WORKING GROUP
Development of a Methodology

*The fifth Working Group was held at Sweet Briar, West Virginia, June 18-24, 2001
and the sixth will be held at Claymont Court, Virginia, November 28-December 2, 2001
The methodology has been developed so that the underlying structure of the various approaches we
use in combination is more apparent and the 'shape of the whole' more defined.*

The review follows the systematic categories as first developed by John Bennett, who has been the main inspiration for the approach (edited to cover only the first four systems).

1. MONAD

The world or universe of the Working Group is diverse in content and technique and it is not a matter of easy definition to pin point what it entails. It is a 'unity in diversity'. These are various aspects:

1. The Working Group is both a body of people and a method in progress and, as such, is historical. A necessary criterion of the 'working group method' is that the method itself is enriched, developed or better understood in its exercise. There is no 'ideal method' that exists outside of the working practice of historical groups. Understanding the method and using the method are considered to go hand in hand. Study of sources, reflection on experience and writing reports are essential aspects of the method, which is not confined to personal experience.

2. As far as possible, everything in the Working Group methodology is made explicit in operational terms. There is no need to believe in anything in order to function in the method. Though there may be references to 'thinking', 'feeling', 'sensation', 'consciousness', 'intuition', 'the unconscious', 'attention' and so on and so on these are configured in the context of behavioral objectives. This program of what can be called 'grounded objectivity' is always in progress as we clarify more and more about the processes involved.

3. The working sessions are guided and facilitated. Expertise that can only come through years of training and experience is brought to bear. This reinforces the historical strength of the Working Group methodology. Each of the seven basic methods used is at least 15 years old and some go back 75 years. The facilitators usually have at least ten years experience in every method they facilitate and guide. If the main originator of a method is still alive then they have professional contact with him or her, or have had such contact. This continuity of creativity, development, practice and experience is crucial to the Working Group method.

4. The Working Group method follows the path of leadership in method but not as authority. The working sessions are constituted as different 'media' in which facilitators and participants work together and instruction is kept to the minimum. There are seven such 'media', which may be described as follows:
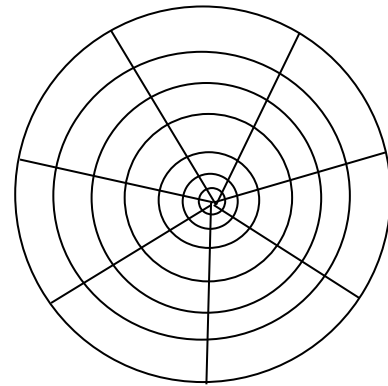
> experienting – attention in awareness
> social dreaming – associating in dreams
> movements – movement in consciousness
> median group – meanings in dialogue
> tissue paper collage – images in colors and forms

LVT – meanings in patterns
ILM – creativity in moments

In each case, the nature of the discipline arises from the medium itself. This can only be partially explained by description because it is to be understood by participation. As time goes on, what can be explained by the facilitators and what can be seen and developed by the participants, expands and deepens. The DuVersity team is considering additional modes of media participation such as: dramatic improvisation, N-logue, walking and active 'meditation' and work projects; but these have to satisfy the stringent criteria we have outlined.

5. In the Working Group method, we are creating a third alternative to the two basic modalities of group currently recognized: the psychotherapeutic and the functional (task-oriented). Though there are considerable parallels with psychotherapy, the Working Group involves no transaction of therapist with group or individual. The facilitator may have psychotherapeutic training but that is not his or her main role. The main role is to guide process with the minimum of interference. At the same time, the Working Group is not functional in the sense of managers gathered together to solve a problem. The Working Group might be called 'logopoetic' in the sense that it is concerned with making meaning in many media. It is important to state that each of the following can have their own independent purpose:

the individual participants
the facilitators
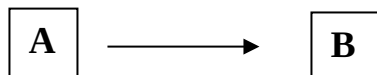the group as a whole
the originators of the methods

All involved are called upon to identify and foster their personal transformation goals or requirements, the thesis being that all such goals can be aided in their realization by participation in the Working Group. An argument for this thesis is that it is necessary to *think*, *feel and sense* something for it to be fully realized and that each of these three needs to be activated independently as well as in sort with the others.
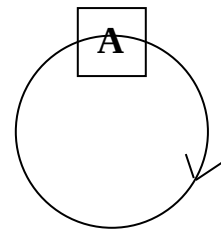
2. DYAD

1. A common view of process imagines that we move from state A to state B and that these two are distinct. This is the *extrinsic model of intention*. A different view is that we 'move' from position or state A back into A, at a deeper level. This is the *intrinsic model of intention*. The 'intrinsic' model leads to the idea of 'trust in the process'. That is, for example, that in thinking is all that is needed to guide thinking, or in speaking is all that is needed to guide speaking: if we are able to *enter again* into the process at a deeper level *by seeing what we do*.

Extrinsic
intention   A ⟶ B   A

                              Intrinsic intention

2. The Working Group method uses seven methods (or *praxes*). As normally experienced, these succeed one another in various sequences. However, there is another order of experience in which the process of each of the praxes deepens towards the condition of being the *same* as all the others. Around the circle (see diagram on left) there is 'sequential consciousness' and along the radial lines there is 'integrative consciousness'. In the radial sense, any one of the methods can be seen as the basis or 'key' for all the others. One of the tasks in designing the Working Group is to facilitate contact with integrative consciousness.

3. In any grouping of people there is a tendency towards competition (and in some respects it is essential). Since members of the group are using a 'common space' there is *contention.* This has been variously studied as in the idea of the 'tragedy of the commons' where we witness people using the common resource for personal advantage against the interests of others that, eventually, degrades the resource. In contrast with this, there is the possibility of *co-creation.* Facilitating co-creation rather than contention is essential to the Working Group.

4. An important metaphor we have been inspired by in our design approach is that of the 'Finite and Infinite Games' of James P. Carse:

"There are at least two kinds of games. One could be called finite, the other infinite. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play."
"The rules of a finite game may not change; the rules of an infinite game must change."
"Finite players play within boundaries; infinite players play with boundaries."
"Finite players are serious; infinite players are playful."
'Finite players win titles; infinite players have nothing but their names."
"Finite players are theatrical; infinite players are dramatic."
"A finite player consumes time; an infinite player generates time."
There is something playful and sufficient to itself about the Working Group.

5. The Working Group conforms to the 'politics of revelation' and not to the 'politics of salvation'. The idea of these two 'politics' comes from Gordon Lawrence and his associates, particularly David Armstrong:
" . . . there is a need for a "politics of revelation" as opposed to a "politics of salvation" (Lawrence, 1994). That is to say, the usual relationship between client and consultant is that of "salvation": one has some sort of trouble, seeks out an expert, and the expert, on the basis of specialized knowledge, diagnoses the trouble and gives directions on the best way to solve it. It is the classic relationship between doctor and patient, but it may also be found between computer expert and intimidated user, accountant and business owner, clergy and congregant, pollster and politician. It is Lawrence's contention, however, that in the modem, turbulent world, both the saviour and supplicant are in need of a collaborative approach to a new understanding of what is needed. This is the politic of revelation, where the new knowledge has to be entertained from wherever it may come." (Thomas A. Mitchell, *Social Dreaming @ Work,* p. 60)

The politics of revelation builds on the self disclosure of the group as it chooses itself to be, in all the uncertainty and ambiguity of becoming.

3. TRIAD
1. The design of the program was altered in June 2001 with the aim of enabling participants to see more of the underlying pattern of the methods used. This meant that on certain days we concentrated

on one specific method out of the seven. Throughout the week, however, we repeated three sessions every day to serve as the recurrent link.

       Experiencing (before breakfast)
       Movements (before lunch)
       Median Group (before dinner)

All seven methods were exercised on the first full day.

2. The following methods were selected for concentrated work:

       Tissue paper collage
       Movements
       Median Group
       LVT

Each of these was allotted three sessions on their respective days. This allowed for a *build* in the method. The correspondences are sketched below:

Tissue Paper Collage
1. Making collages
2. Viewing for images
3. Creating story or dance

Movements
1. Exoteric – learning positions
2. Mesoteric – inner work
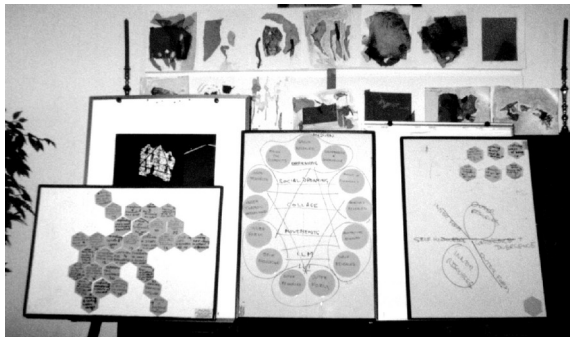3. Esoteric – manifesting for others

Median Group
1. Becoming acquainted with each other
2. Struggle – testing out limits and boundaries
3. Koinonia – impersonal fellowship

LVT
1. Gathering MMs
2. Clustering MMs into groups

3. Unfolding systems of meaning

These stages are not mechanically cut and dried but they correspond to a 'natural' build of significance, symbolized in our culture by such things as the Three-Act play. Some of the methods – such as collage and LVT – lend themselves to such explicit stages. The other two – particularly the Median group – do not. The design of correspondences is not so helpful to know at the time but *is* helpful when it comes to reflection and review. Hence the need for this current document.

3. The three fold structure goes very deep and has found expression in various terms in different traditions while being essentially the same. Without explanation, we indicate some parallels for future research to investigate.
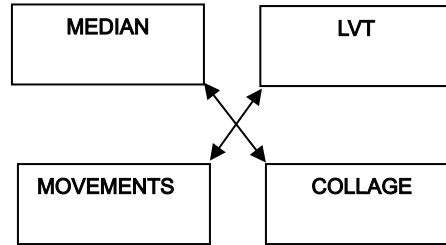
Bennett's Triad
1. Function
2. Being
3. Will

Bennett's Degrees of Togetherness
1. Compatability

2. Compresence
3. Coalescence

Islam
1. Shariat (duty)
2. Marifat (insight)
3. Haqqiqat (truth)

Yoga (Shivapuri Baba)
1. Physical discipline
2. Moral discipline (mind)
3. Spiritual discipline

MEDIAN	LVT
MOVEMENTS	COLLAGE

The third all-important stage is 'beyond consciousness' and is sometimes called realization. This means to make real what has been only thought or imagined. The forms and insights developed in the Working Group have still to be realized – when the individual knows that they are herself. It is not currently understood that what is called 'insight' is not a final stage but an intermediary one. This has a bearing on the evolution of the Working Group method. In a way, the only true value is realization, but this is an entirely individual matter (or is in God's hands). Sometimes, people feel that they have insights but that these do not enable them to live better. The usual response to this is to seek 'practical application' or draw up 'action plans', but this is a reversion to the first level and never satisfactory.

4. TETRAD

1. The role of the facilitator is different in the different working sessions, according to the medium involved. We can distinguish four levels of facilitator/convenor involvement:
Instruction – experienting and movements, which both derive from Gurdjieff and the 'fourth way'
Guidance – collage and LVT, which draw on the facilitator's ability to perceive and interpret
Containment – social dreaming and median group, which require the convenor to be aware of the state of the group so as to assist in holding it together
Indication – ILM, in which the facilitator introduces the method and then suspends any interference

2. The four special methods form a tetrad or quaternary which can be represented as here. The cross relationships are the most interesting because these are the strongest 'opposites':
Median/Collage represent two opposite approaches to the dyad conscious/ unconscious, the former building from consciousness and the latter from the unconscious
Movements/LVT represent 'body' and 'mind' in the extreme, though both are patterns of movement and meaning.