

# The Crux of the present(ed) matter: addressing crucial questions.

## A workshop

**Nomothetic:**  
law-giving; legislative.

**Idiographic:**  
peculiar to or characteristic of one's  
private mark or signature.

### Listening

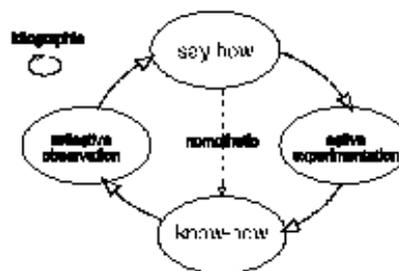
Working with clients involves speaking-and-listening.

Nomothetic approaches to the client do not problematise the correspondence of speaking with acting however - the assumption is rather that when such difficulties arise it is as a result of failing to make things simple and clear.

An idiographic approach to the client always assumes that the correspondence of speaking with acting is problematic. The particular forms of speaking and acting and their correspondence are all characteristic of the particular client.

Nomothetic and idiographic approaches to the client are therefore different ways of *listening* to the client. The principles of circularity and gathering are concerned with enabling the client to speak for himself or herself. Idiographic listening *parenthesises* what is spoken.

This workshop assumes that parenthesising is *a good thing*.



### The plus-one

How does the consultant listen to his or her listening? Is this possible? What happens when there are different ways of listening? Are there different ways of listening? To ask these questions is to engage in a critical process - to move towards an *orthogonal* relation to speaking-and-listening.

The process of this workshop is directed towards orthogonality.

### The economy of discourses

Our view is that there are different ways of listening. Different ways are constituted as different forms of *discourse*. Taken together, these discourses bring forth the 'reality' which the client, consultant and others assume in their speaking-and-listening. These discourses in this sense form an *economy of discourses* in relation to each other.

The workshop will examine the economy it brings forth in relation to the presented matter.

### **What is the matter?**

A loss of parentheses means that the consultant is not able to hear what the client is saying. This will not be a good thing for the client unless the client wants to identify with the consultant.

A loss of orthogonality means that the consultant is not able to question his or her own ways of listening to the client. This will not be a good thing for the consultant unless there are no questions to be asked about how s/he is working with the client.

This workshop is intended therefore for consultants who want to address themselves to their questions of practice: what is the question at stake?

So.

Do you wonder what's going on, what to do, who you are taken as being, why you are bothered, where you are being asked to go, when to act - what the real question is?

This workshop is to help you address yourself to your crucial question - the crux of the present(ed) matter.

### **How?**

We envisage a workshop in which:

Working alone, we become observers of our own lives, by writing about, say, a dilemma or stuckness or impasse in our work.

Working in two's and three's, we become observers of these texts by interrogating them, using our own judgements about concepts, metaphors or themes in the texts.

In the context of the group, we become observers of this analysis, using the Critik programme, and seeing what we can make of the subject matter of the text and our analysis of the text.

Working as a group, we ask where is all this coming from? We look for our investment in particular forms of discourse or speaking/listening positions. We look for connections between the dilemmas we present in our texts, and the way these become constituted in the group's economy of discourses.

### **Why?**

You are thinking of changing your work; someone else is thinking of changing your work; or you are going to continue with your work, but you want to make some changes in it.

The workshop will be concerned with the ways participants address change in their work. It is appropriate for people actively involved in development work or consultancy, whether from inside or outside.

This workshop will be of value in:

Throwing light on our implied readers and writers in the text.

Working on the implied assumptions of subjectivity at work for the participant.

Developing insight into whatever impasse is used as a starting point - uncovering its crux.

Experiencing the ways in which this is constituted in relation to the others, and interpreting that.

The method of the workshop is based on understanding self-knowledge as being impossible knowledge, so that progress is apophatic (the *via negativa*); exploring what is not known rather than elaborating what is known.