

*Abstract*

Fritz Perls' Gestalt Workshops are explained and recommended for in-service training for teachers. Since Gestalt Workshops increase their participants growth, awareness, and integration personally and environmentally, their benefit to classroom teachers would be direct and dramatic.

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### **Gestalt Workshops: Suggested In-Service Training For Teachers**

In-service training for teachers takes numerous forms. It may range from updating teachers on the use of computers in education to the application of Piagetian thought to their area of speciality. This article concerns itself with the use of Gestalt Workshops in educational in-service training. It shows how Gestalt Workshops can be used to help teachers personally and interpersonally. It points to how teachers can improve their teaching and rapport with students through heightened personal and social awareness brought about through the ways and means of Gestalt Workshops. The article addresses classroom weary teachers in particular: especially those who believe there are ways for them to grow as individuals and as professional teachers.

Since all of us grow, the type of growth that occurs is crucial to our own well-being. Teachers grow or stagnate in varying degrees. Assuming that a teacher who grows in a healthy direction is desirable and one who stagnates is undesirable, to offer an in-service Gestalt Workshop to teachers is to act in favor of health and betterment and in opposition to stagnation and dispiritedness. Rather than an educator modelling dejection, Gestalt Workshops help create an educator who can model progress. Gestalt Workshops provide a valuable source of inspiration and integration to teachers — whether teachers feel poor in spirit but wish to be normal or whether they feel normal but wish to feel rich in spirit. Given the lively and vitalistic approach of Gestalt Workshops, teachers and their rapport with students are destined to improve after training in a Gestalt Workshop.

Fritz Perls (Frederick Soloman Perls), developer of Gestalt Workshops, is the theoretician focused on in this article. Usually occurring in small groups, Perls' workshops trace their theoretical roots to Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis — especially as modified by the early Wilhelm Reich, and European phenomenology and existentialism.<sup>1</sup> In Gestalt Workshops, the aim is to promote the growth process and develop human potential. Both of these goals are worthy of consideration by teachers. Since growth processes take time, Gestalt Workshops do not concern themselves with "instant joy, instant sensory awareness, instant cure." Rather, Perls uses his workshops to break through the artificiality of role-playing and to fill in the "holes in the personality to make the person whole and complete again."<sup>2</sup>

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## Perls' Gestalt Workshop Theory

To facilitate understanding, we will sketch the major features of Gestalt psychology that Perls utilizes in his workshops.

1. *Gestalts* or organized wholes exist in such a way that these wholes are always greater than the sum of their parts.
2. The approach to studying behavior was the following: an S-O-R or pattern-of-stimuli → organism's-perceptual-organization → response-determined-by-perception.
3. There exists a *phi phenomenon* which accounts for apparent motion.
4. A figure-ground relationship occurs in such a way that perception is organized so that certain aspects of the field stand out as figures against a background.
5. There is a principle of similarity which states that things tend to be perceived in a pattern if they are similar to each other in some way.
6. There is a formulation of contiguity which holds that things tend to be patterned or grouped if they are next to each other.
7. A rule of *Pragnanz* exists which states that one perceives a pattern so as to make it the best pattern possible.
8. There exists a principle of closure which maintains that a figure which is incomplete is perceived as if it is complete.
9. The *Zeigarnick Effect* occurs when a person, after being interrupted in the course of finishing a task, resumes the same task later in preference to any other task, *ceteris paribus*; i.e., closure is sought.
10. Sensory experience is of utmost importance.
11. Insight is an integrated reaction to the whole situation.
12. The self and the environment are conflicting forces within the whole behavioral field and are believed to cause maladjustment.<sup>3</sup>

Perls maintains that people are governed by two types of control. One type comes from outside the organism, and the other is the one built into every organism.<sup>4</sup> An organism is any living being with organs and an organization which is self-regulating. No organism is independent of its environment. All organisms need environment to exchange essential substances. The organism always works as a whole. We are not a *sum* of parts, but rather a *coordination* or parts. It is not that we *have* a liver, heart, etc; we *are* a liver, heart, and so on.<sup>5</sup> As teachers learn to co-ordinate their organismic parts, they have better control over themselves in their settings.

Perls defines *health* as an "appropriate balance of the coordination of all of what we *are*."<sup>6</sup> When we are in health, we are in touch with the world and with our own self, that is, reality.<sup>7</sup> When the organism is healthy, it "rallies with all its potentialities to the gratification of the foreground needs." Immediately, as one task is finished, it recedes into the background and "allows the one which in the meantime has become the most important to come to the foreground."<sup>8</sup> In the daily life of a teacher, foreground needs emerge repeatedly. To recognize this process is to help complete and control it.

As for neurosis, Perls sees it as consisting of five layers which are not strictly separated. In the first layer, when we meet somebody we exchange clichés — greetings, handshakes, and "all of the meaningless *tokens* of meeting." In the second layer, we play games and roles — the very important person, the bully, the cry-baby, the nice little girl, the good boy — whatever roles we choose to play. These are the "superficial, social, *as-if* layers." We pretend to be better, tougher, weaker, more polite, etc. than we really feel. If we work through the roleplaying layer and take away the roles, we experience nothingness, emptiness. This is an impasse: the feeling of being stuck and lost. The impasse is marked by a phobic attitude of avoidance. We are phobic and avoid suffering, especially the suffering of frustration. There are many things we can do on our own. However, when we come to the

difficult parts, especially to the impasse, we become phobic and “get into a whirl.” We are not willing to go through the pain of the impasse.

Behind the impasse lies the death or implusive layer. This appears either as death or as fear of death. The death layer appears as death because of the “paralysis of opposing forces.” It is a kind of “catatonic paralysis” in which we pull ourselves together, contract and compress ourselves, and implode. Once we really get in contact with this “deadness of the implusive layer,” then something interesting happens. “The *implosion* becomes explosion.” The death layer explodes into life, thereby linking the authentic person who is capable of experiencing and expressing his emotions. There are four explosions from the death layer: “grief, orgasm, anger, and joy or laughter or *joie de vivre*.” These explosions connect with the authentic personality, or true self.<sup>9</sup> To recapitulate, the five layers were the cliché, games and roles, impasse, implosion, and explosion — culminating in authenticity.<sup>10</sup>

Three psychological mechanisms that could warn a teacher of impending problems are retroflexion, introflexion, and projection. Perls considers all three phenomena to be symptoms of a lack of integration.<sup>11</sup> He says that to retroflect means literally “to turn sharply back against.” When we retroflect behavior, we do to ourselves what originally we did or tried to do to other persons or objects. We stop directing our various energies outward in attempts to manipulate and bring about changes in the environment that will satisfy our needs. We redirect activity inward and substitute ourselves in place of the environment as the target of behavior. To the extent that we do this, we split our personality into a “doer” and “done to.” Retroflexions also include what we wanted from others, but were unsuccessful in obtaining. The outcome is that now, for want of anyone else to do it, we give to ourselves “attention, love, punishment, almost anything.”<sup>12</sup> As for treating retroflexion, Perls advises us to “merely reverse the direction of the retroflecting act from inward to outward.” Upon doing so, the organism’s energies, formerly divided, will once more unite and discharge themselves toward the environment. The blocked impulse is given the change to express, complete, and satisfy itself. There can be rest, assimilation, and growth.<sup>13</sup>

Perls teaches us that introjection consists of a way of acting, feeling, and evaluating which we have taken into our system of behavior, but have not assimilated in such fashion as to make it a genuine part of our organism. We were forced to accept it. Our forced identification is therefore pseudo. Even though we resist its “dislodgment as if it were something precious, it is actually a foreign body.”<sup>14</sup> Distinguishing between introjection and assimilation, Perls explains that what we assimilate is not taken in as a whole. It is first destroyed or de-structured completely and transformed. Then it is absorbed selectively according to the needs of the organism. Whatever the child gets from his loving parents he assimilates, for it is fitting and appropriate to his needs as he grows. The hateful parents have to be introjected or taken down whole, even though this is contrary to the needs of the organism.<sup>15</sup> As a treatment for introjection, Perls suggests that to rid the personality of introjections, an individual has to become aware of what is *not* truly hers, to acquire a selective and critical attitude toward what is offered her, and to develop the ability to “bite off” and “chew” experience so as to extract its “healthy nourishment.”<sup>16</sup>

Discussing the nature of a projection, Perls tells us that a projection is a trait, attitude, feeling, or portion of behavior which belongs to our own personality but is not experienced as such. Rather, we attribute it to objects or people in the environment and then experience it as directed toward us by them instead of the other way around. As projectors, we are, for instance, unaware that we are accepting or rejecting others. We believe they are accepting or

rejecting us. For example, unaware of our tendencies to approach others sexually, we feel that they make sexual approaches to us.

Prejudice is an extremely important and dangerous class of projections which can, unfortunately, be found to some degree in our schools. Along with other factors, the following projection always operates. We vilify a group and then attribute traits to them which really belong to our prejudiced selves, but which we repress from our awareness. Hating and refusing to come to terms with our own "bestiality," we feel and prove that our despised race or group is "bestial." When we project parts of our personality, it is usually "not upon a blank surface but upon a screen — another person, object, situation — which already possesses in its own right some degree of what is projected upon it."<sup>17</sup>

The projector throws his unwanted feelings outward, but in doing so, does not get rid of them. The only way a projector can get rid of an unwanted feeling is to accept it, express it, and thus discharge it. But how can one discern whether he is projecting a prejudice onto some appropriate screen? Perls makes a distinction which would be useful in teacher-student relations, between a prejudice and some foolish notion on the following ground. If one can let the matter go, she has nothing more than a foolish notion. If one cannot let it go, if it is an "imminent, haunting danger," then she has a prejudice.<sup>18</sup>

The mechanisms of retroreflection, introjection, and projection do have a positive side though. They constitute neurosis only when inappropriate and chronic. All of them are useful and healthy when employed temporarily in particular circumstances. Retroreflection is healthy when it "constitutes holding back for the sake of caution in a situation of genuine danger." Introjection of the dull and unimportant material of a required school course may be healthy when "one has the chance to spew it forth and relieve himself on a final examination." Examples of healthy projections are the activities of planning and anticipating. In them, a person "feels oneself" in a future situation — "projects oneself into the environment." Then, "when one follows through, in a practical way, one *integrates oneself with the project*."<sup>19</sup>

In Gestalt Workshops, guilt is looked upon as being "projected resentment." When, for example, a teacher feels guilty, he should discover what he resents. Once he has found out what he resents, the guilt will vanish, once he expresses it. If anything exists within someone which wants to be expressed yet is not expressed, the failure to express it can make one feel uncomfortable. Resentment is one of the most common unexpressed experiences. Resentment is the unfinished event *par excellence*.<sup>20</sup> And guilt is the "self-punitive, vindictive attitude toward oneself when one assumes responsibility for interruption of confluence."<sup>21</sup>

Perls pays quite a bit of attention to anxiety in his Gestalt Workshops. Anxiety, a condition quite common in educational settings, is the prime exemplification of the neurotic symptom; it is a simple psychosomatic event. Anxiety equals the "*experience of breathing difficulty during any blocked excitement*. It is the experience of trying to get more air into lungs immobilized by muscular constriction of the thoracic cage."<sup>22</sup> Anxiety is a "tremendous excitement held up, bottled up." Perls claims that if "excitement cannot flow into activity through the motoric system, then we try to desensitize the sensoric system to reduce this excitement." Then all kinds of desensitization (holes in the personality) can be found, such as, "frigidity and blocking of the ears."<sup>23</sup>

Perls sees anxiety as the tension between the now and the later. The most frequent forms of anxiety is stage fright. Perls says that all anxiety is stage fright—that is, related to

performance. The phenomenon in question is dread. Anxiety is an attempt to overcome the dread of nothingness, often appearing in the form of nothingness equals death. When a brain-injured soldier was asked to perform an abstract task, he got deeply anxious. He could not just say that he could not or would not perform because he was anxious to perform. "Without being *anxious to*, excited about the possibility of performing, there would be no opportunity to create anxiety." Any time people are not sure of their roles, and teachers may find themselves in this predicament, they develop anxiety. Perls has films showing that any stage fright disappears as soon as "the patient gets in touch with the present and lets go of his preoccupation with the future."<sup>24</sup>

Awareness plays a major role in Gestalt Workshops. "Awareness," says Perls, "is characterized by *contact*, by *excitement* and by *Gestalt* formation." Its adequate functioning is the realm of normal psychology, while any disturbance comes under the heading of psychopathology. Contact is possible without awareness; but for awareness, "contact is indispensable." The crucial question is: "With what are we in contact?" Sensing determines the nature of awareness, "whether distant (e.g., acoustic), close (e.g., tactile) or within the skin (e.g., proprioceptive)." This last term includes the sensing of our dreams and thoughts. Excitement covers "the physiological excitation as well as the undifferentiated emotions." It includes Freud's cathexis notion, Bergson's *elan vital*, the psychological manifestations of the metabolism from Mongolism to Basedow, and it gives us the basis for a simple theory of anxiety. Gestalt formation always accompanies awareness. We do not see three isolated points, we make a triangle out of them. Forming complete and comprehensive "Gestalten" is the condition of mental health and growth. Only the completed Gestalt can be organized as an "automatically functioning unit (reflex) in the total organism." Any incomplete Gestalt represents an unfinished situation that clamors for attention and interferes with the formation of any novel, vital Gestalt. Growth and development then replace stagnation and regression.<sup>25</sup>

As for awareness and contact, Perls says that without "you as a living, differentiated organization of awareness," your environment would not be existent. Your sense of the "*unitary interfunctioning of you and your environment is contact*." The process of contacting is the forming and sharpening of the figure/ground contrast, which is "the work of spontaneous attention and mounting excitement." As living beings contact is our "ultimate reality."<sup>26</sup> As teachers, when we lose contact with students and become unaware of our environment, we act on the basis of illusion rather than reality. So crucial a factor is awareness that Perls emphasizes that everything is grounded in awareness and that awareness is the "only basis of knowledge, communication, and so on." Communication becomes an act through which one person tries to make another person "*aware of something*."<sup>27</sup> And awareness includes three zones: "awareness of the *self*, awareness of the *world*, and awareness of what's between — the intermediate zone of fantasy that prevents a person from being in touch with either himself or the world."<sup>28</sup> Communication becomes the key to awareness because without communication there is no contact; and without contact there is no awareness.<sup>29</sup> The well balanced teacher thus uses communication to be in touch with and awake to the world around her.

The existential *hic et nunc* has a vital function in Perls' Gestalt Workshops. Perls asserts that nothing should exist for workshop participants but the *here* and the *now*. The *now* is the phenomenon of which we are presently aware; it is that moment in which memories and anticipations are carried. The past no longer exists. All recollections and plans occur in the

present — which is all that truly exists. And the future does not yet have existence. However, it is difficult to live in the present, even though the *now* alone exists.<sup>30</sup>

It is a fact that Perls avoids the *why* of linear causality in Gestalt Workshops and substitutes for it the *how* of process. He censors the term *why* since asking *how* allows us to look at the structure and see what is going on now. The *how* shows that one of the basic laws, “the identity of structure and function,” is valid. If we change the structure, the function changes. If we change the function, the structure changes. We want to ask *why*. However, the “*why* at best leads to clever explanation, but never to understanding.” *Why* and *because* are dirty words in Gestalt Workshops. They lead only to rationalization and belong to the class of “verbiage production.”<sup>31</sup>

The *now* and the *how* are the two legs Gestalt Workshops walk on. They constitute the essence of the theory behind Gestalt Workshops. *Now* includes all that exists. *How* includes everything that is the ongoing process. Anything else is irrelevant.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, “all therapy that has to be done can only be done in the now.”<sup>33</sup>

In Gestalt Workshops, dreams are not interpreted. Instead of analyzing the dream, the dream is “re-lived as if it were happening now.”<sup>34</sup> Second, Gestalt Workshops do not analyze a patient; rather, they integrate a participant. And integration is an ongoing process that is never completed.<sup>35</sup> Third, in Gestalt Workshops skillful frustration is used as a means of growth, for people have to grow through frustration. If people are not frustrated, they develop no incentive to learn ways and means of coping with this world.<sup>36</sup> Fourth, Gestalt Workshops have changed from the “idea of therapy to a Gestalt concept of growth.” From concept of growth, it follows that neurosis is not a sickness but one of “several symptoms of growth stagnation.” Maturation, subsequently, becomes a “continuous process of transcending environmental support and developing self-support,” which entails having fewer dependencies.<sup>37</sup> And fifth, in Gestalt Workshops the process of “centering” is stressed. Through centering, dialectical opposites are reconciled so that they no longer waste energy in useless struggle with each other, but can join in productive combination and interplay.<sup>38</sup>

In review, Gestalt Workshops strive toward therapy and growth. Deriving many principles from Gestalt Psychology, Perls’ theory has both empirical and metaphysical rooting. While dealing with interpersonal communication problems, Perls takes an intrapsychic and intrapersonal approach. Health for Perls refers to integration. Integration involves growth through awareness that comes about through interpersonal communication and personal contact with the environment. Perls’ theory helps integrate the individual in society by stressing awareness and contact between self and environment. He aims to improve individual responsibility and emphasizes the value of being responsible, especially in the sense of being responsive to the physical and social environment. Perls’ theory requires a leader who is usually a therapist who controls the Gestalt Workshop directly. Gestalt Workshops proceed through inquiry — that is, question and response more than spontaneous interaction. Perls prevents his workshop participants from trying to determine causation of past or future problems, since the present is where therapy and growth occur. Perls’ theory tends to be naturalistic and ecological; its potential for weaving a teacher into the school environment is tremendous.

#### *Perls’ Gestalt Workshop Techniques*

Discussing the rules and games of Gestalt Workshops, Abraham Levitsky and Fritz Perls explain the basic techniques employed. At the beginning of a meeting, a few rules are usually introduced. The games are numerous and may be devised by the workshop leader.

The rules are experiments rather than commandments. They are means of unifying thought with feeling, rather than dogmatically listing *do's* and *don'ts*.<sup>39</sup>

Levitsky and Perls list several techniques used in Gestalt Workshops that are highly applicable to teaching. One important technique involves asking a variety of different questions. These questions would benefit teachers directly as personal aids and professionally as aids in guiding students toward improved personal and social well being. The first question technique concerns itself with the principle of "the now." To develop now awareness, communication in the present tense is encouraged. For example, "What is happening now?" "What do you feel at this moment?" "What is your now?"<sup>40</sup> The second device is the "I and thou" technique which tries to drive home the idea that "true communication" involves both sender and receiver. The participant is asked to be aware of the distinction between talking *to* and talking *at* the listener.<sup>41</sup> The third strategem deals with "It" language and "I" language. What is done here is *It* language is changed into *I* language. Instead of saying "It is trembling," we must learn to say "I am trembling." By changing "It" language to "I" language, people learn to identify more closely with a particular behavior in question and to assume responsibility for it.<sup>42</sup> The fourth rule is the use of the "awareness continuum." This is the so-called *how* of experience and is absolutely basic to Gestalt Workshops. The primary use of the awareness continuum is as a guide to the individual toward concrete experiences and away from verbiage. The awareness continuum method is relatively easy. The leader asks such questions of the participant as: "What are you aware of now?" "Are you aware of what your eyes are doing?" "How do you experience the fear?"<sup>43</sup> Another tool of practical use is that of *no-gossiping*. The no-gossiping technique is designed to promote feelings and to prevent avoidance of feelings. Gossiping is defined as "talking about directly."<sup>44</sup> The last rule is that of "asking questions." What is often put in question form is actually a command. In Gestalt Workshops, participants are told to change their questions into statements, since the question is seen in terms of being a sign of laziness and passivity on the part of the participants. However, such questions as "How are you doing?" and "Are you aware that . . . ?" are genuine in contrast to hypocritical questions.<sup>45</sup>

Techniques in the form of games flourish in Gestalt Workshops. The following game techniques are especially helpful. In *dialog games*, a split in a personality is sought. Once the division is found, the participant is asked to have an actual dialog between these two components of himself. The dialog can also be developed between the participant and some significant person. In *making the rounds*, the leader may feel that a particular theme or feeling expressed by the participant should be faced vis-a-vis every other person in the group. If a participant said, "I hate everyone here," the leader would direct her to say that to every person in the room individually and to add some other remark pertaining to her feelings about each person. The "rounds" game may also involve touching, observing, frightening, etc. In *unfinished business*, whenever unresolved feelings are identified, the participant is asked to complete them. Perls says that resentments are the most common and important kinds of unfinished business. In the *I take responsibility game*, with every statement he makes, a participant is asked to use the phrase, ". . . and I take responsibility for it." For example, "My voice is very quiet . . . and I take responsibility for it." In *I have a secret*, each person thinks of a well-guarded secret that is personal. She is instructed *not* to share the secret but to imagine (project) how she feels others would react to it. In playing the projection, the participant who says, "I can't trust you," may be asked to play the role of an untrustworthy person in order to discover her own inner conflict in this area. In *reversals*, if the participant claims to suffer from an inhibition, he will be asked to play an exhibitionist. In taking this reversed role, he makes contact with a part of himself that has long been

submerged. In *the rhythm of contact and withdrawal*, the natural inclination toward withdrawal from contact is not dealt with as a resistance to overcome. Rather, it is seen as a rhythmic response to be respected. When the participant wishes to withdraw, she is asked to close her eyes and withdraw in fantasy to any place or situation in which she feels secure. In *rehearsal*, the group plays the game of sharing rehearsals with each other, thus becoming more aware of the preparatory means employed in bolstering our social roles. In *exaggeration*, the participant is asked to exaggerate a movement repeatedly, usually making the inner meaning more apparent. This technique provides another means of understanding body language. In *"May I feed you a sentence?"* the leader proposes a sentence, and the participant tests out his reaction to the sentence. If the proposed sentence is truly a key sentence to a particular attitude or message the participant implies, the participant will spontaneously develop the idea. In *marriage counseling games*, the partners face each other and take turns saying sentences beginning with "I resent you for . . .," "What I appreciate in you is . . .," "I spite you by . . .," and many more variations.<sup>46</sup>

Any of these games could be practiced by teachers in an in-service training workshop. They could be used exactly as presented here or with slight modification to fit the concerns of teachers. These techniques of Gestalt Workshops are innovative and instructive. Their dramatic style offer teachers a concrete basis for improving themselves personally, socially, and professionally.

In short, Perls' technique dramatize the principles of his group theory. He utilizes real and fictional dialogs frequently. Restricting workshop participants to the present, the techniques lead participants toward their authentic selves. Since Perls sees acting out hostility as one method for cure and growth, he frequently forces confrontation and frustration on workshop participants. He oftentimes pressures a participant by "ganging up on" the individual. In short, control tactics are routine and functional.

Encouraging spontaneous techniques, Perls commonly requires participants to touch. While establishing norms of growth that need not be accepted by workshop participants, Perls' creative techniques help solve everyday problems in interpersonal communication. Because Perls' dramatic techniques work especially well with imaginative, intelligent, and educated people, they are particularly suitable for teachers. The techniques help us live in greater harmony with our environment, and they lead us away from alienation. Hence, the techniques would facilitate teachers adapting to and harmonizing with their students in their educational institutional setting.

### *Perls' Practice of Gestalt Workshops*

Regarding how Gestalt Workshops are conducted, Perls says:

In my Gestalt Workshop anyone who feels the urge can work with me. I am available, but never pushing. A dyad is temporarily developed between me and the patient; but the rest of the group is fully involved, though seldom as active participants. Mostly they act as an audience which is stimulated by the encounter to do quite a bit of silent self-therapy. There are other advantages in working with a group. A great deal of individual development can be facilitated through doing collective experiments . . . . In grief or similar emotionally charged situations, chain reactions often occur . . . . In other words, . . . I carry the load of the session, by either doing individual therapy or conducting mass experiments. I often interfere if the group plays opinion and interpretation games or has similar purely verbal encounters without any experiential substance, but I keep out of it as soon as anything genuine happens.<sup>47</sup>

What Perls is describing is the act of doing "a kind of individual therapy in a group setting in which a group happening might happen to happen."<sup>48</sup>

Perls also distinguishes between a Gestalt Workshop and a Gestalt Seminar. The Workshop is limited to a group of fifteen people and is truly a *workshop*. The Seminar is large and has as its purpose the goal of getting people acquainted with what is done in the workshops. The Seminars are a kind of sampling situation, yet growth experiences and therapy do occur in them.<sup>49</sup>

Stemming from his published dialogs of actual workshop sessions,<sup>50</sup> the following information suggests additional ways for teachers to grow into a more comfortable professional life. If interaction does not undermine his workshop goals, Perls permits and encourages interaction among participants in his workshops. Generally though, he runs the show as manager, director, producer, actor, and interactor.<sup>51</sup> He terminates discussions at his own discretion; he employs a "hot seat" (i.e., a chair in which participants carry on psychodramas) to pressure participants into facing frustrating and conflicting personal emotions; he uses role-playing, psychodramas, theatre games, and the dramatization of fantasies and dreams. Perls also makes heavy use of "re-living" dreams and of sensory awareness. These practices are designed to assist the alienated person to "re-enter" society through means that are as much *intrapersonal* and *intrapsychic* as interactive and social.<sup>52</sup> The teacher suffering from alienation enjoys the opportunity to reunite with students and school alike.

In brief, Perls' workshops accommodate working people. They aid us in adjusting to our milieu through professional trainers who are skilled in conducting the workshops. The leaders move participants closer to awareness and authenticity, while helping them adapt better to their society and environment. Gestalt Workshops help participants understand established values and customs as well as act in accordance with them. To clash with established and immutable laws is less likely to occur after a Gestalt session, since harmony with or adjustment to one's surrounding is highly sought.

### *Conclusion*

That Gestalt Workshops have a place in an educational in-service program for teachers is doubtless. They can be employed to achieve practical, beneficial, and useful results at personal, social, and institutional levels. Irma Lee Shepherd summarizes Gestalt Workshops as "most effective with overly socialized, restrained, constricted individuals." Since teachers may frequently be over socialized, too restrained, and constricted from professional pressures, Gestalt Workshops provide an opportunity for relief. People who have trouble due to a "lack of impulse control" or people who are "less organized, severely disturbed or psychotic" are "more problematic" and require an approach involving greater "caution, sensitivity, and patience."<sup>53</sup> Through Gestalt Workshops and their ability to free expression and minimize control, participating teachers may test themselves before a responsible yet open-minded audience. Confronting the view of people being biosocial as well as the view of people being psychobiological, Gestalt Workshops deal most appropriately with alienated people — those out of touch with themselves, others, and their surroundings.<sup>54</sup>

To the extent that teachers suffer the stagnation of alienation, they have the chance to reduce their suffering through Gestalt Workshops. Perls' holistic way of integrating and harmonizing us intrapersonally, interpersonally, and ecologically is a practicable marvel. From these pearly Gestalt ways, any in-service teacher training program would prosper.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> John B. Enright, "An Introduction to Gestalt Techniques," in *Gestalt Therapy Now: Theory, Techniques, Applications*, eds. Joen Fagan and Irma Lee Shepherd (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 107.
- <sup>2</sup> Frederick S. Perls, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1972), p. 2.
- <sup>3</sup> Ann Neel, *Theories of Psychology: A Handbook* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 274-86. See also, Herbert Burks and Buford Steffere, *Theories of Counseling* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979), pp. 254-275.
- <sup>4</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, p. 5.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 6.
- <sup>7</sup> Frederick S. Perls, *In and Out of the Garbage Pail* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1972), p. 292.
- <sup>8</sup> Frederick S. Perls, "Theory and Technique of Personality Integration," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 2 (October 1948): 571.
- <sup>9</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, pp. 59-62. See also the film by Mediasync Corporation entitled *The Impasse*.
- <sup>10</sup> Perls, *Pail*, pp. 135-136.
- <sup>11</sup> Perls, "Integration," p. 582. See also J.A. Greenwald, "Structural Integration and Gestalt Therapy," *Bulletin of Structural Integration 1* (1969): pp. 19-20.
- <sup>12</sup> Frederick S. Perls, Ralph F. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality* (New York: The Julian Press, Inc., 1969), pp. 146, 150.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 148.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 189.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 190. See also, F.S. Perls, *Ego, Hunger, and Aggression* (New York: Random House, 1969), *et passim*.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 190-191.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 211, 214, 218.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 221.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 212. For additional comments on these mechanisms, see pages 460-464 of the same text.
- <sup>20</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, pp. 51, 52.
- <sup>21</sup> Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman, *Therapy*, p. 127.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 128. See also the film by Mediasync Corporation entitled *A Session with College Students*.
- <sup>23</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, p. 69. See also, F.S. Perls, *The Gestalt Approach and Eye-Witness to Therapy* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Science & Behavior Books, 1973), pp. 46-60.
- <sup>24</sup> Perls, *Pails*, p. 174-176.
- <sup>25</sup> Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman, *Therapy*, pp. viii-ix.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 73.
- <sup>27</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, p. 48.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 53. For additional comments on awareness, see Claudio Naranjo and Robert Ornstein, *On the Psychology of Meditation* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), pp. 170-212.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 48.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 44. See also the film by Psychological Films entitled *In the Now*.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Frederick S. Perls, "Four Lectures," in *Gestalt Now*, eds. Fagan and Shepherd, p. 17.
- <sup>34</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, p. 73.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 70, 69.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 77.
- <sup>37</sup> Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman, *Therapy*, p. v.
- <sup>38</sup> Perls, "Four Lectures," p. 19. For an alternate view of centering, see Chogyam Trungpa, *The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation* (London: Shambhala, 1976), p.19.
- <sup>39</sup> Abraham Levitsky and Frederick S. Perls, "The Rules and Games of Gestalt Therapy," in *Gestalt Now*, eds. Fagan and Shepherd, p. 140.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 141.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 142.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 143.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 144.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-148.
- <sup>47</sup> Frederick S. Perls, "Group vs. Individual Therapy," *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics* 24 (September 1967): 311-12. See also the film by Psychological Films entitled *Dr. Frederick Perls*.
- <sup>48</sup> Perls, *Verbatim*, p. 77.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 78. See also, F.S. Perls, "Workshop vs. Individual Therapy," *Proceedings of the 74th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association* (New York, 1966).
- <sup>50</sup> See his printed dialogs in *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* for confirmation of my description, pp. 81-306.
- <sup>51</sup> Interview with Margaret Rawls, Gestalt Workshop Participant, Urbana, Illinois, 12 June, 1976.
- <sup>52</sup> Interview with Dr. Edward Seidman, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois, 15 June 1976. Dr. Seidman took part in many Gestalt Workshops.
- <sup>53</sup> Irma Lee Shepherd, "Limitations and Cautions in the Gestalt Approach," in *Gestalt Now*, eds. Fagan and Shepherd, pp. 234-35.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.