Theory U feedback from USTA members as of January 20, 2014

Question: What, in your personal view, are the most pressing issues that have to be renewed and innovated for the future flourishing of the Trager work and its community?

These ideas will be addressed at the next workshop in February 23. 24. 25, 2014? Preparation for this next meeting will take place in January and early February, so we give you all a deadline of January 31, 2014 for your responses.

We need more consistency of trainings. For instance, when a student signs up for a level 1, they should be able to see a clear path of level 2 and 3 in the same place. Perhaps a reduction in price when they sign-up for all 3. Check and see if ZB organization does this. Also, eliminate dues by level 1 students. How can we make it easier for them to continue?

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First of all, thank you all for doing this work. I think it is really important on many levels! :)

1. In short, Defining who each group is serving.
   The groups are:
   A-Trager International
   B-National Member Associations
   C-Member/Clients of the National Member Associations
   D-Customers/Paying receivers of the work
2. Staying positive, but realistic about what the work can do, and what is humanly possible, given the facts.
   Below is an expanded explanation of points 1 & 2:

1. Shifting our mindset to see our Members as our "Client" and the people who pay for our Client's/Member's work as the Customer.

   For the sake of clarity, defining our Clients/Members, and helping our Clients/Members define their Customers. Yes, each Practitioner works with Customers and each Practitoner wants to retain or increase the number of Customers. HOWEVER, Trager Intn'l. does not work directly with the Customers of our Clients/Members. Trager International works directly with our Clients. And our Client is our Member, the people who pay to be a part of our organization. As an organization, we can provide information and guidance, and perhaps some marketing for our Clients/Members, but ultimately, our Client/Member is responsible for knowing the laws that apply to our work in their state/city, and how they sell their business to Customers.

   In my short 3 year experience with the USTA Board, my conclusion is that many folks are not clear on what the organization is supposed to be "doing" for them. Trager International's Clients are the National Association Member Nations. The National Association Member Nations Client's are the Members of that Association themselves. The Customers of the Trager work are the general public who pay to receive the Trager work from the Client/Members of each National Association Member Nation. I would be

curious to know if there is a hand's-on exercise that could help folks to understand this structure. My sense is that if we started speaking about the work with the common definition of who and what we are dealing with, then there might be more forward momentum because everyone is using the same definitions.

Once we define who the different parts and pieces are, then the marketing and merchandising become much clearer and easier.

1a. Also, there are some who get into the training classes to do their own personal work. These Client/Members are not the same as Client/Members who are working Practitioners. I think that Client/Member retention can be increased by separating the two.

2. We simply cannot be all things to everyone. Who is? We are not the greatest bodywork modality in the world. We have incredible strengths and the work resonates very strongly for many people, however, I think that our overall goals are too wide (and I really am comfortable with visionaries!)

   I have participated in many "exercises" within our community, that ask me to envision a world where Trager work is everywhere, on every magazine cover, a common household name, on the Oprah show, blah, blah, blah. I know others in our group that have also done this over and over. I think many in our group are of the mindset that if you think about it hard enough, positively enough, then it will happen eventually. I think this sets up a dynamic that if we do not do this intense positive thinking, THEN we must be doing something wrong. I feel like many around me are saying this work is good, no one is noticing us, therefore we must blame someone for why it's not a common household name. AND, often times, the blame falls on the National Association.

   Looking to other non profit groups out in the world for a template of how we can structure our organization, I think, would be helpful. Don't reinvent the wheel. Also, we don't have to look to other bodywork groups to do this. Why not look generically at the structure of other non profit groups that have nothing to do with bodywork?

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I would like to respond to the Theory U project by saying, we just all REALLY need to communicate and work from hook up not just with our clients but with each other. Everything I've learned that is "TRAGER", is what can be easier, free, light, mellow, softness, less effort.

Those who know of me, know my Trager journey started in 2006 and I was finally able to complete training tract and was Certified this past summer 2013. It was a long and difficult journey. Trainings were no where close to where I live making lots of traveling very exspensive. The trading fieldwork (usually done with students) at no cost, for me was all paid sessions with tutors or other practitioners which was at an additional cost each time. Many of the trades that I did with other practitioners or tutors were at least an hr. drive away from me and majority usually 2+ hrs away. Some were requested to be weekdays during work hours so I had

to take either a morning or an afternoon off work to travel and pay extra for gas and use my vacation time and be off of work. My first tutorial was with a lady up in Chicago who was gruff, seemed arrogant and acted as if I had no clue what I was doing (which is true at your first tutorial) but can be conveyed in a constructive encouraging way and she was exactly the opposite. I was so discouraged it took me a long time to get up the nerve to continue my training.

If it wasn't for "the work" the beautiful, wonderful effect this awesome approach had on my own hurting body, I probably would have given up many times along the way. With all that negativity surrounding this uphill journey, especially a bad wreck on the way to a tutorial, Im glad for every genuine, loving, Trager person who has positively softly touched my life, my body and my journey. The positive definitely out weighs the negative. I love Trager. I credit Roger Hughes, Bev Cox, Kate Rose and Carol Curtis for the nurturing they have given me along the way. Anna Marie at USTA headquarters always listened when I was frustrated. I am glad Im finally here, and Certified. But it seemed like it took an act of God to get here. I suggest that ALL tutors and anyone who helps orchestrate trainings should be coached on being helpful kind and supportive 100% with every student, everytime!. Most of the ones I've encountered were wonderful. With exception of a few who were nasty to me early on, which would have made many tuck tail and run, but If you aren't near other students to trade with, you need some type of user friendly exceptions for student trades, either practitioners who don't charge you, or charge less or perhaps time be made at trainings for a day of trades or more supervised practice days that count as many trades as you can get in.

All I know is the the training should come like the work, easy, effortless, softly. We have wonderful instructors and tutors. Those who are harsh and negative should be made to change their ways or NOT remain tutors. There needs to be Level 1,2,3 and a mentastics offered either at a central site or at least once of each in each region so if you are able you can complete the track in a timely manner. Trainings available, training made easier, all tutors and practitioner's help each other. If we ever want to push ahead and reach one person at a time, we need to big bro, big sister our way hand in hand so we all live in the inner circle of Dr. Trager's peace and harmony!

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(Text on the window reads: Enlighten. Engage. Extend)

The Possibility of peace, success, abundance, & Well Being, through Communication.

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In response to the question of what are the most pressing issues that need to be resolved or innovated for the flourishing of the Trager community, my response is:

I was a most enthusiastic participant when I completed my training in Trager and joined my regional board. I served on that for a total of four years. I know that lack of response is a problem in our community, but I believe that is a reaction to experiences. My experience on the Board was fatiguing, as I found the resistance to new ideas to be considerable, and the political climate to be very personal and judgmental. I have not participated in any regional meetings for a long time, as I felt so negative, and exhausted by the experience, and am very sensitive to re-engaging, as I have no desire for a repeat experience. To get me to reengage, I would need to observe change from the periphery before I felt like participating again, and see that change had thoroughly happened, not merely a new structure but same dynamics. I think dealing with these underlying dynamics--that personalities rule our organization, rather than policies--is the most pressing issue.

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To USTA and TI Exec in response to "Message to Trager community"

I gave some feedback in a written interview with the facilitator before the first Theory U meeting, and I have only one item to add at this time, which is feedback about the "Message to Trager community" itself, and the thoughts it has stimulated about future communications from TI.

The message "Warmest Holiday wishes" was lovely to receive from the leadership of my professional organization. I hope occasional greetings like that will continue.

I believe careful attention to the construction of community-wide communications can create confidence in our organization and elicit more participation from Practitioners. For this reason, I am pointing to a couple of problems with this "message to the Trager community" which I think can be avoided in future ones..

I understand that the e-mail message was probably composed by someone whose first language is not English, and that it may not have been checked for either syntax or impression by an editor/helper. My suggestion is that future letters to the Students and Practitioners be given further reading before sending, with attention to copyreading for syntax and grammar as well as to editing for further clarity.

Clarity: I think letters of this kind would be helped by inclusion of short, precise identifications and descriptions (in this case, a sentence about theory u and the titles of the individual focus groups.)

In requests for feedback, it would help me to have a short list of creative ideas, categories or "issues" that have already been raised to stimulate my thinking. I can report back which of those are my own priorities as well as adding new ones.

A carefully- worded focal question is important. Unfortunately, for example, "the most pressing issues that have to be renewed and innovated..." is linguistically confused, even though it gets the idea across. This leaves a subtle impression of organizational confusion.

Sidetracks: The comment about previous non-response is unnecessary to the intent of the letter. And it's a "downer". Unless the point of the letter is to deal directly with a negative problem and to ask for help with it, I think mentioning it detracts from the purpose of the communication.

These are just a few examples of my first impressions as a reader. I hope they are useful. On the other side, I thank you for asking at all. I appreciate the members of the executive committee, the ICMT and the national representatives for their work to continue the TRAGER approach.

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I didn't know that I had an previous opportunity to comment.
My wish is that people move forward and a simple, clear, and functional structure is implemented ASAP before this wonderful approach dies out completely.

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Here are my thoughts:

Trager has not adapted to the current market place. It is lacking a realistic view of the future. Many of our members are idealistic and cling to the idea of "changing the world, one body at a time." This is not translatable to the current climate and demonstrates an inability to adapt language, application, technology and approachability. The culture of Trager is focused on the past in an era that fostered ideals that are not marketable in the current economic and medical climate, at least in the US.

For example, a great deal of focus seems to be put into promotion and research on the benefits of the work for clients with Parkinsons Disease. Most clients suffering with symptoms of this disorder are seniors on medicare, In the US economy this deomographic probably will not be able and/or willing to pay for services not coverend by thier medicare benifits. How effective is it to put resources toward promoting work for a demographic that can not access coverage for the treatment? How about looking at what has gained traction in the space between pshychology and medicine and alining with those who are successful in reaching the market? Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction is a perfect example of this. Yoga is another mind/body modality that has been able cross over from obscurity to become a major player in the market place.

And the stalemade between the instructors and leadership is demonstrating an inability to think about the future and move the training into what the market place is asking for. Whether it is the 500 hr program for professional expansion or a program that is less restrictive for those seeking

personal development and adjunct to other professions, there seems to be a fixed mindset on the past and what was. And in my opinion it also appears to be very ego driven and narcissistic.

Finally, I have come to believe that Trager will never gain traction with its current language: Ease, Gentleness and Life Changing. These are directly opposed to the American culture that includes values of "bigger is better," an "instant relief" medical model and productivity over all else.

The focus of Trager is from an era that was slower paced, less connected and before managed care. It did not make the jump into this century.

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Thank you for communicating and updating everyone. I think people really want to hear about what's going on. I also like that you are encouraging feedback and involvement from everyone.

I'm having trouble with understanding the feedback question. It is a vague question. Maybe that's on purpose. ?

"What, in your personal view, are the most pressing issues that have to be renewed and innovated for the future flourishing of the Trager work and its community?"

I keep re-reading the question and not sure what is being asked. ..."issues that have to be renewed and innovated"....?

I hope you get some good responses and that other people aren't stuck on the question, as I am. Just thought you might want to know my thoughts.

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A feeling of being welcomed and having a contribution to the community regardless of Trager status by all instructors.
A willingness of instructors to be mentors through, compassion, teamwork, enthusiasm and shared vision like the Tutors.

Creating learning objectives and program development for all aspects of education with multi status work groups.

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Regarding feedback on the U Therapy....
I find almost all Trager communications grandiosely unreadable, a lot of words saying stuff about process, communications, etc. To be blunt it seems that all you do as an organization as reflected in Committee notes is talk about talking about discussing something and consensus and put things off to the next meeting. THERE IS NO ACTION. What I call psychobabble maybe eloquently phrased BUT meanwhile the Trager organization is fading out. When I have proposed / asked for years regarding continuing education changes..... perhaps you TALKED about it but nothing has really changed?????? I think this is an enormous issue because many good people have been lost over it and probably that has escalated as the economy worsened.
To quote Milton “Say something real.” “DO something”

I am also concerned about what I saw in the last few trainings I attended that appeared to be more discussion of Trager as an auxiliary but not as a stand-alone treatment. I entirely disagree. The early classes (when I last assisted) seemed tentative at heart (comfort, comfort, comfort, pillows, clothing).... where is the growing place that moves people out of their known comfort zone into an exploration of something new?

Wasn't this work about that when Dr Trager was alive?
Senior Practitioner and FORMER Tutor (ah, those tutor continuing ed requirements..... your loss)

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What would it be like if Trager International disbanded and we only had national associations, and/or we dropped many of the rule restrictions on the promotion of the work?