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Practicing Synergic Inquiry

Ideally, it would be wonderful to have a multifaceted map to take synergic inquiry (SI) participants through each step, procedure, and choice of the inquiry process. It is important, however, to keep in mind that synergy is an organic, emergent process; too detailed a map limits the creativity of the participants. The purpose of this chapter is to provide instead signposts and directions to help participants conduct SI, rather than a map of such detail that it freezes out creativity of synergy for practitioners.

There are two parts to this chapter: The first outlines the basic elements necessary to organize an SI inquiry, and the second provides a road map for the case studies that follow. One can gain further ideas about how to use SI in practice to conduct an inquiry by studying these cases.

Section I: Elements of SI Inquiry

Initiating SI

In our experience, applications of SI have been initiated in two ways: by an SI facilitator or by a group experiencing a need. Often, the impetus comes from an individual initiator. In these cases, the initiator plays a key role in engaging others in the process by explaining the method and effectively communicating the benefits of using SI. In many instances, an experienced facilitator can help artfully frame the benefits of using SI in ways that make these benefits clear to others and with the kind of authority that experience provides.

The other way that SI has been initiated happens when an existing group calls an experienced SI facilitator to help them deal with a problem that they

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collectively face. Normally in this kind of instance, someone in the group has learned about SI through a personal referral or by reading about it. In these cases, it is important that the SI facilitator first attempt to understand the group's situation as fully as possible and then to design a series of synergic activities that fits their needs. In other words, there is no magic formula or boilerplate for SI that can be applied routinely in every situation. To achieve true synergy, information about the purpose, needs, history, issues, makeup, expectations, and personalities of a group must always be included in the design of an inquiry.

Contracting

This is an important step in conducting an inquiry because it is where participants arrive at mutual agreements about how to use SI as their method of inquiry. It is not unusual for participants to have fears and concerns about engaging in this kind of work. Participation in a process that involves working with differences can be threatening, especially when there already exists a situation in which participants experience confrontations or polarizations around differences. The resulting fears and concerns must be addressed before the process begins.

Even though SI is a process that treats everybody equally, and thus should not be threatening, it still requires some contracting of the basic preconditions for participation. It is important for each set of participants to determine its own conditions for entering into the process. During this activity, concerns and fears can be addressed directly, and a safe container for the entire group can be created. It is during these activities that commitment to the entire process can also be gained.

Once participants have come to an agreement on these conditions and the other norms to be honored, they are ready to begin the SI process. What follows is a list of basic conditions that must be present for all inquiries:

- Use nonjudgmental dialogue
- Maintain an openness to others' viewpoints and feelings
- Hold a learning and growth attitude
- Commit to going through the entire SI process
- Respect the role of the facilitator

Planning

It is important to come up with an inquiry plan that includes several major components. The basic categories of a plan are identifying the focus question and outlining the activities.

Identifying the Focus Question

The first task in planning is to conduct an inquiry that defines the focus for the larger inquiry. After this, a specific question or questions are formed around this agreed-on focus. These questions help a diverse group hold the necessary level of coherence of focus during the inquiry, which allows them to attain their desired result.

Because SI is a collaborative process, it is important for participants to engage with each other in the development of these questions. In this way, the issues and concerns of those whose voices are normally excluded can be included in the inquiry. By developing a clear focus and formulating specific and relevant questions at the beginning of an inquiry, trust and confidence are built among the participants.

Outlining the Activities

The next step in planning is to outline the specific activities that will carry the inquiry forward. The complexity of inquiries will vary. Factors that affect this complexity include the purpose of the SI application, the size of the group, the differences involved, and the amount of time available. The key to a successful application of SI is planning activities as carefully as possible and then keeping an attitude of openness and flexibility that makes room for the organic, emergent nature of the SI process. The case studies that follow this chapter present rich descriptions of this complexity, as well as some of the specific strategies that may be useful for a given application.

SI has four intrinsic phases—self-knowing, other-knowing, differences-holding and differences-transcending—and none of these can be treated superficially or omitted. This means that some pragmatic negotiations among participants is inevitably required as far as time and energy are concerned. During each of the four phases there are activities that require the joint engagement of all participants. Times and places for all of these activities need to be determined so that each participant can make plans to have the time and resources to engage in the entire process. It is especially important to define sufficient time for reflection and closure at this early stage.

Facilitating SI

In most cases, it is helpful to use a facilitator to get the SI process started. This is especially true when a group wishes to address an issue of conflict. Members of an inquiry group need to learn about the process and to take enough time to formulate the necessary norms for their inquiry. Effective facilitation of this initial activity is very helpful.

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The role of the facilitator is to guide participants successfully through the SI process. This guidance includes maintaining a balance between the content of the inquiry and the processes through which this content is addressed. It is important to remember that each facilitator needs to respect where the members of the group are, balancing content and process in such a way that the necessary outcomes of resolution and synergy can be met. The facilitator provides guidance through each of the steps in such a way that balance is maintained. After a group masters both the mechanics of the SI process and an understanding of this balance and the need for reflection, they may be able to function without an external facilitator and facilitate their own process.

Content Facilitation

Part of the facilitation has to address the content of an inquiry, that is, the intrinsic experiences of participants. Once the SI process starts, participants tend to get excited about others' perspectives and real-life stories and excited by their interactive and emergent experiences. It is important for the facilitator to help participants go deeply into their own processes, rather than rushing to quick resolution. It is therefore important that the participants' capacities for SI are treated as a priority equal to the need to resolve the presenting issue.

Process Facilitation

The other major part of facilitation involves the processes and phases of the inquiry itself. Several cautions must be included here. First, the facilitator needs to make sure that the group actually goes through all of the phases of the SI process, including both the action and the reflection parts of cycles within each phase. Second, the facilitator must pay attention to how well participants are learning the process. Participants tend to swim in the content of their experiences without paying adequate attention to the process itself. The facilitator also needs to help participants go through each of the reflection cycle steps so that they can learn to develop capacity and skills to sustain the practice of SI without a facilitator's presence.

Working With Emotionally Stuck Participants

Differences often cause stress, and a group may find it difficult to handle the emotional issues that emerge during its inquiry. It is not unusual for individual participants to become emotionally stuck during the process of an inquiry. A good facilitator needs to know how to break open this kind of emotional stuckness for the group. To do this, facilitators need the ability to

coach, to counsel, and to help specific individuals deal with the emotions that arise as part of the inquiry process in a manner that expands consciousness and promotes synergy.

Two skills are often helpful in moving through emotional stuckness. One is to have participants express their feelings in the form of “I” statements so that they remain in their own experiences rather than speaking for or about others. This creates a space for each to be open and for the other participants involved to receive. Facilitators need to catch those forms of statements that sound judgmental and thus offensive. The other skill needed is the ability to have respondents acknowledge and validate their feelings, instead of rushing to solving the problem.

Follow-Up

After their intense experiences together in SI, it is important for groups to have one or more follow-up sessions with each other to reinforce learning and to offer the support that is often needed. These types of activities are of critical importance in the follow-up sessions. One way to do this is to reflect on the actions taken after a synergy cycle and to process participants’ learnings and challenges. This is important because new consciousness and new behaviors need support at the beginning to be sustained. Otherwise, one too easily falls back into old consciousness and habitual behaviors. Thus, helping participants learn to continually develop new strategies for change or transformation is essential. The group can also use the SI process to develop new action plans for sustaining change or transformation.

Second, it is important to make sure that participants do not neglect the content reflections, during which they process their feelings and thoughts sufficiently to move on. This allows them to continue to sustain the emotional filter necessary for their own learning and growth. Finally, it is critical to the development of skill that participants also repeatedly reflect on how they have used the SI process. Participants are encouraged to discuss their skills as well as their difficulties during their experience with the SI process.

Qualifications and Characteristics of SI Facilitators

A good SI facilitator has gone through many personal experiences of SI and, through personal learnings, has mastered the SI process and understands how to balance both this and the content of an inquiry. It is important to point out here that SI is not just another instrumental technique that can be learned quickly and applied mechanically within a short time. Facilitators need to internally master the SI process in practice, not just in

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theory. Good facilitators therefore use SI regularly as an integral part of their own processes of personal and professional development. The following are other key conditions a person must meet to become a good SI facilitator.

Tolerance for Ambiguity

Facilitators must have a high tolerance for ambiguity. The SI process is organic and emergent, and the way it manifests depends on the individuals participating and on the specific cultural setting. A facilitator must be able to pay attention to the steps that each specific group of participants needs to take and to not impose structure or beliefs on an inquiry from a personal perspective. Facilitators also need to be able to separate their own synergizing from the processes of the group being facilitated.

Empathy

SI facilitators especially need to have a capacity for empathy. Our experience shows that this characteristic is essential for the synergy process to actually take place. When participants feel that they have been received and are understood empathically, they feel supported and are willing to go more deeply into themselves and the issues of an inquiry.

Balancing Content and Process

A good facilitator needs to have balanced knowledge and experience of both the content and the process involved in a particular situation. Although SI is designed to deal with all types of differences, adequate knowledge pertaining to the kinds of specific content issues, such as culture, race, or gender, that tend to arise during an inquiry is essential. On the other hand, mastery of content issues without an adequate grounding in the SI process tends to allow facilitators to fall back on other traditional forms of working with differences. Therefore, it is critical that an SI facilitator be skilled at maintaining balance of content and process. This balance can be enhanced by using a team of facilitators who complement each other.

Creating Openness

Skills that foster openness are also key to successful SI facilitation. When participants are open and honest within an inquiry, they are able to go more deeply into their subconscious than is normally possible for them. This creates the preconditions for genuine expansions of consciousness, not simply incremental learning.

Empowering Participants

The ability to empower participating participants is another important skill a facilitator needs. In addition to general empowerment skills, a good SI facilitator knows when and how to let participants create their own processes and activities, as well as when and how to provide guidance without disempowering them.

Issues of Validity

The issue of validity criteria and procedures for qualitative research has been hotly debated among qualitative and interpretative researchers. One extreme position holds that the obsession with identifying criteria for ensuring validity is a product of objectivism and that we should have a “farewell to criteriology” (Schwandt, 1996, p. 58). On the other hand, most qualitative methodologists, including those from the participative inquiry schools, argue that concern for such criteria is indeed relevant for qualitative and interpretative research but that different types of criteria are needed for validating research outcomes (Heron, 1996; Reason & Lincoln, 1996). Reason (1988) argues that the question of validity is of extreme importance because “we must counter the charge that our work is mere subjectivism” (p. 228). Following this line of reasoning, some emerging criteria for qualitative and interpretive research have been developed (Lincoln, 1995).

When we say that a research is valid, we mean that the research findings or outcomes are true, trustworthy, or well grounded (Heron, 1996). In terms of SI, validity has to do with whether the knowledge and capacities developed through SI are trustworthy. Concretely, SI produces visible, logical, and mythical forms of knowledge in each of its four phases: in self-knowing, knowledge about self is increased; in other-knowing, there is a similar increase in knowledge about the other; from differences-holding comes knowledge about embodying multiple realities within oneself, and an understanding of implications for the collective is formed; in differences-transcending, new and practical knowledge is acquired about how one (individual, collective, or both) can change and transform through access to different behaviors or alternative solutions. In addition to these increases, SI also produces or reinforces skills during each phase of SI and the overall capacity to practice SI in the situations of everyday life.

To address the question of validity for SI, it is necessary to be aware of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings for this methodology. The synergic worldview posits that a larger reality than that which humans perceive and project does exist, that this reality is constantly evolving, and that humans come to know this reality through a dialectical process of

constructing their own versions of reality, engaging with the different versions of reality constructed by others, and then working to synergize these toward a new construction that embraces the wisdom of both participating realities.

In addition to resolving a presenting issue or focal question in an inquiry, we endeavor to help participants learn how to consciously embody this evolutionary process in an ongoing way so that they accelerate the evolution of their own individual consciousnesses. In our experience, it is through this conscious embodiment of a universal process that people continue to develop skills and cultivate a capacity for dealing with differences of many kinds.

To ensure that the outcome of a specific inquiry is trustworthy, critical strategies need to be developed by participants. The following sections detail what, at this stage of the development of SI, we have found helpful.

Critical Self-Awareness

Critical self-awareness refers to the quality of awareness about all three dimensions of consciousness: the visible, the logical, and the mythical. To develop this awareness, it is important to examine one's own consciousness in terms of all three of these dimensions of knowing.

In practice, we have found that most people gravitate to one dimension more frequently than to the other dimensions. For example, some people are primarily logical, and logical knowing receives their primary focus and more of their energy. We argue that, whatever the personal preference is, it is critically important to engage in all three levels of knowing because the dynamic interconnection of all three creates the desired qualities of awareness. What often happens is that participants start with only one level in full use—usually the visible or the logical—and stop the process of thorough self-knowing before it has gone as deep as it can.

Another tendency often found among participants is difficulty sustaining enough focus on self to complete the work of self-knowing. This may be a result of cultural upbringings that provided no education about inner development. Participants need to attend to and acknowledge such a tendency when it happens, and over time it becomes easier for them to do the self-knowing. Many of the tools and exercises in Chapter 3 are helpful for achieving high-quality outcomes of self-knowing.

Critical Subjectivity

The term *critical subjectivity* is already in use by other qualitative and interpretative researchers (Lincoln, 1995). This term refers to the capacity to enter a state of awareness “for the purpose of understanding with great discrimination subtle differences in the personal and psychological states of

others" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 283). This capacity is precisely what is needed in the processes of other-knowing and, to some extent, differences-holding.

During the work of other-knowing, participants need to learn how to bracket their own consciousnesses to such an extent that they do not automatically translate, reframe, or distort the consciousnesses of others. Participants are asked to receive a total perspective on reality without distorting or transforming it.

Critical Action-Reflection Cycles

Critical action-reflection cycles are another way to ensure quality outcomes for the SI process. Action-reflection cycles are designed to enable participants to move between reflection and experience for the purpose of expanding both awareness and capacities. The reflection work here is what enables participants to process the new awareness and learnings that come to them through the full, intense experiences of the SI process.

Within the self-knowing phase, reflection is designed to help participants reflect on their experiences of self-knowing and on the skill set of self-knowing. This is to cultivate a high-quality awareness of the multiple dimensions of self. Reflection cycles in the phases of other-knowing, differences-holding, and differences-transcending are designed to expand self-knowing. These reflections on self that are initiated by meeting and taking on the consciousnesses of others lead to a deeper knowing of oneself than can be accomplished without these differing mirrors. Panikkar (1979) and Vachon (1995) argue that one can discover one's own mythical knowing only by taking on the mental planes of others. At the end of each complete SI cycle, there is a metalevel reflection—an overall reflection on the experience of the entire cycle—in terms of content and process. This is important because it enhances capacity for incorporating the SI process into the fabric of one's own being and behavior.

Critical Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a term used by many interpretative researchers (Lincoln, 1995) to refer to the importance of studying the ways in which people relate with each other and how the self changes through intense mutual sharing with another. Through most parts of the SI process, such mutual reciprocity is the norm. We include it here under critical reciprocity because it is important to pay attention to how the self-knowing of each participant is shaped through the intense mutuality of this process.

Starting with the process of other-knowing, SI participants intensely interact with each other. Often this interaction generates a field in which different consciousnesses interpenetrate and initiate a journey of expanding

awareness. It is because of precisely this mutuality that SI as a process creates the conditions and contexts for transformation of consciousness that it does.

Critical Novelty

Critical novelty refers to the new or novel ways of being and of behaviors that arise in the phase of differences-transcending. Although expansion of consciousness and capacities is essentially for developing high-quality awareness, this kind of awareness does not automatically and invariably lead to different ways of being and of behaving. The exhilaration of insight can sometimes entrance one in such a way that the changes are not integrated deeply enough to manifest as synergy. To ensure that the outcome of an SI process has been genuinely transformative, it's necessary to double-check each new way or solution to see whether it is indeed new and novel. Sometimes what appears to be new may, through further examination, actually prove to be a subtly cloaked repetition of the old. When this happens, participants need to return to the cycle and deepen their work.

Critical SI Cycling

Finally, multiple SI cycles are needed if capacity building is to be enhanced. This is especially important if the purpose of an inquiry is to have participants learn to incorporate SI deeply into themselves. One of our primary intentions in developing and communicating the SI process is to incorporate these core principles into our very beings and spontaneous behavior so that we may use them freely and easily in everyday life. Experiencing multiple cycles of SI followed by metalevel reflection on each helps those of us who use this kind of inquiry to achieve that purpose. The experienced driver no longer needs to consciously monitor the individual steps and procedures initially learned for handling a car because those driving skills have been mastered to such an extent that they slip into the subconscious. In a similar way, we find that some participants are able to gradually master and embody the essence of SI to such an extent that these too become automatic. They no longer need to mechanistically follow its steps.

Section II: Applications of SI

Case Studies

SI has many possible applications, only a few of which have been documented. Through the cases that follow insight can be gained into some of the

varied possibilities for using SI. The cases included here have been categorized by the level of complexity of the human system to which SI has been applied. The least complex level that has been documented to date is the individual level, and the level of the international organization is the most complex.

These levels of human systems also intersect with the many issues that these cases represent, issues that include personal development, leadership, racial differences, gender differences, teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, strategic envisioning, organizational development and transformation, and cross-cultural exchanges. We expect that different readers will be interested in different kinds of cases, so we have tried to offer a range of examples. The following summary of cases may help in the selection of which to study.

Individual Level

In “Geisha and Cowboy: Synergizing Inner-Life Differences Through the Mythic Realm” (Chapter 6), organizational consultant Joanne Gozawa shows how the principles of synergic inquiry can be applied at the personal level. Joanne was wrestling with questions about how she could use her mythos to develop depth. She identified two significant mythic symbols—the geisha and the cowboy—that, as part of her being, drive her behavior.

Joanne observed how these symbols relate to her behavior and undertook a program of reading to better understand each of them. Through the process of synergizing these two mythic symbols, she found a way for them both to dance with each other synergistically. As a result, she increased her capacity for dealing with differences and conflict. In this study, she also tells of integrating the SI process into the nature of her being. Because she now embodies it in both being and behavior in terms of these two mythic processes, SI is no longer a formal process that she has to consciously follow.

Relationship Level

Chapter 7, “Husband and Wife Synergizing” documents how a wife and husband used SI to improve their relationship in a harmonizing and sustaining manner. In this study, Venus and Eric demonstrate how nagging difficulties between a husband and wife can be resolved through SI. The focus of the inquiry in this case revolves around the preparation of meals. To do their self- and other-knowing, Venus and Eric each wrote from their own perspectives using a what, how, and why structure. After these reflections were shared, they engaged in reflection on what they had learned about the other.

To hold differences, they read their reflections on each other’s perspective. This was followed by more reflection. What emerged was deeper understanding and appreciation of each other. As a result of their inquiry, their

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feelings about buying food and preparing meals were transformed. Although they still have to prepare meals, there is a new balance in this and a greater source of enjoyment for both of them around the issue of mealtime.

In Chapter 8, a mother and a daughter describe how they used SI to deal with their difficulties involving housecleaning. Lien found herself obsessed with her daughter's lack of cleaning, and neither mother nor daughter wanted the distress of this conflict to continue. They used an external facilitator to help them while they engaged with each other in the SI process. During this process, Lien found something deep in her psyche that was contributing to the difficulties. The process turned into a bonding experience that has had a long-lasting impact on both mother and daughter.

Group Level

In Chapter 9, "Developing a Community Through Synergic Envisioning," Elisa Sabatini describes how SI helped a group overcome tensions that threatened to block progress in forming a new intentional community. This group began by identifying common questions and then preparing individual mandalas, or symbolic drawings, and sharing them. After trying to hold each mandala as their own, they then created a group mandala together that reflected their consciousness as a group. In the sharing of this process, group members realized that they were on different timetables for changing residences to join in the physical community that they were building. This realization allowed the project to move forward, and shortly thereafter a major land purchase was made and the homes in the community were started.

In "Using Synergic Inquiry to Resolve a Group Conflict," Chapter 10, Lien Cao describes how SI was used to resolve some deeper issues that were challenging a group. The focus this time was on changing established study groups at the beginning of a new work cycle. Because of some of the sticky issues involved, it had been difficult for the group to come to their previous agreement, and they were struggling to find a way to organize their work that would be satisfying to all. The members of the group decided to use SI to help them tap into the deeper dimensions of self that were driving their behaviors. After using SI for sharing, tremendous understanding and empathy were achieved. As a result of these new understandings, the group members no longer had any attachment to the form of their study groups, and the issue that had once been such a source of conflict among them disappeared.

In Chapter 11, "Synergic Inquiry in Action: The Expansion of Racial Consciousness," the authors document how another group used SI to deal with racial differences that seemed to generate unwanted power imbalances within their group. These participants split into a Black subgroup and a White

subgroup to clearly differentiate perspectives. Their process was codesigned and cofacilitated by participants from each subteam, with Yongming Tang acting as their adviser. Two synergy cycles were used for this inquiry, one for within the subgroups and one for the group as a whole.

In the first cycle, intracultural synergy, each subgroup, through an intense process, developed a collective perspective on the cultural consciousness of their race. They used all three levels of consciousness to express their collective consciousness and various exercises to hold the differences that emerged. In the second synergy cycle, intercultural synergy, the subgroups engaged with each other synergistically. In an intense 6-month process, they engaged in SI with each other to expand their individual as well as their collective consciousnesses, both as two racial subgroups and as one collective whole. The result of their inquiry was the dissipation of many racial issues and the emergence of a new level of teamwork.

The study in Chapter 12 describes an inquiry that was designed to address gender issues in a 2-day workshop setting. The process was codesigned and cofacilitated by five facilitators who had different degrees of experience with SI prior to the workshop. This group first used SI to focus on the design of the workshop itself, an experience they believe was critical to the success of this inquiry.

Three synergy cycles were conducted during the workshop. The first of these was designed to help participants learn about SI and to give them some basic skills for effective participation. For the second synergy cycle, the men and the women separated into gender-specific subgroups toward understanding and synergizing as a group. Each subgroup went through the synergic experience, using exercises and activities that were tailored to their own gender.

In the final synergy cycle, both men and women, as subgroups, engaged with each other; this resulted in further expansions of consciousnesses, and the workshop turned out to be a powerful and healing experience for both facilitators and participants. A unique aspect of this workshop is that the facilitators became participants from time to time, and some of the participants organically moved into the role of facilitator for the process. This shifting of relationships and roles was found to contribute greatly to creating a deeper and more meaningful experience.

Chapter 13 describes the application of SI in a high school classroom setting. Roma Hammel tells of her experiences using SI as a new pedagogical approach for working with the ethnic and cultural diversity of the students in her classes. She offers several examples of how she integrated SI into the subject matter she was teaching.

In one of these she tells of dividing students into two groups along gender lines and using Ibsen's "Doll House" as part of a process of exploring

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gender issues. The students did self-knowing and other-knowing and then decided that they preferred to share in an atmosphere of mutual respect and community. This class engaged in a second synergy cycle, using art and movement to help them explore gender issues more deeply.

In another application, racial and cultural differences were chosen as the focus of the inquiry. In this case, each student paired with another of a different cultural background and then prepared synergistic cultural presentations. In a third application, her class combined SI with a reading of Ralph Ellison's (2002) novel *Invisible Man* to explore how experience shapes worldview. Roma ends with some powerful student reflections.

Organization Level

Chapter 14 documents an international cross-cultural use of SI in business. In this case, a project team from the United States was organized to interact with a project team from Beijing New Building Materials (BNBM), a large, successful, state-owned manufacturing business in China. The purpose of this project was to use differing cultural perspectives to help expand the perspectives of BNBM's management team and their capacities for the kind of creative problem solving they would need in the future. They wanted to maintain current levels of success and social responsibility and at the same time improve their level of economic performance in the increasing competition of the global marketplace.

The complexity of this project required participants to organize into three subteams, each with participants from both cultures. One subteam focused on leadership, another concentrated on motivation systems, and the third focused on marketing. The U.S. team members engaged intensely with their Chinese counterparts, as well as with other parts of the company and the larger society, through conversations, shared meals, site visits, and interviews. Several synergic outcomes came out of this experience, among them new views on motivation and new organizational ways to support cross-disciplinary cooperation. The performance of this company has improved, and the Chinese executives consider the project successful.

In Project Mexico (Chapter 15), a team from a doctoral program in the United States worked with a team from a San Diego-based international community development organization called World SHARE for a two-layered project. Part of the project focused on difficulties World SHARE was having in taking its program into Mexico. Using this focus as a context, a subteam also explored the transformative processes and effects of the SI process on themselves as participants.

The first stage of differentiation was achieved through reading, interviewing corporate executives, and participating in a food-distribution day in the United States. A field team then visited several affiliates in Mexico, interviewing their leaders, leaders of other community development projects, and participants in local food programs. Two perspectives were developed for this project, one representing corporate World SHARE and the other representing the Mexican affiliates.

After clarifying these two perspectives, a session for differences-holding and differences-transcending was held in which both corporate executives and Mexican affiliate leaders participated. Both views were presented, and specific issues were identified around which to synergize. The end result was recognition by corporate management of the magnitude of differences between their cultural environment and that of their start-ups in Mexico. When corporate management no longer demanded that all programs operate like the U.S. program, an innovative, culturally responsive program could be developed for Mexico.

