



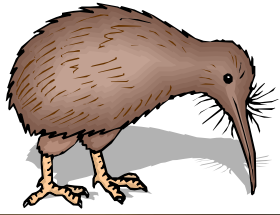
how can action learning be enhanced through the use of behavioural instruments?

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background



- ▶ WIAL SALC and president of WIAL affiliate in Australia
- ▶ action learning background for nearly 20 years
- ▶ also agent for the LIFO® method
 - behavioural diagnostic created by Drs Katcher and Atkins
 - began to wonder if behavioural profiles would assist/hinder the action learning process and if so, how?
 - conducted a small case study in Australia
- ▶ no definitive answers, just a whole lot more questions!



mike down under



“Welcome parishioners”



“Hand on heart, I swear action learning really does work.”

QUEENSLANDER



“Now I’ve got y’all captivated”



“Look out, I’m a bad biker!”

great questions lead to great understandings

- ▶ why do some people participate actively in action learning groups whilst others sit back and seem to offer little?
- ▶ what makes some people go to solution mode straight off?
- ▶ why do some group members seem to like working on personal problems and others prefer organisational problems?
- ▶ what sort of questions will different people ask?
- ▶ how do coaches differ in their approach to action learning even within the WIAL framework?
- ▶ should we be producing “cookie cutter” coaches or is there leeway for individual differences?

actual comment from a recent CALC submission

“During the session, the usual ‘talkers’ would keep firing questions while the ‘thinkers’ keep taking notes. Whenever intervention takes place, the coach needs to employ different tactics to get the group to encourage the quieter ‘thinkers’ to ask questions.”

comments from action learning groups

“It’s interesting that some of us found it so hard to ask questions, yet others seem to do it naturally”

“Your questions always seemed to steer us towards actions”

“I really engaged in that session because it was about a big personal problem and I just wanted to reach out and hug you.”

LIFO[®]

Method

four windows to the world

despite our diversity, there are 4 basic ways of seeing problems and people - each of the 4 ways is like observing the world through a different window, each with a different perspective

each of the 4 orientations are not only a way of viewing the world, but also responding to it

difficulties between people are often due to the fact that they have different perspectives or different orientations to life

even though our perspectives may be different, they are not set in stone, they are in fact dynamic

4 windows to the world

supporting giving-in



The mountain symbolises working harder to reach higher levels and **excellence**.

controlling taking-over



Lightning means a flash of energy for intense effort and quick **action**.

conserving holding-on



The star map symbolises order and system, organising complexity with **reason**.

adapting dealing-away



The rainbow means the uplifting energy of relationships focused on **harmony**.

4 windows to the world



behavioural styles

the LIFO® Survey results do not indicate
“personality types”, they indicate
behavioural preferences

each person prefers a unique mix of all 4
orientations or behavioural styles, to a
greater or lesser degree.

behaviours – NOT types

**don't label
people**



a personality type
refers to who you are -
it is fixed.

**describe
behaviours**



a behavioural style
refers to what you do -
it is a matter of choice
or preference

supporting giving-in



philosophy

“If I prove my worth by working hard and pursuing excellence, I will be able to realise my goals.”

goals

- prove worth
- be helpful

strengths

- thoughtful
- idealistic
- modest
- trusting
- cooperative
- helpful
- receptive
- responsive
- seeks excellence
- loyal

controlling taking-over



philosophy

"If I can get results by being competent and seizing opportunity, what I desire will be there for the taking."

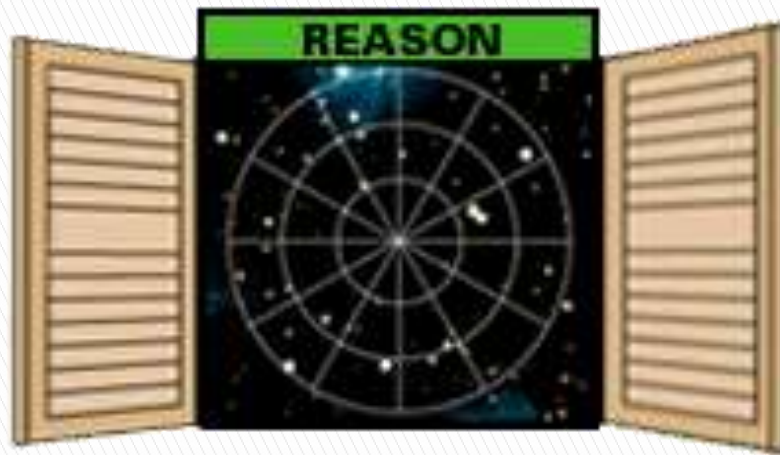
goals

- be competent
- get results

strengths

- directing
- quick to act
- confident
- seeks change
- persuasive
- forceful
- competitive
- risk-taking
- persistent
- urgent

conserving holding-on



philosophy

"If I think before I act and make the most of what I've got, I can build up resources to accomplish my goals."

goals

- go slow
- be sure

strengths

- tenacious
- practical
- economical
- reserved
- factual
- steadfast
- thorough
- methodical
- detail-oriented
- analytical

adapting dealing-away



philosophy

"If I am aware of other people and fill their needs first, then I can get my needs filled that I have wanted all along."

goals

- know people
- get along

strengths

- flexible
- tactful
- socially adept
- youthful
- enthusiastic
- adaptable
- inspiring
- experimental
- negotiating
- animated

favourable v unfavourable

we tend to take 2 different approaches to life:

- 1. when we feel that things are going well
(favourable conditions)**
- 2. when we feel that we are faced with opposition
or conflict (unfavourable conditions)**

is action learning favourable or unfavourable?

the LIFO® method & action learning

- ▶ so how can/could/will this all impact on an action learning group?
- ▶ a small case study in Brisbane
- ▶ VET (Vocational Education and Training) provider with 14 fulltime staff and many contracted teachers
- ▶ 4 action learning sessions
- ▶ first two “straight up”
- ▶ one week later administered LIFO® survey
- ▶ second two action learning sessions after
- ▶ survey to ascertain usefulness



outsource services pty ltd

- ▶ private VET provider – 100% private ownership
- ▶ established 1998, RTO status in 2001
- ▶ 5 executive staff – ELT (executive leadership team)
established to grow business
- ▶ 36 qualification programs - certificate and diploma level
- ▶ brisbane based - vision to be in every state of Australia
by 2011



1st action learning session

- ▶ normal growth pattern of a new A/L group
 - unsure of benefits to begin with
 - one quite openly sceptical
 - felt process was too soft and not direct enough to begin with
 - after first intervention the penny dropped
 - performed well in second half
 - statements disguised as questions
 - asking convoluted many part questions
 - anxious to get to actions
 - were blown away with learnings and power of A/L at the end

second session

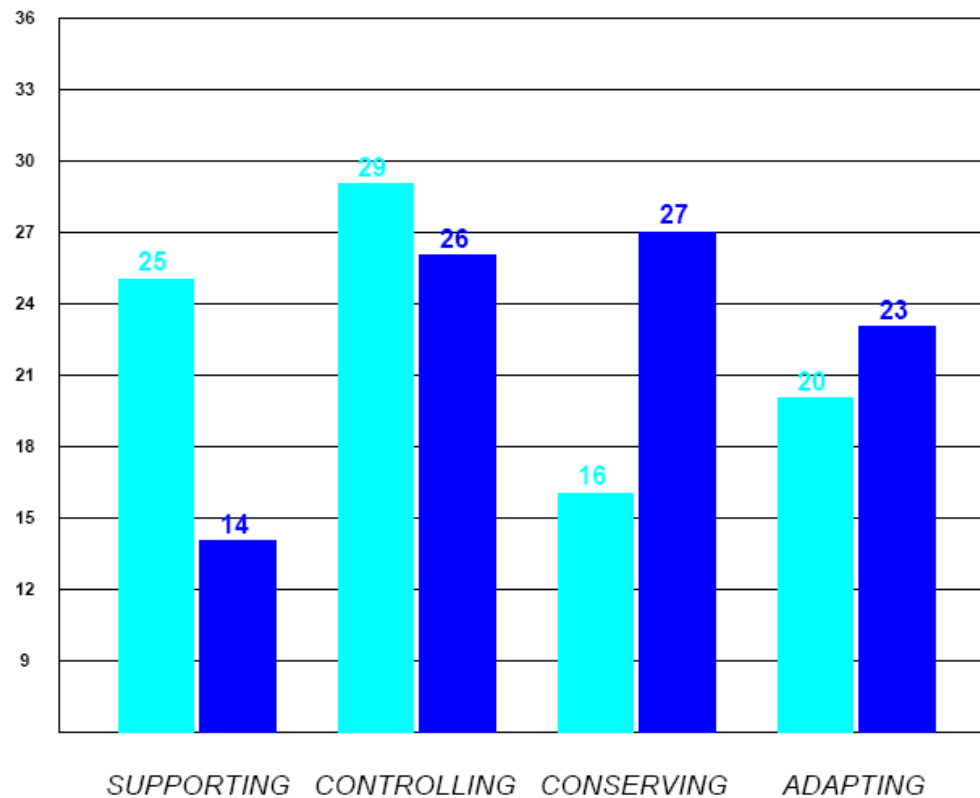
- ▶ far more sophisticated as a group
 - more self regulation
 - one person found it hard to restrain herself
 - good outcomes and actions
 - two very active, two held back even though group asked all questions
 - tendency to ask permission to make a statement – still statement driven in principle
 - immense learnings as a group
 - types of questions differed from person to person
 - action orientated – “what would happen if we...”
 - cause orientated – “what was the cause of that?” “why did that happen?”
 - feelings orientated – “how did that make you feel?”
 - big picture focussed – “how would that impact the business?”



Highlights

Your LIFO® Survey Results

Style	Favorable	Unfavorable
Supporting	25	14
Controlling	29	26
Conserving	16	27
Adapting	20	23



 Favorable Conditions  Unfavorable Conditions

LIFO® profiles

- ▶ Under *favourable* conditions:
 - SG, AD back up, CT blind spot
 - very high SG, back up CT, blind spot CH
 - CT, back up SG, blind spot CH
 - CT, back up CH, blind spot SG
 - CT, back up CH blind spot AD
- ▶ Under *unfavourable* conditions:
 - CH, AD, back up SG, blind spot CT
 - AD, back up CT and CH, blind spot SG
 - AD, back up CH, blind spot SG & CT
 - AD, back up CH, blind spot SG & CT
 - high CT, back up AD, blind spot CH



3rd and 4th sessions

- ▶ far more aware of each other and the types of questions each asked and why
- ▶ far less impatience from the CT to those more relationship focussed
- ▶ more understanding of the need to communicate through others window rather than their own

survey afterwards

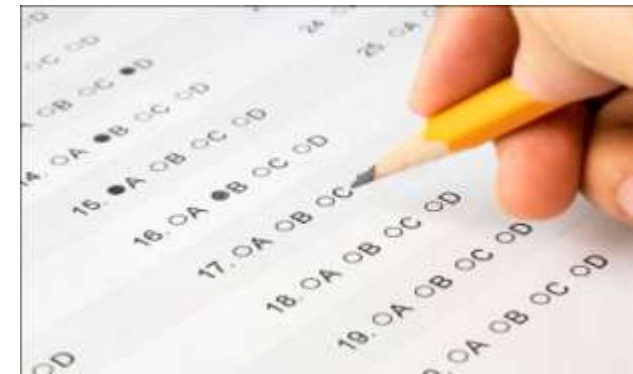
- ▶ 12 questions – 6 quantitative, 6 qualitative
- ▶ 2 variables – *relevance* and *benefit* applied to both individual and organisation.

•How **relevant** have the action learning sessions been for you as an *individual*?

1	2	3	4	5	6
not at all relevant	a little relevant	somewhat relevant	quite relevant	very relevant	extremely relevant

•In what ways has action learning been **relevant** to you as an *individual*?

- ▶ firstly of action learning and then of LIFO® to action learning process



relevance of action learning

▶ *relevance* to self

- 100% said very relevant or extremely relevant



▶ how *relative*

- increased awareness of self and leadership style and how I deal with colleagues; what I need to monitor in my behaviours
- personal growth, self management tool, listening to others without formulating an answer
- made me address leadership skills in problem solving situations
- demonstrated the power of decision making and problem solving
- relieved the burden of believing I had to have all the answers

benefit of action learning

▶ *benefit* to self

- 100% said extremely beneficial

▶ how *beneficial*

- now confidently work through issues/questions with confidence and actually implement actions
- allowed me to fit in to the management team seamlessly
- better leadership skills, communication skills planning skills and great for team building
- realisation that by asking more/detailed questions a solution can be found
- really improved group performance and bonding of the new team



relevance of action learning

▶ *relevance* to organisation

- 100% said either very relevant or extremely relevant

▶ how *relative*

- our ELT will perform and work as a more skilled team
- to the changed culture of the company
- solving complex strategic issues for the company
- structure for communication
- effective tool for planning and organising in a growth period



benefit of action learning

▶ *benefit* to organisation

- 100% said very or extremely relevant



▶ how *beneficial*

- more planning and problem identification before planning
- problem solving, leadership development,
- better decision making and communication with staff
- bonded more and learnt a new tool for problems solving
- demonstrates excellent values
- how we can better work together
- more sophisticated method of dealing with issues and instigating actions

▶ *relevance* of LIFO to action learning

- 80% said extremely or very relevant
- 20% said quite relevant

▶ how was LIFO *relevant* to action learning

- gave a context to the leadership skills – identified areas for development
- made me look harder at blind spots
- greater insight to each others values and perspectives
- aware of behaviour types & consideration for their windows
- aware of different behaviours within our team and how to get the best results from everyone



and



▶ *benefit* of LIFO to A/L

- 80% said extremely or very relevant
- 20% said quite relevant

▶ how was LIFO *beneficial* to A/L

- instrumental – know how to deal with different behaviours
- the way we ask questions and answer them
- the way different people formulate action plans
- awareness and understanding of different types of questions
- knowing yourself before judging others
- their personal preferences can influence our communication & effectiveness
- insight into the group's strengths and weaknesses
- more thought behind the questions was evident



so what does this tell us?

- ▶ there is great *relevance* and *benefit* in action learning to both individuals and to organisations
 - we already knew this but it's nice to hear !
- ▶ it seems there is some relevance and benefit in action learning participants having a knowledge of a behavioural profile
- ▶ is there a benefit for WIAL as far as CALCs go?
- ▶ the sample size is far, far too small
- ▶ and I'm biased! – heap more research needed

so, how does all of this sit with
your experiences?

