Developing a microanalytic lens: A new teaching model for gaining insight into practice

Jennifer Gerwing, Sara Healing, and Peter Sundman (2019)

TEAM

Peter Sundman

- Therapy
- Work with trainees
- Finnish language
- Oral translation

Sara Healing

- Microanalysis
- Education
- Technology
- English language

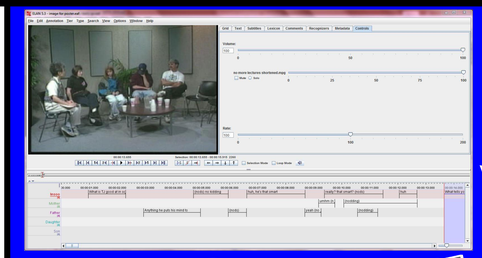
Jennifer Gerwing

- Microanalysis
- Education
- Practitioner supervision
- English language

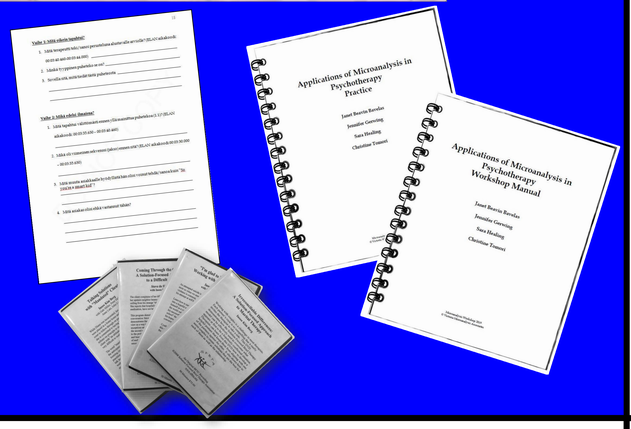
Bärbel Fink

- Logistics
- Program requirements
- Finnish language
- Text translation

Preparation Activities: Materials



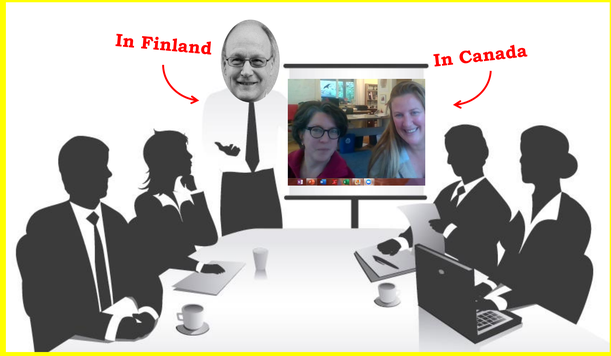
ELAN software



Course Objectives

1. To study their own therapeutic practice using microanalysis
2. To analyse observable behavior and possibilities in specific interactional moments
3. To check and reflect on their own theory-in-practice
4. To report their findings and insights as a case study

Remote, online tutoring

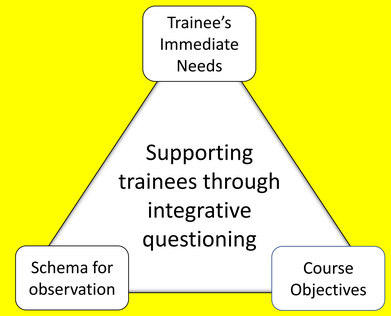


Group Tutoring

- Groups of 5-6 trainees
- Zoom video conferencing
- Each trainee has 15 mins to give project update and receive tailored support

How do trainees benefit?

- support each other and offer solutions
- exposed to different types of projects, ideas, and approaches
- see how to handle different stages of inquiry



A Model for Microanalytic Inquiry into Practice

Before January

- Preparation Activities
  - 21 Trainees record videos and learn ELAN
  - Tailor workshop to course requirements
  - Prepare materials (see above)
  - Translate key materials
  - Logistics- travel, facilities, scheduling

January (in Finland)

Workshop Day 1

- Introduction to microanalysis
- Review of ELAN
- Different Perspectives (see below)
- Approach to Communication (see below)
- Tools of Co-construction

Workshop Day 2

- Looking at your own practice
- Transforming your first impressions
- Steps of Inquiry (see below)
- Reviewing own video
- Possible Projects

February/March

Group Tutorial 1

In February, trainees:

- Annotate 2-3 excerpts
- Describe what's interesting
- Explain practice benefit

In March, trainees:

- Prepare research Question
- Collect examples

April

Group Tutorial 2

In advance, trainees:

- Do analysis of section of interest
- Identify specific behaviors
- Look at the function or effect of behavior
- Collect contrasting examples to help understand the phenomenon of interest

May

Group Tutorial 3

In advance, trainees:

- Finish and prepare results
- Choose section of video to show at tutorial
- Prepare final questions

June

Final Report

(See template below)

- Lit Review
- Purpose
- Research Question
- Data
- Analysis
- Results
- Discussion

Research Based Theoretical Foundation

Communication is:

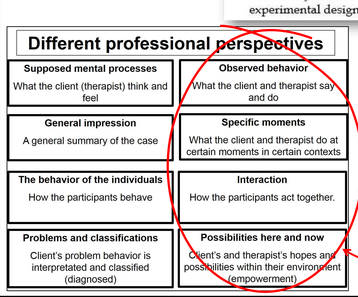
- Sequential, incremental
- Collaborative
- Contextual
- Multimodal

Microanalysis

What is microanalysis of communication?

- "The detailed and reliable examination of observable communication sequences as they proceed, moment by moment, in digitized video of face-to-face dialogue."
- In microanalysis, the analyst always considers the observable behavior within its immediate sequential context.
  - E.g., a therapist's question would be considered within the context of precisely when it occurred and how the client answered it.
- Microanalysis can employ both qualitative and quantitative tools as well as experimental design principles.

A schema for observation

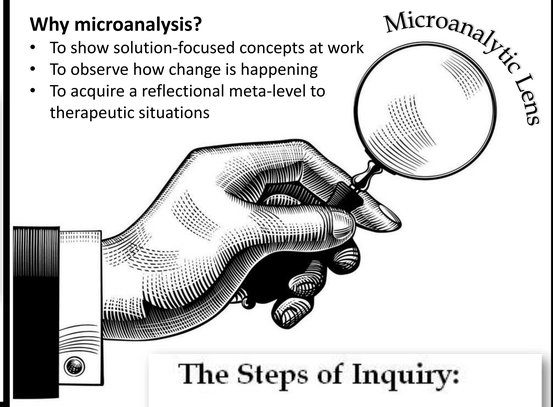


A microanalytic lens

Guiding Principles

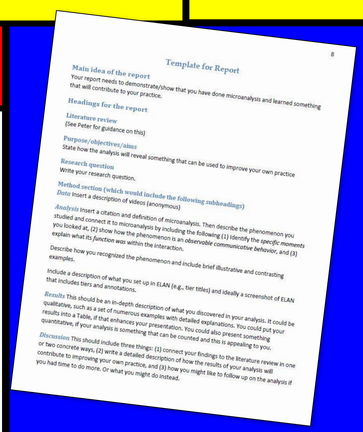
Why microanalysis?

- To show solution-focused concepts at work
- To observe how change is happening
- To acquire a reflectional meta-level to therapeutic situations



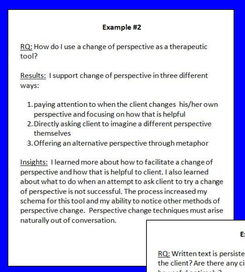
The Steps of Inquiry:

Step 1: What actually happened?
Step 2: What preceded it?
Step 3: What followed it?
Step 4: How did it function?



Examples of topics in trainee projects:

- When and how does the therapist's positive feedback support the client's resilience?
- When do smiles and laughter occur in therapeutic interaction and what is their function?
- When does the client's problem talk change to hopeful-about-the-future talk?
- How does the therapist encourage and support the client's agency?
- Do the therapist's formulations lead more to problem talk or solution talk?



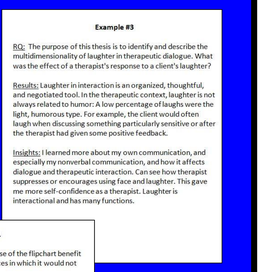
Example #2

RQ: How do I use a change of perspective as a therapeutic tool?

Results: I support change of perspective in three different ways:

1. paying attention to when the client changes his/her own perspective and focusing on how that is helpful
2. Directly asking client to imagine a different perspective themselves
3. Offering an alternative perspective through metaphor

Insights: I learned more about how to facilitate a change of perspective and how that is helpful to client. I also learned about what to do when an attempt to ask client to try a change of perspective is not successful. The process increased my schema for this tool and my ability to notice other methods of perspective change. Perspective change techniques must arise naturally out of conversation.

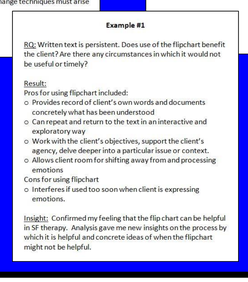


Example #3

RQ: The purpose of this thesis is to identify and describe the multidimensionality of laughter in therapeutic dialogue. What was the effect of a therapist's response to a client's laughter?

Results: Laughter in interaction is an organized, thoughtful, and negotiated tool. In the therapeutic context, laughter is not always related to humor: A low percentage of laughs were the light, humorous type. For example, the client would often laugh when discussing something particularly sensitive or after the therapist had given some positive feedback.

Insights: I learned more about my own communication, and especially my nonverbal communication, and how it affects dialogue and therapeutic interaction. Can see how therapist suppresses or encourages using face and laughter. This gave me more self-confidence as a therapist. Laughter is interactional and has many functions.



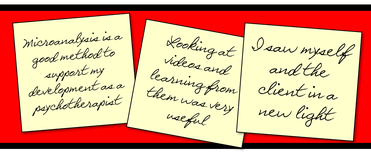
Example #1

RQ: Written text is persistent. Does use of the flipchart benefit the client? Are there any circumstances in which it would not be useful or timely?

Result:
Pros for using flipchart included:
- Provides record of client's own words and documents concretely what has been understood
- Can repeat and return to the text in an interactive and exploratory way
- Work with the client's objectives, support the client's agency, delve deeper into a particular issue or context.
- Allows client room for shifting away from and processing emotions

Cons for using flipchart
- Interferes if used too soon when client is expressing emotions.

Insight: Confirmed my feeling that the flip chart can be helpful in SF therapy. Analysis gave me new insights on the process by which it is helpful and concrete ideas of when the flipchart might not be helpful.

Course Highlights

- Each project rooted in each trainee's *own interest, curiosity, and practice*
- Trainees look at their own work from the outside: *a reflectional meta-level*
- Practice anchored in some form of observable reality
- Detailed, analytical attention focused both on what is being co-constructed for the client and on what the practitioner is doing