Ongoing Discussion "Thought Piece"

Prepared by

Chris Soderquist

chris.soderquist@pontifexconsulting.com

May 2007

Ongoing Discussion Host: Bill Bellows

(**william.bellows@pwr.utc.com**)

for

Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne's
Enterprise Thinking Network

Integral Leadership: Guiding Organizations by Applying Integral Theory

Chris Soderquist

Important Caveat

What follows is an application of Integral Theory to organizational dynamics. One of the titles in Ken Wilber's anthology (*the* thought leader in Integral Theory) is called *A Theory of Everything* – which if you think about it, means it's probably more than a Big Hairy Audacious Goal to try to present much of the subject in a 20-page thought piece. But I've never been accused of holding back on goals (missing current reality, sure!). With individuals like Warren Bennis, Al Gore, and Bill Clinton talking about Integral Theory and how it may be *the* approach we need to transition through these current times, I felt it worthwhile – no matter how BHAG-ish – to present to begin a lifelong dialogue and exploration to how we might all apply it. So, the following will present what I consider the essence of how Integral Theory is relevant to those of us in the organizational development and leadership realm. Much (much!) more is waiting to be fleshed out as practitioners begin to practice and learn from the application of Integral Theory in organizations.

Table of Contents

Thought Piece Overview

Today's leader is overwhelmed with choices regarding how to "lead" or "guide" their organization. What approach is the right one? From the Learning

Organization to Management by Objectives to Six Sigma? From Built to Last to Blue Ocean Strategy. Etc…

Organizations are also at different stages of development. From newly founded, entrepreneurial to decades-old multinationals. Some are in mature markets…some, like Apple, appear to create new markets.

It's enough to make the head spin! And also enough to suggest why it is that employees are so used to the Flavor of the Month approach to initiatives.

One common way of framing such a situation – which is deeply embedded in our collective paradigm, probably as long ago as when we ate from the Tree of Knowledge (between good and evil) – is that there is only one right approach, and all the others are wrong. Another way of framing it is to look for how the myriad approaches might integrate. As Ken Wilber, one of the thought leaders in Integral Theory, has joked, "Nobody is smart enough to be wrong all the time!"

In this paper, I'll present a primer of Integral Theory (only the basics, because the full theory would require a more exhaustive description!). I'll then suggest a learning model that can be applied (using Integral Theory) to guide the organization. I will briefly describe how to apply Integral Theory to each step in the learning model. By brief I mean very brief. Each of these topics could use at minimum of a chapter to even present a good overview! Finally, I'll describe how individuals and organizations can begin building their capacity to apply Integral Theory.

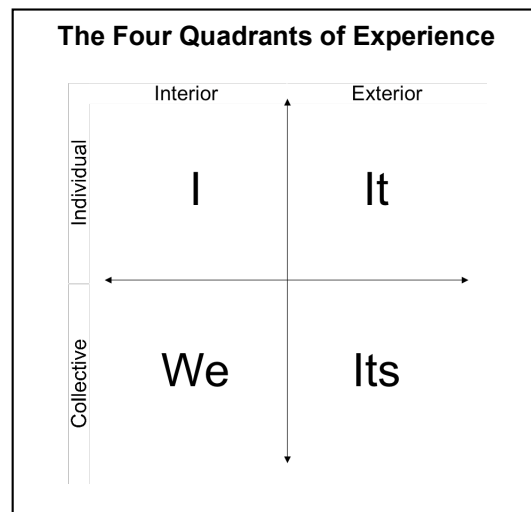## Integral Theory and the AQAL Model Primer

Before exploring the application of Integral Theory to Organizational Guidance, I will present a short primer on the AQAL model.[i] As I do so, I expect you will see several applications of the model to describing (assessing) the current reality and desired future of an organization. It is also useful in prescribing (determining the strategic approach) and in acting (implementing/executing strategy).

A central aspect of Integral Theory is what's known as the AQAL model. This acronym stands for all quadrants, lines, levels, states, and types – the components of the AQAL model. Here are the basics of the AQAL model.

Quadrants

Integral theory describes experience as containing two sets of differentiated dimensions of experience present in each moment. First, you can distinguish between whether something is occurring at the individual or collective level. In all experiences, the units of assessment can either focus on the individual pieces of the experience or the collective/holistic set. Simultaneously, there is another dimension: that of the interior versus exterior. Something that can be observed without inquiry is considered to be an exterior component. Whereas, if you must inquire of someone (or someones) in order to ascertain something, that is an interior experience.

The Four Quadrants of Experience

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	I	It
Collective	We	Its

Let's use an example to clarify. Suppose you wish to understand the poor performance of a manufacturing organization. The items that are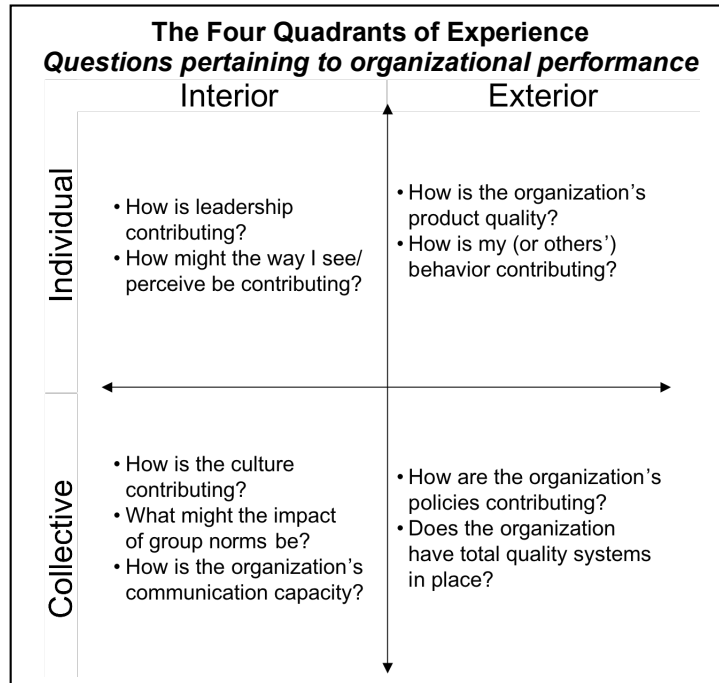 produced things…you can even pick one up and look at it. These items would be exterior (i.e. they are measurable) and individual. In the diagram, they exist in the Upper Right Quadrant.

The organizational rules for producing and accounting do not exist as an individual thing, but rather a collective system: the production process/system, the accounting system, etc… These are also exterior (i.e. they can be observed). Therefore, they fall in the Lower Right Quadrant.

The organization has a culture – a work ethic, a vision, social norms – which guide the behavior of individuals. The amount of trust within the group certainly drives their productivity, but it's not measurable without inquiring. The cultural aspects fall in the Lower Left Quadrant.
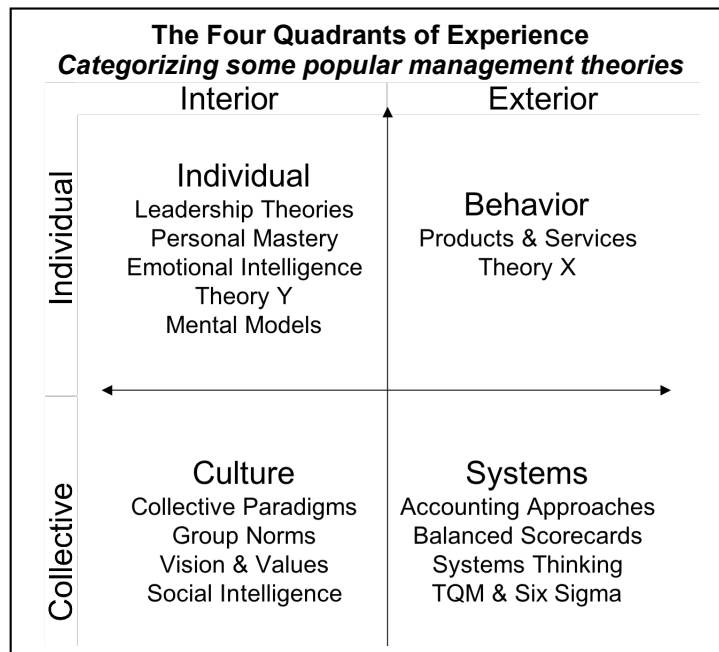
Finally, the individual leaders who are responsible for making decisions (in fact all individuals), have an interior dimension. Each one has individual beliefs, consciousness, cognitive functioning. These things again cannot be "seen", only inquired into. They fall in the Upper Left Quadrant.

The Four Quadrants of Experience
Questions pertaining to organizational performance

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	• How is leadership contributing? • How might the way I see/perceive be contributing?	• How is the organization's product quality? • How is my (or others') behavior contributing?
Collective	• How is the culture contributing? • What might the impact of group norms be? • How is the organization's communication capacity?	• How are the organization's policies contributing? • Does the organization have total quality systems in place?

So, in order to understand the reason for poor performance in the organization, it would be necessary to explore how the products may lack quality, how the systems/processes may be responsible, how the culture may be contributing, and how the consciousness of leadership may be limiting performance.

The diagram shows how these different aspects of experience are present in all situations. It's a simple overview of how these fit together. Moreover, it should be obvious to the reader that different management
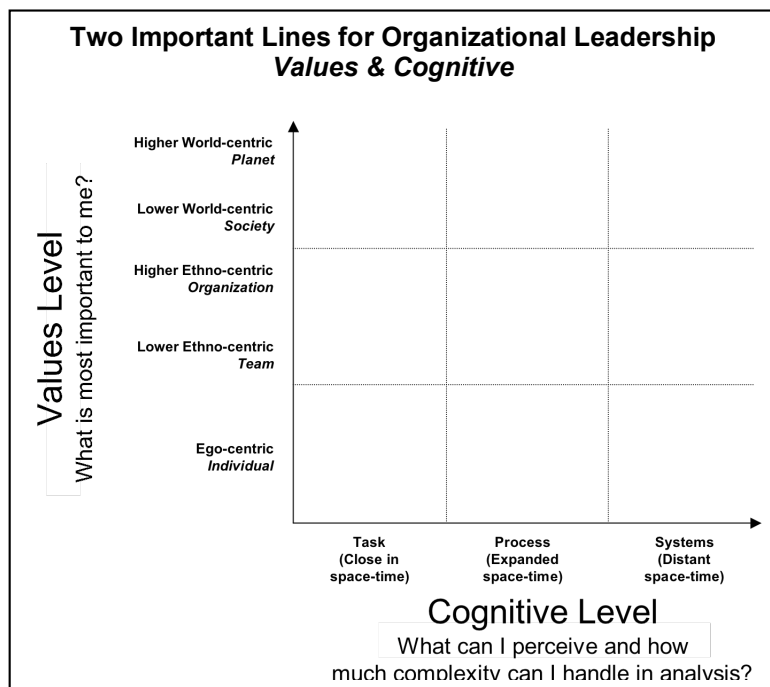
The Four Quadrants of Experience
Categorizing some popular management theories

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	**Individual** Leadership Theories Personal Mastery Emotional Intelligence Theory Y Mental Models	**Behavior** Products & Services Theory X
Collective	**Culture** Collective Paradigms Group Norms Vision & Values Social Intelligence	**Systems** Accounting Approaches Balanced Scorecards Systems Thinking TQM & Six Sigma

principles tend to focus on different quadrants. Six Sigma approaches tend to be exterior-focused; the theories of Chris Argyris[ii] and Ron Heifetz[iii] tend to look to

the interior (with Chris focusing more perhaps on the Lower Left while Ron emphasizes the Upper Left). You can begin to see why each of these approaches have arisen – they address different aspects of experience – as well as why they are incomplete. We'll discuss these approaches in more detail when exploring the Integral Strategizing practice.

Lines and Levels

In each quadrant there exist a number of definable lines. It is perhaps easiest to explain the concept of lines by describing those occurring in the Upper Left. Readers are familiar with the concept of multiple intelligences (e.g. Howard Gardner's theory). Each person is defined as being intelligent in several ways: cognitively, emotionally, kinesthetically, and musically (just to name a few).

With respect to leadership, some of the lines that might be most useful to know include: self-awareness, cognition, emotional, kinesthetic, and values. If you think of a person as having a certain amount of development in each of these intelligences, you've added the concept of levels. In this case, level (sometimes called stage)

Two Important Lines for Organizational Leadership
Values & Cognitive

Values Level
What is most important to me?

- Higher World-centric *Planet*
- Lower World-centric *Society*
- Higher Ethno-centric *Organization*
- Lower Ethno-centric *Team*
- Ego-centric *Individual*

Task (Close in space-time) | Process (Expanded space-time) | Systems (Distant space-time)

Cognitive Level
What can I perceive and how much complexity can I handle in analysis?

refers to the "level of development" an individual has achieved along each line. There are many theorists who look at individual stages of development (Kegan, Beck/Cowan, Torbert, and Hall-Tonna to name a few). Kegan's[iv] work focuses on the cognitive development, Torbert's[v] the development of self, while Hall-Tonna's[vi] and Beck/Cowan's[vii] concentrating on values. To make things more interesting, each has a different number of levels.

Major Lines and Associated Developmental Levels
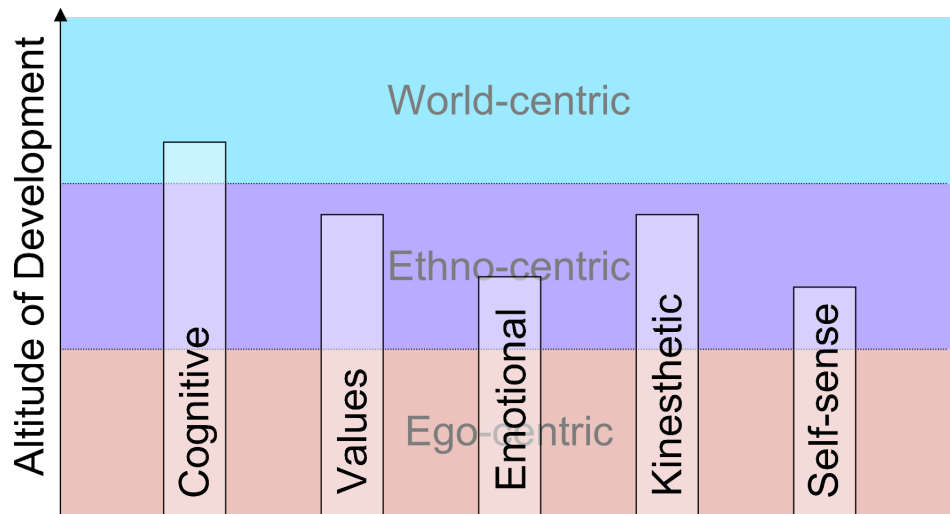
An easy way to simplify these different developmental theories is to define the altitude an individual finds comfortable from a "centric" perspective: ego-centric, ethno-centric, or world-centric.

For the purposes of strategy – guiding an organization – two of the more important lines concern the Cognitive and Values lines. A person's stage of values development – whether more concerned with self, group, or society – will determine what they focus on as being important to achieve in an organization. Similarly, their cognitive ability will determine whether their focus is immediate (short-term, right-in-front-of-them) or much longer term (how will this impact the 7th generation). Cognitive ability also will determine their capacity for applying advanced quality concepts and thinking systemically.

One final note: It appears that the level achieved along the cognitive line is a limiting condition to the level that can be achieved along the others. In other words, it would be difficult to develop world-centric values without having an ability to cognitively "picture" or think at a world-centric level.

Types
Another way of describing/assessing reality is through typologies. There are numerous typologies familiar to those in business (especially organizational development). Organizations use the Myers-Briggs tests, for example, to help

individuals deal with typology. Other tests include DISC, the Social Styles Inventory, and the Enneagram.

Of course, there are other typologies. Gender is a common typology that has gathered much favor in business circles. It may be described as identifying where a person's (or even a team/organization's) has its center of gravity relative to Masculine/Feminine (Yin/Yang) energy.

As you can see, typologies have been a common perspective that has generated a great deal of our diversity and team-building trainings. It is also less controversial than levels (since levels can lead to a more "judging" stance by individuals feeling some levels are "better" than others).

States
The final component of the AQAL model I'll mention here is states. The most commonly known set of states concerns consciousness. I can be in a state of waking, dreaming, or deep/formless sleep. These states have corresponding states in body, often referred to as: gross, subtle, and causal. A more scientific way of presenting this is that our brain waves at any point time can range from Beta to Theta to Delta.

While seeming more esoteric to business people than the other aspects of the AQAL model, states still has relevance in the We space. One of the more promising theories being developed and applied is the U-Process popularized by Scharmer and Senge[viii] is actually a process that leads a group through various states, where they can access different perspectives and solutions regarding organizational issues.
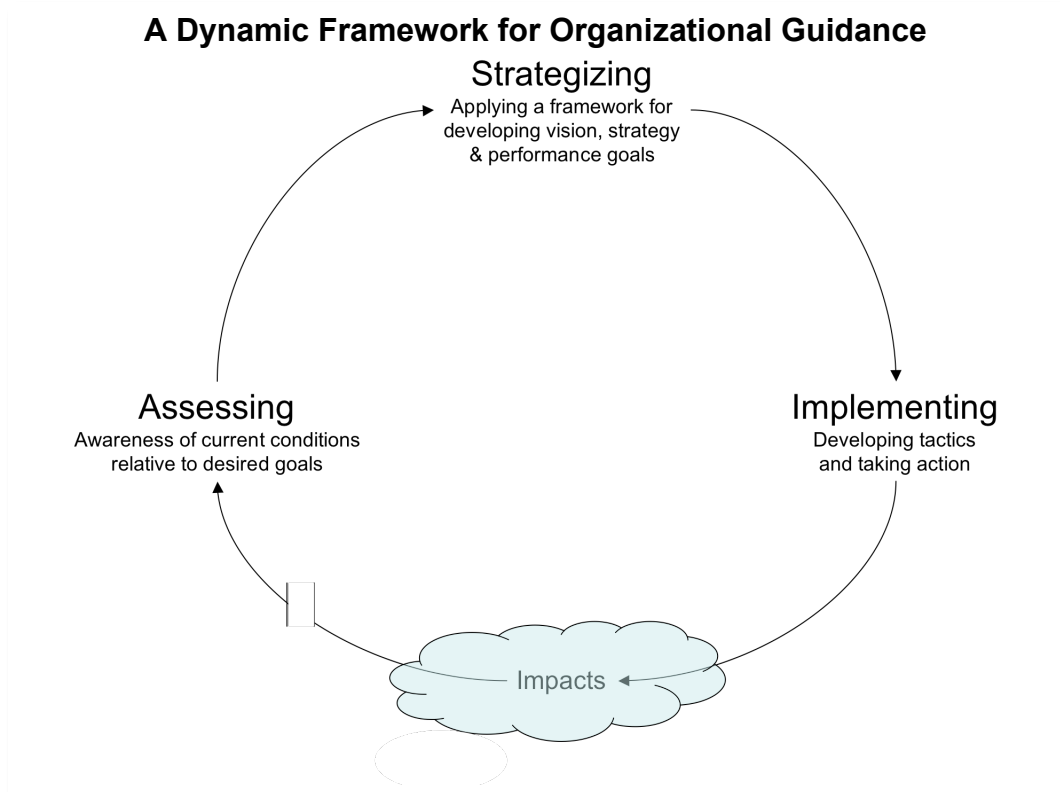
Organizational Guidance
Let's first list some of the activities a leader engages in as they lead – perhaps more accurately, guide – the organization. Guides throughout history are entrusted not only to "lead" a group of individuals into uncharted territory (sometimes even uncharted by themselves!); they are responsible for the very well-being of those they guide. They must know what provisions are needed,

where they will rest along the route, and what is safe (and not!) to do as they journey. And, of course, those who hire them choose not to follow if they feel the guide isn't effective.

For the purposes of simplicity, we can aggregate the "practices" of guiding an organization as being three-fold.

1. Assessing (knowing where you are relative to where you want to go; determining where you want to go)

2. Strategizing (determining the right way to get there; to course correct)

3. Implementing (developing tactics and taking action, aka execution)

In any one moment, a guide may only be consciously working with one of these three practices. But when looked at from 30,000 feet, these practices represent a dynamic framework of organizational guidance. An Integrally Informed Leader will keep all three practices in their awareness as they guide the organization— ultimately orchestrating them nearly simultaneously in each moment.

A Dynamic Framework for Organizational Guidance

Strategizing
Applying a framework for
developing vision, strategy
& performance goals

Assessing
Awareness of current conditions
relative to desired goals

Implementing
Developing tactics
and taking action

Impacts

The simplest description of organizational guidance follows. *Assessing* means having the most accurate awareness as possible of current conditions (those of the organization, the marketplace, global environment, etc…) and comparing those to desired conditions (whatever goals have been set, which may be as simple as to "make money" or as sophisticated as "reducing the organizational footprint on the planet"). Assessing also means sensing patterns, changes, and even quantum shifts that are occurring within the organization or in the external environment. Based upon the totality of awareness (i.e. assessment), leaders can choose a *framework for strategizing*. They most likely will set or modify the current strategy; although, it's possible they could choose to modify goals/objectives or even modify the vision. After working through the accepted framework, they assist the organization in *implementing* the strategy – in other words, they commence to the execution phase.
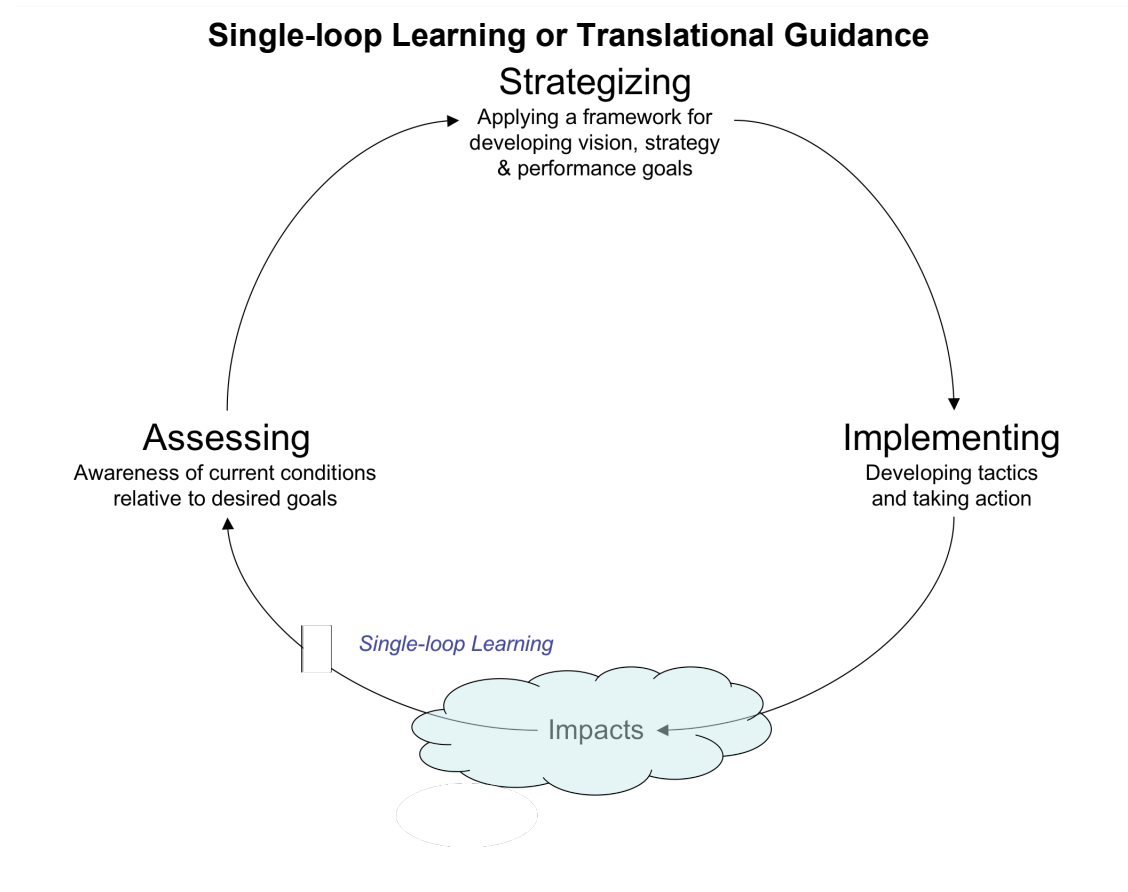
My current definition of Integral Guidance occurs when an integrally informed leader ("guide") applies the AQAL framework and toolkit to each of the three organizational guidance practices, transforming them into: Integral Assessing, Integral Strategizing, and Integral Implementing. Although guiding an organization is typically thought of as an exterior experience, integrally informed leaders will apply Integral Guidance to all (including the I and We) quadrants.

This is admittedly a very macro description of what defines an integrally informed Organizational Guidance process. Yet it provides a powerful meta-framework for categorizing three major practices that we can explore in slightly more detail in the remainder of this paper (and more detail beyond!). But before doing so, there is more insight that can be gained by expanding the basic guidance framework.

Organizational Guidance: A learning process

Whether consciously experienced as an on-going learning process, when integrated, the three organizational guidance practices described above become a dynamic (and learning) process. As individuals, we constantly monitor the environment and make adjustments, learning all the while how to be more effective. As leaders, we constantly monitor the organization's performance and

make corrections—and learn how to be more effective each day. With regard to learning, some leaders may stagnate or make infinitesimal gains, while others will view each day as an opportunity to learn something new and are obviously expanding their understanding and capacities.
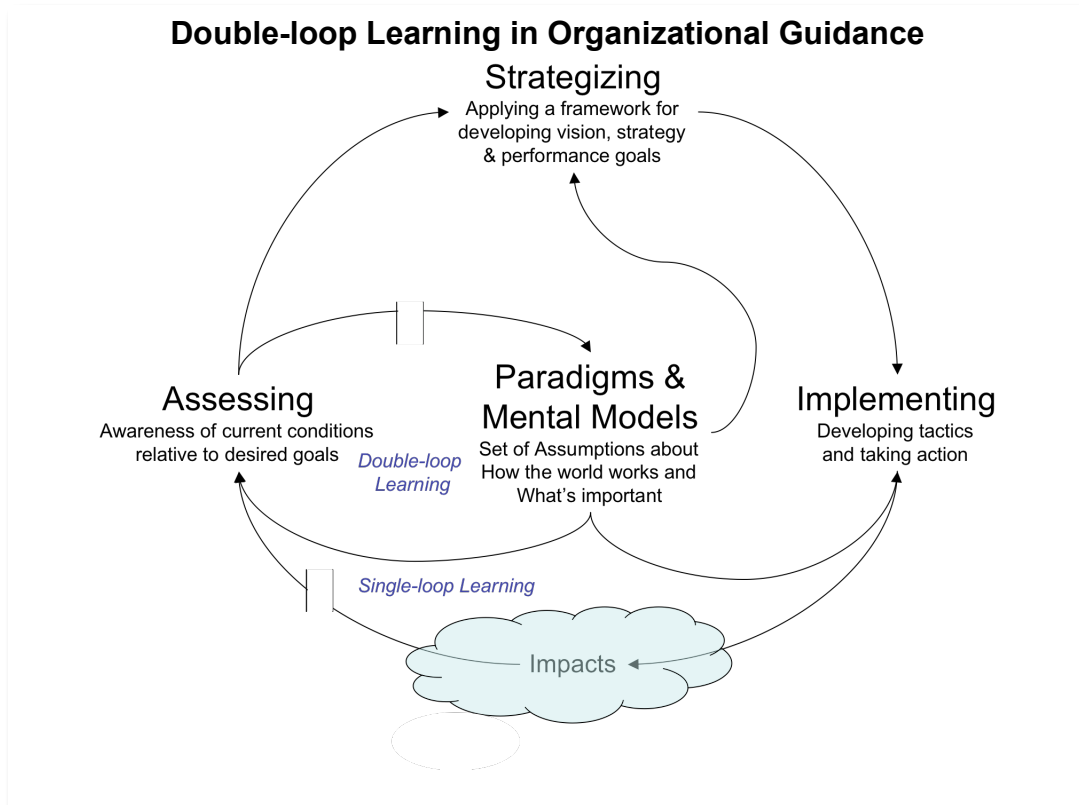
Single-loop Learning or Translational Guidance

Strategizing
Applying a framework for developing vision, strategy & performance goals

Assessing
Awareness of current conditions relative to desired goals

Implementing
Developing tactics and taking action

Single-loop Learning

Impacts

The process by which we typically guide our organizations leads to what Ken Wilber would call *translational* guidance–or incremental changes in capacity and effectiveness. (Translational learning is similar to what management theorist Chris Argyris calls *single-loop learning*.) In translational guidance, leaders make minor adjustments—either change tactics/actions (don't lower price by 10%, lower it by 15% instead) or strategies (build customer satisfaction through "after sales" follow up rather than through increased tech documentation). The premise is that leaders know what they want and the main strategies for getting it are fine; it's just that the strategy may need a few minor adjustments. In the diagram, you can trace the single-loop learning from strategy and tactics as they impact the

real world. Performance gaps are assessed and run through our mental models[ix]. After mentally simulating a variety of possible actions with our mental models, we make some adjustment to our tactics or perhaps the strategy.

Leaders can get stuck in a mindset of looking only for translational growth opportunities in their organizations—but there is potential for moving into the realm of what Wilber refers to as *transformational* guidance. Doing so requires at a minimum a fundamental change in the vision/objectives, and quite likely an increase in altitude (expanded consciousness) of leadership. Transformational guidance requires what Argyris, Bill Torbert, and others refer to as double- and triple-loop learning.

Double-loop learning calls into question either the goals/objectives or vision behind the goals: it gets beyond the How of single-loop and addresses the What or the Why found in double-loop. If single-loop learning is like the thermostat regulating room temperature to 70˚F, double-loop learning is changing the value from 70˚ to 80˚ (perhaps because the purpose has changed to growing tropical plants). It calls into question why leaders choose a particular set of goals and

Double-loop Learning in Organizational Guidance

Strategizing
Applying a framework for developing vision, strategy & performance goals

Assessing
Awareness of current conditions relative to desired goals

Double-loop Learning

Paradigms & Mental Models
Set of Assumptions about How the world works and What's important

Implementing
Developing tactics and taking action

Single-loop Learning

Impacts

leads to exploring whether another set of goals might be more useful. An organizational example: perhaps leadership has set a target penetration of 50% for a particular market segment. If leaders employed double-loop learning, they might reconsider if that target penetration goal is appropriate—or if given their vision should they be going after that market in the first place.

In the diagram, when faced with a performance gap (e.g. lower than the sales target), instead of a knee-jerk response of pushing harder (continuing to lower price even though it's not impacting sales), leaders can access their mental models and decide: should we change our goal or vision? Perhaps if they are continuing to lower price and it's not increasing sales they may be trying to capture a market that is saturated. If so, it may be time to change the goals! Double-loop learning helps develop mental models that are more likely to recognize—even anticipate—changes such as market saturation.

Leaders employing translational guidance will most likely apply single-loop learning to most situations, although occasionally they may draw into question the goals/objectives they have chosen—and thus employ modest double-loop learning. Transformational guidance, which requires charting a course with an expanded consciousness of leadership (and of individuals in the organization), by definition requires not only quantum changes in goals and objectives (double-loop), but more importantly, changes in the awareness and guiding paradigms/mental models of leadership—what Torbert refers to as triple-loop learning.

Triple-loop learning is the ultimate activity that leaders do when faced with performance gaps. It's the most challenging—and it's the heart of high performing leadership. It's the ability to pause and say, "Wait a minute, maybe I'm not seeing this effectively and that I need to learn something." Einstein said, "[The] significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." Triple-loop learning is the process of changing the level of consciousness. It's about bringing new perspectives, new levels of awareness, new skills to the organizational guidance process—that's

why in the third diagram it is shown as impacting each of the three meta practices.

Triple-loop Learning or Transformational Guidance
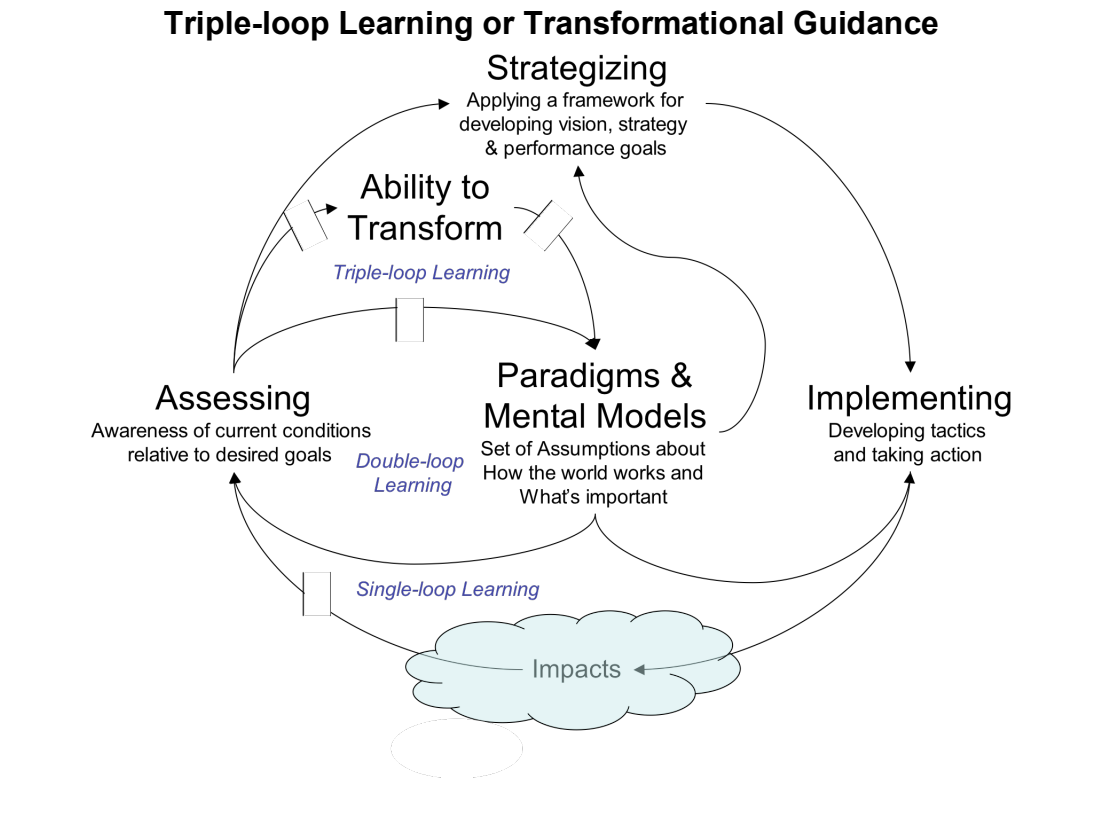
An example: IBM and DEC had mental models that led them to think only a select few wealthy organizations would want (or could afford) computers, so their visions were to provide the biggest and best workhorse data processing computers. Bill Gates and Steve Jobs (among others) developed a different awareness of the changing population/world and adjusted their mental models—they believed most people could benefit from having a computer to "unleash their creativity." "A PC on every desk" or "Computers for the masses" became their vision through the triple-loop and double-loop learning process. And look what happened!

An integrally informed leader will spend time in transformational guidance (applying double- and triple-loop learning)—they will get off the treadmill of translational single-loop learning and surface the underlying mental models

driving organizational performance. The reason for describing triple-loop learning here is that bringing AQAL theory to the process of organizational guidance is itself a triple-loop learning process. What leaders are aware of (measure), what mission & goals they set, what strategy they develop, and how they execute are all transformed by an Integral perspective. It's important to get this meta perspective prior to delving into the details of how AQAL is applied to each of the three activities—which is what is covered in the remainder of this paper.

Integral Assessing

Integral Theory provides a framework for assessing the current condition/ performance of the organization. The theory can best be described as taking a multi-dimensional approach to What Is. I will present applying this framework to organizations in a very abbreviated survey.

As you recall from the earlier primer, the AQAL model is useful in *describing* the current status/performance…actually it's a model for describing the arising of experience at each moment. As such, it provides a much more complete lens for assessment. Typical approaches to assessing an organization are incomplete when compared to the AQAL model. Therefore, simply applying AQAL in order to determine current reality will yield more (and richer) information with which to assess the situation.

Steps to applying AQAL in assessing include:

1. Look at the situation from an "all quadrants" perspective.

    a. Nearly 100% of the time, leaders are applying a behavior/performance lens (Upper Right), and almost as frequently (thanks to systems thinkers like Ed Deming, Jay Forrester, and Russell Ackoff) they are looking for information on how the systems are contributing to behavior (Lower Right). Make sure you continue to look to these perspectives.

b. Also look to the interiors (the I and the We; the Left quadrants). Make sure you are assessing how the culture is, and what the leadership situation is. What's the "center of gravity" of leadership?

c. Finally – and perhaps this is *the* most often overlooked! – look to yourself. What awareness are you bringing to the perspective? Are you currently seeing from a world-centric (global/universal) perspective as much as from the ethno-centric (organization level)? Are you able to include all perspectives as you make the assessment?

2. It may be easier to use an *I, We, It/s* matrix for assessment (rather than a 4 quadrant which is confusing on the exterior aspects). Here's an example of such a matrix. The nice thing about such a matrix is that it

Situation: *Describe reality as you see it relative to desired future reality.*			
(Sample questions appear below…not exhaustive by any means!)			
Perspective	**I**	**We**	**It/Its**
Current Reality	• From what perspective am I seeing this situation? • From what perspective is each leader seeing it? • What mental model (assumptions) are operating? • What types are at play (gender, MBTI, etc.)?	• What are the stakeholder groups involved? • Where is their center of gravity? • What are the group norms and shared paradigms? • Collective mental models?	• What are the relevant current behaviors of the system? Including products and services? • What is the physical state of the individuals? • Which internal systems/ processes are central? External? • What are the interrelationships among internal/external systems? • What's currently measured?
Desired Future Reality	• What are my aspirations for the situation? Why? • The aspirations of leader(s)? Why? • How would types be in desired future? (e.g. strengthened feminine, more intuitive?)	• What is the shared vision? • How would the stakeholder groups be in the desired future? • What lines, levels, states & types would be operating in the desired future?	• What new behaviors would need to be exhibited? • What changes to systems would need to occur? • What new systems need to be developed? • What should be measured?

seems to emphasize the interiors more (I and We) which have been under represented in organizational improvement.

3. Include an assessment of not only current reality, but also the desired future reality. This will be useful in the final step, which is to assess the causal reasons for the gap from the I, We, It/s perspective.

4. A matrix similar to the above can be filled out that describes the causes for each quadrant assessed. Look for distinctions between *translational* and *transformational* causes (which will come in handy during the strategizing phase).

    a. For example, a translational causal question might be: Why does our organization currently have a problem with a particular process? A transformational question might be: Why does our leader hold a particular mental model?

    b. Apply some of the well known tools for looking at systems and processes (TQM tools, causal loop diagrams, system dynamics)

    c. Use interior focused tools to assess causality for the We and I perspectives. Left-hand column cases (Argyris) and competing commitment columns (Kegan and Lahey) are excellent tools for getting to interior causality. The step of co-sensing in the U-process is a place for larger groups to generate causal information on interior dynamics.

Integral Strategy/Planning

We've just covered how the AQAL model applies to the *assessing* practice. It also has much to say about the *strategizing* practice. In particular, it is helpful in the following two ways.

1. Determining fit between strategic approach and an organization (both its characteristics and need)

2. Understanding if changes involved are translative or transformative

3. Ensuring that the strategy covers all the components of the AQAL space

Determining Strategic Fit – Organizational Characteristics

First, the astute scholar of the strategic planning field is well aware that there are nearly as many planning approaches as there are MBAs – and growing! Seriously, Mintzberg et al have categorized no less than 10 approaches in Strategy Safari.[x] He describes in detail each of these approaches (e.g. The

Design School, The Learning School, and The Cultural School), including the pros and cons of each.

An integrally informed leader can categorize these approaches relative to which quadrants they emphasize *and* which level they are ideally suited for. It becomes a useful exercise to determine which quadrants each school emphasizes, and therefore, which

An example of where different strategy schools emphasize
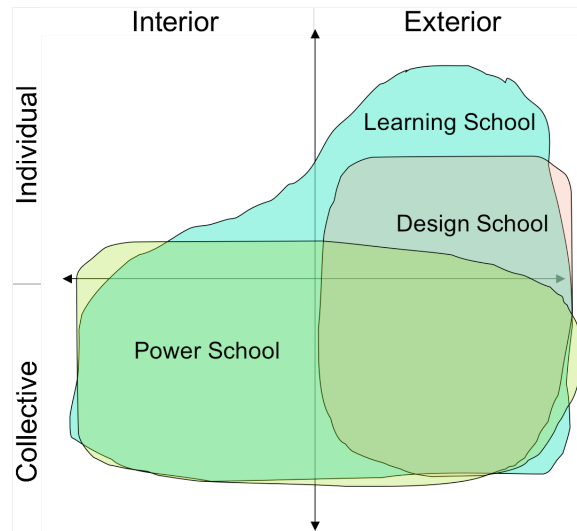
approach might more fit a particular organization's current focus. From a purely quadrant analysis, it is likely unwise to try implementing an approach like the Power School in an organization where the Collective Interior (We) quadrant is not a priority; similarly implementing an approach like the Design School in an organization that has spent years in quality/systems improvement, and where the interior dimensions have been strengthened might prove frustrating.

It is also important to think through what the center of gravity of individuals in an organization are prior to choosing a strategic approach. Individuals motivated by a more egoistic set of concerns will find an approach like the Learning School (e.g. Balanced Scorecards) uninteresting or perhaps even threatening. Whereas individuals with more of a world-centric perspective – with an emphasis on what's good for not only the group but the planet – might chafe under hierarchical approaches (e.g. the Design School).

It would also be challenging to try to implement an approach like a balanced scorecard, which requires a high degree of cognition and an upper ethno-centric

values set with an organization heavily skewed to lower ethno-centric or ego-centric.

Translative or Transformative?

As mentioned in the discussion of the learning model, some learning is *translative* – learning to turn the hamster wheel faster or more efficiently (lower cost, less hamsters). Other learning is *transformative* – deciding to get off the darn wheel or perhaps morph into a rabbit! Heifetz refers to such learning as necessary for *adaptive* challenges. When determining the cause for a performance gap, sometimes the appropriate change is a quantum change in consciousness (double- or triple-loop learning). Through an enhanced awareness, leaders can determine the type of change they (and the organization) must undergo. The type of change dictates the tools and methods employed.

	Translative Practices (not exhaustive!)	Transformative Practices (not exhaustive!)
I	• Discipline-based training (e.g. accounting, process improvement)	• Reflection, journaling • Action Inquiry (Torbert) • Left-hand column cases (Argyris) • Competing commitments (Kegan) • Meditation/yoga • All quadrant capacity building (Wilber)
We	• Team-building • Focus groups	• Inquiry • Dialogue (Isaacs) • Action Maps (Argyris) • U-Process (Scharmer, Senge)
It/s	• SPC/TQM/Six Sigma tools	• Systems Thinking • System of Profound Knowledge

Integral Implementation/Execution

Implementation and execution is where phrases such as the "rubber meets the road" and "the devil's in the details" were coined. In one sense, it's simply the act of translating the strategy into the tactics and actions required to make it happen. How hard can that be? Kaplan and Norton relay a *Fortune* cover story estimating that 70% of CEO failures wasn't due to bad strategy, but to "bad execution."[xi]

Integrally informed leaders need to help their organization engage in the process of execution. They need to ensure that capacity is there (in the I, We, and It/s domains) to enable the organization to implement. Appropriate training and

systems are required. The must be persistent about removing waste in processes and priorities to allow people to focus.

Moreover, one of the benefits of adopting an AQAL perspective is that it encourages tactics hit the important elements in all quadrants, including lines/levels. Is the state of individuals in the organization one of exhaustion or despair? Managing these during the implementation process is part of the execution. Additionally, they will know how to match or translate activities to match the cognitive capacities of employees. Elliott Jaques' theory of human capability and development is an excellent source for knowing effective job matching.[xii]

Perhaps the most important contribution of an integral perspective is the use of *skillful means* when translating a strategy for the members of the organization. The benefits of the strategy must be communicated to address the concerns of individuals at various levels: it makes little sense talking about the benefits of sustainability to future generations to individuals heavily centered in an ego-centric perspective. An integrally informed leader will know their audience and ensure that benefits explained cover the spectrum in order to engage their team and the organization.

Building the Capacity of the Organization

Ken Wilber describes a framework for individuals called Integral Transformative Practice. The practice is designed to deepen/mature an individual's awareness across the four quadrants of experience and build their capacity to be effective in all quadrants. Further, by practicing intentionally in each quadrant, Wilber claims that individual development is accelerated. I have heard him quote a study that showed Buddhist monks who practiced meditation *and* weight training were chosen (blindly) by their superiors to have matured faster in their practice than those only meditating. It is also similar to Stephen Covey's *Sharpen the Saw* approach (Mental, Emotional, Social, and Physical) approach to personal development (through time management).[xiii]

That said, here are a few practices an individual can take:

Upper Left: meditation, journaling, therapy, visioning/visualization

Upper Right: fitness training, yoga, diet

Lower Right: systems thinking, political engagement

Lower Left: social events, volunteering, building friendships

Within the organization, there are two activities that I believe can accelerate the capacity to apply Integral Theory to guiding the organization. The first activity is the development of an integral scorecard to simply post indicators of how the organization is performing in each of the quadrants. Such a scorecard would raise the awareness of being integrally informed.

The second is consciously working on practices to ensure the performance of the organization is as "mature" as possible. The practices must work for individuals at all levels of development while simultaneously encouraging the organization can achieve the "highest" level of functioning. Some practices that most organizations are currently engage in are still very much useful to this objective: process improvement, workforce development, leadership training, team building. However, I believe there are a couple practices that can improve on those listed above.
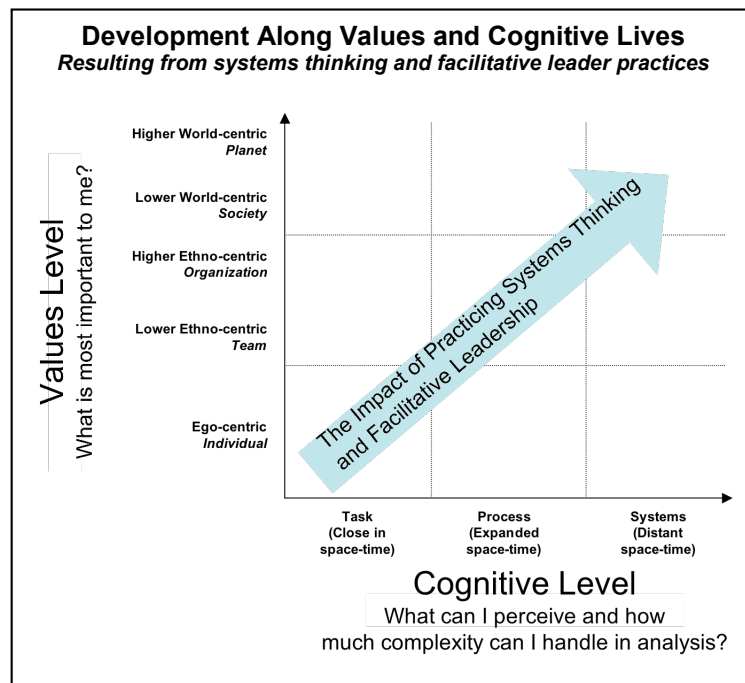
The first is systems thinking, which can help build a much stronger understanding of both the exterior and the interior. Systems thinking, if practiced as a mental model building activity, can be used to not only understand the external physical systems and behaviors of an organization, but it can also be used to describe some of the dynamics occurring on the interior: examples include the building of trust, the implications of motivation, and the loss of cultural "magic." It can also be used – because the types of maps/models individuals make reflect their values and cognition – to determine the center of gravity of an organization along those two important lines.

However, engaging in the practice of systems thinking will also create a vehicle for increasing an organization's capacity along multiple lines (especially values and cognition). So, by engaging in the practice of systems thinking – and I mean

the more rigorous approaches of Richmond, Sterman and Richardson that use stock/flow maps and simulation modeling – I believe that much like Wilber's ITP, an organization will accelerate its Integral capacity development.

The second practice I propose is that of *Facilitative Leadership* and *Skilled Facilitation* of Roger Schwarz[xiv].   Roger has developed an integral framework that combines the best of Argyris, Schön, Schein, and the field of negotiation (Fisher and Ury). What I most like about his approach is the ground rules he's developed for teams/meetings. The ground rules facilitate the operation of the team at a more world-centric consciousness (i.e. more systemic), while not being objectionable to individuals at other stages. By consistent practice with Schwarz's framework, I believe the development in the We space is greatly accelerated.

Both practices above work well to accelerate the development along the two lines in the chart, moving the center of gravity in an organization into the world-centric levels - which will help improve the likelihood an organization (and society!) can handle the challenges we face in this more interconnected, flat world.

Development Along Values and Cognitive Lives
Resulting from systems thinking and facilitative leader practices

Summary

This has been an extremely quick pass over the emerging field of Integral Theory and its application to our organizations. I hope you didn't blink! I have presented as much as I can to probably stir the pot, but not really provide even the appetizer to the meal. I expect it has raised more questions than answers.

Because the field is in its infancy, it is my hope that we will all engage in practice and dialogue to better determine how Integral Theory best applies to our organizations. I do believe that the time has come in our development as a species to create the most integral approach to living and leading (guiding) we can. With the many challenges we face – climate change, poverty, newly arising diseases, fundamentalist terrorism, species loss (think disappearing bees) – a fresh perspective is perhaps necessary for our survival.

---

[i] Wilber, K., *A Brief History of Everything*, Shambhala (2000) is one of the more complete and approachable texts for learning Wilber's extensively researched and exhaustive AQAL model.

[ii] Argyris, C., *Overcoming Organizational Defenses*, Allyn and Bacon (1990) is perhaps Chris's most accessible book. For those wanting more depth, I recommend Arygyris, C. and Schön, D., *Organizational Learning II*, Addison-Wesley (1996).

[iii] Heifetz, R., *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Belknap Press (1998) presents Ron's theories on the types of challenges we face today – which he calls adaptive. Adaptive challenges require what Wilber refers to as transformative change/learning.

[iv] Kegan, R., *In Over Our Heads*, Harvard, (1994) is the most comprehensive (and should I say dense) presentation regarding his theories of adult development. A more readable and practical discussion is in Kegan, R. and Lahey, L., *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*.

[v] Torbert, B. et al, *Action Inquiry*, Berrett-Koehler (2004). A very heartfelt presentation of Torbert's theories. The first section of the book is particularly useful regarding how transitions between his proposed stages occur.

[vi] Hall, B., *The Genesis Effect*, Resource Publications (2006). The Hall-Tonna values inventory is a terrific tool for assessing an individual's stage of value development.

[vii] Beck, D. and Cowan, C., *Spiral Dynamics*, Blackwell Publishing (1996). Don Beck has done more to advance the theories concerning adult development than any other practitioner. His work with the post-Apartheid South Africa is moving and compelling. Readers who have heard of using colors to describe levels of development, or memes, will be familiar with the impact Don has had.

[viii] Senge, P. et al, *Presence*, Society for Organizational Learning (2004). A very engaging dialogue regarding the latest learning of the SoL leader and other practitioners. The U-Process is presented well within the context of this book.

[ix] Peter Senge has done more to popularize the concept of mental models. For a good description of mental models see Senge, P., *The Fifth Discipline*, Currency Doubleday (1990). For an additional perspective on mental models, especially how we build and mentally simulate them, see Richmond, B., *An Introduction to Systems Thinking*, isee systems, inc. (2002). In particular the work of Richmond, Richardson, and Sterman on the uses of system dynamics tools is well worth exploring.

[x] Mintzberg, H. et al, *Strategy Safari*, Free Press, (1998). Mintzberg presents perhaps he most exhaustive treatment of strategy perhaps ever written. It's a standard in many MBA programs.

[xi] Kaplan, R. and Norton, D., *The Strategy-Focused Organization*, Harvard Business School Press (2001). The founders of the balanced scorecard describe their more recent findings on how it's being applied in organizations. For an operational perspective on how to embed strategy into an organization's function, I suggest their more recent *The Office of Strategy Management* in the Harvard Business Review (Oct. 2005).

[xii] Jaques, E. and Cason, K., *Human Capability*, Cason Hall & Co. (1994). Elliott Jaques was one of the first to present a theory of adult cognitive development in 1965. The 1994 book is a great summary of the advances he has made in exploring this territory.

[xiii] Covey, S., *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Free Press (1990). There are few people in the business community who haven't been exposed to Covey's highly popular book. His suggestion to sharpen the saw is one of the first widespread adoptions of an integral transformative practice.

[xiv] Schwarz, R., *The Skilled Facilitator*, John Wiley and Sons (2002) and Schwarz, R. et al, *The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook*, John Wiley and Sons (2005). Roger and his colleagues have done an excellent job of integrating diverse fields from the human interaction field (negotiation, action science, anthropological assessment). His fieldbook is a great place to learn about his work, and one of the most coherent presentations of Chris Argyris's theories out there.

Biography

Chris Soderquist is the founder and President of Pontifex Consulting, an organization committed to helping individuals, teams, and organizations in building their capacity to develop strategic solutions to complex issues. Chris uses his extensive experience in Systems Thinking/System Dynamics, group facilitation, communication skill development, and statistical/process analysis—integrating the "hard stuff" and the "soft stuff"—to facilitate the development of solutions that are effective and actionable. For over 15 years, he has worked with Fortune 1000 companies, international development organizations, national and state government organizations, and communities to help them better achieve the future they desire.

Chris is on the curriculum development team for Integral University's Business and Leadership Center, and delivered a session on Integral System Dynamics at the Integral Sustainability Seminar. He is a contributing author to *The Change Handbook* (Berrett-Koehler, 1999) and has published several features in *The Systems Thinker*. Chris has facilitated two webinar series for isee systems (developers of the system dynamics software *iThink* and **STELLA**) to help their clients build more effective "systems models" for organizational improvement.

Some of Chris's clients include: Alcoa, The Boeing Company, Dow Chemical, Federal Reserve, WW Grainger, Hewlett-Packard, Indiana Human Resource Investment Council, Merck, MnDOT, Nextel, Northrop Grumman, Pfizer, Sustainability Institute, US Department of Treasury, US National Park Service, and the World Bank.