolving breakdowns effectively

An effective response to breakdown is to "bless the breakdown." By this I mean to regard the breakdown with respect and curiosity, with an eye toward addressing the question, "What had to be present in order for this breakdown to occur?" Doing this requires getting past the natural, defensive reaction of cursing the breakdown. This challenging step is much easier to take if one has done the relationship work necessary to establish a working or, preferably, synergistic relationship before the breakdown occurred.

To bless the breakdown, I find it useful to look first for its source, which can be located in three possible places: interpersonal, intrapersonal or technical relationships. Interpersonal sources include hierarchical or adversarial relationships, failing to treat the other with respect, not having a complete wanted conversation, making incomplete requests or promises, and stopping a meeting before all parties are clear about who will do what, to what standards, by when.

Intrapersonal sources of breakdowns include attitudes (e.g., engineers are not a credible source of information; I must give an answer to this question right now; I cannot tell my boss "No"). They also include mismanagement of emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or confusion. For example, some people get anxious in the middle of the wanted conversation (thinking it is taking too long) and terminate it prematurely. The result is that they remain ignorant of some of the items the other wanted to get from the meeting.

Technical sources of breakdowns include giving technically inaccurate information and not verifying that the client has understood the technical information that has been presented well enough to be able to use it in the required context. Once sources of a breakdown have been identified, the challenge is to stay in *bless the breakdown* mode by asking questions like:

- How did I contribute to this happening?
- What can I do to reduce the chances of this breakdown source appearing in the future?

Most of us encounter a strong pull to revert to cursing the breakdown by making pronouncements like:

- If I had better clients, this would not happen.
- No one can work with clients with bad attitudes.
- I have too much on my plate to be able to be effective in *all* my consultations.

In this situation we face a daunting question: What are you most committed to? Getting the job done? Or being right?

Summary

Relationship is job-one in learning. Working or synergistic relationships can be intentionally created. Breakdowns will naturally occur. Blessing the breakdowns by looking for

interpersonal, intrapersonal, or technical sources for the problem is an effective way to identify and resolve it. This involves change, which is uncomfortable. But the results are worth it.

References

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Feng Shui in the Classroom

By Lucie Harmer

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to teach in a classroom that felt uplifting and inspiring? Have you longed to create an atmosphere in your classroom that encouraged students to learn easily? Tapped into their creativity? Allowed you to experience the joy of teaching without having to discipline constantly?

The ancient Chinese art of Feng Shui (pronounced *fung shway*) can show you how. The London Feng Shui Society defines Feng Shui as “the art of analyzing and influencing the interaction between people, buildings and the environment in order to create a better quality of life.” It is based on the movement of Ch’i (pronounced *chee*), or energy, in and around our physical world. Already an important tool in the home and office, many Feng Shui principles can also be applied to the classroom.

Energy needs to flow

One of Feng Shui’s major principles is that every space within a room should be used in a proactive and positive way. In other words, there should be no lifeless areas in your classroom where blocked and stagnant energy might pool. Therefore, make sure you use every area in your classroom in some way. If you have a corner where no one goes, dedicate it to a specific activity and put up inspiring pictures that will draw your students to it.

Light can increase or decrease energy

Stagnant energy can also be created by a lack of light. Most of us already know that lighting is extremely important in any learning situation. Scientists have shown that it directly affects the pineal gland, which not only affects our capacity to learn, but our mood as well. One in four people in Europe suffers in the winter from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is caused by a deficiency in sunlight. Symptoms are tiredness,

depression, excess weight, diminished vision and shying away from the world.

We need to keep two factors in mind when considering lighting. The first is the intensity of the light, and the second is the quality of the lights used. Fluorescent lights are very tiring since they only give off the blue end of the spectrum and tend to flicker. The best kind of light is sunshine. Thankfully, we can now find full spectrum lighting that has the same quality of light as sunlight.

The direction of the light is also important. If you want to bring more energy into a space, use lamps that focus the light upwards. If you are trying to create a cosier, more relaxed corner in a classroom, direct the light downwards in that area.

Get rid of clutter

Another major principle in Feng Shui is that clutter represents old, stagnant, energy. To ensure that energy flows and circulates easily throughout your classroom, get rid of clutter. For example, clean out your classroom cupboards and get rid of anything you don’t like or don’t use. Discard broken items, old glue pots, and old student creations that date back 10 years! All of these objects diminish rather than enhance the vital energy of your classroom.

Books are wonderful because they represent ideas. However, if your bookcases are filled with old books that you or your students never read, they represent old, stagnant energy. By removing them, you create space for the new books and new ideas.

A lot of classroom clutter is typically made up of paper, paper and more paper. Piles of paper represent blocked creativity and missed opportunities, and they end up wasting a lot of your time. File every piece of paper as soon as you get it. If you

have huge piles of paper, sort them out weekly to keep them from getting out of hand. You may soon discover that the more clutter you discard, the more prosperous your classroom becomes.

Choose your wall decorations consciously

Children are very sensitive to pictures and paintings, which have an extremely powerful impact on their subconscious minds. Ideally, you should only hang up pictures that inspire you and your students and represent what you would like to create and manifest in your classroom. It is also great to exhibit paintings and creations that your students have done. However, these should be changed regularly whenever new projects begin. You can even ask your students to create treasure maps that depict what they want to manifest in their lives and put up inspirational sayings.

It is a good idea to walk around your classroom every month and look at each picture with fresh eyes. What is the picture telling you about your classroom life? If it doesn't feel right, let it go.

Be aware of the colours in your classroom

Always base the colours in your classroom on those you enjoy, that make you feel good. Colour preferences develop at an early age. Eminent researchers, such as Rudolf Steiner, strongly suggest that children need to be surrounded by—and absorb—certain colours at certain ages.

Colours are very powerful mood enhancers. To increase creativity, self-esteem, optimism, enthusiasm, and the well-being of your inner child, use orange. If you want to increase communication and activate the mental capacities of your students, choose yellow. If you want your students to relax, calm down, and develop a deeper understanding, use green. Blue helps to increase intuition, creative expression and inspiration. Purple is an excellent colour for deepening your perspective of life and creating a more spiritual consciousness.

Think about energy flow when arranging the furniture in your room

Careful arrangement of furniture can make a critical difference to the flow of energy within your classroom, and therefore to its overall success. It is very important that your desk be situated so that you can see the door. This gives you visual control of your surroundings, empowers your psyche, and relaxes your body.

Students who are troublesome or who are frequently sick are often found sitting with their backs to the door or between the flow of energy from the door to the window. Sometimes just placing a plant or a small cupboard behind them gives them the extra protection they need to feel safe and to thrive.

Use plants and other natural materials

Another Feng Shui principle is that plants and other natural materials add positive energy to a space. Scientists have found that many plants absorb electromagnetic pollution, increase the quality of air, and absorb chemicals such as formaldehyde. Amongst the most efficient are: peace lilies, dwarf banana plants and spider plants.

Use essential oils to clear the air

It is very easy to clear heavy energy in a classroom by spraying a vaporiser containing essential oils before you begin your lesson. This is especially helpful if you don't have your own classroom but teach in different classrooms. To do this, put filtered water in a 100 ml spray bottle and add ten to twenty drops of essential oil. (Note: Don't mix more than two essential oils at any one time.)

Choose oils that suit your needs. For example, rosemary and juniper remove heavy emotions and stimulate mental clarity. Orange increases joy and relieves depression. Basil dissolves stress and anxiety. Lavender, an old-time favourite, releases stress and mental tiredness and increases understanding. Geranium rebalances yin and yang/ masculine and feminine energies and harmonizes emotions.

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