



Dialogic OD
The skills of DOD practitioner

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AGENDA

- Three different kind of skills in DOD
 - Designing processes
 - Designing meetings
 - Facilitation in the moment

While the dialogic approach often seems more difficult to explain, it also seems more likely to succeed (Weick and Quinn 1999), since it involves people directly and works to produce meaningful changes responsive to the local context of people in their work.

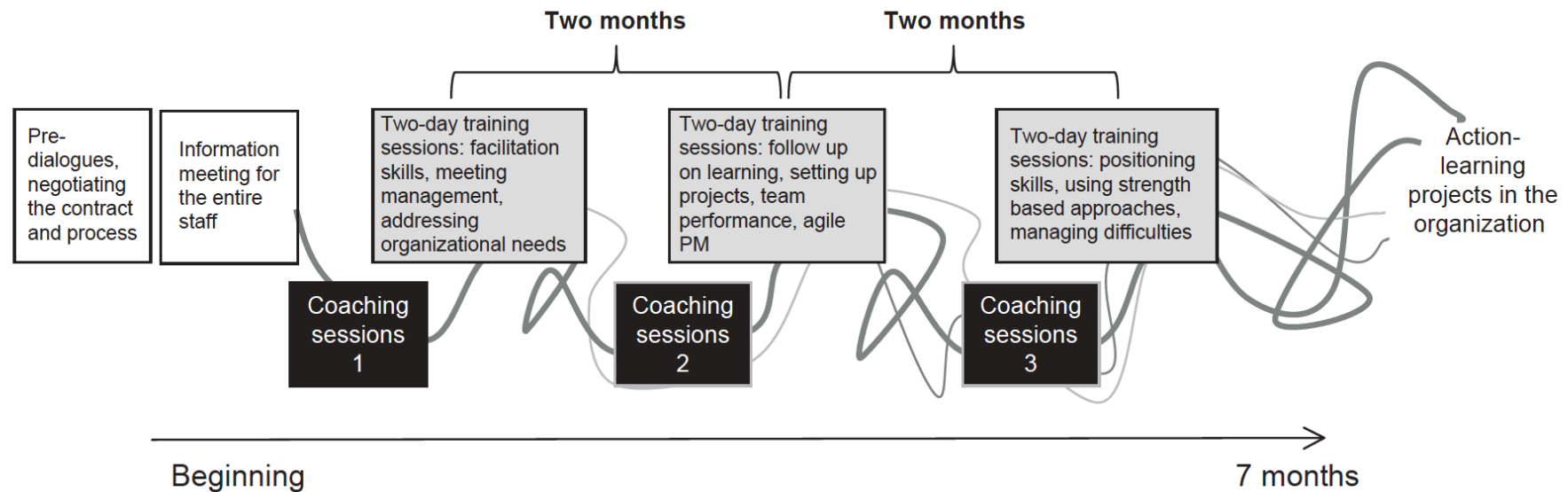
The Dialogic OD Mindset
views the ability to stimulate relationally
responsive conversations that
channel peoples' needs and desires
towards continuously evolving ends
as the aim of good change practice.

Strategic Process Design

The strategic process design is a plan for a coherent narrative of change displaying a deliberately chosen sequence of conversations that respond to needs and requirements of the organization and lead to a desired outcome, as it can be articulated in the early initiating conversations. The strategic process may last from a few weeks to several years, and the design will certainly change during the process as people learn and apply new knowledge in practice.

(Pearce and Pearce 2000, 415)

An example of a simple process design



A participants respons

I don't feel that I have been on a course where I have thought that I was on the school bench again, just sitting and listening and receiving and then for myself, trying to work out how to apply it at home. It is probably because we have used each other, we have used and practiced it together during the course and not just received it. In a way we have ourselves participated and been active, we have experienced that we have been used in designing the training, that it has been altered as it progressed. It hasn't been like a box we should fit into, the box is fitted to our purposes and that really worked out well, I believe.

Event Design

Events are sequences of activities that occur within a single meeting; they may last from less than an hour to several days. Many types of events, deliberately sequenced, may occur within a [dialogic] strategic design.

(Pearce and Pearce 2000, 416)

Dialogic Facilitation Skills

The success of any event depends in part on the ways that facilitators act or respond, in the moment, to what the participants do. One level of facilitation skills includes conventional practices such as timekeeping, providing supplies, recording conversations, and ensuring that all participants have sufficient “air time.” A second level of facilitation skills consists of (re)framing comments by using circular, reflexive, and dialogic interviewing procedures; positioning participants as reflecting teams and outsider witnesses; and coaching participants in dialogic communication skills.

(Pearce and Pearce 2000, 417)

Two Sets of Skills

- Outward skills
 - Skills we learn to apply a tools, e.g.;
 - Re-framing
 - Circular questioning
 - Using boards and drawings to externalise
- Inward skills
 - Learning to respond to how our bodies take part in the communicative act
 - Noticing bodily sensations
 - Inner dialogues
 - Developing an interpretational repertoire of our own bodies

A Consultants Reflections 'in the moment'

(Carl) offers some final comments and she reports what happens next: As Carl says this I look around at the group. I notice that some of them nod. Most of them look like it makes good sense to move into a final stage. Though there is something that disturbs me. I sense kind of dissonance— something which isn't quite so clear. Maybe it is an expression of us being at the end of the day and people are getting tired. Maybe it is an expression of something else. One of the employees, Elise, looks at Carl and says: "Eehh. . . . I really don't know. What is it exactly you want us to do?" Carl looks at me and I sense that it is me who has to move the group forward now. I just have some doubts . . . I am reminded of some theoretical aspect of my training which is arguing for the importance of being clear and transparent about the intentions of the consultant in relation to certain choices made during a process and I decide to lay open to view my intentions for this final stage of the process.

Some comments are made by the leader and then another employee expresses some doubts and uncertainties. Solsø continues her reflection:

Kirsten's [the employee] comment speaks directly into my doubts. I can feel how her words make good sense to me even though it complicates the process and makes it difficult to finalize in time. I sense the pressure raise on me as I have to find a proper response to how to move on. I look at the group. Several of them nod as if they agree with Kirsten. I think that it was good that Kirsten had the courage to express herself. The question though is what do we do now . . . ?

Solsø (2012, 24–25)

The Collaborative Relationship between Participant and Consultant

The consultant really tried to live his way and understand our world. What kind of complexity we are part of and what is our role in the organization. Understand our professional background, our education and from this propose a goal for the process of resolving a legal matter by means of non- legal practices. I think it really worked out well that the con sul tant understood the world from which we are coming and on the back of this adjusted the pro cess to our group.It was an experience of being taken seriously. I think it is important to balance between taking the participant's needs and perspectives seriously and at the same time maintaining his professional integrity and willingness to go against participant wishes if they appear incoherent to the con sul tant, also if this means creating some level of resistance.

I could feel for myself what it means if you are co-deciding and co-contributing and being involved and active. In this way the process has worked on several levels, while I was there it has worked in such a way that I have embodied and sensed what it means to have your voice heard etc. And then coming home between modules I have used this experience in guiding me to do the same to other people in my work.

Scene- Setting Activities

I believe that it is important that we had these intensive meeting sessions. If we had met every Thursday for two hours in the morning at the city hall then it wouldn't have worked as it did.

Focus on Success

When you are engaged with your everyday doing, then you can easily drown— we easily forget how much we are actually doing. So it really becomes important to stop and start a conversation— both in order to celebrate the successes, but also to pass on your knowledge to one another.

Focus on Creating a Sense of Inclusion

'It's the feeling that we are together in doing this, we share it. It only works because everybody plays along.'

'It creates a kind of willingness, you really want this to succeed and if you share this feeling with the people whom you have to work with then it really makes things move on. If we do it together it brings something forward that wouldn't be possible through traditional approaches. I don't know if willingness is the right word, but it's a kind of fighter spirit, we are together in wanting it and everybody takes ownership. Certainly it offers a good space to work in. Times fly and things run. People are more willing to engage and then you move faster towards something useful because everybody works positively toward a shared objective.'

Learning as Play

“The tools that I have now are very close to those that I thought I needed but I have learned them by playing or in some other way that I hadn’t thought of before.”

“The experience in your own body that this really does work and makes sense makes you want to do it again in other situations, not because I have to, but because I want to. Now I play with different approaches, I might try one tool and if I feel that something else is needed I try out something different as long as it makes sense.”

Safe- Unsafe Conditions

“It was my experience that in the beginning one is not certain whether this was about our professional skills or whether this was about our personalities, it really came close in the beginning. We felt uncertain because this was not our home ground but then it progressed into developing our professional skill as the training evolved.”

Acknowledging Complexity

“I think it is a fundamental change and it does something to people that we now dare to open up to all perspectives and the complexity of our organization even if there are conflicts or dilemmas. This is a fundamental change and now people are more likely to be invited into understanding other people’s opinions which offers a different understanding of what it is we have to work with.”

“Previously I had the tendency of wanting to reduce complexity, even before we had put our eyes on it. Now I experience that there is a sincere desire to address the complexity before we start to untangle it and there is increased attention to what we need to inquire into and which people we need to invite into the process because we now realize if we don’t admit to the complexity people will just come in later and complain or add to the case and then we have to rework the case which is really undesirable.”