

# Temporary Theories Integration (TTI) Standardized Therapy Schools Dialogue (TSD) and Psychotherapy Integration

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## *Abstract*

The *Standardized Therapy Schools Dialogue (TSD)*, which is considered to be the first and thus oldest methodological sector of *Experimental Therapy Schools Research (Psychotextology)*, represents an interdisciplinary research program across psychotherapeutic modalities as well as an "integrative approach" quite in the sense of the international psychotherapy integration movement. This assertion will be substantiated in the context of this textual contribution. In doing so, it will become apparent whether the psychotherapeutic research ambitions of the dialogical-experimental approach in TSD are indeed compatible with basic aspirations and goals concerning integrative endeavors.

## *keywords*

Psychotherapy Integration, Theory Integration, Temporary Theories Integration (TTI), Standardized Therapy Schools Dialogue (TSD), Therapy Schools-Interdisciplinary Research, Experimental Trans-Contextualization (ExTC), Experimental Therapy Schools Research, Psychotextology

## *Temporary Theories Integration*<sup>1</sup>

### *Standardized Therapy School Dialogue (TSD) and Psychotherapy Integration*

The Standardized Therapy Schools Dialogue/TSD (Greiner 2012), which is considered to be the first and thus oldest methodological sector of Experimental Therapy Schools Research (Psychotextology), represents an interdisciplinary research program across psychotherapeutic modalities as well as an "integrative approach" quite in the sense of the international psychotherapy integration movement. This assertion will be substantiated in the context of this textual contribution. In doing so, it will become apparent whether the psychotherapeutic research ambitions of the dialogical-experimental approach in TSD are indeed compatible with basic aspirations and goals concerning integrative endeavors.

### *1. Psychotherapy and Integration*

In the USA, towards the end of the 20th century, a movement gradually emerged out of the increasing interest in bringing together the many different currents and directions of psychotherapeutic thinking, acting, researching and cognizing, in view of whose intensity John Norcross (1995, 45) speaks of a "metamorphosis of psychotherapy". Although this metamorphosing movement was initially called by different names, it was underpinned by a fundamental intention:

Characteristic of the attempt at psychotherapy integration is the dissatisfaction with approaches committed to only one school, and a corresponding effort to go beyond its boundaries and see what can be learned beyond them from other psychotherapeutic practices for the benefit of patients [...]<sup>2</sup> (Norcross 1995, 45).

Admittedly, the integrative tendency in the field of psychotherapy is nothing new. Attempts at rapprochement and unification in this sense can already be traced back to the early 20th century, although they were considered rather an exception or even condemned as "fall from grace" and "heresy". Since the end of the 1990s, however, the integration phenomenon has meanwhile become an integral part of the psychotherapeutic literature, textbooks, and professional essays (Castonguay u. Goldfried 1997, 244). Last but not least the integrative psychotherapy movement has stimulated the foundation of important interdisciplinary psychotherapeutic organizations, such as the "International Academy of Eclectic Psychotherapy (IAEP)" or the "Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI)" (Norcross 1995, 46).

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<sup>1</sup> As an operating principle, the TTI is constitutive for the Standardized Therapy Dialogue (TSD), which began to establish itself as a Research Program at SFU Vienna in 2007. As a concept, this TSD-typical TTI was mentioned explicitly for the first time in: Greiner, Jandl, Paschinger 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Original quote: „Kennzeichnend für die Psychotherapie-Integration ist die Unzufriedenheit mit Ansätzen, die nur einer Schule verpflichtet sind, und das entsprechende Bemühen, über deren Grenzen hinauszugehen und zu sehen, was sich jenseits dieser Grenzen von anderen psychotherapeutischen Praktiken zum Wohle der Patienten lernen lässt [...].“

## *2. The Phenomenon of Language Diversity in Psychotherapy*

An essential motivating factor for the formation of the psychotherapeutic integration program is the fact of psychotherapeutic language diversity. The fact of the "lack of a common language" in psychotherapy has been recognized by the psychotherapeutic mainstream for a long time and was predominantly perceived as a severe issue. Norcross, who is aware of the mentioned dilemma, writes in this context:

"Each therapeutic school tradition has its own jargon, its own therapeutic shorthand for insiders, and this widens the gap between the different modalities. The encounter between strangers across this gap of ignorance leads to mutual misunderstanding [...]"<sup>3</sup> (Norcross 1995, 53).

It is only in the course of the development of psychotherapy-integrative discourse that the two questions a) whether it is possible and b) whether it makes sense at all to strive for a common language in psychotherapy have emerged.

In addition to numerous advocates for a unified therapeutic language, an epistemologically critical camp was able to form, in which attention is drawn to the fact that different language practices imply different ontological and epistemological perspectives, which always structurally determine the object of knowledge in advance and thus also anticipate the adequate way of knowing the object (Castonguay u. Goldfried 1997, 261f.; see also Wallner 1992a/b; Slunecko 1994; Kriz 2009). For school-interdisciplinary oriented therapists it is therefore considered indispensable to acquire "a thorough knowledge of the respective language" via psychotherapy-integrative ways in order to "understand the constructs, philosophy and practice of the different approaches" (Castonguay & Goldfried 1997, 262).

## *3. The Style of Theory Integration*

Along with "methodological eclecticism" and "common factors," theory integration" is considered the most important style of psychotherapy integration. At the thematic center of theory-integrative efforts is the ambitious attempt to "better understand and optimize psychotherapy by considering the perspective of other schools," thus targeting "the improvement of traditional therapeutic modalities on the basis of an approach to other modalities" (Norcross 1995, 46 and Castonguay u. Goldfried 1997, 244f.). Norcross defines the style of "theory integration" as "a conceptual or theoretical neologism that goes beyond the pragmatic mixture of methods of eclecticism" while also pointing out that

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<sup>3</sup> Original quote: „Jede therapeutische Schultradition hat ihren eigenen Jargon, eine eigene therapeutische Kurzschrift für Eingeweihte, und das erweitert die Kluft zwischen den unterschiedlichen Richtungen. Die Begegnung zwischen Fremden über diese Kluft von Unkenntnis hinweg führt zu wechselseitigen Missverständnissen [...].“

"given that theory integration is still in its infancy, [...] this difference (is) partly responsible for eclecticism being the common practice today; theory integration is a promising field of the future"<sup>4</sup> (Norcross 1995, 50).

Insofar as the TSD is to be regarded as a reflective analysis approach in the sense of and for the promotion of the integration of theories, this "future", of which Norcross was still speaking in the 1990s, has long since turned into the present with the development of dialogical-experimental basic research in psychotherapy studies. Moreover, TSD, as a possible form of psychotherapeutic theory integration, takes a positive stand on the phenomenon of therapeutic language diversity. But what does theory integration in psychotherapy in terms of the TSD actually mean, or rather, what particular conception or idea of integration is meant here?

#### *4. The TSD as a Theories Integrative Approach*

The dialogical experimental way of merging and integrating in the TSD can be specified as a provisional, i.e. exclusively temporary integration of psychotherapeutic theories. The circularly structured act of Temporary Theories Integration (TTI) takes place between structure and integration, exhibiting three moments in a dialectical manner:

Starting from the inherent therapy structure (1), after the attempted integration effort (experimental trans-contextualization) into the structural fabric of a foreign therapy system (2), it is imperative to return to one's own therapeutic context of thought and action (3), which only then can be meaningfully questioned in a differentiated manner and potentially modified in further consequence.

The five-stage dialogical process (see graphic on the operating principle of the TTI) illustrates this specific function of the TTI in the TSD, which consists precisely in being an operative means for reflective analytical purpose. In other words: therapy-school-interdisciplinary basic research in TSD uses tentative and preliminary integration of different psychotherapy theories (TTI), by carrying out intrinsic analyses by means of contextual confrontations with a differing modality. The TTI activity is based on a critical-reflexive interest in knowledge. With its detailed set of rules, the theory-integrative procedure Experimental Trans-Contextualization/ExTC (Greiner 2012) in TSD offers systematic guidance for the creation of reflective insights, which is why the specific gain in knowledge (*reflection profit*) aimed at in the dialogical experimental research approach can also be characterized as a deepened or expanded understanding of one's own through the other.

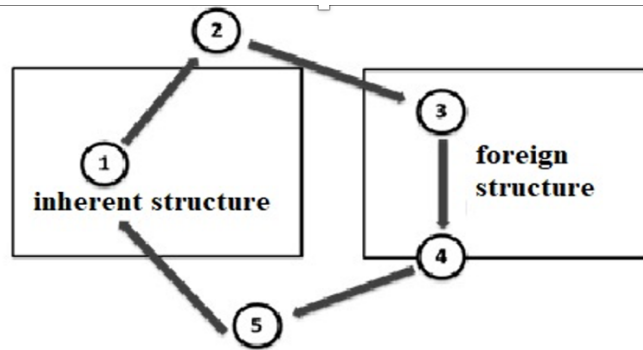
Since 2012, other methods of TTI have emerged in Experimental Therapy Schools Research in the course of technological advancements and differentiations. In addition to TSD via ExTC, the experimental and imaginative hermeneutic analysis tools *Intertherapeutic Text Puzzle* (ITTP), *Intertherapeutic Picture Process* (ITPP), and *Intertherapeutic Media Games* (ITMG) can also be

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<sup>4</sup> Original quote: „ [...] angesichts der Tatsache, dass die Theorie-Integration noch in den Anfängen steckt, [...] dieser Unterschied mit dafür verantwortlich (ist), dass Eklektizismus heute die übliche Praxis ist; Theorie-Integration ist ein vielversprechendes Gebiet der Zukunft.“

understood as tools of Temporary Theories Integration insofar as all these interdisciplinary reflection procedures function across different therapeutic modalities. (Greiner 2020).

### Illustration of the Operating Principle of TTI



**(1) Isolate (2) Extract (3) Integrate (4) Benefit (5) Return**

*The five-step process of Temporary Theories Integration (TTI) in TSD via ExTC*

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#### *Explanation of the Illustration*

The therapist first decides on a theoretical area within his/her own therapy modality that is to be critically and reflectively analyzed and *isolates* (1) a specific theoretical element (specific propositional system, theorem) within it. Then the researcher *extracts* (2) this theory element and thus detaches it from the intrinsic structure of the therapy modality. This extracted theory element is temporarily *integrated* (3) into the theory structure of another freely chosen therapy modality. In the course of this strictly rule-governed process of experimental insertion of the intrinsic element into the foreign structure (ExTC), a gain in knowledge finally crystallizes, from which the therapist *benefits* (4) in a reflective analytical respect. Last but not least the researcher *returns* (5) this knowledge profit into the thinking and acting context of his/her own therapy modality.

## *5. Four Potential Dialogue Experiments to Illustrate the Principle of Operation TTI in the TSD*

For exemplary purposes, four potential dialogue experiments will be outlined below to illustrate the specific operating principle TTI in TSD. The demonstration of concrete TTI acts by means of exemplary dialog operations (TSD via ExTC) can unfortunately not be done within the limited scope of this paper due to space constraints. For this, reference must be made to the literature (Greiner 2012).

*Potential Dialogue Experiment 1: A theoretical element of the therapy modality Self-Psychology (Kohut) temporarily integrated into the theoretic structure of the therapy modality Holotropic Therapy (Grof u. Grof).*

Within the therapy modality of Self-Psychology (Kohut) the concept of self takes a central position. Erwin Bartosch attempts to further define this term, which is as fundamental as it is complex, in Self-Psychology: "The term 'self' is a holistic concept that perceives the inner life and experience of the human being initially as 'a life in essential and life sustaining relationships' (Kohut 1987)<sup>5</sup>" (Bartosch 1994, 38).

For reasons concerning reflective analysis, it would be of interest what would happen if this specific understanding of the self as a characteristic unit of self-psychology would be temporarily integrated into the paradigmatic framework of the therapy modality Holotropic Therapy (Grof and Grof) by means of the procedure Experimental Trans-Contextualization (ExTC). What kind of epistemologically relevant effects could be achieved by this special confrontation?

Such an encounter could be relevant for reasons concerning reflective analysis because in Holotropic Therapy it is basically assumed that

the human being [...] in his development [...] outgrows the ego [...]. The focus is no longer on the development of an ego that is as strong as possible and oriented towards self-assertion, but on the withdrawal of the ego in favor of an opening for spiritual experiences and values. It is about consciously seeking out, confronting, and leaving behind attachments to ideas about oneself and the world that are recognized as the cause of recurring experiences of suffering, of behavior that is harmful to oneself and to society<sup>6</sup> (Stumm u. Wirth 1994, 231).

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<sup>5</sup> Original quote: „Der Begriff ‚Selbst‘ ist ein ganzheitlicher Begriff, der das innere Leben und Erleben des Menschen von Anfang an als ein ‚Leben in lebensnotwendigen und lebenserhaltenden Beziehungen‘ sieht (Kohut 1987).“

<sup>6</sup> Original quote: „[...] der Mensch [...] in seiner Entwicklung über das Ego [...] hinaus(wächst). Nicht mehr die Entwicklung eines möglichst starken, auf Selbstbehauptung ausgerichteten Egos steht hier im Mittelpunkt, sondern das Zurücktreten desselben zugunsten einer Öffnung für spirituelle Erfahrungen und Werte. Es geht um das bewusste Aufsuchen, Konfrontieren und Hintersichlassen von Bindungen an Vorstellungen von sich und der Welt, die als Ursache für wiederkehrende leidvolle Erfahrungen, für selbst- und gesellschaftsschädigende Verhaltensweisen erkannt werden.“

*Potential Dialogue Experiment 2: A theoretical element of the therapy modality Daseinsanalysis (Binswanger) temporarily integrated into the theoretical structure of the therapy modality Individual Psychology (Adler).*

In the therapy modality Daseinsanalysis (Binswanger) psychotherapists work with the method of "phenomenological science of experience" and thus make "ontic statements, i.e. statements about actual findings in factually occurring forms and shapes of being (i.e. Dasein<sup>7</sup>)" (Binswanger cited in Benesch 1995, 562). In phenomenological research approaches, one first starts from the conviction "that the essent makes itself known in its essence, sense and being"<sup>8</sup> and then describes "the essence, meaning and being of the essent itself"<sup>9</sup> by "strictly adhering to that which shows itself" (Müller u. Halder 1967, 132). The philosopher Martin Heidegger summarizes this basic phenomenological principle in a short sentence: "Let that which shows itself, as it shows itself from itself, be seen from itself"<sup>10</sup> (Heidegger cited in Vetter 1994, 194).

For reasons concerning reflective analysis, it would be of interest, for example, what would happen if this specific methodological maxim, as a characteristic unit of meaning in regard to Daseinsanalysis, were to be temporarily integrated into the conceptual context of the therapy modality Individual Psychology (Adler) with the help of the procedure Experimental Trans-Contextualization (ExTC). What kind of epistemologically relevant effects could probably be achieved by this specific confrontation?

An encounter in this regard could be relevant in terms of reflective analysis, especially with regard to a confrontation with the individual-psychological concept of the so-called "tendentious apperception". In connection with this theoretical perceptual concept, Alfred Adler speaks of the

attempt to perceive oneself and the world in a way that corresponds to a person's typical lifestyle and safety measures. Adler refers, for example, to the tendential devaluation of the opposite sex; to the tendential grouping, omission, or addition of memories; or to the tendential assumption of being inferior to certain demands of reality from the outset [...]<sup>11</sup> (Datler 1995, 37).

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<sup>7</sup> Author's note

<sup>8</sup> Original quote: „[...] dass das Seiende sich in seinem Wesen, Sinn und Sein zu erkennen gibt.“

<sup>9</sup> Original quote: „Wesen, Sinn und Sein des Seienden selbst“

<sup>10</sup> Original quote: „Das, was sich zeigt, so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt, von ihm selbst her sehen lassen.“

<sup>11</sup> Original Quote: „...Versuch, sich und Welt so wahrzunehmen, wie es den lebensstiltypischen Sicherungswünschen einer Person entspricht. Adler verweist dabei etwa auf die tendenziöse Abwertung des anderen Geschlechts; auf die tendenziöse Gruppierung, Auslassung oder Hinzudichtung von Erinnerungen; oder auf die tendenziöse Annahme, gewissen Anforderungen der Realität von vornherein unterlegen zu sein [...].“

*Potential dialogue experiment 3: A theoretical element of the therapy modality Gestalt Therapy (Perls) temporarily integrated into the theoretical structure of the therapy modality Biodynamic Psychotherapy (Boyesen)*

In the therapy modality Gestalt Therapy (Perls), the organism-environment-relationship is viewed as a structured, dynamic whole or as a "psychological field." Furthermore Gestalt therapists speak of the so-called "organismic self-regulation" and understand it as "an inherent power of the organism [...] to satisfy its needs and to grow" (Schwarzinger & Stumm 1994, 160). Höll writes the following about this basic gestalt-therapeutic premise, which goes back to a concept of the humanistic theorist Kurt Goldstein:

The strongest need or concern at any given time pushes itself to the forefront of attention, it becomes an open gestalt, acquires priority until it is taken care of, so that a constant flow of Gestalt emerges. In the best case, the human organism is involved in this process with all its abilities including thinking, evaluating and deciding<sup>12</sup> (Höll cited in Schwarzinger & Stumm 1994, 160).

For reasons concerning reflective analysis, it would be of interest, for example, to find out what would happen if the principle of "organismic self-regulation" as a characteristic unit of Gestalt Therapy were to be temporarily integrated into the theoretical terrain of the therapeutic modality of Biodynamic Psychotherapy (Boyesen) with the help of the method Experimental Trans-Contextualization (ExTC). What kind of epistemologically relevant effects could be achieved by this specific confrontation?

Such an encounter could be relevant for reflective analysis because in Biodynamic Psychotherapy one speaks of the mechanism of the so-called "psycho-peristaltic self-regulation", which the human organism possesses, and which enables the return to a healthy inner balance (Lang 1994, 280). With the theory of "psycho-peristaltic self-regulation" or "psycho-peristalsis", which is considered the basic concept of the biodynamic system,

a psycho-physical function had been found which regulated and reflected the inner processes in the organism and thus enabled a targeted and precisely dosed therapeutic procedure. At the same time, this discovery opened a new perspective on the development and treatment of neurotic disorders<sup>13</sup> (Lang 1994, 279).

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<sup>12</sup> Original quote: „Das jeweils stärkste Bedürfnis oder Anliegen schiebt sich in den Vordergrund der Aufmerksamkeit, es wird zu einer offenen Gestalt, erlangt Priorität, bis es erledigt ist, sodass ein beständiger Fluss von Gestalten entsteht. Daran ist der menschliche Organismus im besten Fall mit all seinen Fähigkeiten beteiligt, Denken, Bewerten und Entscheiden eingeschlossen.“

<sup>13</sup> Original quote: „[...] war eine psycho-physische Funktion gefunden, die die inneren Vorgänge im Organismus regulierte und widerspiegelte und so ein gezieltes und genau dosiertes therapeutisches Vorgehen ermöglichte. Zugleich eröffnete diese Entdeckung einen neuen Blickwinkel auf die Entstehung und Behandlung von neurotischen Störungen.“



*Potential Dialogue Experiment 4: A theoretical element of the therapy modality Systemic Therapy temporarily integrated into the theoretical structure of the therapy modality Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*

Radical constructivist representatives of the therapy modality Systemic Therapy explicitly interpret the specific experiences, the modes of perception and the experiences of a concrete person explicitly as their "individual constructions of reality" (Stumm u. Wirth 1994, 219).

For reasons concerning reflective analysis, it would be of interest, for example, to find out what would happen if the basic conviction of the "construction of individual realities" as a characteristic unity of meaning of systemic therapy by means of the procedure Experimental Trans-Contextualization (ExTK) into the paradigmatic framework of the therapy modality of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. What kind of cognitive effects could be achieved by this specific confrontation?

An encounter in this regard could be relevant in terms of reflective analysis, primarily because the cognitive-behavioral therapeutic view of the human being as an "active information-processing system" is based on the methodological foundation of the so-called "information processing paradigm" of cognitive psychology. This particular, empirically based cognitive-psychological as well as neuropsychological inspired "basic conception of the psychic (has) [...] a similarly comprehensive claim to validity as earlier behaviorism and implicitly or explicitly [...] influences most of today's theories and concepts of behavior therapy [...]"<sup>14</sup> (Maderthaner 1994, 134).

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<sup>14</sup> Original quote: „[...] Grundauffassung des Psychischen (hat) [...] einen ähnlich umfassenden Geltungsanspruch wie früher der Behaviorismus und beeinflusst implizit oder explizit [...] die meisten heutigen Theorien und Konzepte der Verhaltenstherapie [...].“

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