

## The Work Group as a Learning Group in Counseling: Leader Subjectivity in Group Learning Processes

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**Abstract:** *Consultants and leaders frequently are called upon to facilitate group processes at high levels as interest in shared learning and cooperative work groups increases among organizations. Their views on all phases of group life will influence the group's communication field and its development. The purpose of the study was to discover how the leaders of learning groups view the developmental features of beginning and mature groups. A persons-in-relation developmental approach was used to uncover leader/consultant subjectivity regarding real and ideal groups in both beginning and mature developmental phases. Forty-two Q sorts were subjected to by-person factor analysis. Four factors are interpreted and discussed: 1) the group as a group, 2) cooperation and self-realization, 3) honesty and truth through individuation, and 4) perturbation as separation and individuation. Commonalities among the factors are also presented. The need for leaders to value interdependency in work groups and to learn communication skill sets that can facilitate the development of competent work groups is discussed.*

### Introduction

Interest in developing well functioning work groups in organizations is increasing, as the benefits of persons working cooperatively to meet common goals are not fully realized (Argyris 1990, Johnson and Johnson 2000, McClure 1998, Bion Talamo, Borgogno and Merciai 1998, Senge 1987). The ability to thrive and work effectively in groups, once largely taken for granted, is now generally viewed as a complex skill set that requires learning (Hargie 1999, McClure 1998). If group leaders are to facilitate such learning, they need to understand and be able to work with the changing nature of groups and understand how groups develop over time. This study looks at the views of leaders at the beginning and mature phases of groups under real and ideal conditions. These views are seen as indicators of awareness of the differences in groups as they develop. Such awareness is considered to be a significant part of the ability of leaders to facilitate the learning required for group functioning at high levels.

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As people work together in groups there are many complex, relational issues that come into play. As Bion says, "if the W[ork] group were the only component in the mental life of group, then there would be no difficulty" (1961, p. 129). For Bion the mentality of the work group is permeated and infused by other "group mental phenomena" such as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of group members that are not directly connected to the work. These phenomena give rise to all kinds of difficulties and complex communication patterns that are understood in psychodynamic theory as "mental perturbations" and regressive emotional activities (p.141). Awareness of these patterns and the ability to work with them are parts of the developmental tasks of groups.

According to Bion, 3 basic assumptions (p. 146ff) operate beside or beneath the work group mentality occurring either as regressions or as developmental phases of groups in general. The assumptions reflect prototypical emotional states with relational connotations of *dependency*, *fight/flight*, and *pairing*. These states are associated with problems of belonging, individuation, and authority in groups (Aschbach and Schermer 1987). They can occur at any time throughout the developmental life of the work group as regressive emotional episodes, and can hinder optimal functioning.

In the beginning *dependency phase* the group needs to be characterized as a caring and safe place for group members to explore their own space and boundaries (Aschbach and Schermer 1987, Bion 1961, McClure 1998). In this phase, strong, care-taking, ideal leaders are required as the group members symbiotically project themselves onto the leaders in order to dwell safely in the group. As part of the whole, distinct individuality is toned down in favor of the whole group as a caring "good mother" object, as the group moves towards the collective. In the experimental design, levels of the *dependency* effect are the group as *mother object* and *projective identification*.

If the tasks of the dependency stage are fulfilled, there will be excellent bonding and a shift of attitude towards feelings of belonging among the group members. Sooner or later the group will need to move to a more independent level. Security in a symbiotic state will reach a level of homeostasis demanding perturbation. Individuality seems to be an almost compulsory force moving itself forward out of safety, becoming more distinct and separate.

The *independency phase* creates a transitional space (Winnicott 1971) and re-organizes the initial group boundaries. The reorganization is seen as a restructuring and an expanding movement that includes feelings of aggression and fear, power-struggles and sub-group alliances (Aschbach and Schermer 1987, Bion 1961, McClure 1998). This creates the potential for group conflict. It can lead positively to a development of resource expansion and differentiation, benefiting the group and its members in terms of individuation,

self-realization and commitment to task. However, if the conflicts are not worked through, group development will stagnate. As McClure asserts, "...many groups [have] failed to advance beyond the conflict stage of development" (1998 p. 35). It takes power to move out of the prevailing ways of relating and forward to the next developmental level. Independency, as a design main effect, has levels of *individuation*, *separation*, and *power*.

The transition from the independency to the *interdependency phase* has developmental features that move the group towards reciprocity and altruistic values. Group members have developed their own ideals. They no longer depend on the values of leaders. They have also transcended their independent stance of being separate from the leaders. The time of projections is over. Responsibility and direct communication reflecting actual concerns rather than object-relations and regressive reactions are the norm. The work group is seen as a co-operative endeavor characterized by feelings of responsibility not only for the group's task production but also for relations within the group, reflecting qualities of community (Kirkpatrick 1986, Kvalsund 1999, Macmurray 1961/1991). Group members are seen as whole, distinct and self-regulated entities who can relate to each other in authentic and realistic ways with caring and altruistic attitudes towards each other. In addition, the ground has been laid for including the leaders as full group members in direct, mutual and functional communication. The interdependency effect reflects both *responsibility* and *conscience*.

Ideal work groups can be characterized as agencies whose members know how to fulfill their purpose in the groups, to act and react rationally to solve task problems, and thereby use their resources in scientifically valid ways (Bion 1961). In competent work groups, members are able to communicate effectively to fulfill the purpose (Hargie 1997, Johnson and Johnson 2000). Their level of *object constancy* or congruency is seen as high (Aschbach and Schermer 1987). They see themselves and each other, as well as the leaders, as whole and self-governed entities. The resources of members are acknowledged and included in the work task. The communications among group members are direct and holistically oriented towards creating the best possible group or member relations to solve the task rationally and, thereby realize the group purpose.

In order to create effective work groups moving toward the ideal and promote organizational development, group leaders must know how to implement learning tasks and create reflective experiences for groups to work through developmentally. They must enable groups to transcend regressive states, so that they can re-establish themselves at the appropriate developmental level and work together co-operatively. Therefore, one crucial and basic task for leaders is to be aware of gross developmental phases and regressive emotional stances of work groups.

In this study the participants were group leaders in a humanistic-existential counseling education program designed for experiential learning in groups. The leaders in the program facilitated learning to counsel and guide other people as well as increase student self-awareness. Self-insight and self-awareness were seen as prerequisites for good counseling for individuals or groups (Allgood and Kvalsund 1995). The participants were all former graduates of the program.

The purpose of the study was to discover how the leaders of learning groups view the developmental features of beginning and mature groups. Did they express any awareness of differences in these 2 phases? Could they provide insight into the need for using different skills and attitudes to manage and facilitate learning at the 2 different phases of group development? Real and ideal conditions of instruction were included in order to study the awareness of leaders and how they actually experienced groups, as well as how they would like to see groups functioning.

### Design and Development

The experimental design was organized around the 3 persons-in-relation developmental phases of *dependency*, *independency*, and *interdependency* as main effects with distinct operational levels. Each phase was associated with a gross developmental stage of group development and was subdivided into levels. The levels describe operations that have been seen as characteristic for the particular phase. However, it is important to note that instances described by the effects and levels could occur at all stages of group development. With this design structure it was possible to construct a Q set from a concourse that reflected the complexity of group development.

#### Experimental Design

Main effects	Levels		Items	
Primitive group phase: Dependency	a) mother object	b) projective identification	2	
Transitional phase: Independency	c) individuation	d) separation	e) power	3
Competent work group: Interdependency (Community)	f) responsibility	g) conscience	2	

The study was designed to observe leader awareness of the developmental features of beginning and mature groups. Further, there was an attempt to examine how these features related both to the actual experiences and ideal perceptions of the group leaders. In this first exploration, the view of participants about the transitional phase of group development was of no

particular interest. As a result, the prototypical condition of instruction was: "Sort these statements according to how, as a leader, you view a [...] group." Participating leaders were instructed to sort 4 times, following a predetermined schedule to ensure that there was some time between each sort (Brown 1980). They sorted twice with reference to a beginning group and twice with reference to a mature group. Under each group developmental stage they were asked to sort the Q sample once from the perspective of their actual subjective experiences and once from how they would ideally like the pertinent group to operate and communicate.

Eleven leaders/teachers (6 women and 5 men) participated in the study. Each person constructed 4 Q sorts, except for 1 leader who made 2 Q sorts that reflected only his actual experiences with beginning and mature groups, (omitting the Q sorts for ideal groups). Forty-two sorts were intercorrelated, factored, and rotated to simple structure with a 4-factor varimax solution chosen for interpretation (Atkinson 1992, Schmolck 1997).

### Factor Interpretation

#### Factor I: Group as a Group

Six Q sorts and 4 persons' views defined this factor, which reflects the characteristics of the beginning group. Two sorters expressed this view both in their real and ideal beginning group. The other 2 persons expressed this view in the real beginning group only. One of them made a sharper distinction between real and ideal groups than did the other.

Factor I reflects an overall view of the group as a group predominating over the single individual member and providing a safe, "good mother" environment (11, 38, 44). Leadership is required to create space for all group members, to accept them, and to create a framework that includes everyone as worthwhile. Furthermore in this view it would be important to use the power of leadership to establish a safe environment by giving care in order to reduce members' fear of hurting others (26), thereby promoting openness among group members.

The use of strong leadership is positive if it has the intent to encourage individual members to align themselves with the group (25). The same view is confirmed on the negative side, that no one should be overlooked, but rather helped to create separate space and voice within the group (30). The group as a group has primacy in this view. Individuals should be given help to participate, but not if they act out of indifference to others, thus endangering group safety and sound group development (42). On the other hand, it is also important to allow group members to express their ideas about others, even if they do not know each other well (28). Expression of aggression and negative emotions are also seen as important for group development, with the view of their being accepted as parts of the whole with potential for the common good.

#### Factor I: Salient Statements

No.	Statement	Factor Score
38	In connection to groups, one will develop positively only if one feels accepted and feels that it is ok to be one's self.	+5
44	For the group to feel whole, communication must be such that everybody feels incorporated into and meaningful to the group. Outsiders destroy group feeling.	+5
11	A responsible group is characterized by its having developed so that all members feel at home and worthwhile in their positions and functions.	+4
26	The fear of hurting others and the leaders can lead to things not being said that should be said.	+3
25	To be a member of a group creates insecurity and uncertainty in relation to who one is and what one shall do, with the need for a strong leader who will support and protect one.	+2
48	The group's power must lie with those who have the responsibility, the leaders.	0
47	Aggression and the ability to express negative feelings are more important than anything else when caring is too prominent in the group.	-3
28	One should not be allowed to say things about others in the group before one knows them and what they stand for.	-4
40	Showing one's negative feelings and aggression in a group creates only guilty feelings and bad blood between group members. It does not lead to anything positive.	-4
30	It is more important to ignore one member's negative expressions than to give help to understand them.	-5
42	It is most important to give a damn and speak one's mind even though that can create a feeling of standing alone in the group and against the leaders.	-5

Another feature showing the primacy of the group as a group is revealed as inherent in the acceptance of the care-taking paradigm. Statements 42 and 47 show that leadership energy is used to allocate power to the group as a group, helping members to belong through the establishment of a maternal, care-taking group object, primarily idealized through strong leadership. The leaders do not see that it is their responsibility to hold all the power, but they seem indifferent to the issue (48). Power should be used only to promote the group as a group. This is seen as necessary, especially in the beginning group, where the members need to feel they can depend on the leader and feel safe.

In terms of the design, Factor I connects to the dependent group developmental phase in which both care-taking and projections are welcomed and worked through for the sake of building a potential group self. The leaders are aware of the necessity for caring for the group as a group, and seem to have a nurturing capacity for empowering the process of building up a perceptual “good mother” group object that the group can rely on in the beginning.

### Factor II: Group as Arena for Cooperation and Self-Realization

Six persons and 13 Q sorts defined Factor II, which is comprised of sorts under all 4 conditions of instruction. Nine Q sorts indicated the mature group focus, and 4 the beginning group. Regarding mature groups, 5 Q sorts represented the actual experience of the leaders, and 4 their ideals about groups. Three sorts reflected the leader views of ideal beginning groups, and 1 represented the view as actually experienced in the beginning group as well.

While the leaders used power for developing a maternal group object in Factor I, there was an indifference to holding all the power (48). In Factor II, however, a strong feeling appears against the leader as sole power holder, seeing the group as capable of being a responsible entity in itself (48, 13). Thus Factor II represents a view that individuation and separation already have been accomplished. The group is seen as capable and responsible, with all members having acquired their own power, knowing their group space, boundaries and positions, and feeling valued and at home in the group (11, 13). Statement 10 indicates a leadership view that facilitates and promotes the group as an object for individual self-realization. Participatory and accepting perspectives support this view (see especially factor scores for items 13 and 17 respectively).

Acknowledgement of one’s projections with both subsequent guilt feelings and feelings of responsibility (7) is prized by Factor II. This supports an interdependent view that expects the group to behave in ways that reflect direct communication, taking responsibility for tasks as well as being open and conscientious about the relations within the group (13). The factor is indifferent to expressions connected to the transitional phase (24, 27, 35), indicating that this developmental phase either has been transcended or is unimportant in other ways.

On the negative end (30, 40), this factor believes all kinds of emotions, including negative ones, have a place in group interactions, seeing potential in these for creating common good. There is a clear, antagonistic view about leadership power, where leaders are seen as responsible for group development and group members recognize the power of the leader. Power is oriented towards individuals as functional resources rather than towards group structures or institutions.

### Factor II: Salient Statements

No.	Statement	Factor Score
10	Participating in groups gives one hope that the group as such will (can) meet one’s deep needs and create room for self-actualization.	+5
11	A responsible group is characterized by its having developed so that all members feel at home and worthwhile in their positions and functions.	+5
17	It is important not to reject individuals when their fantasies about the others are presented as true. It is most important that individuals get help to see themselves and to own their projections.	+4
7	In a group when one must finally acknowledge that, there and then, one has ascribed to another person the qualities and feelings that one cannot own, one creates not only guilt feelings but also responsibility.	+4
13	When power is shared among all the group members a genuine and conscientious group develops.	+3
24	Sooner or later the group must see the necessity of liberating itself from the leaders and make its own choices.	0
27	Breaking out of the group’s common interest and norms, and standing up for oneself is important for one not becoming alienated.	0
35	Even if one means something else and wants do things other than the group wants, one needs attention and support from the group and the leaders.	0
48	The group’s power must lie with those who have the responsibility, the leaders.	-4
40	Showing one’s negative feelings and aggression in a group creates only guilty feelings and bad blood between group members. It does not lead to anything positive.	-4
30	It is more important to ignore one member’s negative expressions than to give help to understand them.	-5

Since Factor II contains defining Q sorts from all 4 conditions of instruction, it can be interpreted differently depending upon the underlying perspectives of the defining persons. For example, some participants see this view as adequate only for mature groups, while some persons see it as relevant for beginning groups as well. Also some participants seem to hold this general view both from their actual experience and ideal perspective of both beginning and mature groups. In trying to understand the surprising case of some leaders

who view Factor II as relevant for both beginning and mature groups, one might question their ability to discern the different needs of developing groups. Speculation suggests that the ideology of interdependence as a wished-for value expressed in groups has led to a confluence in the views of both beginning and mature groups for some leaders.

### Factor III: Honesty and Truth through Individuation

One person loaded with all 4 sorts on this factor. This view seems to have an individualized, rather than group, focus on both the group members and leaders. It does not lend itself to group development, per se, and does not see the group as a group being most important in any situation. It upholds the same view for the beginning and mature groups in actual and ideal situations. Different conditions of instruction do not provoke discriminatory responses for this definer.

Caring and kindness within the group or coming from the leaders have no value, because they are seen as potentially covering up truth and honesty. Conflict, aggression, and negative feelings are appreciated, seemingly because they promote a true picture (47). The leaders' task is to make sure that honesty is promoted through maintaining and developing tolerance for individual differences, and that each individual develops courage for self-expression in opposition to group norms (20, 21).

This factor expresses similar values through the statements with which sorters disagree, maintaining that aggression and showing negative emotions will lead to the common good by helping honesty and truth to emerge or become visible (35, 40). Statement 30 must also be seen in this light, since negative expressions as well as positive ones are part of the images of honesty and truth.

In addition, there is no belief in the leader's power as an institutionalized position within the group (48). Such power positions might easily result in being at odds with honesty and truth. Strong leadership as protection is simply not part of the discourse in this factor (25).

Speaking the truth is a value strongly held in Factor III. These persons seem to feel it is more likely that truth and honesty will come to the fore, if the negative is welcomed and individual voices can be heard (5). The group is seen as valuable for training oneself to become honest and true, even if such training hurts other group members or the leaders (19, 26).

Factor III expresses a belief in group members promoting themselves in true and honest ways, seeing no need for strong leadership to protect, govern or facilitate learning in the group process. True and honest individuation will seemingly lead to the most authentic group from whatever developmental stance it is viewed. Therefore, in this view, there is no need for leaders to

### Factor III: Salient Statements

No.	Statement	Factor Score
15	Groups can be too nice. It is important to break out of the caring and protective atmosphere even if that leads to conflict.	+5
29	Good and kind leaders need to know that life is more than support and protection, it is also confrontation.	+5
47	Aggression and the ability to express negative feelings are more important than anything else when caring feelings are too prominent in the group.	+4
20	People must really stretch themselves to tolerate different expressions of experience and not be so sensitive on their own behalf for a group to function ideally.	+3
21	To break in and stop people when they provoke others and express themselves unsoundly towards others is a moral must for every leader.	+3
25	To be a member of a group creates insecurity and uncertainty in relation to who one is and what one shall do, with the need for a strong leader who will support and protect one.	0
19	When people in a group express too many fantasies about each other, only splits and conflicts are created. This is not good; rather it creates pangs of conscience.	-3
35	Even if one means something else and wants do things other than the group wants, one needs attention and support from the group and the leaders.	-3
26	The fear of hurting others and the leaders can lead to things not being said that should be said.	-3
40	Showing one's negative feelings and aggression in a group creates only guilty feelings and bad blood between group members. It does not lead to anything positive.	-4
48	The group's power must lie with those who have the responsibility, the leaders.	-4
30	It is more important to ignore one member's negative expressions than to give help to understand them.	-5
5	It would be difficult to stand fast and keep one's view without having a bad conscience regarding the other group members and leaders.	-5

change their leadership style as the group develops and changes. Finally, there seems to be a general lack of awareness or valuing of complexities inherent in group dynamics and, therefore, the need for high-level leadership skills.

**Factor IV: Perturbation as Separation and Individuation**

Two persons and 7 Q sorts defined this factor, including their actual and ideal views on group development, not only from the beginning, but also in the mature group. The factor emphasizes the conflicts and movements associated with separation and individuation processes over other areas in group dynamics. Statement 11 shows that this view is indifferent to a harmonious group where every member has found his/her place and function, and feels valuable. The individual is seen as important, but not as defined in Statement 11. The connections among harmony, feeling at home, and responsibility seem to have low feeling tone in this factor.

On the positive side, this factor reveals a direction towards individuation and separation, where it is important to take oneself seriously, be truthful towards oneself, and dare to confront and revolt (37), even to the extent of challenging leaders and other authorities. This points to an autonomous, self-oriented authority as the most important, where being real rather than kind is seen as primary (29, 34). Seen from within the design, the focus seems to be on the transitional developmental phase. The generation of a whole, real, and direct communication between the group members is important (41), not harmony and feeling good. Confrontation and somewhat aggressive action (29 (above), 37, 43) are focal for developing individuated, separated spaces and boundaries, making the whole group visible (9).

On the other hand, Statement 26 modifies the confrontational view in that the fear of hurting people can become a hindrance to speaking freely and openly. One interpretation might be to see Statement 26 as reflecting part of the actual experience of the sorter, without seeing it as contrary to the need for confrontation and individuation. As an ideal, Factor IV reflects the notion of a community in which an overall positive view of aggressive and confrontational separation also requires an awareness of the possibility of hurting others to promote interdependence in an otherwise perturbed group situation.

Seen from the negative side, Factor IV expresses an emancipation from dependency and from the need of leaders to protect and care take (21, 23, 25). It seems that this view will allow more chaotic and turbulent atmospheres than may be tolerated in dependency groups. Even acts of separation, ousting leadership authority, are seen as responsible and mature(8).

Since both persons define this view from both actual experience and ideal theory in terms of the beginning group, no particular developmental perspective is operative. Rather, any group seems well served by a turbulent, Individuating, and sometimes chaotic atmosphere for becoming independent and responsible. Neither dependency (5) nor interdependency (11) is valued in this view.

**Factor IV: Salient Statements**

No.	Statement	Factor Score
26	The fear of hurting others and the leaders can lead to things not being said that should be said.	+5*
37	Once and a while it can be right to revolt against the leaders and authority in order to be true to oneself and the common interest, even though it creates guilty feelings.	+5
29	Good and kind leaders need to know that life is more than support and protection, it is also confrontation.	+4
34	If the group cannot tackle, receive and work through its projections, it will lead to the alienation of individuals – and to the development of a false group self.	+4
41	It is important to speak one's mind in the group regardless of whether or not one expresses positive or negative fantasies and feelings, as that will lead to a larger wholeness and better communication that will again lead to future group healing.	+4
43	One can't only hide behind others, for example, by supporting oneself and defending oneself through what the leaders do and say, even though it can be painful to step forward and become visible.	+3
5	It would be difficult to stand fast and keep one's view without having a bad conscience regarding the other group members and leaders.	0
11	A responsible group is characterized by its having developed so that all members feel at home and worthwhile in their positions and functions.	0
23	When individuals use power to maintain their fantasies and understandings about others, it is necessary for others to break in and the group to move ahead.	-2
8	When a group rejects and removes its leaders and enjoys doing so, the group members lack both self-insight and conscience.	-3
21	To break in and stop people when they provoke others and express themselves unsoundly towards others is a moral must for every leader.	-4
25	To be a member of a group creates insecurity and uncertainty in relation to who one is and what one shall do, with the need for a strong leader who will support and protect one.	-4
9	In groups, it is best to be invisible.	-5

\* real and ideal

It appears that both dependency and interdependency can threaten independency, which in Factor IV appears connected primarily to the individual group members. The optimal and responsible group is one in which each member cares aggressively for individual independence, and, as an altruistic residual, is aware of the potential of hurting others. One might question the ability of this strong focus on independence to create feelings of safety and belonging that are theoretically posited to be crucial for initial group formation. Further, it is possible that the minor role of community this viewpoint expressed will hinder development of a competent work group.

The presence of real and ideal conditions in this factor can be interpreted in 2 ways. Positively, the presence of the 2 conditions can be seen as expressing congruency, with no distance to be bridged between the real and ideal. On the other hand, it could express a lack of awareness of any potential to develop beyond what is actually occurring, i.e., there appears to be little chance to move beyond independence to interdependence. Such lack of awareness might point to a corresponding deficiency in the leadership skill set.

#### **The Shared View of All Factors: Consensus Statements.**

Despite stark differences revealed in the 4 factors, part of their reality is also shared. Each view appears indifferent about removing its leaders. Since leaders sorted the statements, the consensus on Statement 3 might indicate, for instance, that they want to keep their power for the sake of maintaining their position as well as stubbornly holding onto their views against the group. However, such an idea is not hinted at within the sorters' awareness. Brown (1980) has pointed out that statements in the 0 range are interesting in that the expressed indifference may mask an attitude that the sorters are unaware they hold. Furthermore, as shown in Statement 22, all factors seem to be indifferent to idealizing the leaders and giving them power as such. One might question if the indifference to item 22 reflects a current societal judgment that it is not acceptable to want power for power's sake as well as the humanistic-existential philosophy of the educational program that the leaders facilitate.

Consensus about Statement 9 indicates that the best solution is never to be invisible in groups. Even Factor I, with its emphasis on dependency, excludes such a possibility. In terms of understanding a beginning group movement, anxiety and insecurity about the unknown might have endorsed individual invisibility as the best possible solution to reduce levels of insecurity, at least for the near term. However, 1 probable reason for the strong negative feeling toward this idea across all factors could be the global character of Statement 9. This statement also appears to contradict the group developmental need for individuals to become distinct and known as parts of group-wholeness, without which group self-awareness would be impoverished. The agreement among the factors about Statements 28, 36 and 41 supports this last argument.

#### *Consensus Statements*

No.	Statement	Factor Score			
		I	II	III	IV
3	If necessary, a group must remove leaders who will not give up their power and authority vis à vis the group's own decisions even if the group feels guilty about it.	0	0	0	1
22	Ascribing ideals to others is usual in groups, especially seeing the leaders as ideal.	0	-1	0	0
9	In groups, it is best to be invisible.	-4	-5	-5	-5
28	One should not be allowed to say things about others in the group before one knows them and what they stand for.	-4	-2	-2	-3
36	Expressing negative opinions about others in the group leads easily to one being attacked and feeling both rejected and an outsider, something that is both right and reasonable.	-3	-2	-1	-1
41	It is important to speak one's mind in the group regardless of whether or not one expresses positive or negative fantasies and feelings, as that will lead to a larger wholeness and better communication that will again lead to future group healing.	3	4	2	4

In interpreting the agreement among factors, one can see that leadership or authority problems are likely to occur mainly in the transitional phase. Factors I and II avoid problems of group-leader conflicts as the focus in both beginning and mature groups by excluding the intermediary developmental phase of individuation and separation. The interdependent view either includes leadership as an internal positive resource within the group or sees it as unimportant. One might be surprised that Factors III and IV do not express strong feelings towards possible conflicted relationships between the group and leaders. Neither view sees the leaders as being in positions of power for itself, but rather as a way to facilitate both the separation and individuation processes as well as that of becoming true and honest. In this way Statements 3 and 22 emphasize leadership in ways that are strange or alien in the view of Factors III and IV.

## Discussion

Factors I and II represent a developmental view of groups with a distinct discrimination between the characteristics of the actual and ideal, beginning and mature groups. From a leadership perspective, Factor I represents a view of dependence that is characteristic of beginning groups where it is important for leaders to use power to establish the group as a group. In psychodynamic terms, safety and predictability are established through maternal caring together with an accepting and receiving atmosphere that facilitates the projective identification process promoting group development.

Factor II is a reflection of both actual and ideal views on group maturity. This factor represents a mature group view that has transcended the transitional phase of individuation and separation. Power is used for cooperation and self-realization in direct and effective interpersonal communication. Dependency and independency are included in an overall interdependent view, reflecting maturity as an end already achieved.

Another interpretation for Factor II emerges through its inclusion of both actual and ideal perspectives. Maturity as an ideal seems to be aligned to a strong societal ideal or wishful thinking that when adult people come together in work groups they will automatically function optimally and effectively to meet stated goals. In this view, persons are seen as both autonomous and interdependent without strong needs for leadership. They already have the capacity to communicate directly and are reality-oriented, not needing to deal with complex object relations and more primitive emergent emotions. Educational psychology and group counseling are not required to facilitate group development.

In terms of an ideal perspective, such wishful thinking is not surprising. There is, however, a greater challenge in understanding that this is also the actual experience of group leaders in learning groups. A tentative explanation can come from seeing real experiences as being contaminated by the ideal. Beyond any doubt, there are experienced adult students who are easily observed as being mature and who function at high levels. The real presence of those students might be the source for the leaders' construction of a more unified picture of a mature group than is warranted, as has seemingly been done in Factor II.

Both Factors III and IV value independence. Individual members are predominant as distinct, autonomous beings and as resources for the group. Factor III has a strong emphasis on honesty and speaking one's truth as the most important tools for establishing self-realized and authentic individuals as well as real groups. However, honesty and truth do not have the same impact in Factor IV, where confrontation and perturbation are seen as important for movement towards independence and autonomy. Harmony and feeling at

home in the group are not parts of the discourse about group development in Factor IV. Instead, group life is seen to revolve primarily around aggression and fighting for oneself.

Though Factors III and IV both share a perspective of group members using the learning group as a place for their individuation and separation needs, there are subtle, but distinct, differences between the factors. It can be insightful to discuss both these factors in relation to, and as reflections of, the humanistic-existential perspective of the counselor educational program of the learning groups.

Self-awareness and self-insight are highly valued in the learning program. Self-support and emphasis on individuation, honesty, and responsibility are explicit values. Therefore, one can suppose that individuation and autonomy might be the main developmental focus even though the curriculum moves progressively toward an increasing focus on interdependence and the group, especially in the later phase of the program.

Since, as students in the educational program, the leaders have learned and benefited from their own deep experiences with the values of independency (Lepeskiene 2000), one can conjecture that their theories-in-use (Argyris 1990) reflect those values. However, this view presents a problem in its tendency to stop development at the independence phase, leaving the individual always as the focus in the group (Allgood and Kvalsund 1995, Aschbach and Schermer 1987, McClure 1998). Only by both transcending and including independency can the group realize itself as authentic and real in interdependence. Factors III and IV seem to lack this developmental perspective, while Factors I and II, at least in part, include a maturational view.

Finally, one can discuss the leaders' awareness of the complexity inherent in the process of developing learning groups into effective work groups, and, therefore, the need for high-level skill sets to facilitate learning effectively in such settings (Hargie 1997, McClure 1998). Since some leaders had all their sorts on one factor, it seems that they lack at least some awareness of developmental issues regarding groups. For example, one can speculate that the sorting behavior of the 1 person who had all 4 sorts on Factor III was influenced not by a developmental perspective but by the ideology of the interdependence phase. Similarly, central values of truth and honesty, and individuation and independence seem to be the guiding forces in the leaders' view of groups in Factors III and IV, respectively. A developmental view of groups learning and maturing seems to have little force in determining those leadership styles. These central values seem too simple and inflexible to meet the challenges in complex and changing learning situations. Some leaders seem unaware of any need to flex and modify their facilitation styles as the group changes and matures. Surprisingly, they express little awareness of the



change process that would seem to underlie the acquisition of a high performance skill set.

If work groups are to develop into effectively functioning cooperative endeavors where individuals are resources for achieving shared aims, then group leaders need to value and promote developmental processes that lead to interdependence in mature groups. Such attitudes and abilities in turn presuppose that leaders have learned complex communication skill sets that will enable them to effectively facilitate such developmental group processes. Without such skills, it seems unlikely that leaders will be able to encourage the development of groups toward mature cooperation and interdependency.

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**Appendix**  
**Factor Scores**

No.	Statement	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
1	One will necessarily feel alone in a group if one represents a view that is against the group's norms.	-3	0	0	-1
2	It is always necessary to work through the perceptions and fantasies that are presented in a group so that they become real for all the group members.	2	2	-2	0
3	If necessary, a group must remove leaders who will not give up their power and authority vis à vis the group's own decisions even if the group feels guilty about it.	0	0	0	1
4	As long as individual members hide themselves in the group and are silent and withdrawn, then they do not take responsibility for their contribution to the group community.	1	0	2	3
5	It would be difficult to stand fast and keep one's view without having a bad conscience regarding the other group members and leaders.	2	-3	-4	0
6	The goal for every projection in a group is that it shall wend its way back home to the originator where its meaning can be completed.	-1	2	1	1
7	In a group when one must finally acknowledge that, there and then, one has ascribed to another person the qualities and feelings that one cannot own, one creates not only guilt feelings but also responsibility.	2	4	0	2
8	When a group rejects and removes its leaders and enjoys doing so, the group members lack both self-insight and conscience.	-1	-2	-1	-3
9	In groups, it is best to be invisible.	-4	-5	-5	-5
10	Participating in groups gives one hope that the group as such will (can) meet one's deep needs and create room for self-actualization.	1	5	-2	2
11	A responsible group is characterized by its having developed so that all members feel at home and worthwhile in their positions and functions.	4	5	1	0
12	By not participating positively to a group's life, one feels lousy and guilty.	0	-2	-1	-1

No.	Statement	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
13	When power is shared among all the group members a genuine and conscientious group develops.	-1	3	1	0
14	Presenting oneself to others by expressing one's feelings and fantasies is more important than feeling a part of the group.	-3	1	-2	1
15	Groups can be too nice. It is important to break out of the caring and protective atmosphere even if that leads to conflict.	0	0	5	2
16	By idealizing the leader one gives away one's own potential to be good, splendid and conscientious.	-1	1	0	-1
17	It is important not to reject individuals when their fantasies about the others are presented as true. It is most important that individuals get help to see themselves and to own their projections.	2	4	1	1
18	Only those who stand a little outside the group can see it from another perspective and in that way bring in worthwhile knowledge.	-2	0	-1	-2
19	When people in a group express too many fantasies about each other, only splits and conflicts are created. This is not good; rather it creates pangs of conscience.	-2	-1	-3	-2
20	People must really stretch themselves to tolerate different expressions of experience and not be so sensitive on their own behalf for a group to function ideally.	0	1	3	0
21	To break in and stop people when they provoke others and express themselves unsoundly towards others is a moral must for every leader.	0	0	3	-4
22	Ascribing ideals to others is usual in groups, especially seeing the leaders as ideal.	0	-1	0	0
23	When individuals use power to maintain their fantasies and understandings about others, it is necessary for others to break in and the group to move ahead.	-1	-1	1	-2
24	Sooner or later the group must see the necessity of liberating itself from the leaders and make its own choices.	-2	0	4	2
25	To be a group member creates insecurity and uncertainty in relation to who one is and what one shall do, with the need for a strong leader who will support and protect one.	2	-3	0	-4

No.	Statement	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
26	Fear of hurting others and the leaders can lead to things not being said that should be said.	3	-2	-3	5
27	Breaking out of the group's common interest and norms, and standing up for oneself is important for one not becoming alienated.	-2	1	3	3
28	One should not be allowed to say things about others in the group before one knows them and what they stand for.	-4	-2	-2	-3
29	Good and kind leaders need to know that life is more than support and protection, it is also confrontation.	1	3	5	4
30	It is more important to ignore one member's negative expressions than to give help to understand them.	-5	-5	-5	-4
31	That someone is ascribed characteristics and abilities that one doesn't have is unfortunate in relation to groups. Such behavior destroys and provokes too much. It must not be allowed by responsibility-conscious leaders.	-1	-1	-3	-3
32	Group members who are troublesome are worse than obstinate children are.	-2	-3	-1	0
33	Expressing one's power and exercising it in the group is more honest than asserting that one doesn't have power at all.	3	2	4	1
34	If the group cannot tackle, receive and work through its projections, it will lead to the alienation of individuals – and to the development of a false group self.	1	2	2	4
35	Even if one means something else and wants to do things other than the group wants, one needs attention and support from the group and the leaders.	4	1	-3	3
36	Expressing negative opinions about others in the group leads easily to one being attacked and feeling both rejected and an outsider, something that is both right and reasonable.	-3	-2	-1	-1
37	Once and a while it can be right to revolt against the leaders and authority in order to be true to oneself and the common interest, even though it creates guilty feelings.	0	3	0	5

No.	Statement	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
38	In connection to groups, one will develop positively only if one feels accepted and feels that it is ok to be one's self.	5	3	3	2
39	It is the leaders' responsibility that the group functions as a whole, all group members must acknowledge the leaders' power.	3	-4	1	-2
40	Showing one's negative feelings and aggression in a group creates only guilty feelings and bad blood between group members. It does not lead to anything positive.	-4	-4	-4	-5
41	It is important to speak one's mind in the group regardless of whether or not one expresses positive or negative fantasies and feelings, as that will lead to a larger wholeness and better communication that will again lead to future group healing.	3	4	2	4
42	It is most important to give a damn and speak one's mind even though that can create a feeling of standing alone in the group and against the leaders.	-5	0	2	-1
43	One can't only hide behind others, for example, by supporting oneself and defending oneself through what the leaders do and say, even though it can be painful to step forward and become visible.	1	2	-2	3
44	For the group to feel whole, communication must be such that everybody feels incorporated and meaningful to the group. Outsiders destroy group feeling.	5	-1	0	0
45	Group experiences of safety are more important than one member's claiming special meanings and needs.	4	-3	2	-2
46	It is important to commit oneself to what the group wants otherwise there will soon be chaos.	1	-1	-1	-1
47	Aggression and the ability to express negative feelings are more important than anything else when caring is too prominent in the group.	-3	1	4	1
48	The group's power must lie with those who have responsibility, the leaders.	0	-4	-4	-3