

IDTA Newsletter

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Conference news, research news, EATA news and exam success news!

Editorial

The third IDTA conference was held in Watford on 6 and 7 October and it was a resounding success. Sixty-eight people attended over the two days and there was a lively buzz as people selected from a wide range of workshops, and chatted over coffee or browsed the book shop.

It was good to meet old friends and make new ones, and to join in the debate about Developmental TA – what it is, what do we want to achieve as an Institute, what is our identity (see Annie Murray's speech, reproduced below), and where do we go from here.

On behalf of the IDTA, I would like to thank the presenters and the organisers for the time and effort they put into making the conference so successful.



About IDTA The IDTA aims to provide networking and professional development opportunities to practitioners using DTA. The purpose of this newsletter is not only to update members but also to invite participation in the growth of the Institute. Views expressed in this newsletter are those of contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the IDTA.

IDTA News



A presentation was made to Julie Hay at the conference to recognise her outstanding commitment to the IDTA, and for being one of the founder members and a past Chair of the Institute. She was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a silver brooch.

Exam Successes in Istanbul

Congratulations go to Debbie Robinson for passing her Certified Transactional Analyst (CTA) oral exam in July.

And also to Colin Brett for passing his Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst (TSTA) exam at the same conference.

A real achievement, well done to both of you.

AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held at the end of Day one of the conference, followed by a brief Council Meeting. Further details of the new Council will be announced in the next newsletter.

Copy deadline for the next newsletter is 1 December 2006. All contributions welcome!

IDTA Conference Keynote Speech Annie Murray – Chair of IDTA

This conference is an opportunity for us to explore what it is that we mean by Developmental TA (DTA). Given that DTA is not just an abstract concept - there is an automatic link with our identity as DTA practitioners - I want to start this keynote speech with the question 'Who do we think we are as Developmental TA practitioners'?

I think that this is a great question for all of us ~ as individuals and for IDTA as an organisation. I believe that it is a worthwhile exercise for individuals, groups and whole organisations to periodically review their identity and role in relation to others.

My experience is that most people don't ask this question of themselves or of the various groups that they belong to. Most people (groups, teams and organisations) rumble along in the role that they've had for years and only review what's going on or what they think they're all about when there is a crisis or a significant change or some kind of conflict.

Arguably if people took time to review the nature of their identity and the kinds of things that they are doing within their role there would be fewer crises and more development.

So for the professional body representing developmental applications of TA, given that we have a whole lot of theory at our fingertips, we not only need to know who we think we are, we need to integrate the theory and practice of DTA into the way we operate as an organisation.

We need to live our values and beliefs and the central pillars of our practice.

And while we look inwards at our role we need also to look out beyond this boundary around our DTA house, along our street at the boundaries and communication paths between ourselves and our neighbourhood professional bodies. And this is the really important bit, we need to look at **who** we are in relation to the wider communities of our practice.

So, regardless of scale it is useful for anyone who uses TA in their work to consider what it means to be a TA practitioner. What are the implications of the role in terms of notions of self and others?

Does it change one's way of relating to others? Does it involve becoming a member of a tribe? Or as a fellow trainee said to me back in 1990 'is TA **just** a toolkit, or is it perhaps a way of life?

Perhaps it's a good idea to revisit those questions at the end of the conference and for people to make up their own minds!

So..... who do you all think you are? Well from what I know, some people in this room have been Educational or Counselling or Organisational Transactional Analysts for many years. Some (not many and possibly only one) have both developmental and psychotherapy qualifications. Some are responsible for training and supervising others who want to become qualified in the Developmental fields.

Some are actively connected to international networks of DTA practice. Some are on a contractual developmental journey to become qualified, others are teetering on

the brink of a decision to become qualified. Some of you decided that you wanted that you wanted to become qualified some time ago and are starting to panic at the pace of years passing and still no case study ... (note to trainees – it doesn't write itself!)

Some of you have no desire to become qualified and are here out of interest.

And for most people my guess is that you are here because you are interested in exploring the possibilities that arise from using TA within a variety of roles and settings.

And so the question 'who do we think we are' is I suggest relevant for all of us. This conference through the workshops, discussion groups and through networking will provide the opportunity for all of us to "**Be**" in a place where possibilities are explored and where ideas about professional identity and professional practice can be nourished.

To go back and apply the question 'who do we think we are?' to DTA as a body of specialist practice that is supported and promoted through the professional association IDTA, I suggest that there are two other questions to add.

What do we feel about who we are and what is it that we **do** about this identity. So this speech and yes, that was quite a long introduction to it, will join up all three questions. And propose some answers.

IDTA has a leadership role in communicating who we are as a group of professionals, what we're about and what difference Organisational, Educational and Counselling TA can make, to all who are interested – including those organisations and individuals who don't yet know that they are interested.

And so collectively for all members of this organisation it is important that we get our thinking clear, our feelings acknowledged and our actions aligned with both of these.

The understanding of who we are, what we feel about that identity and what we do within our network of influence is clarified through knowing a bit about the history of how we got to be here today. IDTA was born out of a recognition of difference. And it was also born out of feelings of frustration with the status quo which led to some bold, and according to some people, controversial actions.

Julie Hay Trudi Newton and Anita Mountain started IDTA in 2002. Prior to this all transactional analysis practitioners were represented through the ITA. Most TA practitioners are psychotherapists and Educational, Organisational and Counselling fields have always been minority specialisms, and actually in the overall practice of TA the bulk of ITA business has always focused predominantly on the practice of psychotherapy and on issues of concern to psychotherapists.

This was arguably inevitable. Also inevitable was the experience amongst many developmental practitioners that our professional interests and needs were not taken account of and for some of us this provoked feelings of anger and frustration.

Also annoying and frustrating was the belief amongst some of our colleagues in the psychotherapy field that if you did psychotherapy based training you could drift across ... as if by osmosis... into any of the other 3 fields.

Now, people do not know what they do not know. They don't know when they are being offensive, discriminatory and excluding. And when a person is passionately

focused on their own field, their own preoccupations and their own professional practice it takes an effort of will and a huge conceptual leap to see the world through the professional frame of reference of another.

Out of this situation, within the mainstream body of ITA was that leaders within what came to be known as developmental fields joined up their thinking and feeling with action.

The bold action that now seems so obviously necessary, was to set up a separate professional body to represent all minority TA fields other than psychotherapy.

When a group of different fields of application are united by who they are not (ie not psychotherapists) there is a need to articulate and assert who they actually are. For a while some of us would refer to DTA as the non-psychotherapy fields. Now, there is a discomfort for any professional in defining themselves in terms that start with "non".

Some of you may remember about 10 years ago an American children's TV show called Dinosaurs – it featured a family of dinosaur puppets a bit like the Simpsons, and within this largely dysfunctional family the baby dinosaur would look at the daddy dinosaur and greet him with un-babylike contempt as 'not-the-mommy'.

Whilst few of us would want the label of 'not-the psychotherapist' we may at times have been unclear with ourselves and with others about what our role and identity actually is.

Speaking personally, when I started using TA as a trainer working mainly in the field of management development, I kept my passion for TA under wraps.

I was almost apologetic about what I was introducing. The fear I guess was that someone might mistake me for a relic from the 60's pop psychology culture. They might regard me as 'not-the-serious-professional management consultant'. Or I was perhaps scared that they'd be put off by a perception of TA being 'touchy feely' stuff. Oh how I loath that expression!

How times have changed. Almost all the contracts that I have in my consultancy practice are TA based and this is because people commissioning development services are asking for TA as the main methodology for change.

So, let's return to our best thinking so far within IDTA, about what makes DTA distinct from other uses of TA and what unites the three fields of Educational, Counselling and Organisational TA. What is it that defines who we are and what we do. Giles Barrow (having consulted and developed his thinking with a group of DTA peers) has written a beautifully succinct and powerful paper outlining the distinctive features of DTA.

IDTA council have used this statement of identity as a benchmark for reviewing, developing and promoting all the areas of activity within our remit as an organisation.

And I want to share this thinking with you now.

DTA is all about creating insights, encouraging strengths and promoting growth and has the following distinctive features:

- Multi-party contracting is a norm and the work that we do involves respectfully and overtly taking account of all perspectives of the people involved

- Awareness of the political dimension of interventions involves a connection to a belief in social and community change and in the positive use of power between equals
- Emphasis on healthy growth and development and on future actions as opposed to a focus on pathology and cure.
- Co-creativity is fundamental to our approach as developmental practitioners. This involves a partnership in the use of TA where power is shared and channelled into joint creation of new meaning, new insights and new options for change.
- Universality is key. There is a priority on main-streaming TA into a public domain that is inclusive and reflective of the diversity of our communities
- Emphasis on prevention and promotion rather than remediation and reparation. Whilst many DTA practitioners are engaged to work with current difficulties and dilemmas, the end point of the intervention incorporates prevention of similar dysfunction arising. And some DTA practitioners work purely in a preventative mode.
- Quality of intervention is important to us and to safeguard the interests of people who use our services.

Now to consider how we feel as practitioners of DTA. I of course can only speak for myself as an individual. And I want to make some points about IDTA in terms of the collective resource of feelings within the organisation as a whole.

So, starting with IDTA – this may seem like a fanciful kind of question, how does the organisation ‘feel’? And if you are thinking, ‘this is a strange kind of line of exploration’, please bear with me. I think it is important to consider the identity of the organisation in this way because our feeling base is at the heart of our culture. What we feel about ourselves and others will be communicated through our actions and will either enrich or impede our thinking.

There are numerous definitions of organisational culture and I want to stick with a simple one. Organisational culture refers to how things get done. Which also relates to our values and our feelings about ourselves and others.

When we recognise and acknowledge our feelings as a valid and important energy source we are empowered to channel them into positive action. We can also consider how our feelings about who we are get communicated within and outside of our immediate environment.

From where I stand, here today as Chair of IDTA I feel excited by and proud of the accomplishments of this organisation. I feel satisfied that I personally have let go of a whole lot of anger from my past experience of my professional specialism being discounted.

I’m aware that I can rekindle that anger when I experience comments that diminish or exclude or fail to value the work that we do. And I feel more confident in challenging that kind of thing constructively.

I also feel delighted that some people here do not have that shared history of being a discounted minority and for them DTA is ‘where it’s at’.

It is this feeling of potent and well-grounded optimism that I want to encourage and promote within IDTA and in our dealings within our various communities of practice.

Now onto the third of my questions, what is it that we do. Part of this is encapsulated

within Giles's paper. And part of it involves a celebration of what we've done already in the short life of IDTA and what we can go on to achieve
So what we've done already is this:

- We've created and are running a post graduate level qualification system that allows people to gain a certificate and a diploma in DTA
- We have a well established qualification system for children and young people in TA (TAPACY)
- We have regular DTA newsletters
- We have gathered together examples of best practice in DTA through annual conferences
- One of the UK representatives in the European Association of Transactional Analysis (EATA) who is busy making her mark is from the IDTA
- Other IDTA members are contributing to the work of the International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA)
- We have established a research committee that is actively integrating research into DTA practice

As individual practitioners we are influencing systems and developing people in ways that lead to new insights and new options for sustainable change. Some examples of this you will discover and I hope be inspired by through taking part in this conference.

I want to end this speech with a question to all of you and with a quote from Giles Barrow.

Starting with the quote:

'People live in communities. They have strengths and resources. For the most part they are healthy and want the best for themselves and others. Whilst DTA has its roots in mainstream psychotherapy, its ambitions extend to a more radical view of human relations.'

So the question is, from your reflections on who you are and how you feel, what will you **do** that will be important for your growth and development during this conference. What do you want to take away from the conference that will assist you in your role as someone who brings about positive change and development?

Annie Murray
Chair, IDTA

EATA Council meets in Santiago de Compostella

From your 'Europe Correspondent'

It was with a mixture of apprehension and excitement that I took up my place as one of the two UK delegates to EATA at the Council meeting in Santiago de Compostella in July. I was unsure as to what would be expected of me and unclear as to what the Council process would be. I had spent the previous few days at the International Trainers' meeting and had been around friends and colleagues with whom I have established relationships. When they all left and I was facing participating in the Council meeting, I had a quick and short rubber band experience to my first day at school.

As the delegates assembled in the meeting room, the apprehension faded and the excitement increased. We had 30 delegates from 26 countries, I felt as though I had joined the United Nations! One of the most humbling things was that every delegate was able to conduct Council business in English.

The meeting started with an invitation to each delegate to say something by way of introduction and to highlight the achievements in their national association for the past year. I spoke about the IPQs launched by the IDTA and of the amazing work being done through the TAPACY programme. I was stunned to receive a round of applause.

The meeting, over the three days, was a rich mix of sessions with the full Council and Committee work. Amongst the many things we covered as a full Council was the issue of contracting. We were invited, in small groups, to consider what our individual contracts are both with EATA and our national associations. This was a thought-provoking exercise and helped me to get clarity about what I was there to do.

As a delegate I am expected to join two committees to support the work of EATA.

I had already volunteered for the conference committee, deciding that because of previous experience, I was on safe ground with this one. I enjoyed participating in this committee and we had good and productive sessions. And for those of you who haven't heard the EATA Conference in 2007 is in Les Diablorets in Switzerland from 6th – 9th July.

I also volunteered to join to a new group which is being called the Developmental Task Force. This group has quite a wide remit and the objective is to raise the visibility of TA in Europe. Over the three days, we had three sessions as a group of seven, and we identified six projects for the coming year. Six of the seven group members took on the role of Champion of one of the projects and we are currently working on project plans for submission to Council.

Jenny Bridge, who is the other UK delegate, and also a new kid on the EATA Council block, joined PTSC. PTSC has a lot of work and members of the Committee are not expected to join another committee.

The day-to-day running of EATA is managed by an Executive Committee of the Council, led by the President. The Executive Committee meets three times a year. All of the committees progress their work during the year and keep the Executive Committee updated on progress.

How would I sum up my experience? The days were long and tiring, but paradoxically energising. I felt connected to the European TA Community, welcomed, valued and stroked. I made many new friends and I left with a sense of having made a contribution to the work, growth and development of EATA.

The full Council next meets in Les Diablorets prior to the conference next year.

Sandra Wilson

New EATA Ethics Code

The new EATA Ethics Code is available for all members to read and comment on. The Ethics Committee have put a lot of work into the code. It has taken three years to produce and many people from national associations have supported its development. The Code has been approved by the EATA Council and the Executive Committee. You will be sent a copy by email over the next couple of weeks. In the meantime if you want to read it sooner please go to www.eatanews.org and download the file. Any comments should be sent to our EATA delegate, Sandra Wilson, email sandra@tasotland.org by 10th January 2007.

Biography

I am a Provisional Training and Supervising Transactional Analyst in the Education field and therefore one of a fairly small group of practitioners in the UK. I qualified three years ago and took my training endorsement workshop in Chennai, India two summers ago.

I run several groups for trainees at different levels; a couple of foundation-style groups and an advanced group. I also run a supervision group and do a lot of individual supervision. Perhaps most significantly I run lots of 101 courses – around 12 a year.

I have attended workshops at a number of regional, national and international conferences. I especially remember an important one that was co-led with Trudi Newton, at Edinburgh and a 'seat of the pants' session at Nashville in the US.

I am passionate about my field – education. I am utterly committed to the transformational potential of learning. I am intrigued by what this means for learners, educators and the emergent process. Although my background is as a

teacher in mainstream schools I am clear that educational TA is not especially about working either with children or in schools.

Instead, educational TA is about utilising a learning experience to generate new insights about self, others and common experience. I see it as another arena in which script beliefs might be re-evaluated and possibly changed; learning has a therapeutic potential.

Much of my own training was with Trudi Newton who continues to be such a key player in educational TA both here in the UK and internationally. I had the opportunity to co-tutor several 101 courses with her before qualifying which was a terrific opportunity to extend my confidence and competence and I am especially grateful to Trudi for that experience.

Nowadays I mostly use TA in working directly and overtly with parents and professionals. I also use TA as the primary way of self-supervision and to inform my own preparation and delivery process. Within the IDTA I have the lead responsibility on TAPACY in addition to being on the Council.

When I reflect on my TA journey a couple of things strike me. First, that I have learnt more about learning and education than I did in my professional training as a teacher. Second, that TA deserves a renaissance in the public domain similar to the one it enjoyed in its early days. To achieve this, TA needs to re-connect with the social radicalism that gave it such an original bright energy. I really believe that developmental TA is a key dimension of such a renaissance.

Giles Barrow

Feedback from President's meeting held at the ITAA Conference Istanbul July 2006

The meeting was attended by delegates from: Russia, India, Italy, UK, South Korea, Turkey, North America, and Brazil. It was chaired by Jim Allan and was introduced as a meeting place for an international network of presidents of professional TA organisations to come together and share the progress, challenges, frustrations and goals of their respective organisations.

Bill Cornell, in his capacity as editor of The Script also attended the meeting. There was no agenda other than each person present would speak about what was happening in the development of TA in their country and from the perspective of their professional association.

There were some areas of commonality, particularly with regard to the frustration of lack of recognition from other professional associations. There were also a number of differences in relation to how professional bodies are constituted, their size and their perceived role and function.

From my perspective as chair of IDTA (or president, since this was an international meeting and president is the term used across the range of countries) I felt very proud of what IDTA has achieved in such a short time. I spoke about our purpose, our goals as an organisation and the success that we have had so far.

I also spoke about the reason why IDTA exists and the need for the Developmental fields to be represented assertively. This led to a discussion about the nature of inclusiveness and about how some of the language used within the international TA community inadvertently distances and excludes developmental TA professionals. An example of this was Bill Cornell's keynote speech throughout which he referred to TA practitioners as 'mental health professionals'.

The term 'TA professionals' was suggested by Lucy Freedman as a more appropriate generic 'label'.

The discussion about this was stimulating and involving. There was, I felt, a genuine will within the meeting to engage with the underpinning principles of the issue of exclusive language and behaviour. Equally there was considerable interest in IDTA activity and goals.

At the end of the meeting Bill Cornell offered to run a regular Developmental TA item in Script and to start this process with a feature on the progress of IDTA.

I had gone along wondering about the value of attending the meeting and feeling very much like a small minority fish in a very large sea. The experience could not have been more different. I was heartened and encouraged by the interest that was shown and the recognition that was given to IDTA and left feeling optimistic that we really do have a presence and a role to play within the international network of TA organisations.

Annie Murray, Chair of IDTA

UNDERSTANDING EXCLUSION

I am a secondary teacher of drama and in 2005 I gained my PhD which was entitled 'Gender, Deviance and Exclusion'. It sprung from my own desire as a classroom teacher to improve my way of working with challenging behaviour (mine and the student's). Before and during the course I had been involved with various forms of meditation and counselling and was also doing my foundation year of TA with Gordon Law.

The research evolved in two phases. Phase one included 67 interviews with pupils who were returning from fixed term exclusions. Having gained informed consent I used active listening skills during the interviews and worked towards maintaining an I+U+ relationship with the young people. I would ask them to tell me the story about what happened before, during and after the exclusion incident and during this narrative I would listen and ask them to elaborate on matters pertaining to gender construction. My research was underpinned by a feminist methodology - which meant that I would be reflexive about my own part in the research (Weiner, 1994; Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991) that I would be interested in feelings and interpretations, and that I would be aiming to empower the people involved, I brought my own role as a teacher and my identity as woman into the interviews. I also invited the students to reflect on the process of being listened to.

As a result of the phase one findings I then moved into an action research phase. I wrote and taught an 'Emotional Literacy and Drama' course, during which I taught concepts such as stroke theory, the drama triangle and functional ego states. I also started lessons with some meditative breathing and a check-in. As a result of this, other members of staff became interested in TA and Hazel Hurst came to run a 101 for about 18 staff who came in during their own time. A few months after the course, I interviewed staff about what they had got from the course. I was also invited to run an art and drama club for a feeder junior school which worked on self-awareness and building self-esteem and finally a group of boys from the phase 1 interviews joined a therapeutic group run by a transpersonal psychotherapist.

The drama course and the 101 were both found to be helpful in the way that they allowed individuals to reflect on their behaviours in an OK way and to offer them ways of behaving differently. I found that the language of TA was accessible for all abilities of children and that it stayed with them! Even 4 years after the course, some students still talk about warm fuzzies! I wanted to teach TA from an experiential point of view so created drama games and exercises which allowed the learning to emerge through reflection and discussion. Sometimes I would present the 'theory' first and set up opportunities for the students to test it out, on other occasions I would set up exercises first and then ask the students to consider what they had learnt.

I think that this practical of teaching and learning not only allowed a cognitive understanding but also allowed pupils to experience new ways of behaving and to practice them. They were able to understand at an emotional and a behavioural level which meant that they reported using what they had learnt at home and on the streets.

The two most powerful concepts were 'warm fuzzies and cold pricklies' (Steiner, 1977) and the drama triangle. By using and understanding these concepts the young people saw how they could influence not only their own behaviour but the behaviour of those around them, be they teachers, parents or friends. Some boys were able to avoid conflict through their understanding of the drama triangle and how it links into the construction of masculinity, and others we were able to understand how they had

got into conflict which allowed ownership and reparation to occur.

I avoided working with script level concepts such as drivers and injunctions as I felt that the boundaries were not secure enough and that I was not in a position to be able to contain any strong emotional reactions to the work.

As you can see, my practical approach was eclectic. However, when writing up and analysing the work, I drew on the work of Carl Rogers (1961), Jung (1954, 1959, 1960) and Bowlby ((1980, 1982, 1998, 2003) but found that TA drew together a lot of concepts which I found in sociological works on deviance (Becker, 1963; Hargreaves, 1976, Pollard, 1979; Marsh et al, 1978). Much has been written about what kinds of teachers pupils like or not (Verkylen, 2002; Burke and Grosvenor, 2003), and this can be summarised in terms of life positions (I+U+) and functional ego states (Adult to Adult).

Now I look back at my work I can see things I would have done differently. Although I am pleased with how I gained consent and informed the young people of the research, having seen Giles Barrow at work, I wish I had made contracting a larger part of the interviews and the action research. Giles starts his work shops with the questions: 'Why are you here? Who sent you? Who have you got to report back to? What do you want from the time? What are you going to do to get it? What might you do to stop yourself getting it?' He also makes explicit what the actual contract is in terms of who is employing him and what his brief is. At the time I was worried about it 'wasting time' and now I can see that it would have brought issues of power and control to the fore more quickly than they otherwise arose. I also think it takes practice for young people to contract effectively in school as school is often structurally disempowering for them.

I left the research site to work for a year in Spain which meant that the TA work with staff and pupils came to an end. I regret this and am just at the point of starting the process again 5 years later. Just in one year I was able to influence the school culture by adopting a bottom-up approach. I worked with myself, then with my classes and then word spread to staff. Had this process continued with the 101 being offered regularly, I am sure that we would now be a TA school!

Subsequently I have had article published by Antidote, another by NASEN, I have co-written a chapter on conflict resolution in schools and I did submit an article for the TAJ, which was rejected as it did not contain enough TA theory. Although I can understand the feedback I was given, I felt like the point of the research was missed. As far as I am aware, very little TA has reached academia. As someone who is involved in teaching, teacher training, academia and TA I think TA needs to be seen as open to scholarly study.

In the conclusions of my work I wrote that ideally all Initial Teacher Training (ITT) would include elements of TA and academic journals are one way to achieve this. My PhD was passed and it included TA, however, my article was rejected as it contained too much about research methodologies. Surely if TA is to move into ITT, policy and practice, then it has to be able to share space with other disciplines.

For me, working with TA with pupils, in ITT, with leaders, means that it has to be able to include and allow for other discourses and is richer for so doing.

Julie Leoni

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