

I do very little lecturing in my classes. But the panel for one of the last days told me it was about time I gave a lecture. So I did. They collected questions from the class, and I gave the answers you see here, with some oral elaboration. This is the handout that went with the lecture.

ANSWERS to questions posed for Runkel by members of EdPM 507, Mgt & OD,
3 December 1986.

1. Please review the major characteristics of your control theory.

It is not my control theory; it is Wm. Powers's.

See handout on CHARACTERISTICS. - *attached*

2. I have difficulty understanding how control theory is different from the OD theory presented in S&R.

Glad to hear it.

The recommendations we make for practice in S&R sound very much like the left-hand column of CHARACTERISTICS. But a lot of the theorizing sounds more like the right-hand column. We did not know about control theory at the time we were writing.

Lots of academicians say there is no theory of OD, or at best it is a catch-as-catch-can hodge-podge. I think control theory gives us a firm and coherent basis.

For the way I think OD practice overlaps with control theory, see pages 10-15 in the Kinko paper.

For the way organizational climate can be described in the terms of control theory, see the handout ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE.

The term "effectiveness" is bandied about by organizational theorists. What effectiveness can mean for OD people is very well described, I think, in the handout EFFECTIVENESS. I think control theory has those same implications. Compare Hackman's view with what you have been reading lately about "the effective school."

3. How is control theory different from Glasser's Control theory in the classroom?

Glasser took his ideas from Powers. But Powers says that Glasser doesn't think people reorganize their control systems. And from what I have heard people say who have been in Glasser's workshops, Glasser insists too strongly that we can always, single-handedly, bring out perceptual inputs quickly to the desired level.

4. How are the seven steps in your paper on control theory (page 60) related to the frames described by Bolman and Deal?

I'll rephrase the question: On page 60, I give seven criteria for a design for a healthy organization. Through what frames of Bolman and Deal might an organizational designer best understand each of them?

See handout FRAMES AND ORGANIZATIONAL CRITERIA.

5. How do we integrate the four frames and pull out the best combination?

I can't add anything to B&D's chapters 11 through 16.

6. Please give your perspective on the integration of the four frames.

B&D are saying that they see four habits of perceiving that managers (and workers, for that matter) very frequently form. Each limits the possibilities for action that a person can envision. B&D want us all to be able to see more possibilities.

My view of the mix of frames that makes up OD is in the poem I wrote to B&D on page 10 of the handout I gave you on the first day.

7. Could he spend some time on applying the symbolic frame?

It's like charisma as described on pages 258-259 of S&R.
But I can say more if you give me a more specific question.

8. While the logic behind reframing as a method of problem solving is obvious, the process is not as clear. How could a manager ensure successful reframing?

Get a little help from your friends.
If B&D are right, most of us see pretty well through one frame, but as through a glass darkly through the others. So surround yourself with people each of whom sees well through another of the frames.

9. What are limitations of OD theory? Where has it got into trouble?

I don't know the limitations of "the theory," because I don't know whose head you have in mind. (Or whose mind you have in your head.) OD theorists differ somewhat.

But OD practice gets in trouble gets in trouble chiefly, I think, from two mistakes: (1) trying to do too much too fast and (2) thinking you can improve an organization by improving only its parts. A third mistake, maybe not made as often as the first two, is to fail to collect enough data—to think you know what's best for the organization before you find out from the people there what's going on.

- 10(a). What is the future of OD?

Assured. But it may change its name. It's a phenomenon of rising expectations.

- 10(b). How popular and successful has it been during the past ten years?

Its frequency of use continues to grow.

11. Can a top-down implementation of OD be justified when the ideal situation would seem to be a "grass roots" (bottom-up) movement to adopt OD in a school or district?

Yes. Start wherever you can. Both routes have advantages and disadvantages.

12. For people who are new to OD, how can they easily come to understand it and put it into practice?

By "people," do you mean a group? A school faculty or a portion of it, for example? If so, call in a consultant for a demonstration. In Eugene, school people can call on the Communication Consultants (OD cadre).

If you mean an individual, that's harder. Individuals who seek out more OD once they get a whiff of it (in reading or in action) are almost always those who are already aware of yearnings they have (internal standards about social behavior with which they have not yet brought their actual perception into match) and which, they discover, are also the yearnings of OD practitioners. They move fastest by participating (in any way) in OD work.

For moving a group or organization into OD, see the sections on readiness in S&R, pages 378-396 and 406-410.

- 13(a). Suppose a district is uninformed about OD, and a principal with some skill would like to use it in his or her building. (a) Is it likely that the principal, being a member of the organization, can function successfully as a facilitator?

Yes, though it is not as easy as is it for an outside consultant. C. Wayne Flynn did it by relinquishing his administrative duties for a year. He reported his success in his dissertation. See also bottom of page 502 in S&R.

- 13(b). If so, what specific actions would be necessary to take theory into practice?

Wow. Read the whole S&R Handbook. But the principal must start by changing his or her own behavior and describing it to staff as he or she does it. And expect the whole process to take a long time.

- 13(c). If not, what are some options short of contracting someone to facilitate?

If the principal does not feel confident in trying it as the sole leader, there is no option but to get help. But to avoid paying money to a consultant, the principal might try forming a group of

like-minded persons, study up on technique, try a few simple and low-risk exercises, and go on from there, the group learning as it goes. I've never heard of that being done, but I don't think it impossible. I first acted as an OD consultant (though I did not know at the time that was what I was doing) in 1949 or thereabouts after reading a couple of articles in a journal.

14. One big question I have is about trust. OD depends on trust. Yet many organizations I know of are based on political power and adversarial, extremely non-trustful relationships. To be trusting is to be eaten by the sharks! How does OD deal with that or overcome it?

If an organization is too committed to combat, the OD consultant should stay away.

But the fact is that very few people actually enjoy the kind of shark-infested organization you describe. In training I have done, I have seen corporation executives burst into tears of horror at what they have done and of yearning for a more affectionate kind of life.

You can sometimes start slowly and bit-by-bit with small subgroups in an organization. It's not the fastest way, but it's possible. See sections on readiness in S&R, pages 378-396 and 406-410.

15. If you were reading the answer to a question about OD in a comprehensive examination, what are the key concepts you would look for in the answer?

How can I say without seeing the actual question?

16. Are there helpful myths or legends that we can or should develop with staff and community?

I'll bet there are. Don't ask me to prescribe them. Every organization must itself struggle toward its own inspiration.

17. How can a principal promote a good relationship between the faculty and the goals of the school?

It strikes me as odd to ask about a "relationship" between people and ideas. Maybe you are asking how faculty can be persuaded to comply with goals someone else has conceived? If that is the question, my answer is: Don't waste time trying. Instead, read pages 42-48 of my paper in the Kinko book.

18. If you work with a staff whose experience is under an autocratic leader, a staff not comfortable with participation, how do you move them toward participation?

Little by little. See answers to questions 9, 11, 12, 13. But your question also reminds me to say that moving from one set of norms for behavior to another always requires a transition period. During the transition period, people must try to restrain themselves from behaving in the old way and take the risk of behaving in the new way. For a while, they see themselves behaving like both fish and fowl. It's very confusing. During the transition, therefore, you must build specially permissive norms for experimenting and falling on your face.

19. Is there a difference between Bolman and Deal's use of the terms leadership and management? What would you describe as their similarities and differences?

I don't remember what B&D said about that. And since I myself do not care whether people call some behavior the one or the other, I'm not going to hunt through the book for what B&D did say. If it helps your own thinking to make a distinction, feel free.

20. Staff development and team building.

Well, what about them?

I am delighted to see evidence in those 20 questions that many of you are consciously trying to integrate the ideas that have come to you (and not all of them or even most from me) during the term. It's not easy, is it? Think how much harder it must be for people working the day long in a school or other organization and someone comes along with the bright idea of changing the ways of working--and the people cannot set aside the hours you have been able to set aside for rumination.

Thank you for tossing me these questions. They have helped me get my own thoughts more in order. That's criterion No. 7 at work.

Separation page

EdPM 507: Mgt & OD, Runkel, fall 1986. CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTROL THEORY vs "LINEAR" SOCIAL-SCIENCES THEORIES. The following is over-simple, with subtleties omitted, but what do you expect on two pages?

	Control theory	Linear theory
Action consists of:	continuous maintenance of desired perceptual input, a continuous interaction between external disturbance and internal standard. See figure 2 in the Kinko paper.	a series of distinct episodes like S-O-R, each set off by an external event (stimulus). See figures 3 and 4 in the Kinko paper.
The person is motivated by:	a discrepancy between an internal standard for a perceptual input and the incoming actual perception. The person acts to reduce the discrepancy.	a change in an external variable. The person acts to change some other variable. The variable X is what causes Y, not the person.
The researcher wants to discover:	the level of a perceptual input variable that the person wants to hold constant (at zero deviation from the internal standard). Researcher hunts for the perceptual input that has <u>zero</u> correlation (does not vary) with external variables.	an external variable a change in which will cause a change in a specified (pre-chosen) output variable. Researcher hunts for input variable having <u>maximum</u> correlation with output variable.
Researcher expects to be able to predict:	continuous action (though no particular action) to maintain constant level of input. Particular actions will depend on what is available in the environment to serve the person's purposes--a handgun, for example, if you want to stop a person from disturbing your input.	specific action on a particular environmental object or class of objects--for example, hostile acts toward other people, purchases of certain products, memorization of certain strings of words or their equivalent, or change in favorability toward certain things or ideas.

Control theory

Linear theory

Researcher finds
little or no
interest in:

the varieties of acts chosen
to oppose disturbances.
Researcher wants first to know
what is held unchanging.

actions predictable a hundred
percent of the time, or patterns
that stay the same, such as
opening the drugstore for
business every morning.
Researcher wants first to know
what changes with what.

Practical
advice:

Find the kinds of events (those
affecting the person's desired
input levels) the person will
act against. Either remove
those events or provide
environmental resources that
will make it easy for the
person to counteract the events.

Find the environmental variables
changes in which will push the
person to the particular acts
you want the person to exhibit.

Social
psychology:

Other people become both
disturbances and resources.
Find ways that actions of others
can become aids to reaching your
own goals, not obstacles. See
p. 36 ff. in the Kinko paper.

Other people are stimuli; their
actions change the variables
that will produce changes in
other variables. Find ways you
can act that will push people
toward the acts you want them
to take.

See also items 1, 2, 3, on page 1 of the Kinko paper.

Separation page

Some remarks on
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE
P.J. Runkel, Nov. 1985

I do not know who coined the term "organizational climate" nor who picked it up and popularized it. Nor do I know what analogies or metaphors were in the minds of those people. But I think they picked a pretty good term. They might have picked ambience, atmosphere, aura, background, character, circumambience, circumfluence, constitution, ecology, embowerment, endowment, envelope, health (some people do use that word), hygiene, internal environment, make-up, milieu, mood, quality, setting, surrounding, temper, texture, tone, weather, weave, or wholesomeness. But climate, I think, suggests useful analogies.

A benign physical climate enables you to do what you want (to maintain the inputs you want to maintain) without undue interference, without added burdens. You can do what you want without having to spend a burdensome amount of time finding or growing food, without having to make complex clothing and bundle up in it every time you go out, without having first to build strong and weather-tight houses into which you will have to retreat periodically, without having to prepare to be snowed in, without having to stay close to fire or carry it with you, without taking care not to stay too long in the sun, without worrying about heat exhaustion or frostbite, without having to run from floods or cower from tornados, and without suffering from colds, influenza, malaria, sleeping sickness, scurvy, and other ailments that tie you down, deplete your energy, slow your movements, dull your senses, and even kill you.

A benign climate doesn't make you do a lot of things you don't want to do before you can do what you want to do, and it doesn't very often make you stop doing what you want to do to save yourself from danger. A benign climate doesn't threaten you--at least not very often, not too suddenly, and not too severely. The idea is similar, I suppose, to Herzberg's idea of "hygiene factors" underlying job satisfaction.

Another way to put it is that a beneficent climate gives easy access to resources. It gives air that is not too hot or too cold, that is free of volcanic gases, and that does not move so fast as to blow your house down, it gives pure water for which you do not have to dig too deep, it gives ample food plants, and so on.

Similarly, a beneficent organizational climate enables you to do what you want to do without interferences or added burdens. It does not threaten you--at least not very often, not too suddenly, and not too severely.

Like physical climate, a good organizational climate

starts with enough of the resources that keep body and soul together: safety from bodily harm, air that is healthy to breath and not too hot or too cold, easy access to food and toilets, enough money that you are not subsidizing the organization by getting poorer and poorer, and so on.

Foa and Foa (1974) offer a nice list of resources valuable in organizational life: money, information, status, love, services, and goods.

Enough money to enable you too feel that you will be comfortable in your old age is necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, money takes on other meanings: being appreciated or properly valued, making progress, and the like. Money can become a means of service or a symbol of status or even affection.

Enough information about what is going on around you so that you can do your job properly is necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, more information enables you to redesign your job so that it serves the organization better or expands the use of your abilities (and thus your control of your own work life), it enables you to feel that you are safe in the group as a trusted member, and it enables to extend your influence because you understand better your connections in the organization. Information can become a service or a symbol of status or affection.

Enough status and respect to assure you that you are not being deprived of your share of the other resources is necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, more status makes your self-esteem more secure and makes you more confident of your claim to the attention of others. Status can increase your claim on information and become a symbol of affection.

Enough affection (love) so that you believe people will forgive you for a mistake now and then is necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, mutual affection enables you to expect respect for the abilities people have discovered you have (because they have come to know you as a whole person), and it enables you to call upon them for services not merely that your job description specifies, but also those that you need as a person and ask for as a friend. Affection is easily exchangeable for status and services.

Sufficient services from others to enable you to do your job properly are necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, more services from others enable you to offer them services in return and thus increase the flexibility of the interdependence between you and them, the exchange increases the control you and they have over your lives at work, the fact that you can call upon services increases your status, and the exchange of services encourages friendliness. Services, furthermore, often bring you materials, supplies, or equipment--that is, "goods." Services are often exchangeable for status, affection, or goods.

Sufficient materials, supplies, equipment, floor space and so on (that is, "goods") to do your job properly are necessary to remove threat. Beyond that, the right goods enable you to call upon the predictable and suitable services. Goods somewhat beyond the bare necessities can become a symbol of status. The rug on the office floor is the customary example. Goods, especially equipment, can often be substituted for services. And of course they can easily be substituted for money.

Overall, those resources increase what I call "free space." They enable you, when they go beyond the minimum for removing threat, to keep threat and fear at a distance. They give you a cushion, a zone of defense, against unforeseen threats and dangers. Money gives you a sinking fund. Information gives you forewarning and the knowledge of where to get other resources. Status gives priority to your claims on help. Affection gives you help from your friends. Services give you back-up. Goods give you the tools you need for the emergency.

Above all, resources give you flexibility--the possibility of choosing the features of your surrounding "space" that you will alter to maintain the inputs to yourself that you want to maintain. No one can know as well as you the alterations in your environment that will most quickly restore the input you want--and you yourself are not always sure. You must often carry on some experimentation before you find the alteration that brings you what you want. Others cannot do that very well for you.

Using the ideas of Foa and Foa, we can say that organizational climate will be good if you find it possible to get more of those six resources than your job description implies you will get. Or if you can get more than enough of some of them so that you can exchange some of them for those that are in short supply.

We should remember the principle of relative deprivation, or adaptation level, or rising expectations. Once a person experiences a certain level of resources, the person experiences a reduction of them as a threat even though they remain at a level he or she would earlier have considered bountiful. If resources of one kind must be reduced, it is best to compensate by increasing another kind.

We should also remember that people differ. Some people have organized their lives and their thinking to make best use of one kind of resource, some another. The kind of resource you are most skillful at using (and sometimes exchanging for other kinds) will seem to you a need. One person "needs" money to eat. Another "needs" it to put on dinner parties. One person needs status more than money. Another needs services more than information.

Finally, we should remember that people can learn. A person born in the tropics can learn to like snow. A person born above the arctic circle can learn to like the tropics. A person skillful at using money can learn to use affection. And vice versa. And finally, we should remember that people sometimes need help with their learning--maybe even the help of some organizational development.

Separation page

EFFECTIVENESS

We hear a lot nowadays about the effectiveness of schools, colleges, and other organizations. The concept has always been messy: effective in doing what? Toward what end? People disagree, naturally, about the ends they value. And what does effectiveness have to do with OD, or vice versa?

Controversies are usually worth a little attention, and ends are always worth attention. The best thinking about effectiveness that I have found so far is in a chapter from which you will find excerpts below. You will note some similarities to Aoki's three kinds of evaluation, for which see pp. 415-419 of Schmuck and Runkel.

EXCERPTS FROM:

J. Richard Hackman. *Doing research that makes a difference.* In E.E. Lawler III and associates. Doing research that is useful for theory and practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985; pp. 126-149.

The notion of "performance effectiveness" is common to the several themes in my research. As I intend to spend the rest of this chapter discussing strategies for generating usable research and theory about performance effectiveness, let me take a few paragraphs to explain exactly what I mean by the concept.

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I define an individual, group, or organization as carrying out work effectively if the following three criteria are met:

1. *The productive output of the performing unit exceeds the minimum standards of quantity and quality of the people who receive, review, or use that output.* There is no unidimensional, objective criterion of performance effectiveness in most organizational settings—and even when there is, what happens to a performing unit usually depends far more on others' assessments of the output than on any objective performance measure. So it is necessary to pay attention to the evaluations made by those who have a stake in the group's output—even though this may require us to deal with multiple and conflicting assessments of how well a unit is performing.

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2. *The process of carrying out the work enhances the capability of the performing unit (be it an individual, a group, or an organization) to do competent work in the future.* Organizations are not single-shot systems, and the way any single task is carried out can strongly affect the capability of a performing unit to accomplish subsequent tasks. A unit that "burns itself up" in the process of doing a task is not viewed as effective even if its product in that particular instance is fully acceptable.

Note on "outcomes" and "products": Don't get misled by too-handy analogies and metaphors. Students are not products. They are humans who receive a service (even if sometimes a disservice) from school or college.

3. *The work experience contributes to the growth and personal satisfaction of the persons who do the work.* Sometimes the process of carrying out a piece of work serves mainly to block the personal development of individual performers or to frustrate satisfaction of their personal needs. In such cases, the costs borne by individuals in generating the work product are so high that the performing unit is not viewed as effective even if its product is fully acceptable.

This way of thinking about performance effectiveness, then, involves far more than simply counting outputs that meet a predetermined quality standard. The use of client evaluations of work products, for example, shifts primary control over the choice of assessment standards from researchers to those who use and are affected by what is produced. And the social and personal components of the criterion are explicitly normative in asserting that some group and individual outcomes are generally to be preferred over others. These are relatively nontraditional ways of thinking about performance effectiveness, and they impose on the researcher both a greater measurement challenge and a higher data-collection work load than are usually encountered in assessing work outcomes.

Yet the criteria themselves are modest. All that is required to exceed minimum standards for effectiveness is output judged by those who receive it to be more than acceptable, a performing unit that winds up its work more competent than when it started, and performers who are more satisfied than frustrated by what has happened. The challenge in my work has been to develop ways of understanding, designing, and managing performing units that increase the chances that these modest criteria can be met. And what I have to say about research strategy in this chapter is based on my history of trying to make some progress on this general issue.

I will frame my thoughts as a series of assertions, each of which summarizes something I think I have learned about what is required to develop usable research and theory about performance effectiveness as I have defined the concept. Each assertion begins with a negative learning, something I have found *not* to work as well as I once hoped and expected. Then I will raise some alternative ways of proceeding with research that may circumvent the difficulty—including some strategies I am using in my current research on team effectiveness and others that remain to be explored in the future.

Assertion One: Laboratory research methods are not much help in developing practical theory about performance effectiveness—but for reasons different from those we usually cite when complaining about laboratory studies.

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But what if contextual and environmental variables should happen to be among the most powerful influences on group performance? This is not an unreasonable possibility (for example, Hackman, in press; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). It just may be that, in the interest of "good" experimental practice, some of the variables that most strongly affect group behavior and productivity are usually fixed at constant levels in laboratory research, *thereby ruling out any possibility of learning about their effects*. By contrast, these same features of the group and its external relations receive special attention in many state-of-the-art action projects in which self-managing work teams are created in organizations (for example, Poza and Marcus, 1980).

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The liabilities of the experimental laboratory for developing practical theory, then, have little to do with the artificiality of the setting as such or with the limited ecological validity of the setting (Berkowitz and Donnerstein, 1982). The problem, instead, is that those variables that lend themselves to study in the laboratory may be less important in influencing performance effectiveness than those that are difficult or impossible to deal with in that research setting.

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Particularly inviting are settings where organizational changes are taking place. The changes may involve planned alterations of the work context, or they may be responses to a changing external environment. In either case, there is variation in the phenomena of interest, and therefore study of those phenomena is possible. Another alternative is to gather data from a number of performance situations and conduct comparative analyses. I have used these strategies in my current research on work group effectiveness and with each of them have found it necessary both to use multiple data-collection methods (observational, interview, survey, and archival techniques) and to collect data from multiple perspectives. Just as no one method can adequately capture the complexity of contextual influences on group behavior, neither is there any single accurate description of the context or how it operates. Because there are many separate (and not necessarily correlated) truths about the context of a group, any reasonably complete understanding of contextual influences requires that they be examined from multiple perspectives, using a variety of measurement devices.

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Assertion Two: The field experiment may be a fundamentally inappropriate device for developing practical theory about performance effectiveness.

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The point is this: If we had been able to successfully negotiate a field experiment, execute it, and gather follow-up data on schedule, we would then have needed to worry about the external validity of the findings—their generalizability to other organizations. Why? Because any organization that could and would hold still long enough for such research to be done and would relinquish to researchers the level of control needed to run an experiment (for example, determining how people are assigned to conditions, designing the intervention and the measures, deciding when they will be administered) would be a pretty strange place, unlike the great majority of work organizations to which we would wish to generalize our findings.

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Rather than continue trying to force the world to fit the designs we know and know how to use, I suspect we need some innovative thinking about methods for studying productivity in organizations. Can we, for example, find ways to create mutually beneficial *partnerships* with organizations, in which researchers and organization members collaborate to learn about factors that influence individual and group performance?⁴

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Assertion Three: Searching for unitary causes of performance effectiveness can make it harder, not easier, to learn about the organizational conditions that foster good performance.

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Teasing out the separate effects of various interventions does, of course, help us obtain a sense of how potent they are when isolated from other factors that may also enhance or depress performance. The problem arises from the fact that there are many ways to be productive at work and even more ways to be nonproductive. If our attempts to understand what causes productive work behavior focus on single causes, we are unlikely to generate a coherent understanding of the phenomenon. There are simply too many ways to get there from here, and the different routes do not necessarily have the same causes.

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Systems theorists call this aspect of organized endeavor "equifinality" (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p. 30). According to this principle, a social system can reach the same outcome from various initial conditions and by a variety of means. Equifinality encourages us to view the management of work performance as essentially involving the *creation of multiple conditions*—conditions that support high productivity but also leave individuals and groups ample room to develop and implement their own ways of accomplishing the work within them.

. . .

If performance outcomes are in fact overdetermined—that is, if they are products of multiple, nonindependent factors whose influence depends in part on the fact that they *are* redundant—then we will have to find some new ways of construing and researching performance phenomena. The comfortable "X is a cause of Y, but their relationship is moderated by Z" kind of theorizing will have to go, for example. Moreover, several key assumptions of our powerful multivariate models, models designed specifically for analyzing causally complex phenomena, would be violated so badly that we could not use them for studies of influences on work performance (see James, Mulaik, and Brett, 1982). Are there alternative approaches that might be adopted for studies of work performance, approaches that would fit better with the phenomena?

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Assertion Four: Contingency models of behavior in organizations are of little practical use in managing work performance.

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To assess the usefulness of a contingency model as a guide for organizational practice, we must ask two questions. First, does the model predict the outcomes of interest more powerfully than simpler "main effect" models that address the same phenomena? And, second, is the model framed in a way that makes it *usable* by practitioners in their work?

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Unfortunately, the answer to both questions for contingency models having to do with work performance appears to be a qualified no. Although there are some exceptions, the general direction in research guided by contingency thinking has been to make more and more distinctions and to add ever more conditions and qualifications to general propositions. The point of diminishing returns is reached soon: Increments in explanatory power come more slowly than increases in model complexity.

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Are there alternatives to contingency models that would provide more powerful and practical conceptual tools for managing work performance? One intriguing lead is offered by the theory of multiple possibilities set forth by Tyler (1983). Whereas contingency theory assumes that if we knew the right moderating variables, we would be able to predict and control behavior in virtually any situation, multiple possibility theory holds that such an aspiration is ill conceived. Instead, the theory maintains, there are *many* possible outcomes that can emerge in any situation, and the particular outcome that is actualized is not completely determined by the causal factors that precede it. Thus, multiple possibility theory envisions a world with some "play" in the system, and it encourages attention to human choice as a factor that transforms multiple possibilities into single courses of action.

Multiple possibility theory nicely complements the system theorists' notion of equifinality, discussed in the preceding section. Where equifinality alerts us to the fact that the same outcome can occur in response to many causes, multiple possibility theory posits that the same cause can generate a variety of outcomes. Taken together, the two notions call into question standard stimulus-response models in which situational causes are tightly linked to behavioral effects—whether directly ("Introduce this management practice and performance will improve") or contingently ("... performance will improve, but only for certain kinds of people under certain circumstances").

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Assertion Five: Evaluation research that assesses currently popular productivity improvement programs allows both managers and scholars to avoid addressing fundamental questions about how organizations are designed and managed.

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How can one argue about the value of evaluation research in our field? The history of management is filled with fads and fashions that, when subjected to empirical assessment, have proved to be of little value. And, occasionally, research has shown that some management devices, appropriately used, *can* improve work performance in organizations.

We have done MBO, job enrichment, T-groups, goal setting, zero defects, brainstorming, and a multitude of others.

Now we are examining newer programs, such as quality circles, quality-of-worklife programs, and gain-sharing plans. Soon still others will emerge, and we will take a look at them. Part of the burden of being a social scientist interested in organizational performance, it seems, is that one must be ready to gather up one's methodological tools and pack off to evaluate the latest productivity improvement scheme. Although we sometimes risk losing a few consultant friends along the way, the work is important and ultimately constructive.

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It also is insufficient and is a diversion from what we really ought to be doing, if we aspire to research that has significant implications for organizational effectiveness. What bothers me is not what typical productivity improvement programs do but what they do *not* do. Understandably, managers would like to obtain improvements in productivity with as little effort, anxiety, and disruption of standard organizational practices as possible. As a consequence, productivity improvement plans that gain easy acceptance by the management community tend to be those that do not call into question (1) the authority structure of the organization, (2) the core technology used by the organization in making its product or providing its service, or (3) fundamental managerial values and assumptions about how human resources are used in the organization and about the personal and financial rights of employees.

By studying only programs that are readily acceptable to management, we close off the opportunity to learn what might happen if some of management's unquestioned "givens" were altered. Worse, we may unintentionally and implicitly support the notion that relatively modest, nonthreatening programs are the best that behavioral scientists have to offer. The result can be a continued collusion between ourselves and managers, an unstated agreement that the search for ways to improve work performance will not seriously address the possibility that the way work is designed, organized, and managed in this society underutilizes and misuses human resources.

We obviously cannot study what does not exist, so what are we to do if we harbor a suspicion (as I do) that many opportunities for improving performance effectiveness lie hidden in management's unexplored forbidden land? Three possibilities come to mind.

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For the three possibilities, see Hackman's original.

End of excerpts.

Separation page

On page 60 of my paper in the Kinko book, I write: "Can an organization work without engendering such inner conflict in its members that the organization works only at the cost of individual ill health and social conflict? I think a few do and more can. How should an organization be designed if it is not to give its members and its society the stomach-ache?"

I'll copy here the criteria and mention the frames through which I think they can be most easily envisioned.

Criterion	Frame
1. Allow adequate free space for members.	The human resources frame urges us to allow enough freedom for individuals to find their own ways of working. Some bargaining is necessary to bring about some free space for all, so the political frame is useful here, too.
2. Build loopy groups around tasks wherever possible.	This is at the heart of the human resources frame. Loopy groups are highly cooperative groups. They enable you to pool the human resources
3. Don't expect individuals all to go gung-ho for the same goals, but do use myths, stories, and ceremonies to portray system-concepts--as long as you do not violate items 1 and 2.	The human resources frame urges us to honor the goals of individuals, and to ignore them is to try to bottle up trouble. But some minimal amount of attention to common goals (organizational goals) is necessary, too. So you can use the symbolic frame to <u>invite</u> people to travel in the same direction.
4. Keep the requirement for obedience focused strictly on tasks.	Every organization of any size must require some obedience. That's the structural frame. But obedience always encroaches on free space and produces some amount of inner conflict. That warning comes from the human resources frame. The structural frame can help you find the minimum obedience necessary to get the tasks done. The political frame can help you negotiate the most equitable distribution of obedience.

Criterion

Frame

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| 5. Teach the people who deal with the outside, and the outsiders who deal with the organization, the idea of maintaining free space for the organization. | I don't know how this connects with the frames of B&D. I put it there to help those who deal with the outside to find feedback loops through which to reach their own goals <u>and</u> the common goals in the organization. |
| 6. Provide quiet to learn from conflict. | Both the human resources and the political frames tell us not to run away from interpersonal conflict. But learning from conflict some new ways to act often requires "reorganization" in the control systems in individuals. And that takes time, and time without continuing stress. |
| 7. Always and throughout, invite people to help you reach your goals in ways that do not prevent them from reaching their own goals. Try not to tread on other people's feedback loops. | Maybe this is easiest to see through the human resources and political frames, but I think of it both as a direct derivation from control theory and as the chief value of OD practitioners. |