11 Learning as a subversive activity

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What is meant by 'subversive'? Is it the challenging of established forms of knowledge, or does it imply the undermining of the establishment values around the authority-figure teacher/learner relationship? In either case it can clearly be seen as a movement towards the integration of knower and known, of learner and learned. This chapter describes one approach to this movement, which is also a very clear example of the use of social processes to aid individual development, through co-counseling. It is all the more intriguing in that these personal and social processes are assisted by modern technology, by computer-assisted reflective learning. It can thus be seen to be related to the learning community (Chapter 5) and to certain aspects of learning conversation (Chapter 15).

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1979/80 academic year, a new programme director took over the Master's degree programme at the London Business School. One of the initiatives introduced to the programme was a series of Creativity and Learning Workshops in the first term (McQuillan, 1979). These workshops had four objectives: first to make it easier for students to manage a highly structured and impersonal first term by providing them with private space and some help in using this for reflection; secondly to provide alternative forms of experiential and student-centred learning; thirdly to use facilitators who had a direct relationship with the School as a whole; and fourthly to contribute to the climate of the programme by providing opportunities which surfaced and explored issues in an arena which was essentially integrative rather than win—lose. The end result of this initiative was that three alternative forms of workshop were

offered: using and writing poetry as a way of exploring ideas and experiences; exploring feelings, attitudes and forms of action through drama; and exploring different learning needs and styles in relation to the School as an environment. The aim of this chapter is to describe this last workshop. which I ran under the title: 'Learning as a Subversive Activity'.

Aims and objectives

The title of the workshop was derived from Postman and Weingartner's book (1971): *Teaching as a Subversive Activity.* Weingartner's point was that for teachers to be effective, they had to challenge and question established forms of knowledge, and thus imbue their pupils with the same attitude of mind. My aim was to enable the workshop participants to challenge and question established teachers in relation to a conscious awareness of their own learning needs, so that they were better able to digest the forms of knowledge being offered to then within the two year MSc. experience.

The workshop therefore was designed to develop an active approach to learning. It was intended to be of use to those 'who were feeling flatulent or who were suffering from indigestion as a result of consuming too much pre-packaged knowledge'. Its design was based on the assumption that different people had different learning needs originating in the particular forms of experience they had acquired and the intentions they had for their own future. The implication of this assumption was that unless people could become conscious of the ways in which their intentions and experience influenced their learning needs, they would be unable to subvert to their own ends what was undoubtedly a very rich learning environment.

The workshop was intended for a maximum of ten people, and the specific objectives were:

(a) to find ways of describing the School as a learning environment both in terms of the activities available and also in term: of their relevance to personal goals;

(b) to discover what learning needs existed, and how different people went about meeting them differently;

(c) to explore how different people had learnt differently from their past experience;

(d) to use the insights gained in the workshop to create new way: of relating learning activities to personal goals.

What follows describes the workshop from, as far as possible, tin participants' point of view. To do this I have used participants' owl comments, and a particular example of one participant's reflections Writing about this kind of process is very difficult however, not only

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because the written medium is wholly inadequate for representing the quality of different individuals' experience, but also because what I write can only be my view among many other equally legitimate views. Keeping this in mind therefore, I hope to leave you, the reader, with my impression of the value of the workshop experience.

The context to the workshop

All three of the alternative forms of workshop offered were seen as having a marginal contribution by the School. This was reflected in the location for the workshop: a basement room with a window looking up at a noisy main road within 20 feet; and their timing — seven sessions last thing on Friday afternoons. The MSc's term was ten weeks of formal teaching occupying about 30 hours per week. Their second week was set aside exclusively to Accounting, culminating in an exam. After that, Data Analysis, Macro-Economics and Organisational Behaviour occupied about 75 per cent of their time; and Working with Computers and Business Environment occupied a further 20 per cent. The 5 per cent of formal time allocated to the workshops was intended as 'private' space, and therefore it was competing with all the other demands placed on the MSc's for reading, case studies, and the various other forms of assignment generated by the formal teaching.

   There were about 80 of the 100 MSc. students in the lecture theatre where we three teachers presented the alternative workshops. I enlarged on the aims and emphasised the contract: we would work together on the basis that participants would do what they chose, express themselves in their own way, and be responsible for their own learning. At the end, 19 students signed up, and when we met two weeks later, 10 actually turned up, and 6 worked through all the sessions. This depletion in numbers was both an expression of the kind of pressure MSc's were already under in the School and also a necessary consequence of the contracting process — those who remained had chosen to stay. Some indication of the reasons for the MSc's initial choice can be seen in the following:

> I had no idea what **I** was going to get out of it, but **I** wanted to get to know people better and to be known better.

> Boxer seemed cynical, quite amusing and reasonably bright. **I** tried his workshop because the best fun people were joining up, and because it seemed the best.

A clue to the importance the group had to the contracting in of participants was that four out of the eventual six came from the same first term study group. My main concern in designing the workshop was that the group's

cohesiveness and intensity built up during sessions would be destroyed by the pressure placed on individuals through assessment and the fragmented and low energy timing of the sessions: there were no interdependencies created by the institution which supported or legitimised the group's existence. **I** planned to counter this influence by developing their awareness of their interdependency in terms of the two-year experience as a whole, and enabling them to see the extent to which their individual differences were a valuable learning resource to each other. Beyond that **I** felt **I** had to accept that there would be a considerable overhead of time that would have to be spent re-establishing the group's 'here-and-now' presence each time we started a session. After the first two sessions however, the process would depend on individuals opting into a focal role in order to work with their own experience. The quality of learning which they would then derive would depend on their commitment to learning and the extent to which the other participants could contribute their insights to that learning.

The workshop

The workshop started with us seated around a large magnetic whiteboard which was on the floor. Around it were piles of magnetic tiles and pens. The object of the session was to identify as many different learning activities — things which students could be observed doing —as possible. These activities had to be written on the tiles, and then arranged on the board so that their positioning on the board reflected their relationship to each other. The board therefore was a kind of mar of the LBS terrain over which the various activities would be experienced. The process thus disabled forms of thought which sought to categorise and classify because the board only allowed the expression of boundaries and relationships. It also helped the participants to distinguish between on the one hand the activities and on the other hand how they experienced the activities.

> I felt frustrated having to consider others' ideas. I had a prevailingly anxious feeling because we concentrated on school.

> The group seemed very interesting, and I began to realise that I learnt more from extra-curricular activities than programmed learning.

> Reticent, strained atmosphere which asked 'who is this guy? (i.e. Philip). I played fool to relax. Very unclear on what it was all aiming at eventually. I was relieved those **I** didn't get on with did not turn up.

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I was pretty sceptical about this board game thing; persevered as it might lead somewhere.

There were eight participants at the first session. Of these two did not come again, leaving the six participants who stayed with the workshop

Table 11.1: A sample of the 137 activities and their groupings

A	Making dinner Injections	K	Peer discussion Coffee breaks
B	Going to bank Loan getting	L	Theatre Restaurant
C	Tennis Gliding	M	Walk in park Getting away
D	TV Reading letters	N	Socialising with corporate people LBS discussion with expert
E	Assess my performance Having an identity crisis	O	Selling yourself Being polite
F	Visiting family Special occasion – a wedding	P	Committing crimes Stopping stealing
G	Co-operative projects Listening to lectures	Q	Projects overseas Domestic travel
H	Explain late work Library	R	Socialising with lecturers Organising revue
I	Earning money Paying for course	S	Communicating Hustling
J	Formal group discussions Making presentations	T	Being mentally and physically ill

throughout. Two further participants came along to the second session who had not been able to attend the first one. Neither of these continued with the workshop. The new arrivals meant that the terrain mapping process had to continue into the second session. The fact that they both left was of course part of the contracting in process, but it was also due to their experiencing themselves as slight outsiders in relation to the others, and the fact (I felt subsequently) that I had allowed the process to deepen too quickly.

Getting bearings on each other

By half way through the second session, the activities had been formed into twenty groups. Each group expressed some underlying theme, a feel for which can be gained from Table 11.1, which shows a sample from each group. Participants were then asked to express some of their learning goals — ways in which they would evaluate their learning looking back over the two-year experience as a whole — and to discuss what these goals meant for each other. They were asked to select one goal which was particularly important to them as an individual, and to rate the degree to which each group of activities contributed to attaining that goal. The rating took the form of a

pattern of letters along a continuum. Figure 11.1 is one example. The others were then asked to create patterns expressing how they felt the activities contributed to that participant's goal, and the different patterns were then compared. The participant ended up with different feedback on how the others' views of the activities differed in relation to his own goal. The marked differences were discussed, and then the process was repeated

for another participant.

Figure 11.1: An example of the degree to which one participant experienced the learning activities as contributing to his learning goal

I have found that exercise revealing for myself, in trying to quantify how much 'jogging in the park' helped me to 'examine my intelligence'. It made me aware of the many different ways I do learn, and where I didn't feel I was learning. The other side was discovering in a fairly specific way how my attitudes differed from others. It's a great process for getting to know others in a group. I'm sorry we didn't do more at the time.

I had no idea that anyone 'like me' would be so different ... he had totally different ideas on things I thought were conventional wisdom. I must not assume so much.

At last I began to see where the workshop was going — even though I only approximated all my classifications, when I compared them with other people I found some very great differences. I can see bits of myself in other people, though I don't understand why they think so differently from me.

I'm realising something. Can't put my finger on it but it's good.

If this whole thing means opening up, I think I can handle that.

At the end of the second session, one of the participants agreed to take on the focal role in the next session. The preparation for taking on this role had to be done outside the sessions. Part of this preparation involved two participants getting together to discuss each other's learning goals and to help the other to identify the particular past learning experiences which he or she felt were significant in influencing his or her approach to those learning goals. The process involved distinguishing a set of relevant experiences and then through active listening, enabling the other to condense into conceptual form particular ways in which he or she had experienced

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those experiences. Figure 11.2 shows the outcome of this process for

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a - A-LEVELS              b - OUTSIDE SCHOOL
c - 1ST YEAR UNIVERSITY   d - E.I.U. HOME PPOJECTS
e - E.I.U. OVERSEAS PROJECTS  f - LISBON
g - MONASTERY             h - L.C.
i - FACTORY               j - L.B.S.
k - STUDY GROUP           l - FAMILY VISITS
m - SCHOOL DAYS           n - FAMILY ABROAD
o - MID-UNIVERSITY        p - SEVILLE
q - BED-SITTER            r - DOLE
s - MULE                  t - 4TH YEAR UNIVERSITY
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                    LOW                                          HIGH

SAFE                :-cm-------d--ijpr-----ek--qs----gobfhlnt---a------:

OUT OF SYSTEM       :-am----qj-hlrngoi--kt---d-e---c--f--p-s---------b-:

CONFUSING           :-----bsao--f-nkriht-l-e-jqd-gp---m--------c-------:

STEADY              :-------cedj-lop--i-knm--fqtbrsh------g--a---------:

PRACTICAL           :-------n--m--oq-pc--al--tbr-g-jfsk--hi----e--d----:

EXCITING            :q---m--l------o-n--jakrgc-ib-fh-dtp-se-----------:

MINDLESS            :-ghisetfbmdkpocn-j--a-l-------r----------------q-:

STERILE             :--s-gh-kbedptil-fjrc---a-om--qn------------------:

OUT OF THIS WORLD   :--a--q-r-m---jo--cli-b---kn--dt-h-pef-g------s----:

REPLETE             :---m-q--o---l--nr--j---k-a--icp-tbfs-d-he-g------:

CAREFUL             :----m-nq-c--bo-s--pa-fr--te-d-jh--g----li------k--:

QUIET PAIN          :----------fspb--nec-kd-air-t-h--jg-qol--m--------:

JOLLY               :------ma--q-o--ct-rslk--b-djn-pi-------e-g--f-h---:

LOVED               :----------ma-qk---jlrbin-ceopd-sf-t---h-g--------:

ORIENTING           :------c--q-n-m-a--obr-l-sfd--ketgp-----ijh--------:

PLUSH               :--------s-rmc--tq--a--o-i-b-kp---d-j-fhenlg-------:

LAZY RUSH           :-------s--qr-a-m-j--oi-b-klt-d-p-e-ch-g--f-n------:

LIBERATING          :----ma-q---l-nr-k-cjb-o--tdig-e-h-f----p-s--------:

BASIC               :------n-a-m-c-ol--q--btpe-fdk-gjs-h-----r-i--------:

QUIET               :-------c-mn-a--l-d-o-k-bj-pie---hq--frt--s--g-----:
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Figure 11.2: The concepts produced by one participant reflecting on past experience relevant to his particular learning goals

one participant. Each continuum expressed the degree to which each experience was experienced in terms of that concept. The preparation involved inputting these patterns into a computer in order to use it to discover the patterns implicit in how the participant had patterned his experiences — a computer assisted reflective learning technique (CARL for short) was used which supported the reflective process (Boxer 1979).

Enter CARL

Each session lasted about 11/2 to 2 hours. During sessions 3,4,5 and 6 we worked with three participants in the focal role. It was decided to move the final scheduled session to a Saturday — which came immediately after the MSc's end of term 'binge' — and it went on for about 8 hours. About 2 hours were spent by each participant in the focal role, although much more time than this was spent with the earlier ones. The average was slightly more than my previous experience had suggested, which fitted with my feeling that the group was never really able to settle down. The essence of the reflective learning process was in developing the participant's consciousness — the size of whole he or she could think in terms of, whether in relation to self or others (Boxer, 1980). Although the process was focused on one participant's views, the process of empathising with and enabling the thinking of that participant was equally as important a part of the learning process. My role was therefore to model the process of empathising myself and through this to influence the forms of communication through which the others sought to enable the thinking of the focal participant. Before discussing this process further, however, it will help to consider what the focal participant was focusing on.

The co-counseling process which produced the patterns shown in Figure 11.2 developed a mutual understanding and awareness between the two participants involved. In order to achieve the aim of using the group to help the focal participant to develop his own understanding and awareness, the group had first to share the context defined by the set of past experiences. The computer was used to provide a focus for this process by generating a printout shown in Figure 11.3 based on the patterns in Figure 11.2. This printout showed the ways in which the focal participant had experienced the experiences as similar in terms of his own concepts. The focal participant was asked to explain the significance to himself of each experience and then to try and rationalise the groupings. The notes generated by this process for this particular focal participant are shown alongside the computer printout This rationalising was felt at times to be very irrational since there was no obvious connection between the experiences grouped together. It was only after the

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group had understood *how* the focal participant had experienced the experience that the connections became apparent.

Figure 11.3 The ways in which the experiences had been experienced as similar
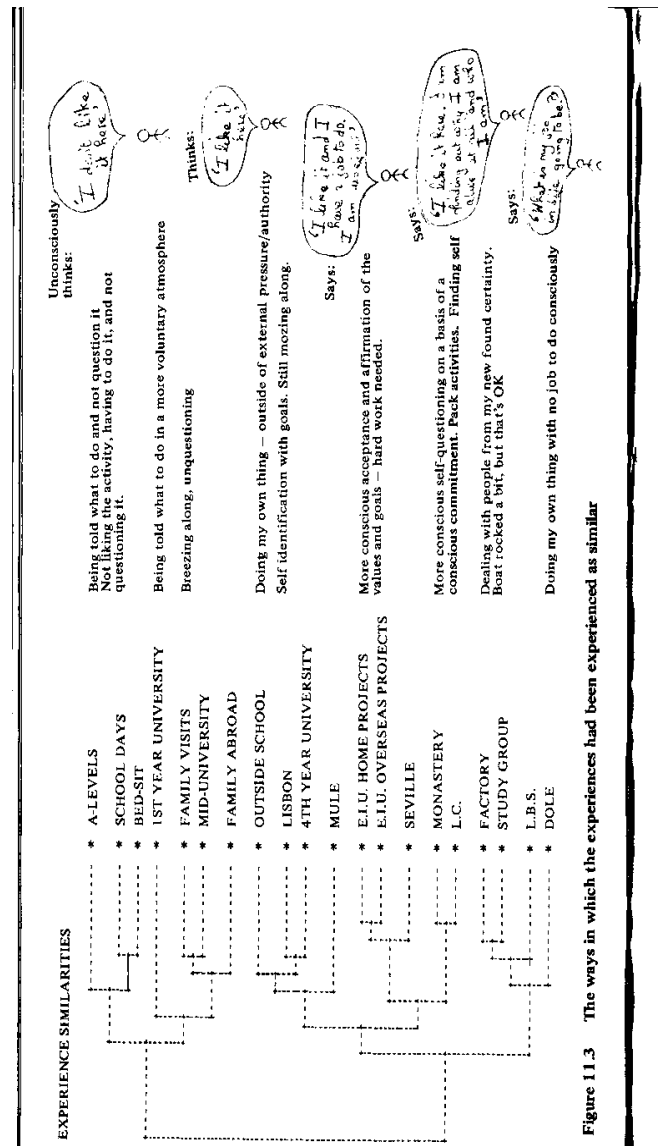
Figure 11.3: The ways in which the experiences had been experienced as similar

Tenderised somewhat. Immediately afterwards I didn't feel helped or hindered for that matter. Just a bit exposed. I had great difficulty fording words to express areas of experience. Those used were all others' suggestions, not mine. No absolutely new discoveries, but made certain things more conscious and thus easier to deal with.

I was very surprised to find so little in common — deep down — though at the time I couldn't see what was important to me.

Getting to know him through his important events and activities was fascinating. Self-analysis by computer? The idea is ridiculous, the concept intriguing, the practice quite practical. The objective viewpoint given him by the computer printout distanced him enough to allow him to see his activities in a new light. The juxtaposition of perhaps less likely events forced him to really analyse what happened in those events, and how he learned from them . . . I learned from helping him to learn. Trying to open new approaches to his experiences with him was a stimulating experience for me.

The effect of working through the focal participant's experiences in this way was to generate the feeling of a shared consciousness: it felt as if we were all on the 'inside'. This provided the foundation on which the group could develop a way of describing the gestalt in how the focal participant patterned his experience. This 'way' took the form of language which the group negotiated with the focal participant so that it had appropriate connotations with how he experienced. The computer printout which supports this process is shown in Figure 11.4. Based on the patterns in Figure 11.2, it showed both the gestalt in pictorial form, and also as a list, so that the patterning concepts could be related in terms of larger patterning concepts. The significant thing for the focal participant was not the accuracy or 'truth' of the groupings but rather the extent to which he could develop forms of meaning which could embrace the concepts — the reflective learning process.

At some point the focal participant felt unable to identify any larger patterns which felt solid. The writing in Figure 11.4 indicates the point at which he stopped. What was left then was a number of large patterns describing different ways in which he patterned his experience — different modalities. Some of these modalities supported each other, and some conflicted and created tensions between them. The reflective learning process for the focal role ended when the ways in which the modalities supported and conflicted with each other had been recognised and owned. Figure 11.5 shows the result of this process on paper for the focal participant.
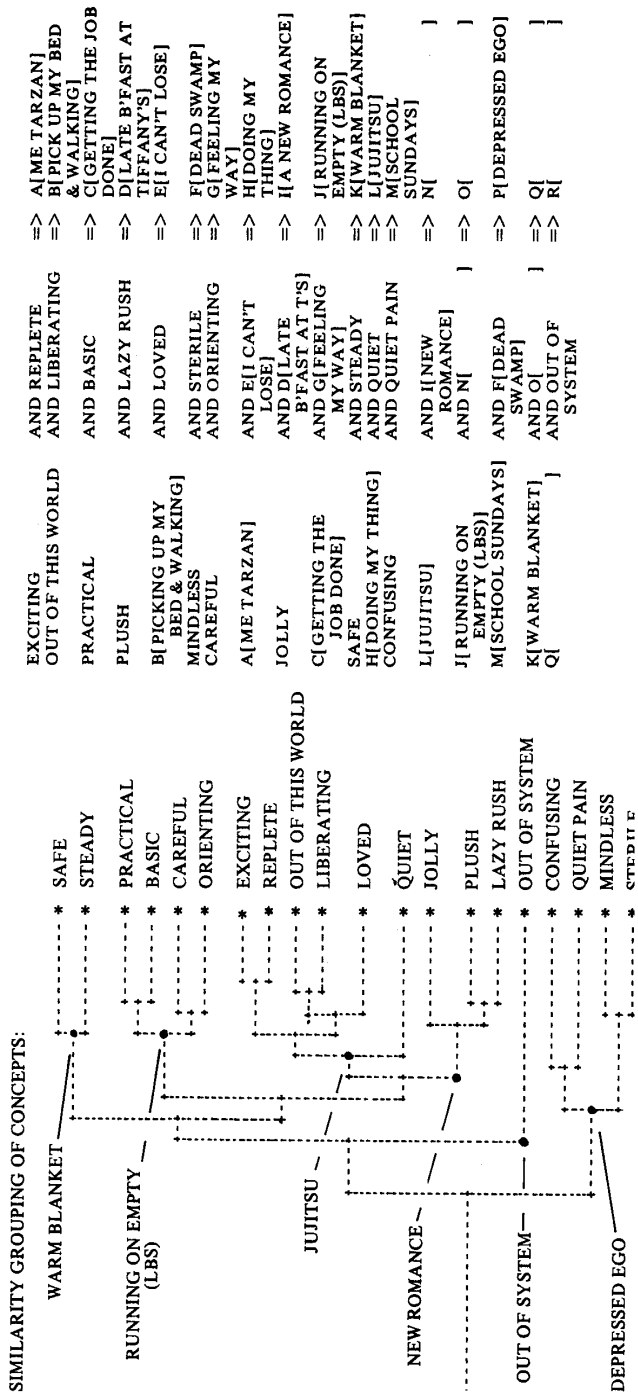
Boxer, P.J. (1981) "Learning as a subversive activity" in Boydell, T. and Pedler, M. (eds) Management Self-Development: Concepts and Practices, Gower.
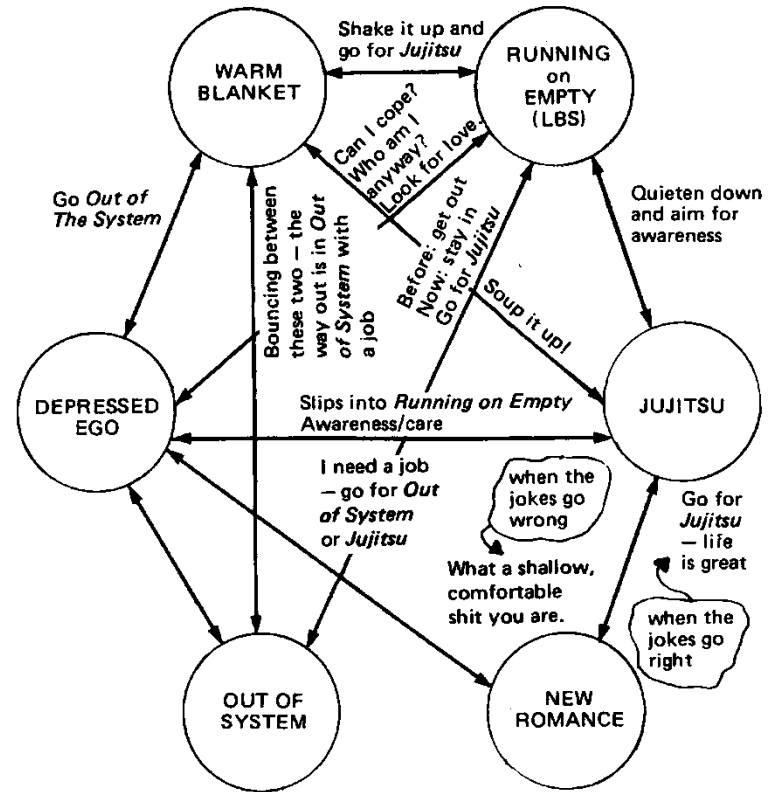
Figure 11.4: The forms of support and conflict between the different modalities identified in Figure 11.4

Absorbing work getting out modality relationships. That need for love was OK, but the extent to which it occurred with me betrayed an excessive lack of self-confidence. I stop seeking strokes the whole time now from all and sundry. Others can take me or leave me. **I** am me — not who others want me to be.

Useful? I don't know. The experience got me thinking about myself in new ways — a 'good' thing. No decisions were made. Again, the major result was a deeper knowledge and appreciation of him. Very worthwhile.

His feel for introspection was tremendous. Far greater than mine. I've always thought introspection I've had was mine, as it's come

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SMILARITY GROUPING OF CONCEPTS:

	EXCITING	AND REPLETE	=> A[ME TARZAN]
	OUT OF THIS WORLD	AND LIBERATING	=> B[PICK UP MY BED & WALKING]
	PRACTICAL	AND BASIC	=> C[GETTING THE JOB DONE]
	PLUSH	AND LAZY RUSH	=> D[LATE B'FAST AT TIFFANY'S]
	B[PICKING UP MY BED & WALKING]	AND LOVED	=> E[I CAN'T LOSE]
	MINDLESS	AND STERILE	=> F[DEAD SWAMP]
	CAREFUL	AND ORIENTING	=> G[FEELING MY WAY]
	A[ME TARZAN]	AND E[I CAN'T LOSE]	=> H[DOING MY THING]
	JOLLY	AND D[LATE B'FAST AT T'S]	=> I[A NEW ROMANCE]
	C[GETTING THE JOB DONE]	AND G[FEELING MY WAY]	=> J[RUNNING ON EMPTY (LBS)]
	SAFE	AND STEADY	=> K[WARM BLANKET]
	H[DOING MY THING]	AND QUIET	=> L[JUJITSU]
	CONFUSING	AND QUIET PAIN	=> M[SCHOOL SUNDAYS]
	L[JUJITSU]	AND I[NEW ROMANCE]	=> N[
	J[RUNNING ON EMPTY (LBS)]	AND N[	=> O[
	M[SCHOOL SUNDAYS]	AND F[DEAD SWAMP]	=> P[DEPRESSED EGO]
	K[WARM BLANKET]	AND O[	=> Q[
	Q[	AND OUT OF SYSTEM	=> R[

* SAFE
* STEADY
* PRACTICAL
* BASIC
* CAREFUL
* ORIENTING
* EXCITING
* REPLETE
* OUT OF THIS WORLD
* LIBERATING
* LOVED
* QUIET
* JOLLY
* PLUSH
* LAZY RUSH
* OUT OF SYSTEM
* CONFUSING
* QUIET PAIN
* MINDLESS
* STERILE

WARM BLANKET

RUNNING ON EMPTY (LBS)

JUJITSU

NEW ROMANCE

OUT OF SYSTEM

DEPRESSED EGO

Figure 11.5: The gestalt in how the focal participant patterned his experience

out of me. In fact I have much in common with him only he's better at it than me.

Fascinated at how valid computer's linking of concepts was. Found it difficult to help 'him work through concepts as I didn't know him too well. Was struck with the potential negative implications of this in a hostile 'real world'. From his printout I could see he was more able to act on his own internal feelings of right/wrong, good/bad than I. I'm more tuned into others' feedback which sets me up.

Being a catalyst

For me, the difference between this reflective form of experiential learning and those forms which focus primarily on structuring experiencing itself is that whereas the latter feels like a focus on *being* leading to new possibilities for *consciousness,* the reflective process is one of focusing on *consciousness* leading to re-interpretations of *being.* Thus my intention in relation to the focal participant was to empathise with the forms of meaning which he was transferring onto the representations he had created, and thereby to help him to articulate those meanings. My intention with the other participants was to model congruent forms of communication myself, and through that to enable the other participants to express their insights congruently (Bandler and Grinder, 1975; Satir, 1967).

Why is everyone laughing at me? My values seem so logical. Don't people want to be loved and in control of their own destinies? I feel much younger than them. Now I know why she left.

He is irritating. He asserts himself *and* looks for approval at the same time — one or the other, OK; but both together is irritating.

He was absolutely shocking. His egocentricity and lack of self-esteem seemed to be major contradictions. He was revolving around a void or insignificant centre. Found some inadequacies very funny as they were so classically textbook. I didn't think people would be able to function half way as effectively as he does with all these problems.

A very different process. Where working with the one before was interesting, analytical and slightly detached, the process with him was, for me, involving, emotional, and more demanding. He needed our help more . . . demands were made on us as a group. It was more like work. A little frightening — I wasn't sure enough

of Philip to be confident that he (the focal participant) wouldn't start something *we* couldn't handle. We were responsible. But

he had enough trouble relaxing that it seemed likely he wasn't going to push himself too far. There were times when I heartily disliked him, but by the end I felt closer to him, warts and all. I think he needed some fairly strong persuading; the computer output was too easy to ignore. It only suggested, it did not demand anything of him. If he was to get anything from the experience, he was going to have to *experience* it himself.

The original contract was essential to the legitimacy of my actions: you do what you choose, you express yourself your way, and you are responsible for your actions. It also meant that I did not intervene directly on the structure of their actions itself. There were times however when I felt that the focal participant was experiencing confusion between different forms of consciousness — consciousness of reality as he experienced it, consciousness of symbolic forms of thought, and consciousness of his own desires. Two of the participants chose to use a gestalt 'empty chair' technique in order to distinguish between these forms of consciousness in order that they could make better use of their insights.

In the hot seats. I can identify two characters in me. One I call 'the Fish' and he's a thoughtful intelligent chap with a keen eye for change. 'The Lad' is a popular external chap who generally operates pretty well with 'the Fish'. I only know the outlier I'm aware of as occasional intrusions of hate. 'The Lad' has to try to deal with him on his own. I *think* this picture is me. What does it all mean?

He is thoroughly into this, acting as 'Fish', 'the Lad' and 'God'. Trying to show the bad characters the inconsistency of their positions through questions. Socratic method.

Concluding

The last day together had both the warm feeling of a reunion and a sense of truncation. The last two focal participants had stayed on the margins of the group and never really took much time in the focal role — both their choice and a constraint placed on them by the workshop. They were left with varying degrees of unfinished business, and my concern was that the School should provide other spaces and other ways of enabling them to work that through.

We did not spend time re-examining their relationship with the School. There was therefore no closure placed on the process of the group — neither did the participants choose to create any. I did feel however (following the metaphor in the title) that they had in a sense been liberated from a dependent relationship with the institution. A learning cell had formed.

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Learning as a subversive activity

The open-endedness of the workshop as a whole was intentional. It was an active way of enabling a reflective process which would be part of their learning style throughout the two-year experience, and hopefully beyond. As a particular application of computer assisted reflective learning it was however a first time in the MSc. context. It left me with concerns over the extent to which we had been able to move from a macro to a micro learning focus, but otherwise the workshop was a successful transfer of the application of this approach from an organisational context to an institutional one (Boot and Boxer, 1980). There were however, definite problems in how the participants were able to see my role as legitimate in the context of the first term; and the cultural pressures of the School combined with forms of learning media which do not have an explicit place for reflective learning will inevitably dissipate some of the benefits which could be gained. My aim• now is to build on the outcomes of the workshop by enabling the workshop's participants to work with other students in their year, using myself and the technology as a way of supporting this process. To end the chapter however it seems appropriate to add a postscript written by the participants about a month after it ended.

Postscript

I am now able to analyse why I make a decision in ways I could not before. When faced with a task I now have the ability to look at the problem in context, while at the same time being able to get on and accomplish it. In relation to the course, I feel able to see interrelationships between subjects much more strongly, and why we are taught in different ways. I also more fully realise that I am going to learn more from other students than from the course itself. The group is a very strong base of support for the next two years, offering physical and moral support in a 'sea of troubles'.

I feel more self-confident in that I have a clearer perspective of myself. I have more understanding of my behaviour and feelings. I was never able to pinpoint my motivations and energy sources as clearly as I am now. I feel I will be successful in changing old coping behaviour that I no longer need and is at times very negative. I feel that being myself is OK and even great at times. I feel entitled to feel uncomfortable and anxious without thinking I'm going into a major depression.

I have discovered that I am not here to be subverted to the School and its system, but to subvert the School to my uses. I feel the group has been an oasis of learning in a sea of knowledge. It has been productive to have a place to meet a small group of confreres and to attack our problems. Its comforting to discover there actually are others who have the same problems. We are not alone!

All in all I have no plans to change myself but I'm stronger through awareness. These sessions have really been a source of power through self knowledge and not, as they might be envisaged by outsiders, a weekly couch session with the local head shrinker.

I really don't feel I was able to contribute much due to my own introverted state but that the experience of the Saturday was so disturbing to me in what the others said and did that it forced me to go and seek help and to realise that I'm not an island and other people can help me. I can't think my way out of everything! I only hope I can accept this idea and put it into practice. It's so easy to fall back into the ways of twenty-five years of experience.

Acknowledgement

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