

USATAA-NET

Volume 26, Number 2

Spring/Summer 2010

EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings to our NET readers! This is the first NET you have seen this year. Rather than reflecting a lack of activity in our Association, it means we have been busy moving a number of projects forward. The NET had to take a temporary back seat. Now we are eager to share what is going on in USATAA with our active and interesting members.

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE USATAA COUNCIL AND COME TO THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN MONTREAL

We are pleased to introduce you to the 2010 slate of Council members. Some of them are experienced Board members, and others are very new to our organizational culture. They are Kimberly B. McClelland, Southeast Regional Representative, and Tom Nissley, Northeast Regional Representative. With the resignation of our Pacific Regional Representative, Phyllis Jenkins, who is leaving to become President-Elect of the Northern California Group Psychotherapy Society, Catherine O'Brien has agreed to complete the final year of her term. We are recruiting a new General Member for the Council.

What they will need is your approval and support. We hope that you will take the time to read their TA biographical information and get to know them. Then, come to the General Meeting to be held at the ITAA Conference in Montreal on Friday, August 13, 2010, at 12 noon.

COMING EVENTS

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|--------------------------------|--|
| August 11-15, 2010 | ITAA Eric Berne Centenary Conference, TA in Action, Montreal |
| August 13, 2010 12 noon | USATAA General Membership Meeting, Delta Hotel, Montreal |
| February 5-12, 2011 | USATAA Gathering, Frenchman's Cove, Port Antonio, Jamaica |
| October 2011 | USATAA Conference, San Antonio, Texas |

ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE OF "SCRIPTS AND EPISCRIPTS" WITH FANITA ENGLISH

Under the leadership of Phyllis Jenkins, video of Fanita's one-day institute has been edited into a 2-DVD set, coinciding with Fanita being awarded the EATA Gold Medal at the European Association for Transactional Analysis conference in Prague this July.

This educational program was recorded in November 2009 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, at the Mary Goulding Memorial Redecision / TA Conference. Fanita was invited to present a pre-conference institute focusing on Scripts and EpiScripts, Decisions, Redecisions, and "Hot Potatoes." In an informal setting, Fanita describes developmental processes and script formation. USATAA members may place orders at the special rate of \$60 (20% off full price) until September 30, 2010.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE FORMING FOR OCTOBER 2011 SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE

We are excited to announce that a USATAA conference is being planned for October 2011 in the beautiful accessible city of San Antonio, Texas. We have many pleasant memories of previous ITAA conferences, council retreats, and good times there in the past. After researching several locations, the Council decided that the reasonable hotel rates and air fares combined with the gracious hospitality of local host Felipe Garcia would generate lots of

enthusiasm and attendance, and keep our US TA momentum rolling.

Members are needed for the conference committee in numerous functions. Will you help? Please contact acting conference coordinator, Mary Westphal, at education@usataa.org to discuss your willingness to be part of this dynamic and productive team. And start thinking about what you want to present and participate in when we meet in Texas.

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE USATAA COUNCIL



Kim McClelland
Southeast Regional
Representative

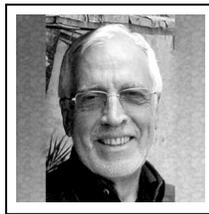
Kimberly B. McClelland is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She received her Masters in Social Work at Louisiana State University

in 1983 and spent the first part of her career as a medical social worker serving as the Director of Social Services at Willis-Knighton Health System, Shreveport. As the director, Kim trained and supervised social workers, and did program development and administration. Clinically she worked primarily with medical transplant patients and their families.

In 2001, Kim started her private practice and her TA training. She had the privilege of working with Barbara Thorne-Thomsen and Marquerite "Peggy" Salley who had trained with Bob and Mary Goulding. Barbara and Peggy provided instruction, tapes and access to the Transactional Analysis Journal.

In 2005, Kim went to the Evolution of Psychotherapy Conference where she attended Mary Goulding's lectures on Redecision Therapy and grief work. Later, with her Shreveport colleagues, she attended the first regional Transactional Analysis Practitioner (TAP) course taught in Dallas. In January 2008, Kim became one of the first TA Practitioners in the United States. Later that year she attended the first USATAA Southwest Regional Gathering.

Kim really enjoyed the Mary Goulding Memorial Redecision / TA Conference in New Orleans. There she decided she wanted to become more active with USATAA. Ms. McClelland treats all ages in her private practice. She deals mostly with clients suffering from depression, anxiety, PTSD and relationship problems. We are happy to have her on the USATAA team where she has accepted the position of Southeast Regional Representative and is already hatching plans for her region.



Thomas W. Nissley
Northeast Regional Representative

Tom Nissley, longtime friend and TA person, has agreed to represent the Northeast Region, replacing Marian Weisberg. He is a retired Presbyterian Minister with years of community

involvement in Stamford, CT, and in New Canaan, CT. as a former elected member of the School Board, and an appointed member of cultural councils and arts-serving agencies.

Tom says, "I have been a clinical member of ITAA since 1974, and certified to teach 101's since 1977. I was Program Chair for three major international conferences, did supervision in a workshop with Mary Goulding in Singapore, have given favorite workshops on family systems in many conferences, helped conferences be more sensitive to drug and alcohol problems (i.e. got softdrinks added to opening wine and cheese - sounds so simple - wasn't) and worked with Massachusetts Board of Education to expand food choices to more healthy ones, like salads ("kids don't eat salads") - well, not if they're not provided!

"I'm still pushing for TA to be used with youngsters and seniors to help with understanding of who's responsible for 'my life.' In time in ERTAA I maintained a strong position that all conferences and training events should be self-supporting."

Tom served as Chief Financial Officer of the Eastern Region Transactional Analysis Association until its recent "conversion" to become the Eastern Regional Council of USATAA.

For many years, Tom owned and operated a training center known as 'Ridgelea.' and now serves as a Realtor in New Canaan, CT. He is a member of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and of the Connecticut (theatre) Critics Circle. Tom enjoys writing with a focus on historic development and performance arts. He has two sons and one granddaughter, and married Sandy Baldwin Nissley in 2008. They spend lots of time traveling.



Catherine O'Brien
Pacific Regional Representative

How did I find out about Transactional Analysis? I was introduced to TA by Dr. Pat Allen at the WANT Institute in Newport

Beach. For 34 years, Pat has conducted weekly Wednesday Group meetings, and she often taught concepts of Transactional Analysis. She taught about strokes and contracts and games, and the structural PAC diagram. The tools of TA were simple, clear, and elegant. I was hooked! As the director for organizational training for Marie Callender Restaurants,

I saw tremendous value in the principles of TA in corporate training programs.

In 2007, I returned to school for my masters degree in counseling psychology. I also wanted to learn more about TA! Last November I attended TA 101 in San Mateo. I was impressed with the information and the knowledgeable facilitators from USATAA. Their dedication to the expansion of TA is admirable. I am delighted to join this organization, and I look forward to learning from so many experienced CTA's.

Going forward, I want to participate in the expansion of TA training in business and organizations. TA is a perfect fit for corporate environments. In addition to my private practice, I foresee teaching TA in the business arena.

PROJECT TO DEFINE ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

The professional world is going to the web for much of its learning and credentialing activities these days. With the funding we have received from ITAA to expand availability of TA in the US, it seems natural to develop online and other distance education offerings for our members and practicing professionals. With that in mind, we have commissioned an initial study to determine the requirements for providing training and awarding continuing education credit and TA Practitioner certification via distance learning programs. Based on the initial study, we will proceed to create the materials required for successful, attractive courses with the idea of providing some opportunities in the near future.

THANKS TO OUTGOING NET EDITOR, ANGELA BERQUIST

As the term of NET editor concludes, we are grateful to Angela Berquist for her generosity in serving in that role. Here is an excerpt from our letter of appreciation to Angela.

"As terms change over, I am writing on behalf of the entire council to thank you for your leadership as editor of the NET. You provided direction and creatively generated themes to make it more relevant. You reached out and brought in new contributors. You helped people

express their ideas and were patient with a wide variety of writers and styles. I think the publication became more interesting as a result.

Many thanks for hanging in there with us, and for your caring and dry sense of humor."

We look forward to our continuing friendship with Angela, and hope to see her at future USATAA events as well as in our personal interactions. Thanks as well to her husband Michael Betts, who has supported our efforts on many occasions.

TRAINERS EXPLORE NEW IDEAS FOR US TA TRAINING

At the initiation of USATAA founder and longtime TA trainer Felipe Garcia, a group of Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analysts met by conference call on January 9, 2010. The goal was to expand TA training in the US in a way that is suitable to the needs of professionals here. Fanita English, Val Chang, Vann Joines, Marian Weisberg, and Jo Lewis participated along with Felipe and USATAA Education Coordinator Mary Westphal. Ellyn Bader and Chuck Holland provided additional input by email.

In the US, licensing requirements that vary with each state and profession, constraints on therapy, and limited availability of TA training in academic settings make our situation quite different from that in many countries.

The lively discussion raised questions about how USATAA training and credentials compare with ITAA

Training and Certification Council policies, how to provide TA training with continuing education credit to US professionals, and how to certify people to teach in the TA Practitioner programs to ensure continuity and high quality. In addition to the TA Practitioner program, members' other training programs, consultation groups, and TA conferences can serve as ongoing professional education, a certain amount of which may be required for people to continue to teach in TA Practitioner Programs.

Marian Weisberg commented that the call was very helpful in clarifying what is needed and how we can move ahead, and everyone supported the idea of circulating recommendations and bringing them up to the USATAA council. Felipe and Marian are continuing as leaders of this working group. Trainers who want to be included as this progresses may contact Marian, Felipe, or Mary Westphal at education@usataa.org.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS IN ACTION: EGO STATES, GAMES AND SCRIPTS ON STAGE AND OFF STAGE

by Luis Aguilar with Vitalia Rodrigues



All the world's a stage and all the men and women are merely players.

— William Shakespeare in *As You Like It*

Theatrical scripts are intuitively derived from life scripts, and a good way to start is to consider the connections and similarities between them.

— Eric Berne in *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?* 1973, p. 35

Twelve years ago, we began our *Transactional Action Laboratory*, and have been using role-playing with Eric Berne's main concepts--ego states, strokes, games, life scripts, existential positions, time-structuring, payoff, drivers, drama triangle, decisions, rackets, permissions, and contracts--for education, counseling, organizational training and management.

The Transactional Action Laboratory is a space, or setting, with very specific characteristics, strict rules and clear objectives. It has a time and a transitional (symbolic) and transactional (relational) place. We shall explain here the format and contents of this personal developmental space-time, where one reflects and rehearses life. Although it requires some stepping back (and must be done in a symbolic way), the exercise is nonetheless real and representative of actual life.

Transactional Action

Eric Berne began his lifelong work by investigating and theorizing about the characteristics that define relations that two or more people establish between themselves. He also identified the ego states that affect the multiple transactions in which people engage every day (hence the name Transactional Analysis, the name he gave to his theory of personality). However, Berne never stopped saying what many transactional analysts seem to have forgotten: action. In his book, *The Mind in Action*, Berne (1947) faulted some practitioners for their static execution of the theoretical concepts of TA. Berne and his followers did not define concrete drama tools or methodologies in psychotherapy or training that could show how people might react to inappropriate, or unsatisfactory, transactional behaviors to modify them.

While diagnosing in Transactional Analysis claims to be a strategy for change, personal development and treatment, most attempts to diagnose are forms of labeling (something that Berne himself rejected), and something that many transactional analysts have not been able to avoid. The goal of diagnosis using test data collection, intuitive observations, and mutual contracting for change, is to avoid the labeling trap. Change and/or treatment require concrete actions that maintain a dynamic

relationship with the nascent changes a trainee or client seeks and agrees to.

When we want to get across the idea that therapy training activities should focus on personal change via concrete actions, we think Transactional Analysis should be really called *Transactional Action*. We follow this path so that, in practice, we have tried as much as possible to get participants in therapy, or involved in training, to describe the past of the scene talked about or played out in the present here-and-now by getting them to play the other's role in the script. This is the basis of Moreno's psychodrama and sociodrama; i.e., using symbolic representation to bring forth into the present moment the conflict and its characters.

At first glance, it might seem a bit unorthodox to bring together in the spatio-temporal setting, a psycho- and socio-dramatic approach and Transactional Analysis. Still, Transactional Analysis reaches its full value in conjunction with other approaches that validate and complete it at both a conceptual as well as a practical and experimental level.

This gets me into trouble in the ITAA these days. There are many people who want to take Transactional Analysis back to psychoanalysis... Well, I am a camper, especially on this one: I feel strongly that not to go in the direction of the social/transactional aspects of Transactional Analysis is to abandon the model. This is the essence of Transactional Analysis. It was the heart of Berne's theory, and it is what made Transactional Analysis different. It is about the analysis of transactions, not the analysis of psyches. Transactional analysts analyze transactions, I like to say (Steiner, 1998).

Role-Playing in Transactional Action

We defend role-playing starting from the principle that a person learns better if the various aspects of him- or herself (intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual) can be active together during the same activity; i.e., role playing. The original technique of psychodrama, adapted much later by Gestalt therapy, offers a fairly convincing demonstration of ego states' reality (Steiner, 1984, p.55).

Fritz Perls (1969), who was truly impressed by Eric Berne's work and the latter's emphasis on role-playing, was disappointed when Berne and his followers failed to

build properly on this activity. As Perls suggested, *the idea of maturation, integration and transcendence of role-playing appeared as something foreign to them* (Perls, p. 264).

Since we cannot follow people at each stage of their lives, nor determine through testing or interviews how they use their ego states or the transactions they experience daily, we must rely on role-playing activities. As metaphors of life, they allow us to examine in simple and quick ways what we need. In this context, role-playing is a kind of time-out or break from reality, which allows us to perceive this same reality and bring the subject closer to himself, treading the less frequented paths of intimacy, autonomy and the spontaneity of the here-and-now. In such a training or therapy setting, active participants can neither pry open the chest of future uncertainties, nor open the bag of past tricks, as they do every day when they become unhappy as a result of their inability to live in the here-and-now. The immediacy that role-playing offers is about finding oneself and others and being able to live a fictional reality that, more often than not, can actually explain day-to-day reality, or even transcend it.

What is hidden away in our unconscious mind is revealed in images and metaphors we generate in the spontaneous dramatic play we perform and in the speed with which we carry out each action. This way role-playing is better than words, allowing us to save a lot of time and strive for what Berne sought from the very beginning, namely a quick and effective way to treat and train.

Our role-playing activities belong to the field of experimental research. Their goal is to interconnect the means of self-understanding proposed by Transactional Analysis to the role-playing. It is used as a factor of innovation in Transactional Analysis, compensating for its excessively analytical rationality and lack of practical tools for training or therapeutic action.

Demonstrating Ego States

In our Transactional Action Laboratory, we created a few acting-out activities to identify different ego states. The results obtained through the egogram test (like those achieved through general testing) only provide indicators. In order to find someone's dominant ego states, it is important to know the person's life history, origins, family, what he/she has done and continues to do in life, what he/she knows, feels, and experiences. These matters cannot be revealed in a simple test or interview.

A first part of the work is demonstrating ego states. This is related to life experiences that form a triple personality and that is related to total being (structural analysis). Therefore, physical activities incorporated into role-playing are a good way of determining which ego state subjects mobilize. For example, in the Child ego state, they may like to touch or be touched and easily accept an

outburst of happiness. In the Parent ego state, they may touch what is strictly necessary in order to conform to social rules or to protect the other and avoid sensual (sensitive) content. Finally, in the Adult ego state subjects might touch with a well defined purpose; for example, touching someone on the shoulders to show solidarity or understanding.

In the practice that we are developing as transactional action counselors, teacher trainers and youth educators, or those in the field of group psychotherapy, we have at times observed how participants in our therapy and training settings quickly perceive some surprising behaviors and ways of being of which they initially were unaware. When a teacher whose self-image is democratic and non-directive is suddenly asked to create a teacher-student relationship image, he or she ends up becoming self-critical, pointing the finger at his/her own intrinsic authoritarianism, mobilizing for its effect his or her own ego state as a Critical Parent. Once back in the real world after he or she has uncovered what was hidden in his/her consciousness, he or she is likely to change behavior as a teacher towards his/her real-life students. The same happens in situations where we are called to create an image of Parent-Child relationship. Our later work with teachers in training further confirms that new ego awareness can be achieved using methodologies that require kinesthetic actions such as those found in group work and dynamic acting scenes.

Aguilar and Rodrigues use a tableau variant of word association in teaching TA concepts to teachers. With the "students" standing in a group, the leader calls out an emotionally-laden term and orders the group arrangement. An example would be "Teacher" and "Threes." The students then quickly arrange themselves into triads to adopt interactive positions so that the term "teacher" evokes a particular grouping. The students freeze in their position, which then leads to discussion about how they spontaneously arranged themselves and explored certain options and alternatives. (Gaft & Moore, 2004).

It was our understanding of Berne's work to release the kinetic forces locked away in the static environment in only talking. That's when we established our Transactional Action Laboratory. We tried out our revision of the practice at the San Francisco Conference in 1999 at a session chaired by Felipe Garcia, Sam Gaft, and Mary Westphal. It was there that we confirmed we could identify ego states and release the inhibited forces of personality locked in the rigidity of a compressed ego.

Exchanging Strokes

The second part of the work is related to the exchange of strokes. According to Steiner, the first experiments on strokes were conducted in Berkeley and initially entailed transforming people's negative strokes into positive ones. The desire for strokes is so great that, if people cannot get

them in a positive and natural way, they will seek them in negative and fake ways since it is better to have negative strokes than none at all. According to Steiner, the need for physical strokes is greatly compensated by symbolic and recognition strokes.

Seen from the outside, putting a number of people in a room may seem quite artificial; so does asking them to give strokes to each other following a set of clearly defined rules that ban, for instance, negative and exaggerated criticism of others, comparisons or lying directed by order of the Critical Parent in the pig parent version. However, those who do participate, especially if accompanied by a therapist or instructor who knows what he/she is doing, will witness outbursts of joy, laughter, crying, openness to feelings, etc. Thus we can ask: What is artificial? We have people freely and creatively expressing to one another what they spontaneously feel. How different is it from the mayhem of everyday life, in which we see people do just about anything to get the psychological calories they would otherwise not have, even if it means remaining inside a vicious circle that turns people off, and allows obsessive circulation in the dramatic triangle. In these, destructive games they sometimes persecute others, play the traveling savior, or complain or portray themselves as the victim (Karpman, 1973).

Analyzing Games and Scripts

Eric Berne's theory of games (1964) assumes that there are certain needs: for strokes, structure, excitement, recognition and leadership. Analyzing a game is a very complicated matter that can only be done in a psychotherapeutic framework. All the clues protagonists give usually prove insufficient to sense what game is in play. Berne put it so well when he suggested that an individual does not look for a given therapy or session to learn how to live in a healthy, intimate, spontaneous and creative way, but rather does so to learn how to better play the game. Psychotherapy and training in this field are not only about bringing games to an end, but are also used to move out of them, even if it is by creating new ones. Suppose we change the negative strokes for positive ones! Will people behave artificially and cease to play? At least for a few moments, they stop playing, abandon the script, and leave behind the distress that their life position might have thrown at them. In a simulated situation, which

sometimes can be more real than the real thing, people express real feelings because they don't have to disguise what they feel in order to get strokes.

From our point of view, this process can begin from any angle as long as it leads to autonomy, spontaneity and intimacy, which are the only ways one can first change and then develop as a creative person instead of remaining what Berne calls a plastic person; i.e., someone who switches on the mechanisms of games that are related to one's own life scripts. Since life does not allow experimenting or rehearsing these changes, it becomes necessary to create settings like the ones we propose and which serve as a break or time-out from the reality. Role-playing allows us to collect additional information to identify the games people play or those to which they are invited.

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TA COWBOYS: FROM NEW ORLEANS TO MONTREAL

by Cowpoke Chuck Holland



In the early days of TA, Eric Berne liked to address those who attended The Seminars as Cowboys or Dance Hall Girls. He was speaking affectionately of therapists who knew how to free their own Child Ego States. He had several definitions for a

Cowboy. A favorite is from *Beyond Games and Scripts*, his last book edited after his death. In the Glossary "Cowboy" is defined as, "A relaxed therapist who knows how to make himself understood by the patient's Child."

Several of Eric's cowboys met at the Mary Goulding Memorial Redecision/TA Conference in November of 2009. We scheduled three Men's Meetings at 8 AM. Real men arrived early, most with their campfire coffee, and circled the chairs around a talking stick. The warm conversation rapidly became the all-warming fire. All wrote names and hometowns on the sacred flip chart. We discussed a format and decided to pass the stick and talk of what was going in the now with all who wanted to speak. A fun Kid-like trust developed quickly as we shared deeply "What's up?"

During the second meeting, we were tempted to play "Ain't it Awful." We almost stepped into that. A couple of wise rounders corralled this and lovingly stopped it in its tracks. Back to the serious business of sharing the present.

In the third meeting, we roped in deep appreciation for our roots and cowboy mentors, grieving the loss of some while celebrating each other and those teachers still with us.

Cowboys from five countries and thirteen states passed the talking stick. The following attended at least once: Xander Abrams, James Binder, Leonard Campos, Robert Hall, Phillip Hetherington, Vann Joines, Vern Masse, Peter Nagel, Ryota Sakural, Ravi Sethi, Quentin St. Clair, Mark Stipanovsky, Ken Taber, Andrew Toplack, Albert Viquerie, Jonathan Weiss, and Jim Wrightsman. Chuck Holland facilitated.

Many of us are excitedly awaiting Eric's next book about his childhood to be unveiled at the Eric Berne Centenary Conference in Montreal. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday the cowpokes will meet at 8 am for more deep male musings. Carve a notch in your whittling stick or scratch out a reminder note to go in your saddle bags. We hope to have a great roundup of *garcon vachers*.

The United States of America Transactional Analysis Association (USATAA) is the association for the practice of Transactional Analysis in the United States. USATAA publishes the USATAA *NET* four times a year.

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Arrival day Feb. 5, 2011. Meeting begins 1 pm Sunday Feb. 6. Departure Saturday Feb. 12.

For information, contact Dianne Maki, coordinator@usataa.org, 908-234-1873.

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Address Correction Requested

Highlights of this issue:

- New Council Members
- TA in Action by *Luis Aguilar*
- New DVD on Scripts and Episcritps by *Fanita English*
- Membership Meeting in Montreal Aug. 13, 2010 at noon
- TA Cowboys Meet in Montreal Friday-Sunday at 8:00 am