

## **The Affective Model for Teaching and Learning Psychoanalytic Concepts**

### **Abstract**

In response to criticism of existing methods in psychoanalytic education the authors present the Affective Learning Model, an experimental method for the teaching and learning of psychoanalytic theory and its clinical application, using multi-channel teaching, process and review in group settings, and learning from experience. The design of the model rests on theories of individual object relations, group analysis, affect regulation, neural development, and chaos theory. The authors give examples of concepts being taught, demonstrated, and validated in the affective learning group experience. Alternative models are difficult to devise and implement in traditional institutes, and so this form of education takes place in an open system institution that is not constrained by standards for certification of analysts. Designed to fit the educational aim of teaching object relations theory, the Affective Learning Model is now presented, critiqued, and reviewed for consideration of its applicability in traditional psychoanalytic institutes.

## **The Affective Learning of Psychoanalytic Concepts**

### **Problems with Traditional Models for Learning Psychoanalytic Theory**

The model of psychoanalytic education proposed by Eitingon (1923) for the Berlin Psychoanalytic has dominated institutes of the American and International Psychoanalytic Associations (Kernberg 2000). This model consists of three components: training analysis, supervision of control cases, and theoretical seminars and clinical conferences -- in that order of importance. The Eitingon (or tri-partite) model is characterized by careful pre-selection of candidates, restricted numbers of training analysts who favor orthodoxy, and a standard, required, conservative curriculum through which candidates proceed year by year. Critics think that the Eitingon model is inherently destructive: it rewards analysts for conformity, stifles innovation, and infantilizes candidates (Arlow 1972, Bernfeld 1962, Friedman 1999).

The model developed in France is the major alternative to the Eitingon model at this time (Kernberg 2000). The French model gives the candidate a broad choice of training analysts, no required curriculum, no evaluation of performance or progress. This model has the advantage of conferring freedom in intellectual decision-making and spurring innovative, collaborative thinking, but it has drawbacks too. The candidates feel adrift. Final selection for membership occurs at the end-point of training and this generates anxiety and creates wastage.

Neither model is free of regressive, authoritarian, and infantilizing features (Kernberg 2000). In both, individual training analysis is widely regarded as the primary place of learning about psychoanalysis. How well these confidential analyses convey psychoanalytic theory and

technique and how they affect learning in seminars is not open to examination. The overvaluing of the role of training analyst leads to an in-group that is demeaning to the educational task of the training institution. The closed nature of the work of the selectively appointed training analysts engenders an atmosphere of paranoia throughout the institute (Kernberg 1986). The teachers and the seminar program are devalued and excluded like oedipal children from the parents' sexual life (Dorey, qtd. in Kernberg 1986).

The habit of reporting and assessing progress in the training analysis was eventually usefully separated from the formal educational process (Lifschutz 1976), but then nothing arose to replace the concept of an analysis as an integrated personal and professional experience where affective and intellectual experiences were shared by teachers and trainees -- except perhaps in supervision which however, like analysis itself, remained hidden. Kernberg (1986) proposed a remedy: improve the conceptualization of the primary task, create better organizational structures, develop competence in group dynamics, and most important ensure open process and review of the clinical work of teachers and training analysts, as well as of candidates. This last provision addresses the need to defuse the hidden impact of the training analyst and the closed hierarchical system. We think that the programs we are about to describe answer Kernberg's call for the development of innovative models of training that "provide an intensity of experiential as well as academic learning" (p. 112) and that "provide an atmosphere of excitement and freedom" (p. 115).

We agree with Arlow (1972) that identification is an important component of learning psychoanalysis and that identification with individual training analysts that is fostered by the present system inhibits creativity and innovation. We also agree with him that cognitive methods alone are insufficient, and that the social unconscious has to be dealt with lest it subvert

the primary task. We agree with Kernberg (2000) that innovative models for teaching psychoanalysis are needed, that they must include experiential learning and convey knowledge of group process, and that the institution should offer an environment of excitement, security, collegiality, and freedom.

### **An Alternative: The Affective Model**

In response to these objections and recommendations, we propose an alternative informed by our research in teaching and learning (D. Scharff and J. Scharff 1979, J. Scharff and D. Scharff 2000). The Affective Learning Model addresses unconscious affective needs directly, spreads the identificatory process among many teachers and peers, and works with unconscious social processes in a system that is open to the examination of the interacting modifying influences of the larger groups in which the analytic dyad exists. We had to create an alternative institution so that we could freely develop this innovative model for teaching psychoanalytic theory without the difficulties inherent in the structure of the traditional analytic institute. For instance, we do not pre-select our students, and they are not analytic candidates. We accept psychotherapists at any level of experience and analysts who want to know more about psychoanalysis in the object relations tradition. We do not evaluate standards of competence. We are not trying to maintain an elite and have nothing to lose. We think that this is what leaves us free to develop an alternative model of teaching and learning psychoanalytic theory and its application to clinical practice. We now present the Affective Model for consideration of its applicability to the traditional institution for training and certifying analysts.

### **The design of the program**

The fundamentals program of theoretical and clinical instruction takes place over two years in a modular format consisting of two week-long immersions in a basic curriculum of theory and eight three-day weekends of presentations at the leading edge of the development of theory. The first week of the basic curriculum covers the object relations theories, and the second week deals with attachment research, infant observation, and their relevance for countertransference. The curriculum of the eight weekends is not fixed, but features new ideas in object relations and their connection to and enrichment by other psychoanalytic approaches including Freud, Jung, Mahler, intersubjectivity, and Lacan. Cognitive, auditory, visual, emotional, interpersonal, and social channels for learning are engaged. The method of instruction includes lecture, videotaped clinical examples, case presentation, large group discussion, small group discussion, and large group plenary review. The small group has the task of integrating cognitive and emotional aspects of the learning experience, and it is the cornerstone of the program. There is no requirement for treatment or supervision at this stage in the training, although many participants elect to have both. Elective programs of theoretical and clinical instruction on special topics are offered in 4 weekend courses (that include a 5-session small group) and occasional week-long institutes (that offer a 7-session small group). The example of an affective learning small group given later in this paper comes from one of the week-long institutes.

The advanced program takes place over the next two to four years for those who want more immersion in clinical application. It consists of continued attendance at selected weekends and study groups, individual and group supervision in person or by telephone, and analytic therapy. Intensive treatment in which an analytic process is established is a requisite for those in this additional program, but we do not specify frequency or duration except to say that twice a

week for two years is the minimum and more is preferred. Treatment may be undertaken with any analyst or analytically oriented psychotherapist, usually not a member of the faculty. This provision arose for the practical reason that many of our students commute from afar and have no access to specified analysts. The policy of allowing total freedom in selecting their analysts ensures that trainees' treatment remains a private matter untrammelled by institutional politics, and that education is not complicated by intense transferences to an analyst or therapist who is politically involved in the student's education. Admittedly it has the disadvantage that there is no direct quality control of treatment options, but the exposure to analytic sensibility demonstrated by many teachers and advanced students in the open system of the learning environment gives trainees a check on the effectiveness of their own analysis. We do not require our trainees to have completed cases, because we do not judge the therapist's competence by the patient's goals.

Supervision is the only context in which educational progress is rated. The supervisor checks the student's therapeutic competence against a standard list of skills. The supervisee evaluates the supervisor's competence equally specifically. Supervision focuses on analytic process and on the emergence of internal object relationships in transference and countertransference in treatment and in the parallel process of the supervisory relationship. Supervisors meet to discuss supervision dilemmas, and relate each student's supervisory experience to learning behaviors throughout the program. So supervision does not remain hidden and the supervisor's work is under constant review. Like the student, the supervisor is learning from experience.

### **The Rationale for the Affective Learning Model**

The affective learning model is built on four bodies of theory -- affect regulation and neural development, individual object relations, chaos theory, and group analysis informed by systems theory (J. Scharff and D. Scharff 1998, D. Scharff and J. Scharff 2000). It depends primarily on the assumption that affects are the motivating and integrating engine of self organization at all levels -- in the mind, in the neuropsychological functioning of the brain, in relationships, and in groups. It is built on the idea that the internal relationship of ego and object is the basic unit of the structure and functioning of the psyche as the organizer of external relationships (Fairbairn 1952) and that the individual endopsychic situation interacts with others through processes of projective and introjective identification (Klein 1946; Dicks 1967). Through mutual projective and introjective identificatory processes which support processes of perception, unconscious communication, defense, and growth, the individual psyche connects with others. From the turbulent mixture of cognition, affect, small and large group structures, and unconscious processes, we work through experience toward understanding

In the traditional institute, learning cannot occur efficiently when the learning process is not available for study owing to the fact that personal experience in class is reserved for discussion in the privacy of analysis. Reading and listening provide a cognitive map that, without an emotional experience, lacks depth and resonance. For instance, when teaching about internalization, we want to create a model setting in which internalization can occur -- not merely to understand the concept of internalization intellectually, but to learn it from experience. All students need a personal experience of encountering phenomena to which theory can only refer. This gives affective credibility to concepts that then become more digestible and comprehensible. To accomplish this, the learning has to occur in an intellectual climate that has affective resonance with what is being taught.

## **Affect regulation and neural development**

The first pillar of the Affective Learning Model comes from findings in affect regulation, neural development and infant observation that support the tenets of object relations: mind is interpersonally and intersubjectively constructed (Schoore 2000). The parent's mind is the culture medium for the growth of the child's mind in cognitive ability and affect regulation. In the affective learning institution, positively toned learning facilitates optimal learning in the affective regions of the right frontal cortex, and the negatively toned emotions of fear and anger that dampen down the growth processes there can be addressed and mastered (Schoore 1994).

Bion's (1967, 1970) theory of container/contained proposes that the infant's primitive anxieties are put into the mother through projective identification. Through her reverie, she comes to know them, tolerate and shape them, modify and structure them in the image of her own mind, organize them in the form of understanding, and then feed them back to the infant in a more tolerable, less toxic, more structured state. Bion's theory describes how the mind that is to become capable of thinking is constructed out of pre-thinking processes which, when they meet events, result in thoughts. Equally and simultaneously it refers to emotional experience as part and parcel of cognitive experience. In the Affective Learning Model we think that intellectual cognition can be conceived of as a container for raw emotion, and emotion can be conceived of as a container for purely intellectual conceptions. We privilege neither affect nor intellect in the mind's search to know through experience.

## **Individual object relations theory**

The next pillar on which the Affective Learning Model stands is individual psychoanalytic theory. Our theory of the individual rests on the organized, systematic object relations theory of the endopsychic situation elaborated by Fairbairn, enriched by the ideas of Freud, Winnicott, Guntrip, Balint, Bowlby, Sutherland, Klein, and Bion (Sutherland 1980; D. Scharff 1996). Although all psychoanalytic points of view are needed to make sense of the human condition, we concentrate on object relations because we have found it to be the most adaptable across the range of therapeutic modalities. We also find in it the basis for the teaching and learning design. The fundamental unit of mental structure consists of parts of the ego attached to exciting, rejecting, and satisfying part-objects, each structure characterized by telltale affects. These sub-units of the self are all in dynamic relation.

Any of these intrapsychic systems may be displayed as individuals recruit others to interact with them. A teaching setting that involves group interaction is a transitional space for creative work (Winnicott 1951). Within that space is created a laboratory for here-and-now examination of the inter-relatedness of self and other and the associated interaction between self and internal object, as trainees combine with others in sub-group formations that oscillate between supporting and subverting the work of the group.

### **Chaos theory**

According to principles of chaos theory, the teaching setting that uses group interaction promotes perturbations in existing patterns of ways of knowing and understanding. The system is designed to create changes in the initial conditions for learning. Individuals and groups stuck in set patterns of behavior and ways of understanding that are determined by limit cycle attractors and familiar basins of attraction can then move into a transitional state approximating

chaos where they will be open to new organizations of thinking, feeling, relating, and working (D. Scharff and J. Scharff 2000). The groups function as laboratories for the here-and-now examination of the inter-relatedness of self and object, and the associated interaction between self and other, as trainees combine with others in sub-group formations that oscillate between supporting and subverting the work of the group, between chaos and stability, between what is already known, what has been experienced but not understood, and what is more thoroughly not-yet-known.

### **Group analytic theory**

Analytic group theory is another pillar of the Affective Learning Model, and the bulwark of the organization of the educational matrix into small and large group settings. We have found most useful the concepts of basic assumption group functioning (Bion 1961, 1962), the group as a whole with a body and a mind of its own (Anzieu 1988, Ashbach and Schermer 1987), the group as a dynamic system of individual members' selves and the leader's own self (von Bertalanffy 1950, Foulkes 1948, Rice 1965, Neri 1998), and the group transference (Ezriel 1950, 1952).

The group has a work mentality but it also has sub-groups unconsciously devoted to seeking gratification (Bion 1961). If these basic assumption groups obtrude on the work group and are ignored, they subvert the task. But when interpretation enables the group to recognize and understand them, "intellectual activity of a high order is possible" (Bion 1961, p. 175.) Recognizing the impact of these group processes and interpreting them in the light of the countertransference makes the group process conscious, and this clears the way for the group to proceed with its task.

The group is an entity with a group skin around its distinctive culture, a boundary that separates one group from another (Anzieu 1988). The group culture includes the structure of member's voices and patterns of interaction, sub-group formations, and attitudes towards the leader. This culture defines its identity and differentiates it from other settings which may seem to be less defined in comparison. Within the skin the group has a body and a mind. It has a mind of its own that goes its own way. Its body may seem to be a female body like the maternal body that the members wish to suck on, explore, and get inside or whose cavernous spaces they dread. Or it may be like a male body that has a hard edge and a powerfully penetrating capacity.

The group becomes an entity, an external object that becomes an internal object for its members. This internal object is then related to as an object to be feared, longed for, hated, revered, appreciated. Once the group's containing function is fully effective, it becomes an object to internalize. As the group works, individual problems in understanding the material are projected outside the individual self into the shared space of the group where they acquire a new dimensionality as each member resonates with the task or with the index problem which has been brought to the group's attention. The group perspective transforms individual problems with comprehension and clinical application into shared issues which individuals can now see better because they are outside the self (Pichon-Rivière 1977, Searles 1965). Individuals learn about themselves from their impact on others and how others view and deal with them. And the individual brings to the group a focus for its collective work.

The group commutes between the focus on individual and group, cognition and affect, knowledge and passion to arrive at a comprehensive view of the group of individuals as a complex living system subject to dynamic flow (Neri 1998). Each individual creates turbulence in the group process and the group creates turbulence in the individual, a situation of mutual

feedback and dynamic flow that pushes toward change and rearrangement of ideas and affect regulation. The group functions as an organizing system that appears to create a level of chaos in the group and its individual members at the same time that it draws meaning out of chaos.

The Affective Learning Model modifies theory from the group analytic literature for the educational task. It has similarities to group therapy in terms of the use of affect, countertransference, and interpretation of unconscious processes in the group, but the educational context and contract establishes the difference. The small groups in the Affective Learning Model are for teaching and learning concepts, not for therapy, which remains a matter for individual analytic treatment.

In a teaching and learning small group -- as in a therapy group -- the leader's attitude toward the group is crucial in establishing the culture that will be productive for learning. She keeps in mind the integrative task of linking the didactic material to individual and group experience as the group discusses the presentations. She commutes between relating to the members as individuals with their unique perceptions, thoughts, and feelings and to the group as a whole with its unique patterns, atmosphere, and group mind. She identifies group behaviors and fantasies to show how they relate to the concepts under study and so illustrates them. She notes repeating patterns of interaction, conceptualizes them in terms of their defensive function, and helps the group members tolerate their underlying anxieties as they attempt to learn complex psychoanalytic concepts. Through her containing function she metabolizes these anxieties until they become thinkable so that the concepts can be learned. The group identifies with her containing function and itself becomes a working container for holding, processing and transforming anxiety-provoking, affectively charged mental and relational material. Identifying with, and sharing in her containing function, the group finds that the meaning of the concepts

emerges from experience. Last but not least each group comes to appreciate that it exists in a matrix along with other groups. All groups in the matrix need to be considered to approach more complete understanding of the material, the responses to it, the teaching and learning objectives, and the nature of the institution in which students and faculty teach and learn.

### **The Group-Based Design of the Affective Learning Model**

#### **The median-to-large group**

The combined membership of faculty and students meets in a median-to-large group both to hear and discuss lectures and clinical case presentations and to review the learning experience. The work of this median-to-large group is to study bodies of theory about human and social development, and to consider the individual's unconscious relationship to the institution and society (De Mare, Piper, and Thomson 1991). This focus is unlike that of either the small group which resonates with family experience, pre-oedipal and oedipal issues, interferences with love, intimacy and individual development, or the very large group where chaos, isolation and mob dynamics predominate (Hopper 1977; Kreeger 1975; Springmann 1976; Turquet 1975). While the small group thrives on the need for affiliation and dependency, the median-large group takes hate as the starting point, because affiliative wishes are so readily frustrated by the size of the group. Just as affectively understanding intellectual interchanges is central to the work of the small group, so intellectually understanding the affective exchanges of the large group becomes the medium of discourse and provides the link to institutional and cultural experience.

The median-large group exists in two main forms, the workshop and the plenary. The workshop group of approximately twenty to a hundred members is arranged in a theatre style format. Faculty and students listen to lectures and take turns to contribute their thoughts in response to the presenter and to each other in a group-wide conversation. In the workshop group where the aim is to teach theory and clinical practice, interpretive comments about group process are used only occasionally to address impediments to learning or to illustrate the substantive process being studied in that presentation.

The plenary is arranged sometimes in circles with faculty and students sitting wherever they wish and other times in rows with students facing faculty. The circle, a visual symbol of inclusiveness, is most conducive to thinking together in a collaborative, egalitarian way. The row seating favors the emergence of criticism, envy, and rebellious attitudes to authority. Both formats are valued. We invite the group to raise administrative problems and programmatic criticisms and suggestions. Discussion of problems leads to a free-form dialogue (or more accurately a multilogue that is the large group equivalent of free association) which leads to understanding of the unconscious factors that underlie the sense of dissatisfaction. We collate our impressions later with the scored results of the formal evaluations so as to arrive at the issues that need rethinking and redesign. Interpretive comments are used frequently by both faculty and students in their shared attempt to establish the meaning of shared and individual events. This median-large group plenary studies the institution and the relationship of individuals to the institution and to the wider culture. This component of our learning task shares equal priority with individual and small group learning.

### **The small group experience**

The small group consists of five to ten students and a faculty member committed for 70 sessions over two years. On occasion we assign two faculty members as leaders of one group for co-leading experience. Most graduates return for additional single weekends or series of weekends while they continue in the advanced program of study and supervision.

The individual's task in the small group is to discuss the theoretical and clinical material that has been read or presented, and at the same time to examine intellectual and emotional responses to it. As each member attempts to do this, discussion follows and a group process develops.

The group's task is to enable its members to learn from all levels of experience. While studying the theoretical and clinical material that is provided, the group examines its own process to discover how the individual's inner world combines with the personalities of others to illustrate the concepts and to foster or impede the learning.

The small group of five to ten members has a special standing representing the intimate nuclear family experience and at the same time the peer group. In this size of group, members have experience which can be processed by all of them in the immediacy of the moment, and yet because the size is larger than most nuclear families in our culture, they reach a broader perspective from multiple individual understandings of shared experience. The small group is the place to integrate learning from didactic lectures and workshops, reading, clinical experience, with personal experience (inner world and outer world.) It is the place to explore the impact of the learning experience itself on what is being learned. In this way, learning about object relations theory is amplified by experience of object relations affecting interpersonal interaction. Learning occurs at all levels of scale, and the differences between the levels is subject to examination.

We find that the concepts being studied affect the person and the group, so that concepts get illustrated in the behavior of the group. The small group's task of integrating cognitive and informational learning with clinical and personal experience is a complex and ambiguous task, subject to the distortions and perturbations of personal needs. Working with this allows for far greater understanding than the purely cognitive reception of material, and so greatly enhances the applicability of theory to the practice of the individual therapist or analyst.

These small groups are reviewed at faculty meetings in consultation with the course director. The affective experience of faculty members in leading and trying to understand their small groups and in participating in their faculty group becomes a major source of information about the usefulness of the concepts, the efficacy of the teaching, and the freedom of the learning environment. Exercising this integrative function, the faculty group centers the shared task and nurtures the institution.

### **An Illustration of the Affective Model**

We have chosen to describe an affective learning small group that met during a week-long institute rather than from the two-year program, because the brevity of the experience condenses the evolution of the learning process and this makes it easier to report in a paper. (For longer examples, see J. Scharff and D, Scharff 2000). The small group met for seven sessions each following large group discussions of lectures on object relations theory and practice. We provide an abstract of one lecture and focus on the opening session that followed it so as to illustrate typical resistances to learning. We list the topics of other lectures and summarize the progress of following group sessions. We highlight the fourth session which shows mid-phase affective learning group work, and the seventh session which shows the conclusion to the week's

work. We do not view the interpretations given as absolutely correct, but only as work in progress toward establishing a secure group environment in which intellectual confusion, dependent longings, sexual and aggressive wishes and conflicts, and feelings of futility, loss, and fear can be worked with as they arise in relation to the topics. We focus especially, as the analyst does, on transference. We view the interpretation of transference toward the leaders in the affective learning group as a point of access to the group's unconscious preoccupations.

### **The first lecture**

The opening speaker gave a complex paper on subjectivity and objectivity in borderline states (Britton 1999). He described patients' borderline attributes in Kleinian terms. When the defenses are thin-skinned, the positive maternal transference is paramount, the fundamental anxiety is fear of destruction, and the analyst overfunctions and then feels shame and guilt. When they are thick-skinned, the positive paternal transference predominates, the fear is of the void, and the analyst feels futile. Objectivity (by which Britton means the capacity to appreciate a third person point of view) arises from the resolution of the oedipus complex which can only occur if there is a secure maternal object from which to enter the oedipal triangle and face the primal scene. This object gives the capacity to tolerate the third position, to explore interactions from that position, and so to develop the internal space of the mental triangle. If analysands lack the third position, they cannot stand the union of the analyst with his thoughts. Empathic understanding (viewed as maternal) and intellectual understanding (viewed as male) coming together in independent analytic thinking is dreaded because it represents consummation in the analyst's mind which then intrudes as an envied coupling into the patient's mind and leads to destruction.

### **The opening session of the small group**

In the opening session of a small group with two women co-leaders, the group had difficulty in addressing its task of discussing the material and learning from the experience. The participants said that the complex paper was excellent, but they were not used to learning from experience and some of them doubted the value of groups. A woman analyst emerged as an alternative leader who tried to settle the anxiety by getting group members to state their individual identities. The co-leaders showed the group how it had used a defense of individuation to resist co-operative activity in the learning task.

Instead of discussing the lecture, the group members, supported by the woman who functioned as the alternative leader, asked for copies of it to read alone later. The group leaders said that participants were continuing the individuation defense against working together as a group and were also valuing cognitive apperception over learning from shared experience. The group members argued that they could study the paper together to discuss its points. The leaders noted that the group members seemed to be thinking that the points resided in the paper rather than in the group's collective mind, each of them having just heard it, and that they wanted hard information to help them with anxiety about both the ambiguity of the group task and the implications of the theory that might be discovered in the group.

Instead of dealing directly with the two small group leaders as a couple, members took turns directing the group themselves. This is an example of attempting to provide a new leader to meet unacknowledged needs and longings to be cared for. Then group members tried to pair with each other to lead the group, until the others complained about them. This pairing defense extended to invoking other couples as well: a woman participant was paired outside the group

with a dear friend and colleague who hated groups even more than she did, and another was in treatment with an analyst who happened to be attending the same conference. The group was drawn to support the couple who refused the value of groups and to attack the analytic couple. The group's anxiety on behalf of the analysand and outrage at the analyst for what they regarded as a boundary violation made it seem as if they had discovered an illicit, erotic coupling by which the analysand would be terribly damaged. They could not think about this image of a primal scene couple from any other point of view. This dynamic vividly illustrated the point the lecturer had made concerning blocks to thinking from the third position because of anxiety that the primal scene would lead to destruction and fear that thinking about it would have the same effect.

Obscured on the one hand by the number of members in the group and on the other hand by the emphasis on individuals, the couple could not be noticed and thought about. One of the leaders asked the group to consider why the image of the couple had to be avoided, re-created, displaced, or condemned. Still upset at not getting a helping hand and not being given the paper, the group responded with intense affect, describing another authority figure they had encountered outside the group. She wouldn't give them what they wanted even though she could have and she didn't seem to care about them at all. They called her an old battle-axe. The other group leader interpreted this image as a displaced transference to themselves: instead of seeing them as a couple, the group had fused them into a single old battle-axe that was withholding and uncaring. The group leaders worked together to show the group that the topic of the Oedipus complex combined with the impact of the presence of the co-leading pair had heightened reactions to the leaders as a couple. One co-leader acknowledged that the reactions had been so intense that the group members had to displace them at first. She added that the group was now

in touch with the unconscious fantasy of the leaders united in one powerful image as a battle-axe with the potential for causing grief and damage.

The other leader sallied forth saying that awareness of this couple might lead the group to recognize its dislike of the coupling of empathic and intellectual understanding, referred to in the lecture as an even more feared couple because of the destructive potential of such integrated knowledge. Stunned by this interpretation of unconscious resistance, the group resorted to diatribes against the old battle-axe and complained that they couldn't get anything from her or from the leaders. The leader who had made this interpretation felt foolish and useless. She thought that her comment was accurate but she realized that it was given prematurely when the group was still in a paranoid-schizoid state. In a later session she would learn that the group had been imagining her as a charming, powerful father who could be explosive. Looking back on this moment she recognized a paternal transference and now thought that her premature interpretation was an example of her taking intellectual action to avoid feeling futile in response to the group's thick-skinned defensiveness to this transference.

The group members complained that they didn't have the emotional and intellectual resources for integration. They blamed this on the leaders, who, however, understood the group's experience of poverty as stemming from not yet having resolved oedipal issues with the leaders. Once they did so, they could expect to find the understanding and objectivity that the paper mentioned as resulting from resolution of the oedipal complex. This time the group could hear the interpretation and the members became able to discuss their understanding of the sexual and aggressive aspects of the oedipal complex and their relevance for the acquisition of knowledge. As one member put it, he had learned from the paper and from the group experience that the

oedipus complex is as much about knowledge and the denial of it, as about sexuality and aggression.

### **The second, third, and fourth sessions**

In the second and third sessions following didactic presentations on fusion and encapsulation, trauma, murderousness, the elusive object, creativity, sexuality, aggression, and destructiveness, the group continued to work on its defenses against learning. Comprehension, emotional resonance, integration, and capacity to work in depth improved in general, except on the topic of trauma which was conspicuously absent from the discussion. By the third session the group had become appreciative of the small group learning experience.

In the fourth session, following a lively, large group discussion of a woman student's presentation of her treatment of a patient with severe relational difficulties, one of the men in the small group presented a troubling case of a male patient who had sexually sadistic, strangling fantasies that filled the therapist with anxiety. The group responded helpfully. He was able to see that his own aggressive actions toward women in the group (expressed in silence, seductiveness, and inability to take in their comments) caused reactions that re-created in the group members the family constellation and dynamics of the patient who was difficult for him to treat. Having successfully confronted this example of male aggression in the group, the women became alarmed at facing the loss of the only other male group member who had already announced that he had to leave before the last day of the conference. Without him, they were afraid of being left alone with the man who might still be filled with the sexual and aggressive energies of his patient.

The case presentation, the ensuing discussion, and the material of the preceding lectures exposed the group to sexual and aggressive anxieties and these were illustrated in the group process. The loss of male protection in anticipation of the second man leaving magnified the group response to issues of oedipal striving, its effect on thinking, and murderous rage. The group had a fantasy that male-female collaboration and creative understanding in the group would lead to sexual arousal or other forms of aggression that must be strangled and so may lead to personal destruction or destruction of the group. Like the woman student presenter's patient with relational difficulties, the group showed difficulty in being responsible for the well-being of both self and objects if sexual and aggressive feelings were to be acknowledged.

### **The fifth and sixth sessions**

In the fifth and sixth sessions, the group progressed in its independent discussion of the lecture material on attachment, psychic reality, and the ambiguity of the beginning and end of sessions. Its ability to review its process and its capacity to integrate empathy and cognition to arrive at understanding improved. The members became aware of the continuing impact on them of dealing with a female co-leading pair. They recognized fantasies of longing for the nurturing female object, envy of the pair, and defenses against envy by splitting the leaders, idealizing the one they identified as having masculine qualities, and denigrating the one who seemed more feminine. They became able to see male and female elements integrated in each individual, but then there was a regression. Hoping to cause suffering, the women came late to the sixth session, cruelly leaving the remaining man alone with the two co-leaders and then feeling excluded when he used his intellectual energy apparently to reformulate his difficult case successfully but really to impress, charm, and co-opt the more feminine of the two leaders.

### **The final session**

Referring to the topic of the final lecture, the group discussed whether analytic process begins before and continues after the end of the analytic hour. In a gripping conclusion to the week, the group worked on an incident that had occurred between two of its members before the conference had begun and uncovered a history of trauma that had been encapsulated in the group all along. In this educational setting the group process had begun unconsciously before the official starting time, just as the clinical session presented by the lecturer had been preceded by a subtle interaction in the waiting room. The group dealt with the trauma empathically and with reference to concepts on trauma which had been not been fully discussed earlier in the week, and now the leaders knew why that lecture had been ignored. The group ended with the realization that the members' appreciation of the concepts had been maximized by learning from experience and that learning would continue long after the end of the group.

### **Problems in Applying the Affective Learning Model in the Analytic Institute**

#### **Dichotomy between involvement in analysis and seminars**

Friedman (1999) remarked that if the affective model were to be introduced into the traditional analytic institute, candidates could experience a conflict over their allegiance to the principle of privacy in analysis and the principle of emotional openness in the seminar. Overcoming this conflict could offer a counterbalance to the secrecy around analytic experience and its compromising effect on the ability to think in new ways. The Affective Learning Model could improve the penetrance of analytic concepts. Friedman suggested that an easy point of

entry for introducing the affective model into the analytic training institute would be the traditional seminar where the teaching analyst could suspend discussion of concepts in the traditional seminar temporarily in order to discuss what was going on, instead of allowing group dynamics to remain hidden. We agree that it could be useful for the teacher to address group dynamics as a resistance to learning, but in our view this does not use the group to its full potential. We use the group to illustrate the concepts being taught.

What we are recommending is an ongoing affective learning group in which didactic material is discussed and responded to emotionally, fully integrated with the curriculum. But that requires individual analysts also trained in group dynamics, working in a supportive culture. If the seminar group is to become an effective affective learning group, it must be embedded in an open system of safety and freedom secured by an institution-wide commitment to process and review. For instance, we would like to see large group discussion at scientific meetings instead of the traditional formal discussant followed by question and answer. We would like to see large group plenary review at open meetings for candidates, teaching analysts, and training analysts.

### **Need to include classical and intersubjective concepts**

Friedman thought that because the model relied heavily on the object relations concept of projective identification and because he thought that he detected a dual drive bias toward the interpretation of unconscious sexual and aggressive fantasies and fear of the primal scene, it was useful only for presenting Kleinian concepts. So, he questioned whether it could convey Freudian, intersubjective, and relational concepts. For instance, in response to the first session of the group described above he said that the leaders' non-gratifying interpretive style illustrated an

empathic failure. A self-psychologist could have used that moment in the group to demonstrate the concept of empathic failure and to improve the group's sense of a good holding environment.

The group can work on Freudian concepts of resistance, transference to ideas and to the leader, and the analysis of latent content including the hatred of the primal internal couple. In Freudian terms, a group experiences and internalizes the concepts in mourning and melancholia, including identification with lost objects. In self-psychology terms, the group can offer individual recognition, mirroring experiences, and a safe holding environment in which students and faculty can expect empathic responses. The group creates an interpersonal microcosm for exploring contemporary theories of gender, race and difference. Group work tunes the individual unconscious to function as an accurate receiving apparatus for relating in depth.

### **Too much emotional involvement**

The Affective Learning Model has been criticized on the grounds that the obliteration of emotional distance creates a loss of freedom for the learning self and leads to indoctrination. If valid, this objection is deeply troubling, since the point of our innovation is to avoid the subtle coercion that we think exists currently toward identification with a single point of view on theory and technique or with a single powerful analyst. We think that the openness of the system and the multiple group perspective is the best safeguard against indoctrination and supports the freedom of the self to think creatively.

### **Regressive pulls vie with the educational task**

At times, the affective learning small group functions as if its task were to offer therapy for individual members. This tendency is the target of the most frequent criticism from outside

faculty and guest presenters, from critics of our method, and from ourselves. The regressive pull occurs because discussion of emotional experience is on task and because the group size primes the members to look for an intimate experience akin to family life. The leader keeps in mind that small group participants in an educational process are not seeking analysis. They sign up for a growth experience, not for healing. This correctly limits the extent of revelation they expect of themselves and others in the group setting. We expect less regression than in a personal analysis, or in a therapy group. Nevertheless, we find that each small group (even one with the same leader as another small group in a different year) interprets the task somewhat differently, and strikes its own balance between emphasis on the personal and the group issues, the intellectual and the emotional, the regressive and the progressive. Although our aim is to promote learning, personal growth often occurs. The work may be therapeutic in a general sense, but the primary task remains an educational one (Scharff and Scharff 2000).

We remain alert to dynamic processes that tend to subvert the task, but we do not avoid the possibility by eliminating small groups or structuring them to meet a simple aim. Most learning designs cut off access to internal individual experience, and split off individual concerns into a treatment setting, but the Affective Learning Model deliberately maintains an open avenue between the individual inner world and the learning experience. We take the view that the tendency to regression is inevitable and must be the constant object of study, but it is not an inherent flaw in the method. Just as transference used to be viewed as a resistance before it became the medium for resolution of neurosis, regression in the service of learning is not in the way; it is the way!

### **Fear that the small group will draw transference away from the analyst**

Transferences might be displaced from treatment into the group process. If so, they should be recognized in the group as individual vulnerabilities that are displayed in relation to concepts through interpersonal interaction. The trained individual analysts of affective learning group members should be able to recognize and interpret their analysands' displacements recognized in their narrative of their learning experiences or in the lack of full disclosure.

### **Conclusion**

We believe that the Affective Model for learning psychoanalysis has the potential to fill the gap between the necessary separation between training analysis and educational experience. If the Affective Model is applied to psychoanalytic institute training, analytic candidates and their training analysts could retain a private, confidential space for analytic work, but the group would provide all of them with a shared, visible space for learning and applying concepts. The integration potential of learning from group experience in an open system fuels the possibility of re-establishing the priority of the educational task as defined by Kernberg (2000). We therefore propose that the Affective Model be implemented in psychoanalytic institutes to modify and augment current educational methods at institutes devoted to the training and certification of psychoanalysts, and to the educational methods used in their psychotherapy training programs as well.

## Summary

Respect for tradition, and adherence to concepts of development and pathology drawn only from individual psychoanalysis, have constrained the development of psychoanalysis by splitting off education from training analysis, cognition from affect, and individual from group unconscious processes. The authors propose an alternative method called the Affective Learning Model that reinstates an integrated psychoanalytic education as the primary task, at the same time retaining training analysis and supervision as essential components. The authors describe teaching psychoanalytic theory and its clinical application, using multiple channels for presenting material, process and review in a group setting, and learning from experience. Based on an interactive theory of mind drawn from object relations theory, infant research on affect regulation and development, analytic group theory, and chaos theory, the Affective Learning Model was specifically developed to be consonant with the object relations theory mainly being taught. Nevertheless, the authors hold that it can be used to teach within many psychoanalytic traditions. They illustrate the process of learning psychoanalytic concepts of individual development and validating them in interaction in the small group setting of this alternative learning environment. The authors conclude by addressing possible drawbacks and proposing the model for inclusion in a traditional psychoanalytic institute.



## References

- ANZIEU, D. (1988). Introduction. D. Rosenfeld, Psychoanalysis and Group. London: Karnac.
- ARLOW, J. A. (1972). Some dilemmas in psychoanalytic education. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 20:556-566.
- ASHBACH, C. and SCHERMER, V. L. (1987). Object Relations, the Self and the Group. London and New York: Routledge.
- BERNFELD, S. (1962). On psychoanalytic training. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 31:453-482.
- BERTALANFFY, L. VON . (1950). The theory of open systems in physics and biology. Science, 111:23 -29.
- BION, W. R. (1961). Experiences in Groups and Other Papers. London: Social Science Paperback, 1968. London:Tavistock, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1962). Learning from Experience. New York: Basic Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1967). Second Thoughts. London: Heinemann.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1970). Attention and Interpretation. London: Tavistock.
- BRITTON, R. (1998). Subjectivity and objectivity in borderline states. Paper presented at the “Object Relations in Britain” conference of the International Institute of Object Relations Therapy, London, July 27-31.
- DE MARÉ, P., PIPER, R., and THOMPSON, S. (1991). Koinonia: From Hate, through Dialogue, to Culture in the Large Group. London: Karnac.
- DICKS, H. (1967). Marital Tensions. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- EITINGON, M. (1923). Report of the Berlin Psychoanalytical Polyclinic. International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, 4:254-269.

- EZRIEL, H. (1950). A psychoanalytical approach to group treatment. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 23: 59-74.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1952). Notes on psychoanalytic group therapy II: interpretation and research. Psychiatry, 15:119-126.
- FAIRBAIRN, W. R. D. (1952). Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Also published as An Object Relations Theory of the Personality. New York: Basic Books, 1954.
- FRIEDMAN, H. (1999). Discussion of J. and D. Scharff's precirculated paper "The group affective model: an alternative model for learning psychoanalytic therapy" at the American Psychoanalytic Association winter meeting, New York, December 19.
- FOULKES, S. H. (1948). Introduction to Group-Analytic Psychotherapy Studies in the Social Integration of Individuals and Groups. London: Heinemann. Reprinted London: Maresfield Reprints.
- HOPPER, E. (1977). Correspondence. Group Analysis, 10(3):9-11.
- KERNBERG, O. (1986). Institutional problems of psychoanalytic education. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 34:799-834.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2000). A concerned critique of psychoanalytic education. International Journal of Psycho-Analysis 81(1):97-120. First presented at the Swiss Psychoanalytic Society, Geneva, Switzerland, October 3, 1998.
- KLEIN, M. (1946). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. In Envy and Gratitude & Other Works 1946-1963. pp. 1-24. London: Hogarth Press, 1975.
- KREEGER, L. (Ed). (1975). The Large Group: Dynamics and Therapy. London: Constable.

- LIFSCHUTZ, J. E. (1976). A critique of reporting and assessment in the training analysis. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 24:43-59.
- NERI, C. (1998). Group. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Inc.
- PICHON-RIVIÈRE, E. (1977). El Proceso Grupal. Del Psicoanalise a la Psicologisa Social. Buenos Aires: Nueva Vision.
- RICE, A.K. (1965). Learning for Leadership. London:Tavistock.
- \_\_\_\_ Ed. (1996). Object Relations Theory and Practice. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- SCHARFF, D. E., and SCHARFF, J. S. (1979). Teaching and learning: an experiential conference. Journal of Personality and Social Systems, 2(1):53-78.
- \_\_\_\_ (2000). Clinical applications of chaos theory. Manuscript under review by IJP.
- SCHARFF, J. S., and SCHARFF, D. E. (1998). Object Relations Individual Therapy. Northvale NJ: Jason Aronson.
- \_\_\_\_ (2000). Tuning the Therapeutic Instrument: Affective Learning of Psychotherapy. Northvale NJ: Jason Aronson.
- SCHORE, A. (1994). Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self: The Neurobiology of Emotional Development. Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum.
- \_\_\_\_ (2000 in press). Freud's project and current findings on brain correlates of affective development. In The Psychoanalytic Century: Freud's Legacy for the Future ed. D. E. Scharff. New York: The Other Press, and London: Karnac Books.
- SEARLES, H. (1965). Collected Papers on Schizophrenia and Related Topics. Madison CT and New York: International University Press.
- SPRINGMANN, R. (1976). Fragmentation in large groups. Group Analysis, 9(3):185-188.

- SUTHERLAND, J. D. (1980). The British object relations theorists: Balint, Winnicott, Fairbairn, Guntrip. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 28(4):829-860.
- TURQUET, P. (1975). Threats to identity in the large group. In The Large Group: Dynamics and Therapy, ed. L. Kreeger. London: Constable.
- WINNICOTT, D. W. (1951). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In Collected Papers Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis. London: Tavistock, 1958, and Hogarth Press 1975.

