

MULTI-LEVEL APPLICATION OF GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE LEARNING: STAFF, MEMBERS AND SPONSORING ORGANISATIONS

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In a paper I recently wrote exploring the key themes of past major Group Relations conferences run by the Australian Institute of Socio-Analysis¹ I described the development of what I called "the socio-analytic mind" in Australia. AISA is the organisation which has run Group Relations conferences there since 1986. Socio-analysis is the activity of exploration, consultancy and action research which combines and synthesizes methodologies and theories derived from psychoanalysis, group relations, social systems thinking, organisational behaviour and social dreaming. Among other things, I considered whether particular qualities could be discerned in the themes of these conferences that might relate to unconscious social anxieties in Australian organisational life. I also wondered whether the conference themes (in addition to the conscious motives in their selection) represented, as socio-analytic material, manifestations of unconscious social anxieties or concerns in AISA.

In reflecting on that paper in the context of this conference, I realized that I wanted to make a contribution here to the understanding and development of learning from Group Relations conferences that has emerged from our ways of working in Australia. I recall a conversation I had with the late Eric Miller some years ago in which he commented on the relative freedom to innovate that he imagined we had in Australia, because of our location so far from the epicenter of Group Relations work in the UK. I believe that Australian conferences have held true to the primary tasks, structures, methodologies and processes of the so-called "Tavistock tradition" of Group Relations conferences. But I also think that the peculiarities (sic) of Australian culture have not only shaped our work in distinctive ways but *have* also opened up some interesting and perhaps adventurous possibilities for applying learning from Group Relations conferences. I refer in particular to our learning – perhaps action-learning – in the development of the methodologies.

¹ Shafer A (2003, in press) "Developing the 'Socio-Analytic Mind' in Australia: A Socio-Analytic Exploration of the Key Themes of Major Group Relations Programmes of the Australian Institute of Socio-Analysis: 1987-2003" *Organisational & Social Dynamics* 3(2): 267-276

My intention in the title of this paper – multi-level application of Group Relations Conference learning - was to address three levels of applied learning: learning for participants in conferences; learning for the staff of conferences; and learning for the organisations which run conferences – in this case AISA. I recognize that much has been written about transference of conference learning and the application of learning for the individual (e.g. Reed (1976)²). I do not intend here, to examine the detailed nature of adult learning in the context of Group Relations. In so doing I am moving through a spectrum that covers the individual, the group and the organisation.

1. Applied Learning for Conference Members

My personal experience of Group Relations conferences as a *member* was that they were the most significant adult learning experiences I had had, apart from my own analysis. That is not to say that I regarded conference learning as therapy: rather that they enabled me to think and to learn in novel, innovative and creative ways, about myself, about my own mind, about the dynamics of group and organisational life and about the nature of authority. In particular learning about how I took up particular roles in the conference and the application of this learning to the way I take up organisational roles was an educative experience unique to Group Relations conferences.

My interest in the notion of learning from Group Relations conferences is reflected in the themes I have selected for some of the conferences that I have directed, for example: "Authority for Learning: a working conference to explore the dynamics of authority, leadership, courage and organisational learning" (1999), and "Learning for Leadership" (in 2003 and 2004). Its also evident in the development of what I called an "applied" conference which was aimed specifically at participants who self-identified as "psychotherapists". It was entitled "Who am I at work³?" (2001).

As I have developed as a conference director, responsible for the design of conferences, I have had repeatedly to re-evaluate a remark Gordon Lawrence once made to me (when we worked on the staff of an AISA conference in 1991) that what you learn in Group Relations conferences is

² Reed, B. D. (1976) 'Organisational Role Analysis', in C. L. Cooper (ed.) *Developing Social Skills in Managers: Advances in Group Training*, London: Macmillan.

³ With acknowledgement to Susan Long from whom I borrowed of this term.

how to behave in Group Relations conferences. The assumptions underlying this position demand exploration.

In their fascinating paper on "Modernism and post-modernism in Group Relations" (2003, in press), Karen Izod and Bernard Gertler indicate that "In this broader field of application we are concerned to maximize the relatedness of conference experience and learning to the everyday experience of members in their workplace, cultural or societal context."⁴ While their primary concerns are about the relevance to *post-modern* organisations of Group Relations conferences, which they suggest evolved for *modern* organisations, they make some points which I think are highly relevant to the issue of conference learning that I am exploring here. In particular, they suggest that: "Feedback from participants is often that learning is essentially related to individual awareness even though the focus of consultation is usually systemic, and aimed at enhancing organizational awareness. Members speak of being at odds with the methodology, role(s), and stance of the staff members, describing scenarios in their everyday workplaces which de-emphasize hierarchy, where they engage in multiple tasks, and where relationships with managers are more accessible. Boundaries between systems are seen as more fluid, and subject to constant flux and change."

As I have indicated earlier, my personal learning *was* essentially about "individual awareness". However the frameworks provided by Group Relations have also equipped me to apply that awareness to thinking divergently about my systemic experiences and also to thinking about how my up-take of roles is shaped by my personal valencies in interaction with organisational dynamics.

I nevertheless *do* think that the applicability of learning from "traditional" Group Relations conferences may not always adequately assist conference participants to think divergently about their own contemporary organisational settings and may indeed provide them with frameworks which are now less relevant and perhaps even erroneous. However, while the structure of organizations may be different the impact of different or changing organisational structures on the nature of group dynamics and group relations may need to be thought about. At the same time, I think that many contemporary organisations continue to operate with "modern" rather than "post-modern" structures and

⁴ Gertler B and Izod K (in press) "Modernism and Postmodernism in Group Relations: 'A Confusion of Tongues' ", Forthcoming in Cytrynbaum, S. & Noumair, D.A. Group Relations Reader 3, Jupiter, FL: The A. K. Rice Institute

processes, and themselves may not equip their members to think in post-modern ways about their operations.

I believe these are critically important considerations which we, as conference sponsors must examine and evolve with, if Group Relations is to thrive as a relevant learning platform in a post-modern world. Despite these considerations – perhaps even misgivings - I would like describe more concretely some of the emerging processes for application of conference learning in Australia in the past years. I particularly want to discuss Review and Application Events and Follow-up Programmes.

1.1. Review and Application

Australian conferences have almost always had Review, Reflection and/or Application Groups in various formats. These events are usually located at points in the programme when participants have both sufficient and evolving conference experience to work on. They occur in small consistent peer groups with a consultant. Sometimes the staff has allocated group membership around similarity of work role or issues; sometimes members are free to choose groups or consultants to work with, though group membership is always required to be stable. It seems worth exploring whether there are differences in learning, related to differences in group formation. However, data has not been collected to do this. The fact that such data has not been collected is probably an indication of one of the failures of learning in organisations which sponsor Group Relations conferences.

“Review” is usually aimed at assisting members to reflect on their emerging conference experience – in particular the roles they have taken up in the conference - from an *individual* perspective. It might be thought of as having an “internal ” focus. “Application Groups” – with a more “external” focus - have been conducted in various ways, but almost always participants are invited to do some pre-conference preparation about a work issue they want to explore in the conference. This has taken different forms, but is usually focused on a “problem” issue or an aspect of the member’s work role that they would like to explore.

The processes and models of application work have varied considerably. They have included presentation of the prepared issue to the group with peer feedback and input, assisted by a consultant. They have also included the application of various methodologies, such as “Work Drawings”, where members of the group are asked to represent their work experience graphically, as a tool for projective exploration. In a recent conference with an “A” and “B” membership, the advanced group were

invited to use a version of Open Space Technology to develop key themes of interest, and then to work in two groups on selected themes.

Often these events initially work on the way members take up conference roles and in application are related to work-place roles. Once again, data has not been collected institutionally to assess the learning efficacy of different approaches. Instead the methodology is often selected primarily on the basis of individual preference or the past experience of an individual consultant. This points again to the relative absence of institutional learning – which may, however, occur informally.

Generally consultants to RAG groups are authorized to consult in ways they feel are useful. Participants have found these groups very helpful in working on the conference experience and in providing new perspectives on their “back-home” experience. I am aware once again that the precise nature of this usefulness has not been documented nor formally examined in order to assess the particular methodologies that have contributed to learning. Instead, evaluation is generally based on informal feedback from members and on the consultants’ informal evaluation. A useful way though that this has occurred with slightly more discipline is via the dynamic exploration by the staff, of the data which emerges in the RAG subsystem. I believe that this approach in fact lies at the heart of group relations methodologies – i.e. as a form of action research - and requires even more thorough consideration as a “scientific” methodology.

The extent to which the value of Review and Application as a learning method has been evident has resulted – certainly in the conferences I direct – in my placing considerable emphasis on the RAG Event with increasing numbers of sessions allocated to this task. My colleague, Tania Nahum, who has regularly worked with me on staff, has been particularly instrumental in encouraging this. Moreover, Tania has encouraged me to give greater consideration to post-conference application.

1.2. Follow-Up

In many of AISA's past conferences, optional “Follow-up Events” - half-day workshops which included Plenary and RAG Events - have been held usually between 4 and 6 weeks after the conference. In my personal experience these events have tended to be a continuation of the conference experience rather than a more in-depth focus on application. Attendance at these was often only modest, a factor that seems not to have been sufficiently examined. The fact that it has not been sufficiently examined is yet another example of a missed opportunity for staff and sponsoring institutions to learn from conference experience.

In the design of the 2003 AISA national conference we included an optional – and different “Follow-up Programme” of either 6, 1½ hour weekly sessions which began about 8 weeks after the conference, or where requested, 4 individual sessions with a consultant. Two consultants each ran these programmes, which we began to think of as “Work Group programmes”, and which were well attended and two consulted individually to members. Further exploration is needed to assess the reasons for non-attendance. In some cases we knew that practical issues such as the dates on which the programme was offered affected this. Informal feedback as well as the experiences of the staff indicated that the programme was very helpful to participants. This has encouraged me to include such a programme as a standard option in all AISA conferences, despite the evidence for its reported success not having been formalized. I have subsequently requested participants – by email – to complete a more formalized evaluation sheet but to date have had only one response to this request!

2. Learning for Staff and Sponsoring Institutions

A major aspect of the primary task of AISA Group Relations conferences is the application of learning. In November 2002 AISA held a half-day event for past participants entitled “What have we learnt from Group Relations Work?” It was I attended by only eighteen people – small numbers given that many hundreds had attended conferences over the previous 16 years. The reasons for this poor attendance need to be considered more carefully.

The event began with a Plenary in which the conveners (myself, Alastair Bain and Susan Long) described some of our own learning. Others were then invited to offer their experiences. The contributions were rich. We then broke into three small groups to explore our individual experiences of application of learning. In the final Plenary there was a report back and discussion. From those who participated we learned, among other things, that:

Group Relations thinking is experienced as a subversive activity – taking it back to the organisation is difficult because of the way it challenges the current cultural norms. For a number of people the critical factor has been having a space with others who also understand or have been through a Group Relations experience. People felt alone with their learning after conferences. This was a very valuable illumination of the difficulties of taking learning back to one’s work and personal life. Many people felt isolated “back

home" through lack of engagement with like-minded people who had shared or who understood the experience and its potential value. While a conference follow-up was useful, it did not really address the more pressing issues of maintaining, developing and applying one's learning in the longer term. This latter point suggests that useful post-conference application needs to be ongoing rather than a one-off event and needs to draw on peer support for its maintenance.

There was a strongly expressed bid for a "transitional space" of some kind to support people in the process of post-conference adjustment, in working through the conference experience and in grappling with new perspectives on the workplace.

The simplistic application of "Group Relations methodology" without the broader context of conference-type experience was felt to be fruitless. The possibility of more than one participant from an organisation might also be helpful in having a shared reality as well as in growing a critical mass of like-minded people in an organisation. This points to the importance of offering more intensive links to members' organizations while also participating in a group of like-minded thinkers after the conference.

The Group Relations conference is a learning environment with a *primary task of learning*. The workplace has its own primary task and even in an educational institution is unlikely to give organisational learning cultural predominance. To behave in an organisation as if it is the same as the context of a Group Relations conference is incongruous. This can impede the application of conference learning.

What also emerged was a need to ensure that the learning from this exploratory event was applied to AISA itself and needed to be acted on by individuals in their AISA roles in ways that were useful for AISA and for future (and possibly past) conference participants.

This latter point leads me to consider the issue of learning for conference staff – firstly at an individual level, but also and closely linked with this, at the level of sponsoring organisations. In this context I intend also to give some consideration to what I call "applied" conferences, though in fact all conferences might fall under this heading.

As has emerged in my previous comments, a notable limitation in this area has been the lack of formal assessment of and learning about the efficacy of group relations methodologies. I want to emphasize that the critical factor I am raising here is about learning at an institutional level. I have experienced and observed individual staff and conference directors implicitly and sometimes explicitly using action-learning methodologies to

learn from conference experience for the development of Group Relations methodologies, and I will cite some examples. But I think we have failed to develop such processes systemically, to enhance institutional learning.

Similar examples of these processes occurred in two contexts. Firstly in taking up her Conference Director role, Susan Long introduced in AISA conferences a structure for staff to think about the data and to develop hypotheses about the Study Group systems. This involved organizing the data of the consulting experience into: major themes, transferences, counter-transferences and then hypotheses, in an iterative process. Similarly, at the Leicester Conference in 2003, Mannie Sher provided a suggested framework for doing so. I consider that these approaches could be developed more substantially and applied in the context of broader systemic learning.

I want also, to make some other specific comments about Learning for Conference Staff and for Organisations which sponsor Group Relations conferences.

I want to approach this in three ways: the development of staff; the processing of conference dynamics; and the application to sponsoring organisations. In some ways this parallels the learning of conference members: their own development; their learning from the emerging conference dynamics, and their application to their "back home" organisations. I am going to address the first two issues together as they are closely intertwined.

2.1. Pre-conference staff meetings and staff learning

For administrative and marketing purposes, but mostly for dynamic reasons, I have met with the staffs that I have appointed for up to 6 times before a conference and for a day on the day before the conference begins. Usually this has been by teleconference between Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, and on other occasions also with UK and German based staff members.

Conference staff works with me from early on in conceptualizing, designing, managing and marketing the programme. This has been invaluable in part for the numerical success of conferences, but for me, of great significance, is how this has contributed to a particular style of conference learning and working to which I am committed. It has also

contributed significantly to supporting staff in their own learning and thinking about conference design, structure, process and management. Staff members who have worked in other models have commented on the value of this approach. In fact I find it interesting to note that the current requirements of the Tavistock when it associates itself with the conferences of other organisations, is to participate in the design and planning.

2.2. Working with staff dynamics

In the way I take up my leadership role, I place a premium on working with the dynamics of the staff group. I believe that different views are held about this, some asserting that it dilutes the membership dynamics and deprives the membership of material that needs to be worked through by them. This has not been my experience. I believe that there is a dynamic exchange of relatedness and relationship between the staff group and the membership group. I think that the dynamics of the staff significantly impact on the membership, and the dynamics of the membership reciprocally impact on those of the staff group. This is *the* data for us to work on! A major point I want to make here is that I think we need more systematically to attend to how this material might more formally operate as a medium for learning.

I think it was Susan Long who once said to me that one of the painful aspects of being a conference director is the discovery that the conference often organizes itself dynamically to mirror aspects of the director's internal world. I can unfortunately confirm this! But I can also confirm the degree of learning this offers for members of staff. In addition to its providing access to unconscious conference dynamics, I think it can also facilitate the work of the membership by not over-imposing *unprocessed* staff problems on the conference. However by this I do not mean that staff dynamics should be *over-processed* either. I have found that by developing an understanding of staff dynamics, they can be worked with and worked from as data.

2.3. Organisational Learning

In my own experience of working as conference director or staff member over the past 5 years, I have noticed, in AISA itself, how difficult it has been to pass on the learning from one conference to the next, especially when new staff are involved. AISA has run one, sometimes two major conferences each year for the past 17 years, and several shorter group-

relations based programmes. It is unusual for the same director to lead more than two consecutive programmes. Although occasionally conferences are either jointly sponsored or have co-directors or associate directors, for the most part there have been only three people in Australia who have directed the major programmes – the annual national conferences. This means that knowledge and learning about the history and processes of conferences, and learning about taking up the role of conference director is restricted. I think that a more explicit application of learning methodology – i.e. action-learning methodology – could support this.

2.3.1 Staff learning in the process of a conference

Conference Administration

When I was privileged to have been invited onto staff, then to direct conferences, I became aware of a number of considerations. Two elements in particular were observed, one to do with administrative process, the other to do with the evolution of learning. Regarding the former, sometimes because of lack of administrative continuity as well as the particular value placed on the role of Conference Administrator and, sometimes because of insufficient passing on of learning, each conference felt like it was “re-inventing the wheel” (as one Conference Administrator described it). I became aware of the importance of passing on knowledge and experience which could better prepare subsequent conference staff and directors. Sometimes this was at a quite concrete but dynamically significant level. An example of this was the inclusion in a brochure of an outdated arrangement with a car-hire company intended to assist members to travel to the venue which was difficult to reach by public transport. Members’ discovery that this information was invalid led not only to transport problems but also to the development of a view about the competence of the conference Management.

Administrator and Director as subsystem

Additionally I have found that exploration of the dynamic experience of the Administrator, in role, as well as between Administrator and Director, produced valuable learning about the dynamics of the conference institution⁵. In addition to learning about conference dynamics, this

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Nahum T & Shafer A T(2000) “The role of the ‘Conference Administrator” Paper

phenomenon may also provide insight into the dynamics of the sponsoring institution, as these inevitably penetrate the conference too. It has been suggested (Nahum, 2004, personal communication) that the dynamics of sponsoring institutions may - in parallel process - model (for better or for worse) organisational dynamics for conference members.

Boundary management

For example, for many years AISA's major conference has been held at the same venue in Lorne, a picturesque coastal village about 2 hours from Melbourne. The negotiation of a range of boundary issues with the venue often had to be repeated at each conference, as though the venue and AISA representatives had forgotten the problems and solutions faced each year. One example was the different understanding of time boundaries that affected conference events when meals were not served on time.

Marketing

A more telling example was that the marketing and recruitment processes of each conference always seemed to be a laborious first time, as though the success or lack of success of previous marketing endeavours had been lost. While this inadequate passing on of learning was an administrative nuisance, though not well repaired each time, the passing on of conference experience itself was a more dynamically significant issue.

Staff development and learning

When I took on the role of Director, I learnt on my feet. I had the lucky foresight to appoint two very experienced past directors onto the staff, who proved to be enormously supportive and helpful during the conference experience. Of course this could have been a dynamic nightmare, but Alastair Bain and Susan Long acted with great generosity to me!

In this regard I have made it a policy in my appointment of staff to always include a mix of experienced and relatively inexperienced members. In addition to the fresh perspectives and often the challenge to established

presented to the 2nd Scientific Conference of the Australian Institute of Socio-Analysis, Canberra.

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ways of working that newer people bring to the staff group, they and the sponsoring organisation are also afforded the opportunity for learning about group relations consulting and conference management.

While I am referring here quite concretely to some of the structural considerations, I think that these operate in tandem with other sorts of learning. For example, I feel that the very challenging experience of discovering the role, tasks, authority and dynamics of conference directorship for neophyte directors (and equally for other staff roles) could be enhanced in other ways as well. I am also interested in how the experience and learning of a director could be passed on to future directors.

This is important for two reasons: firstly for the importance of preserving the concrete as well as the dynamic historic knowledge and secondly for the training of potential directors.

2.3.2. Learning methods outside the conference

Directors Forum

- The then AISA Executive supported me in the establishment of a "Directors' Forum" for people who worked (and might work) in this role. The task of the forum was to share knowledge and experience; to explore issues of conference design; and to further our own development while keeping alive the learning from past and current programmes. While this Forum was moderately useful, it tended more to become a consultative body that made recommendations to the AISA Executive about future programmes and the appointment of Programme Directors. I think this diminished the learning potential of this Forum. And I further think that a forum like this could develop the more formal action-learning process I have described above.

- Conference review meetings for staff

Another development I have introduced is a review meeting for staff shortly after the conference. This has proved invaluable on two counts. Firstly, it extended the post-hoc learning about some conference dynamics (which was personally very fruitful). Secondly it helped worked through painful experiences with which some staff had been left. An example of the former related to the experience a staff member in an Associate Director role had of being obliterated in the closing plenary. The exploration of this led to a deep understanding about the dynamics of co-leadership. I think that the value of this experience supports its

continuation and development. Such learning about the relationship of the two roles could be fruitful for future staff.

- Member's feedback

There has been a long-standing reluctance in AISA to obtaining formal feedback from members about their learning from conference experience. This is an interesting phenomenon. Might it mean that we could not bear to hear about conference learning or experience that may not have been helpful? Or could it be that we have so idealized the model of learning that we are reluctant to look to closely at it or to recognize its limitations? I think that this is a potentially valuable and fruitful learning opportunity for sponsoring organisations that should be carefully thought about.

2.3.3. Hindrances to organisational learning

I suspect that one element of this reluctance may be related to the psychoanalytic stance from which we have drawn aspects of our roles as conference staff. Elements of this are invaluable in taking up consulting roles in study groups and other events. But this stance, which is so valuable in the consulting role, may not apply to the management role. I think it is important to take account this distinction. The sometimes-rigid way I have seen staff roles taken up seems not to make this distinction and may be in some respects more appropriate to the psychoanalytic consulting room than to the management role of conference staff.

Susan Long believes that the 'after conference' application style events that are successful owe part of this to the new learning relations that are established between staff and participants - because of the very fact that people can start moving out of transference relations. The sessions may then be more collaborative. There is powerful learning from both styles - for different occasions and purposes.

She suggests that experiential learning is very powerful for the individual. Institutional learning occurs when there is movement at a broad collective level. Not simply a lot of insights for many individuals, but also a set of agreements between people. She sees organisations and institutions as fields of agreements and collusions. If the temporary institution learns, then it is not *sustainable* except as learning through the individuals - for the very fact that it is temporary. It gives members the recognition that group and institutional change is possible - perhaps in their more permanent

groups and institutions. This was supported by the observations made at the event for conference participants that I described earlier.

I have written elsewhere about the relationship between the “executive” and “caring” functions with which managers who come from a clinical background struggle⁶. This struggle may apply to conference staff roles too because of the psychoanalytic origins of group relations work. I suspect that this may also provide an inappropriate model of organisational functioning that constrains the picture of organisational management and leadership which members then are expected to apply to their work settings.

It might be hypothesized too, that Group Relations has swung so far away from forms of learning other than the experiential one within its own tradition, that it has become unable to learn through other traditional methods and actively eschews them even when appropriate. An active split may be occurring.

2.3.4. Learning Difficulties for sponsoring organisations

Another aspect of interest is the application of Group Relations conference learning to the dynamics of sponsoring organisations. It has been striking how historically, such organisations are notoriously unable themselves to manage the kind of organisational dynamics we learn about in conferences. I have been curious to discover my own reluctance to say more about this because I feel that it would be washing AISA's dirty linen in public! I would hazard a guess that this may be one of the contributing reasons to our limited capacity to apply our learning to our own organizations. It may be too painful.

However I think that there are some comments I can make that may contribute to this issue. AISA has recently undertaken changes to our organisational structure that have been both very painful and fruitful. One of these changes has been the establishment of various Directorates within the organisation. In particular the role of “Director of Group Relations” (and other programmes) – to which I have been appointed – is relevant to this paper. This role has the authority for the development of Group Relations programmes over an extended period and for the appointment of programme directors.

⁶ Shafer, A (2003) “Mental Health Organisations and the Problem of “Management”. Paper to be given at the OPUS Conference Organisational and Social Dynamics: International Perspectives from Group Relations, Psychoanalysis and Systems Theory.

Indeed the creation of this role may be, as Veronika Grueneisen has pointed out to me "one of the necessary presuppositions for organisational learning of the sponsoring organisation" (Grueneisen, 2003)⁷. She suggests, "Only if you in your role take an interest in what another director or administrator or staff does and can have them reflect on it with you (and other staff and directors included) will there be an interest in passing on. This organisational interest is embedded in your role. There is, of course, a difficulty in that every staff needs freedom to do what they think appropriate, but if they are authorized by you, then it appears to be appropriate to have them report back and reflect together and thereby contribute to the learning of the sponsoring organisation." This role carries with it the challenge of holding on to and learning from AISA's history while carefully thinking about future innovations so that past and present learning and different learning modalities can be valued but also challenged and developed.

In concluding, I want to refer to the theme of the next – the 17th – AISA national conference: "Learning for Leadership: Flexibility, stability and the growth of new ideas". This theme not only parallels and reflects the organisational developments with which AISA is grappling, but also the challenges of organisational life today, and in particular the challenges facing group relations. Recent reflections about this theme among the staff group of this conference, in a pre-conference meeting, suggested that in the process of engaging with new ideas, it needs to be recognized that there is unlikely even to be agreement about the stability of old ideas – indeed, old ideas are not set in concrete, they are in constant evolution themselves, as well as in our perceptions of their past. It might further be considered whether the growth of new ideas may be anxiously associated with instability, rather than flexibility.

⁷ (Grueneisen, personal communication, October 2003)

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