CARDIFF IPA WORLD CONFERENCE

PRESENTATION JULY 7[TH.] 2011 BRIAN ASHLEY

 PDF FILE PART 1.

Theory and Practice of a Comprehensive integrated System for Play & Leisure in a Community.

This PDF File part 1 describes the complete preparation and explanation for the presentation (PRESENTATION PDF FILE Part 2) and ideally should be read before the presentation

The author would hope that much of presentation time could then be spent in exchanging experience and views with others.

**Abstract.** ,

Developing theory and practice for a field of professional work which is not well researched, requires that one seeks out relevant experiments and theory from other fields and adapts and applies and tests the applications over long periods.  This approach had to be used by the author. The results have emphasised the needs of professionals working in this field for access to the support of independent supervision in innovating and experimenting. One of the best supervising agencies can be the professional training unit that can also gain the benefit from close contact with field practice.

INTRODUCTION
My approach to this task arises from the following influential personal experience:-
*"I graduated in sociology, then trained as a social worker and later as a counsellor and teacher. My first appointment was as a vocational guidance officer in the industrial city of Hull in Northern England, advising school pupils in their last year at school about choice of career and then helping them to find jobs when out in the labour market.*
*In the evenings I worked extra part-time as leader of a large municipal mixed youth club in the same central area of the city. Several years at the task of advising  young people leaving school showed me how inadequately school had prepared many young people for working life or indeed for all life outside school. In*

*meeting and advising parents it was clear that many lacked advice or help with the socialisation of their children. They very limited awareness of how to prepare them adequately to make decisions about their future in a society which was swiftly changing.*

*At the same time, as a youth worker, I was meeting young people who had often been rejected or designated as failures by school but showed themselves to have potentialities and capacities which school had never discovered.*

*I transferred to become a teacher in two schools in the same city area and extended my experience and understanding of this problem. I discovered the same anomalies inside the school. As a sociologist and counsellor I was given classes of the misfits and pupils which the school designated as problems. As a counsellor I soon diagnosed that many of the problems arose from an inflexible system that could not take account of individual difficulties and, as a sociologist, that many of those difficulties arose outside the school in family, neighbourhood and social environment. Clearly no individual teacher could influence the system within a school to become more tolerant of these difficulties. Nor was it easy to solve the general problem of how to discover, understand and combat such difficulties in the social context. My opportunity to investigate and understand better the social context came with my appointment as Warden of Edinburgh University Settlement, a social work and community work centre based in a large pre-World war 2 slum clearance housing estate where twenty years later residents were still grappling with the same wide-spread family problems.. The Settlement centre was residential, and I and my family, together with a cook-housekeeper and thirty medical, social work, teaching and youth work students and even students reading for subjects with no vocational orientation, lived in accommodation above the community facilities. As a condition of their residence, these students undertook voluntary work in the varied social and youth work which the centre provided for the estate families.*

*The Settlement employed also fulltime professional staff that initiated and carried out social experimental and research work in the community, which I directed.*

*I learned much,professionally and academically in my years at the Settlement, but learned most from living with the people in this socially andeconomically depressed area and sharing their life and experiencing the negative views which the outside world, even*

*professional workers aiming to provide help and support service, projected on to the residents and their social context.*

*I was the only professional worker living in the are and had the same difficulties as the residents, in coping with the misconceptions that other workers brought with them from outside. Often these workers, coming from different services, were working with the same family without knowing it and without cooperating with each other.*

*During these years I first began to understand, practically, much of my academically acquired "sociological understanding".*

*This important experiential learning shaped my future attitude to the use of academic studies in providing guidance for practice in working with people in their own social context.*

*Later, a researcher colleague termed as "culture shock" the reaction of newly emerging teachers and social workers and their inability to understand or cope with the behaviour they faced in working in such areas.*

*I learned, through the Settlement experience, that the sheer weight of the effect of this unfavourable social context had to be felt experientially in order to believe and understand it.*

*I then joined the staff of Moray House College of Education to develop the first professional course of youth work training in Britain. The appointing committee revealed in their explanation of the task, that they, as was the 'spirit of the time, had the traditional role of youth leader as moral exemplar in mind. They expected students to become expert in certain subjects that were firmly believed to be character building and that in turn, would be used by the workers after training to inculcate desirable moral qualities in young people.*

*During the appointment discussion, I found myself having to articulate and argue, instead, for an approach to training that would be based on my Settlement experience. The aim would be to help students to learn to know and try to understand the people with whom they worked in terms of the social context within which they were embedded. To learn to work with them and together with them find answers to the tasks, difficulties or problems with which they were faced.*

*When I was appointed and had to develop the new curriculum, the logical outcome was that the course, though containing the academic and practical knowledge required for work with young people, became a training based on this principle*

*of understanding people in the context of their community. Students were helped to take a community development approach and to see their role as facilitating others to understand their situation and difficulties and to select their own goals in order to improve their situation.*

*These students of a new professional training faced much criticism when they emerged into the field, especially in the early years because they did not meet the expectations to launch immediately into directing and organising acceptable moral-building activities for others.*

*They took considerable time to discover – critics said too much time- the needs and capacities of the people they were working with and in gradually helping them to achieve things for themselves. These students, emerging from training ,with conviction based on their new understanding of their clients, due to the practical experience their training had helped them to obtain, took up the challenge to resist the criticism and to maintain the principles of their training.*

*Later especially when they reached the stage of employing others, their approach gained respect. Significantly many of them, after training, undertook challenging experimental projects and initiated new developments that questioned the traditionally accepted practices.*

*After a few years, the principles upon which their training was based were accepted, not only by employing authorities who now sought their services, but even by the validating and qualifying authorities, who permitted the change of the official title of the course to indicate its aim to prepare students for work in the community.*

*These training principles were later extended also to the new courses in social work training that I subsequently developed in the college and were also the basis for my consultancy to public and voluntary organisations working to help and support community development"*

*Please forgive this personal statement but it explains my underlying approach to all questions arising within community and social work training*

**The presentation uses selected experimental and theoretical results from researchers over many years to inform training in group work and experiential education.**

"Whyte, William F. " – " Street-Corner Society" classic case study first published in 1943 and later referenced in Homans,G "The Human Group" Routledge & Kegan-Paul 1951.

#Bion, Wilfrid " Experience in Groups" Tavistock . 1961 and author's personal participation in training seminars of the London Tavistock Institute in developing group work consultancy.

#Rogers, Carl:  Early research & publications developing concept of 'student centred learning' and his later publications: e.g. "On Encounter Groups" New York Harrow Books, Harper & Row 1970: " A Way of Being".1980  Mifflin Press.

#Early works by Parsons,Talcott & Bales Robert, on "Interaction Process Analysis"

#Parsons, Talcott,  Bales, Robert F. Shils,E. "Working Papers in the Theory of Action" 1981. Greenwood Press: and further publications by Bales describing SYMLOG system for group observation.

# Ashley, Brian J. Cohen H. & Slatter R.G. "Introduction to the Sociology of Education" Macmillan 1971. Applying Parson's system theory in education.

#Levin, Kurt "Resolving Social Conflicts & Field Theory in Social Science" American Psychological Association 1997 Washington DC: – particularly classic experiments of Lewin. Lippit and White and work of the Group Training Laboratory.

#John Dewey and Carl Rogers: theories of experiential education

#Bronfennbrenner, Urie,"Ecology of Human Development" Harvard .1978

#Vygotsky,Lev, Mind & Society:Harvard Press 1978. – both of these authors stress the importance of the socio-cultural context for children's development and the author has used their theories to construct the models of provision and practice described in the paper.

Form of Presentation.The presentation builds upon the author's personal summary of the theory and practical experience leading to two main principles on which to base the task of training community workers

1) Understanding community members in their own social context.

2) Helping the members' to develop their potential to choose own goals and methods to improve their own community.

B) A description of how the author, during twenty-five years of training for such work, selected theories, research and experiments from within other fields of knowledge and practice and adapted and applied them to improve work methods with children and youth.

C) The conclusions that have come from this experience are-

1) Adequate provision of the opportunities for free expression in leisure time for all children and youth in a community must also be based on these principles

2) Such provision can only be achieved if the community has a comprehensive leisure service for children and youth that integrates the different approaches and methods necessary for the different developmental needs to be met by each service provision,

D) Models of the service provision for each developmental stage in childhood and youth.

E). Descriptions of the application of the principles for developing work methods and for the role of the professional at each developmental stage...

F) A diagram of a model centre within every community as a base for providing outreach work to support all the play and leisure needs of the family.

IF time permits questions and discussion will be welcomed and case studies can be provided which exemplify the models.  If not this interchange can  take place by e-mail with the author. <brian.ashley@telia.com> .

## Supplement:
### TRAINING TO WORK WITH THE "FORGOTTEN GROUP
This spplement presents conclusions arrived at from the author's study, research and experimentation trying to solve the basic problem of how to train workers to work

with the Forgotten Group. (Term used by author to describe the special leisure needs of pre- and early adolescents)

It aims to provide pedagogic guidance to others interested in the same problem. The reference list provides the academic basis. It was Ericsson, who first drew attention to the special nature of the adolescent stage and the roles and tasks, which have to be resolved in passing through it. These tasks of developing independence from the parents and from other adults, identifying self, and discovering and experimenting in social relationships, compel the adolescent, with others in the same stage, into separating themselves from within society. This group dependency upon the gang of others who wish to separate themselves from adult direction and control, presents a difficult challenge to all adults who have to, or wish to, work with them. As the gang relationships extend over age boundaries the gang becomes too difficult to deal with for most institutions like schools which base programmes on homogeneous age groupings. The gang members, seeking for self-identity and independence, support each other in rejecting the forced choices of the structured programmes, which also typify most out-of school provision.

Whyte provided a classic sociological study of the gang over fifty years ago in his book "Street-Corner Society". He described how groups of youngsters drawn together by circumstance of living in the same neighbourhood, or of experiencing the same life style, or of facing the same social difficulties or tasks, gradually increased the frequency of contact with each other and isolated themselves from other relationships. As their contact increased they assumed different roles in the group, depending on their personal qualities and attributes and these roles hardened into fixed positions, which earned them status in the group but also increased their dependence upon the group. Whyte observed how, due to lack of socially legitimate opportunities to demonstrate ability and earn status, the gang members increasingly resorted to socially illegitimate activity.

Since the time of Whyte, there has been concern in adult society regarding the increase in deviant behaviour which research shows is fostered by group pressure within this separated existence. Recent newspaper coverage of youth gang violence in England and other European countries, including Sweden and in the USA and Japan have prompted this supplement to highlight

the need for educationalists to recognise their
responsibility  to these 'outsiders'. There is a need for self-
expressive free time leisure opportunities for all ages and
particularly for this group in order to give them chances
to develop confidence and initiative independently of adult
direction. Therefore the increasing dangerous tendency to
confine the study and benefit of play to that used in institutions
and guided by adults should be combated. Especially in the pre-
adolescent and early adolescent stages of development when, as
Ericsson showed, a natural part of developing an independent
self, is the distrust and suspicion of adult intervention
and control. The author's comparative studies confirm that
Whyte's description is still valid for adolescent gang behaviour
today. The need for the support of the gang is being increased
among young people today by the alienation of these young
people in our modern society.

Today there are also increased opportunities for gang
development through increasing unsupervised free time.
Comparative studies by the author in Europe, USA, Australia
Japan and New Zealand, reveal universal decrease in public
provision of space for the leisure time of this developmental
stage. This glaring avoidance of the needs of this stage has led the
author, in earlier published work, to label these young people as
" The Forgotten Group".

But this lack of motivation for policies for provision and
opportunity for thespecial needs of the "Forgotten Group" may
also be due to an increasing fear among adults of how to work
with the challenge of the gang. To work with the Forgotten
Group, adults face a dilemma. Firstly to find methods and
opportunities to show adult care and concern and secondly, to
pursue the social goals of fostering acceptable behaviour in the
face of the strong opposition which comes from the cohesion and
support of the gang and which is based on a rejection of adult
authority. This resistance and rejection defeats most adult
attempts. But research confirms that their hopeful attempts
should be regarded positively because under this demonstrative
resistance to adult control or even guidance or suggestion, the
Forgotten Group are shown to have a concealed need for, even if
not admitted, interest in contact with and support of
adults.

This supplement  aims to help to solve the dilemma of those who

wish to work with this developmental stage. It is based on the author's work in training people to work with groups in a variety of situations. In that work the author applied a personal interpretation of the methods and observations of researchers described in this presentation

Valuable understanding for prospective workers can be gained from Whyte's description of how the leader of the gang gained his position, by excelling at one or more of the basic activities, which first brought the group together. The leader then increased his position and power by carefully selecting gang activities, which confirmed his superior ability and thereby increased his status as leader and confirmed the relative lower status of the other members of the group. By manipulating the gang activity and his attitude to other members, he could keep control over their relative status in the group and so avoid challenge to his authority.

Whyte also described how the gang leader's freedom to choose his own development and action was also restricted by his dependence on the group's acceptance and support. The leader and gang were enclosed within this reciprocal interdependence.. Understanding this reciprocal dependence clarifies a risk in the dilemma for the prospective worker wanting to work with the gang. I

t can be tempting to use the methods of the leader in Whyte's study to assume such a leadership position by excelling in an activity favoured by the group.  Many structured activity programmes in leisure provision contain this assumption. But the goals of the gang leader are entirely opposite to all the principles and philosophy upon which concerned adults would wish to base their work with young people. If adult workers use the same methods of manipulating the group activity to gain group support they can only succeed by being drawn in to this same system of interdependence which denies young people chances to grow in personal identity and choice, which should be the aim of work with youth. A further danger of this approach is that, if the worker bases control over the group on the level of skill in the chosen programme, there is a risk that low-level performers are 'forced out. This again is against the principle of concern for the individual's well-being being the prime aim of work with children or youth.

In the same period as Whyte's study, Kurt Levin's field theory and

leadership studies with experimental groups, provided further evidence which could give workers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the gang., Levin trained researchers to lead groups in three different styles, The leader in the authoritarian role chose the activity and took all the decisions needed to guide the group to a successful achievement of the goal. In the democratic role the leader encouraged understanding of the choice and effects of possible goals and the efforts needed to reach them. The members participated in all the decisions to reach the goal and contributed with their own skills to the process of reaching the goal. In the laissez-faire role the leader merely collected the group together and was present during their attempts to work together. The laissez -faire leader did not participate in these attempts and gave no clarifying or supportive help.

In Levin's study the authoritarian group were first to complete the task and when questioned, most members were content with this achievement. The democratic group took longer to complete the task but all the members were very satisfied with the process and felt they had gained from it personally. The laissez-faire group did not succeed in their attempts to define and achieve the task and were very dissatisfiedwith the process and had found it an unrewarding experience.

An even more significant finding emerged in the second stage of Levin's experiments. In this stage of the research, Levin constructed a plausible reason for the leader to leave the group for a considerable period. In the authoritarian situation, the group suspended work whilst it tried to organise itself and to decide on process until the leader returned. It then completed the task but members were dissatisfied, The democratic group proceeded with the task as before the leader's absence, with members contributing to the process and completing the task and feeling very satisfied. In the laissez-faire group, work stopped and the group lost cohesion and did not proceed. Members were very dissatisfied.

These findings can be interpreted simply, as that the authoritarian situation had proceeded on learning dependent on the leader and members had gained little understanding, which they could apply independently on their own initiative. The democratic situation had allowed members to gain independent learning, which they could then apply themselves. The laissez-

faire situation had been a negative learning experience.

In the author's training work, Levin's studies were replicated with selected trainees being trained in the different leader roles whilst others in the training group were participants in the different style groups. Others trainees observed and recorded these different processes. This application of Levin's work was useful in training workers to understand how to develop a democratic approach. Particularly as, at that time, most work with young people, assumed an authoritarian and structured approach with a strong emphasis on the adult worker modelling adult society values. But, as explained later, the approach needed refining beyond the normal understanding of democracy and it did little to help with the problem of making initial contact  and forming a relationship. With the gang

Levin's further work helped with this refinement. Developing these workshops of group observation, Levin discovered that the accidental interruption of a trainee's comment into Levin's  own interpretation of behaviour in a group, led to a greater depth of discussion. This encouraged Levin to extend all his training workshops to sessions in which trainees and trainers participated together, in the analysis and observation and recording of their 'here and now' experience These

gradually developed as 'T-Group'' workshops into which Levin introduced the concept of 'feedback' which he borrowed from electrical engineering. He used the concept to describe how the behaviour and performance of group members could be changed and improved, by receiving and understanding the results of observation and recording results of their previous behaviour.

The work of Robert Bales took this understanding further. Bales was a social psychologist who was strongly influenced by the field theory developed by Levin on the basis of his research and training experience Field theory conceptualised the

behaviour of individuals in groups. It was seen as the combined influence together of the characteristics of others and of the individuals themselves, acting as interacting

forces in a social field. Bales built upon this concept and concentrated on observing and analysing the behaviour of members in interaction in groups. He developed his

theory of social interaction in which the group and its activity, rather than the individual, was the unit of analysis. He still,

however, remained closely interested in the role of individual personality in social interaction.

Bales' particular help, to the problem of this supplement, was in his development of methods of observation and measurement of interaction processes. He developed methods, which he called SYMLOG - the Systematic Multi Level Observation of Groups . He developed technical instruments for recording and measuring group interaction. The author found that all these methods described above, could be adapted for the training of workers to solve the problems posed in this supplement

The author developed a training programme similar to that of the postgraduate course developed by Bales and based on experience of students in practical placements in the author's department. Trainees were divided into self-analytic groups and discussed their own interactions in order to learn about the problems faced by themselves as group members and by those working with the group. The author used group rooms interlinked by a Closed Circuit TV system to enable groups to make systematic observation of other groups and to record and feed back the results of their observations (including the TV replay to support their comments)

In this work certain concepts were used, which are helpful to the training problem of this supplement.

Firstly, Bales' conclusion that groups were always operating on two levels -

that of task behaviour and

that of socio-emotional behaviour.

Sometimes these were complementary and supportive but more often they were in conflict. Bales concluded that the more the group concentrated upon the task, the more the socio-emotional needs of the group were neglected or suppressed (confirming Whyte's description of how the gang leader used task activity to keep the group under his control). Bales showed, however, that suppression of feelings by over-emphasis on task, could build up emotional pressure, which could slow up the task work of the group or even explode and stop the task work.

**(To illustrate this effect the author used the bicycle–pump analogy – how when one pumps with the finger over the outlet the pressure in the chamber builds up until the finger is forced from the outlet and the pressure inside escapes.)**

This effect explains why in any group at some point, the socio-

emotional needs of the group need to become the task, even if they seem to be slowing or diverting attention from the prime task.

The author worked to demonstrate this by using staff members to role- play Levin's leader styles and deliberately create the socio-emotional pressure in the authoritarian group. Other trainees drew Bales-type socio-graphs/grams.

**(Lines drawn representing intensity and direction of contributions to group process -).**

These socio-graphs/gtams  could then be used to check and demonstrate the effectiveness of the role-played styles. The members of the groups under different role-played leadership styles, could then, afterwards, discuss their feelings during the process.

Continual exchanging and inter-changing of roles in these training sessions provided the students with the experiential learning (as extolled by Carl Rogers) needed to work with difficult situations in groups. Using Bales recording methods, (assisted by TV recording or feedback from other observers) they could analyse their behaviour in situations constructed to emphasise task or socioemotional processes. In this way they learned much about, their own reaction to group stress and pressure and how to help groups manage the balance between these two areas of behaviour.

Secondly, Bales had concluded from his own research that leadership in groups was rarely one simple or homogeneous or single-centred role, as that of the leader in Whyte's study. His observations confirmed that such an interpretation of the role limited and starved the group. He showed that, on the contrary, in groups, which were successfully adaptable to variable situations, the role of leadership was made up of a complexity of behaviours, which no single leader could fulfil. His observations listed and categorised these different aspects of the task. He found that members of the group assumed different components of the leadership task, depending on the situation or task. Some of these aspects could be classified as positive task efforts -such as clarifying goals or identifying decisions to be made, others as negative task efforts such as denying progress or obstructing other contributions. Some as positive socio-emotional tasks, such as approving contributions or identifying success, Others as negative socio-emotional tasks such as

expressing distrust or disappointment or criticism. Some others were neutral contributions, neither positive nor negative socioemotionally, such as providing new information or facts. Members might assume different roles depending on the group process.

Using Bales breakdown of leadership behaviour into these many different aspects as a basis for recording, workers in training could receive feedback of their performance in different aspects of the leadership role and learn how to share out andinvolve others in widening the capacity of the group.

This conclusion based on Bales' work, helped the author in refining the role of the democratic leader, which was referred to earlier. This role needs to include the ability to identify in the membership of the group, all the potential contributions to the complex and variable total leadership needs of the group. Even more important the role needed the ability to encourage members to fulfil their potential in the group. The worker needed to learn to accept and support the contributions of any member. The author developed this breakdown of the leadership role, and the spreading and sharing of the potential within the group, into his concept of the **facilitator**, which he used in his training work . This refined role embodies the concepts of experiential learning and enables growth and development by all sharing and contributing from their own abilities. This enabling of growth and development by sharing and participation has been developed by the author in his consultation work as the **facilitating process**. The facilitator maintains an open group, encouraging new learning information to come into the group from outside or to be sought from outside by members who are also helped to take their experience out from the group. The facilitator identifies and supports the particular skills and experience, which each member can contribute to the group. The facilitator uses this knowledge of potential to emphasise creating opportunities for others to identify the goal and task and to make their contribution to the group process. Often this ability to create opportunities for others means that the facilitator must suppress any earlier opportunity for the facilitator to make a contribution for the group and to wait for it to emerge from the group.

This can be a long and patient process of suppressed frustration for the worker. This requirement, to be prepared to

conceal one's own capacity in order to develop the capacity of other members of the group is most difficult for many adults and is the most likely barrier to success in working with the Forgotten Group.

*(In the author's own work these principles of facilitation have proved to be successful with groups of any level of ability and any type of task but have shown to be an essential basis for working with groups in the community who need to be helped over diffidence or inhibition and build up confidence and discover their own potential)*

This supplement has aimed to show that the most important capacity for the potential facilitator with groups to develop is that of sensitivity to the group process and the ability to interpret and respond to the needs of the group. This cannot be learned by reading or listening to lectures.  It must be built upon Carl Rogers' experiential learning. The description above illustrates how experiential learning in specially constructed and supervised practical experiences can develop understanding and increase capacity in the worker.

But sensitivity has to go further than understanding and the capacity to create learning situations. To respond to the group and to facilitate the group's own response and to learn to suppress one's own capacity has to be experienced socio-emotionally by participating in groups constructed to facilitate sensitivity.

In this stage of the development of the training programme the author found the writings and teaching of Wilfrid Bion the most helpful. Bion was a psychoanalyst, who studied and practised in many group situations- therapeutic and otherwise. . He took his studies of group experience to a deeper psychoanalytical level than Bales.

His writings were many and complex but focussed down upon experiences in the family group as underlying all other group experiences. He called this the 'basic assumption' behaviour to which all members would return when facing difficult issues

*(Note: This emphasis was the reason for the author selecting to study Bion's theory as a useful basis for work with gangs or family support groups as these client groups were likely to need this understanding)*

His main contribution towards the problem of this supplement  is that, especially in his work in the Tavistock Clinic in London, he

stimulated group experience meetings or sensitivity workshops designed to help members of groups to learn more about their understanding of their behaviour. His approach was built upon his work with ex-service patients with behavioural problems arising from war experiences. In these groups he, or a consultant trained in his theory, interpreted the behaviour of the group by comments designed to keep the members focussed on trying to understand the socio-emotional process (eg- avoiding the issue)  the group. Like Bales he differentiated between task behaviour and socio-emotional behaviour. But for Bion, every group, which is formed has a primary socio-emotional task, which he believed was underlying all group situations. For Bion, members were always attempting to resolve conflicts or issues arising from 'basic assumption' behaviour. He classified three types of 'basic assumption behaviour'.

\# Fight/ Flight where the individual sways between fighting the primary task by criticism or flying from it by escaping into some unimportant issue,

\# Pairing, where the individual seeks for some other individual in the group, who can offer support or similar attitudes to the primary task.

\# Dependency, where the individual seeks for another  member to provide a model to follow.

According to Bion the behaviour in ordinary 'work groups' often lapses into this 'basic assumption' behaviour where members are being influenced by feelings, which are not related to the task. In order to understand this process and its possible relevance for the training of workers, the author attended in 1970 Bion type "Group Experience Workshops' organised by the Tavistock Institute for workers learning to apply Bion's teaching.

Experience Groups were organised in workshops, lasting a week in a residential situation which members were not allowed to leave. The whole time was spent analysing the behaviour of the group under the guidance of a consultant, trained to help focus the group on its 'primary assumption' behaviour by occasional interpretative comments. Any attempt to 'fly from the task' was interpreted to bring the focus back to the task. The analysis was even applied to behaviour outside the group sessions e.g. attempts to 'leave early' or 'come late' or to 'find other important things one had to do' would be interpreted as 'flying from the task'

Like many psychoanalytical theories, the group experience workshops could easily develop Bion interpretations, almost as a faith, which could answer all behavioural needs.

The author was opposed to such claims but, rather used it, as a helpful tool, among many others described above, of understanding group behaviour.

Therefore, after attending several of these residential workshops, the author felt that he had gained enough understanding and insight into his own behaviour in groups which he could use to help others. Especially he had gained considerable enlightenment as to the way in which groups functioned or did not function. He had learned how aggression and pressure could build up in the group due to feelings underlying the surface process. He learned that these feelings had to be brought to the surface to be dealt with in the group but that the real reason was often too difficult to express. Instead they were often translated and directed towards the consultant. He observed how the consultant accepted the aggression without reacting personally and then, by carefully selected short comments redirected the focus of the group back to explore the reason for the frustration, fear, or disappointment. This experience has been valuable in developing the author's own role in groups as a training consultant or supervisor and as a facilitator. It also confirmed him in his view based on his own earlier experience that workers could only learn to work in groups by being helped to understand their own behaviour in real group situations.

This understanding of the need of the consultant or facilitator to be able to accept the aggression and withstand other socio-emotional pressure of members facing difficulties without responding, confirmed the author in his conviction that working in this way required access to professional supervision or other independent objective advice. As certain of his case studies can illustrate, this is particularly necessary in cases where sole workers are engaged in 'outreach activity' where the work can apply much emotional pressure which cannot be resolved in the work situation.

The supplement has sought to explain the difficulty of working with the gang group and to describe how to build up understanding of the dynamics of the group.

But this understanding can only be applied in work with the gang once contact has been made with the gang and a relationship

established. The solution of how to make contact and secure the interest of the gang group is most likely to be provided by applying understanding of the many-faceted aspects of the group task. By carefully studying the situation and behaviour of the gang it is possible to identify some aspects in which the group shows weaker capacity and where an offer of support limited to this particular weakness can provide a basis for development. By studying the possible complex list of tasks facing the group (as described in the study of Bales' work on tasks e.g. confidence building, understanding and clarifying, possibilities for action, accepting difficulty and failure etc.) it is possible to identify certain contributions, which are particularly suitable for adults to offer. In the early stages of contact these are most likely to be found in the neutral area of information and facts or suggesting alternatives for action. So the worker may proceed by simply informing the gang of information likely to support one of their interests. This possibility of need is suggested by observation of their behaviour.

*(Note: This stage is often helped, as in 'out-reach' work, by contact or meeting in a'neutral' situation like a 'café' as suggested incase studies)*

Once contact has been established with a degree of security on both sides then it can gradually be extended, as other tasks or interests open themselves up for intercommunication and cooperation. It is a slow process and cannot be forced or pressured forward, as often required in public services.

The author's presentation aims to serve as encouragement to extend support services for the free time opportunities of the 'Forgotten Group'. It can be used as an explanation or argument for the importance of the full-time employment of specially trained workers to work with the 'Forgotten Group. But work with the 'Forgotten Group' is only one context and the gang is an extreme situation. It can also be used to help trainers to use the small group as an experiential method of understanding behaviour in other familysupport situations. The author has used Bales methods of observing and recordingbehaviour by other members of the training group as a supplement to the experiential participation in the group. This permits use of Levin's feedback method of discussing observations as a way of changing the understanding and behaviour of trainees. These methods have also been used within seminars for members of the

community who wish to know more about the possibilities of support and those who might be interested in developing these possibilities in their own 'back-home' situation. The author would like to use presentation time to discuss the methods and illustrate the discussion with case studies

*Note: In this build-up of these experiential methods the author himself sought opportunities for experiential learning. It is an essential requirement of the facilitator to learn from the facilitating process one is engaged in and to seek new opportunities for experiential learning.*

*But mere analysis of one's own practice is not sufficient*

*These opportunities can often be provided by the application of the theory and research of others*.