

**Jan Tønnesvang, Nanna B. Hedegaard
& Simon E. Nygaard**

THE QUADRANT MODEL

– what is it and how it can be used in practice

KLIM

Jan Tønnesvang, Nanna B. Hedegaard og Simon E. Nygaard:
THE QUADRANT MODEL – what it is and how it can be used in practice

Copyright © Jan Tønnesvang, Nanna B. Hedegaard and Simon E. Nygaard
& forlaget Klim, 2015

This booklet is intended as an open access introduction to *the Quadrant Model*, which is developed by the American philosopher Ken Wilber. The Quadrant Model is a cornerstone in the Integrative Vitalising Psychology (IVP), developed by Jan Tønnesvang, who is a professor in Psychology at Aarhus University. In combination with the *Vitalising Model* and the *Model of Qualified Self Determination*, the Quadrant Model is what makes Vitalising Psychology Integrative. Booklets that introduces to the Vitalising Model and the Model of Qualified Self Determination are also available as open access at Klim.dk.

ISBN: 978 87 7129 492 7

1. edition, Aarhus 2015

Forlaget Klim
Ny Tjørnegade 19
DK-8200 Aarhus N
www.klim.dk

To read more about Jan Tønnesvang, go to:
[//person.au.dk/da/jan@psy](http://person.au.dk/da/jan@psy)

THE QUADRANT MODEL

– *what it is and how it can be used in practice*

WORKING FROM A QUADRANT PERSPECTIVE

This booklet offers a brief introduction to the quadrant model and presents some applications of the model in education, social work and organisational development in fields related to children and young people. The quadrant model was originally conceived by Ken Wilber (1995), who is also the originator of *Integral Perspectivism*, which we call *Integrative Perspectivism* (Tønnesvang et al, 2013). Integrative Perspectivism is a way of working with and combining multiple perspectives within the framework of the quadrant model. In other words, the quadrant model is an integrative operating system for complex knowledge and practice development in various areas of life. The quadrant model defines four basic perspectives that can help expand our understanding of a given phenomenon by combining precision and focus with a broad scope and a clear overview. Analysing phenomena in one's personal and working life in relation to the quadrant model, which engages as many perspectives and as much knowledge as possible, can produce a better understanding of one's situation and thus enhance one's potential for competent and precise action and for making the most of cooperation opportunities. Within the framework of the quadrant model, understanding involves striving for an awareness of wholeness and complexity that is simultaneously comprehensive, inclusive and balanced. The quadrant model enables such an awareness or understanding by offering a systematic way of relating to the interior and exterior aspects of the singular and plural manifestations of the phenomena we encounter.

The booklet consists of two main sections. The first offers a brief introduction to important elements of the theory of Integrative Perspectivism. Here, our focus is on the quadrant model. The second section outlines three practical applications of the

quadrant model as a tool for analysing and engaging in dialogue about phenomena, organisations and persons in a variety of perspectives.

THE QUADRANT MODEL

The quadrant model rests on the assumption that phenomena can be viewed from four basic perspectives. In principle, these phenomena can be in any form, from fish to electronics, sick leave, new pay systems, school inclusion or anti-bullying policies, a child with special educational needs or an organic food programme in the school cafeteria – anything that one wants to analyse and address.

The four perspectives in the quadrant model capture four basic dimensions of our lives where we are, on the one hand, ourselves with our personal experiences and actions/behaviour and, on the other hand, together with others in cultures and systems. The four basic dimensions are illustrated below with a distinction between exterior (observable) and interior (non observable) aspects and between singular and plural aspects. Together, these points of view form a basic quadrant model with four basic perspectives (four quadrants).

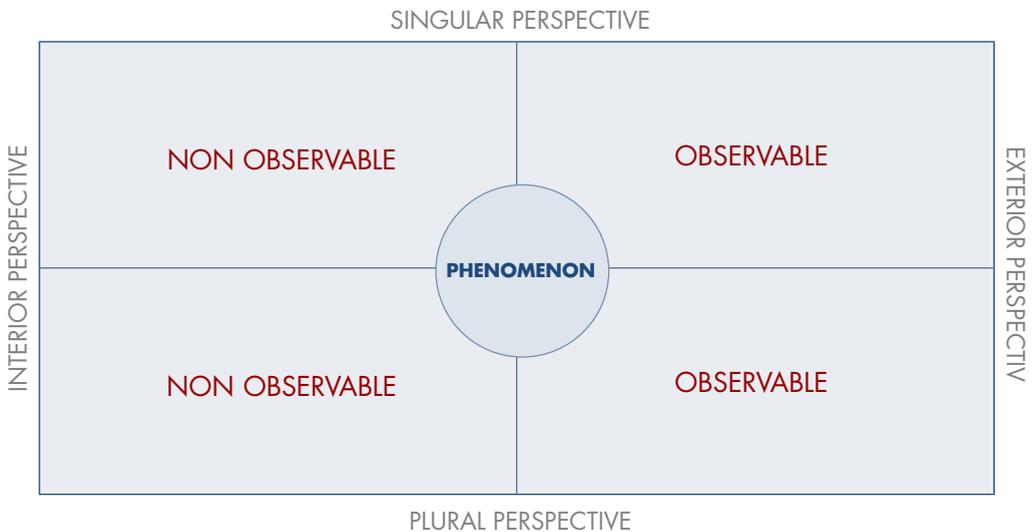


Figure 1: The interpretation and observation perspectives of the quadrant model.

THE FOUR QUADRANTS – WHAT DO YOU SEE?

The upper right quadrant involves an objective perspective, focused on what can be observed about the individual. Examples include behaviours and other measurable (and thus objective) aspects of the person's life which it is possible to hear, see, feel, taste and point to. This also includes individual biology and neurology, that is, the entire body, whether the person is tall or short, skinny or fat, whether there are any neurological dispositions for higher or lower intelligence or inclinations in the person's approach to the world that affect his or her capacity for optimal functioning, and whether there are any specific neurological challenges, defects or damage. All these features can be examined and identified on objective terms. Thus, when a teacher regards a child in the perspective of the upper right quadrant, the focus is on the child's individual behaviour, for example in learning situations. This perspective may involve testing the child's neurological makeup in relation to intelligence and learning. Overall, the focus is on the type of knowledge about the individual that can be objectively verified.

Keywords: behaviour, objectivity, physique, dispositions and physical appearance

The upper left quadrant involves a subjective perspective, and in this quadrant the focus is on individual phenomenology, that is, how we, as individuals, experience what happens, how we experience ourselves in relation to what happens, and how we understand an event on this particular background. This may pertain to feelings, intentions, values, needs, fantasies and concepts of ourselves and others, mental organisation (attachment patterns, cognitive schemas, affective schemas, memory structures etc.). In this perspective, a teacher may, for example, attempt to understand an individual child – how does the class appear from this child's perspective? How does he or she feel? What is he or she interested in? How might a particular incident have affected this particular child? The teacher can explore these aspects by talking with the child and taking an interpretive stance to what the child says. In this perspective, the focus is on the person's interior and on what is at play in the person's thoughts, feelings and motivations.

Keywords: experience, subjectivity, thoughts, feelings and phenomenology

The lower right quadrant involves an interobjective perspective, and thus, this quadrant is concerned with everything that is observable in a plural perspective. This includes systems and their written regulations and guidelines as well as the technologies and

materials that are part of the system. It also includes interpersonal interactions. If we were to look at an after-school setting in the perspective of the lower right quadrant, we would look at the rooms, the tables and chairs, books and computers, the social activities plan for the year, the anti-bullying policy, group activities, the staff's formal tasks and formalised teams, the hierarchical structure and the entire formalised organisation of the programme. In a more general sense, the interobjective perspective also includes the societal conditions and the legislation that frame the system and its mission as well as funding and the conditions related to the funding.

Keywords: system, interobjectivity, regulations, technology and interaction

The lower left quadrant involves an intersubjective perspective and pertains to everything that is not directly observable in a plural perspective but which is accessible for interpretation. This includes experiences of shared knowledge and meaning in relations, cultures, collectives and practice-based customs. This quadrant also addresses the meaning dimension of communication and discourse, which create horizons of interpretation for self-understanding, belongingness, and community that cannot be directly observed. The horizons of interpretation that exist in communities (relations, cultures and collectives) indicate the perceptions of what it means to do things together, to be something to each other and to find meaning in shared activities. We are familiar with this from situations where we encounter others and find that there are some groups of people whom we understand quite well, and others whom we understand less well, because their horizons of interpretation are so different from our own. All these aspects belong in the lower left quadrant.

If we look at a group of school children, for example, in the perspective of the lower left quadrant, we will be oriented towards informal group dynamics, alliances and friendships/animosity as well as the informal hierarchies that exist among the staff and among the children/youths. We would also look at language use in the exchange of meaning.

Keywords: culture, intersubjectivity, shared meaning, norms and horizons of interpretation

Naturally, the dimensions that we are focussing on in the four perspectives of the quadrant model are not mutually independent. On the contrary. The four dimensions are present simultaneously as four sides to an issue or a phenomenon – they *tetra-
arise*, to borrow Wilber's term. The behaviours of a child or a young person in a given environment (upper right quadrant) will be affected by his or her perception

(upper left quadrant) of the world, and both the behaviour and the perception will, in turn, be influenced by and influence the meaning of the relationships and cultures (lower left quadrant) that the person is a part of, and which frame (or framed) his or her childhood and youth together with family members and friends. This will, in turn, be influenced by (and influence) the systems, laws and regulations that govern the child or young person’s environment (lower right quadrant).

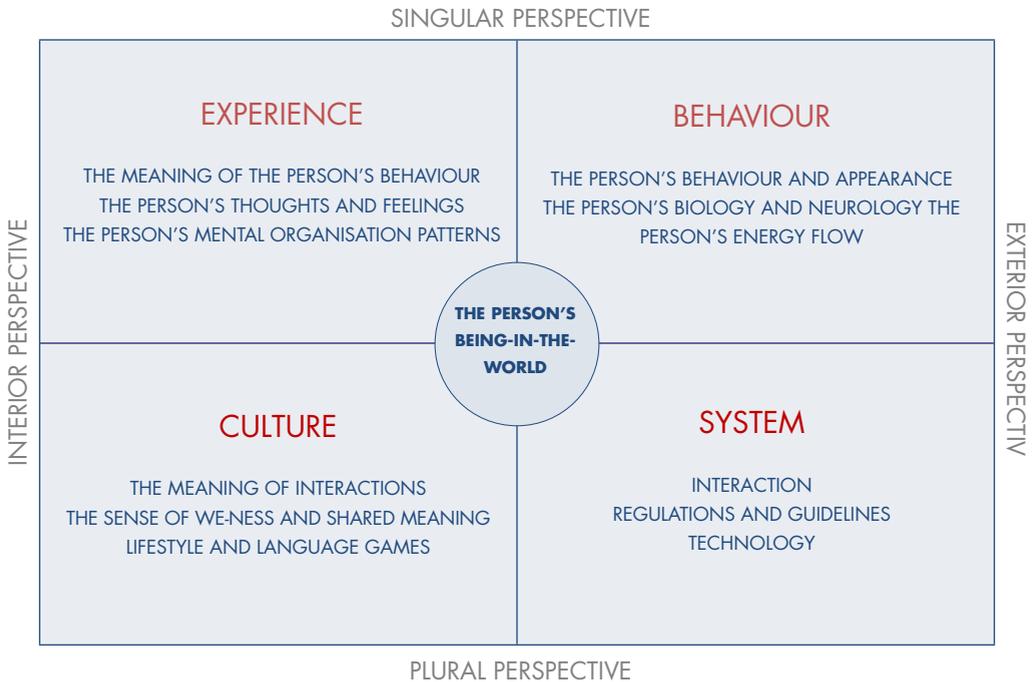


Figure 2: Examples of content in the four quadrants with a focus on Behaviour, Experience, System or Culture.

Thus, all phenomena can be viewed in an interior perspective, an exterior perspective, a singular perspective and a plural perspective. All the perspectives are thus, so to speak, available as potential positions in relation to a given phenomenon. Therefore, anyone who is serious about fully understanding a phenomenon as a whole will, in principle, need to include all four perspectives. However, one may choose to disregard one or more perspectives in a specific context where the emphasis is on particular aspect of the whole. For example, one might say, “Now let’s focus on what we can measure and quantify with regard to Lucy’s social skills in order to determine if there is any need for developmental support.” That would

represent an upper right quadrant focus. Narrowing one's focus and perspective in this way is by no means wrong or inappropriate. It is a case of methodological reduction. However, keeping the quadrant model in mind, one will be aware that this reduction addresses aspects within a particular 'quarter' of the potentially relevant perspectives. This in turn implies the awareness that one is *not* addressing the perceived meaning for Lucy of this developmental support (upper left), or how the act of singling Lucy out will be perceived in the class with its particular culture (lower left), or whether the necessary funding and systems facilities are available for providing the support (lower right) that the test might indicate (upper right). Taking a holistic perspective with a view to understanding the connections that tie together the aspects in all four quadrant perspectives constitutes the beginnings of an actual quadrant analysis.

In principle, the quadrant model can be used to analyse the exterior-interior and singular-plural aspects of phenomena in any context. In applying the model to people (and other living organisms) and their interactions with the world we highlight the essential quality of each of the four perspectives in the model under the headings of behaviour, *experience*, *system* and *culture*. This is illustrated in Figure 2, where we have placed the person's/persons' being-in-the-world at the centre.

LINES AND LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

In Integrative Perspectivism we distinguish – as Wilber does (2000) – between lines of development and levels of development. Both lines and levels of development enable a further level of differentiation in the use of the quadrant model to describe specific capacities in relation to a phenomenon in each of the quadrants. When multiple lines of development are included, for example in the upper left quadrant, this quadrant not only addresses the individual's experience but instead becomes a field with a variety of attention points. There may, for example, be a cognitive line of development (the thinking individual), an emotional line of development (the feeling individual), a moral line of development (the ethical individual) etc. A defining feature of a line of development is that it functions and develops fairly independently of other lines. The many lines of development that exist in each quadrant can in turn be subdivided into levels of development based on how complex and inclusive they are. A classic distinction pertaining to one's perception of oneself and one's environment is that of egocentric, ethnocentric and worldcentric levels. In the present context, we use these levels as an

example of a general set of distinctions, but it is important to remember that this is a general example, and only one possible example out of many – for example, Wilber also speaks of cosmocentric levels, but that level will not be included in our present discussion.

The egocentric level is a way of understanding and relating to things that is centred on oneself and one's own perspectives. On the egocentric level we generally experience our own individual beliefs, perceptions and ideas as superior to other people's beliefs, perceptions and ideas, and it can be a challenge to grasp how other people's perspectives offer different (and perhaps equally adequate) world views. The egocentric self easily winds up in a competitive relationship with its surroundings in a *me-against-the-world* mentality, where the goal may be to derive as much benefit as possible from the systems and relationships that I am a part of, based on my desires and what serves my interests.

On the ethnocentric level, one's perspective horizon includes the groups and relationships one is a part of and the perspectives of these groups and relationships. One is open to embracing diversity provided it stays within the framework of the common principles or premises that apply to the groups, relationships, tribes, families, political associations etc. that one is associated with. On the ethnocentric level, one adopts a *me-with-us* mentality within the framework of the group etc. that one belongs to, and an *us-against-them* mentality towards outsiders. While the egocentric perspective is individual in nature, the ethnocentric perspective implies a more inclusive awareness/focus towards and empathy with one's close environment and the relationships and groups that one is a part of. Some examples of typical concerns on the ethnocentric level: How do my aspirations affect my family? How does my behaviour affect my school class? I need to take an education and contribute to society; How can I contribute in my friendships to help my friends cope better with the challenges they are facing in life?

On the worldcentric level, one's perspective horizon includes people one has never met and points of view that one might disagree with. That is not to say that one suddenly agrees with or loves everyone in the world, but one is able to relate to other people's ideas and beliefs from the points of view that underlie their opinions and behaviour. The worldcentric perspective involves seeing Earth as a planet that has to accommodate others in the future (and not merely as a resource for human beings), and which we need to preserve and protect. As mentioned earlier, the distinction between egocentric, ethnocentric and worldcentric levels of development is merely one example (among many). This point is illustrated in Figure 3, and you can read more about in Wilber et al. (2008).

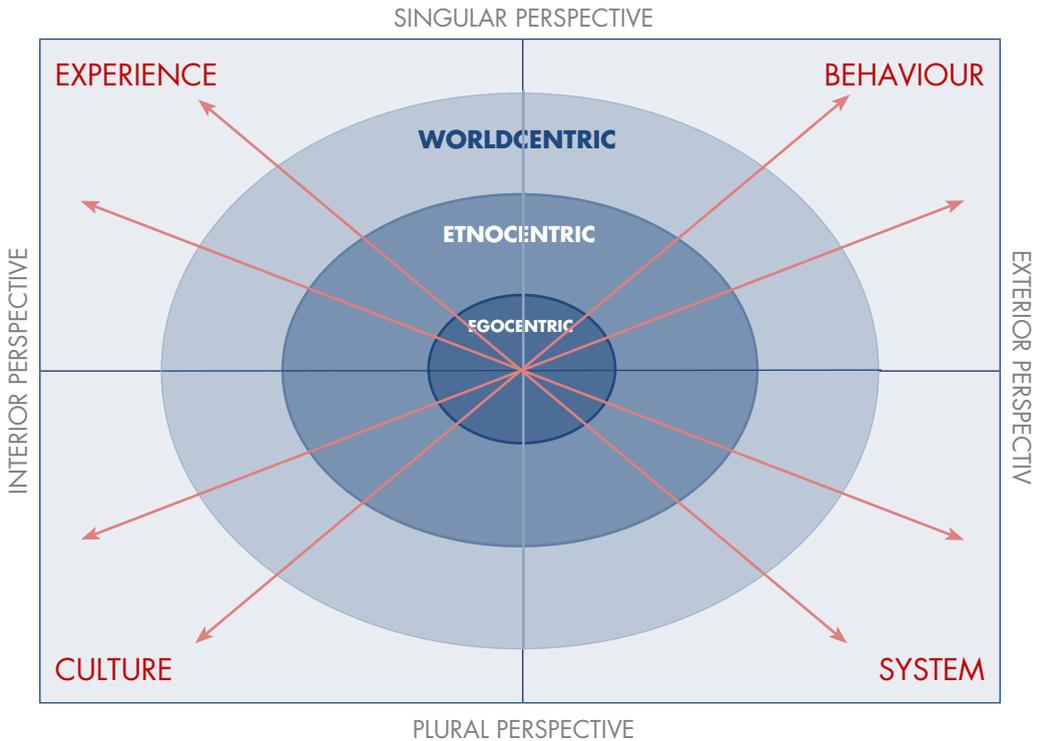


Figure 3: Lines and levels of development in the quadrant model.

A key point in relation to the three levels is that no level is inherently more correct than or superior to the other levels. What characterises the upper levels is that they have a more open and inclusive perspective than the lower levels. In many cases, that can be an advantage, but it is not necessarily better or more correct.

Typically, a given line of development will correlate with conditions of development in other quadrants. Cognitive development tends to result in altered behaviour, a different way of being with others and a different way of using or being in systems. Sometimes, however, lines of development may develop relatively independently of one another, both inside a given quadrant and between quadrants. For example, a high level of development in a person's cognitive line of development may coincide with a lower level of development in the person's emotional and moral lines of development. This might characterise a person who is intelligent but not necessarily very pleasant to be around. A significant spread in levels of development among various lines of development in an individual is rarely optimal and may pose certain challenges for the person or for the person's surroundings – depending on the specific character of imbalances.

In its basic structure, the quadrant model is a *form model*. It does not dictate which lines (meaning content) should be in focus, or what goals should be set for the development of the individual lines in various contexts. That has to be decided by the individual or determined by considerations related to the standard of the relationship or professional norms. However, the basic distinction among the various lines of development and the fact that they typically develop in concert on various levels of development is useful knowledge when carrying out a quadrant analysis in cooperation with others. The people carrying out the analysis may have different understandings of the conditions in the four respective quadrants, even if they operate within the same context on a daily basis. This may be because they focus on different lines of development in the respective quadrants, or it may be due to different notions of what it means to be on a given level, and what can be expected of a person in a given context. In the common professional effort to develop a better understanding of the people one works with it can therefore be helpful to debate which lines of development seem most essential to focus on, and what characterises the various levels of the lines of development in question: Are the individual members of the group focusing mainly on the cognitive, the emotional, the moral or the identity formation line of development? Or are we looking at different lines of development entirely?¹ When working with children and young people, for example, it might be helpful to consider where and how one may serve as a vitalising role model for a higher level, inspiring and guiding the young generations' life development.

MEANINGFUL DISAGREEMENT

One of the benefits of the quadrant model is that it offers opportunities for improving one's capacity for adopting different perspectives and for systematis-

-
1. In vitalising psychology, the main focus in relation to the concept of developmental lines is on our basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, meaning, competence) and on the development of a capacity to manage these needs. The basic needs are summarised in the vitalising model (see Tønnesvang & Hedegaard, 2015b). In addition, there is a particular focus on four basic life-competences (technical, social, reflective and sensitive capacities) and their development as summarised in the model for qualified self-determination (see Tønnesvang & Hedegaard, 2015a). You can read more about these issues at the Klim website, http://klim.dk/bog/Psykologisk_ilt.htm

ing one's thoughts about the phenomena at hand as a basis for reflections and dialogue about these phenomena. Especially for professionals working with people, the model can facilitate a more holistic understanding and a keener awareness of one's perspective on the issues at hand in relation to someone else's perspective. Flexibility in perspective taking is an important quality in effective working relationships and a condition for what we call *meaningful disagreement*. Meaningful disagreement means being aware of the underlying premise of the other's opinion with which one disagrees. A mutual understanding for each other's respective opinions as potential 'partial truths' that may co-exist and contribute to a more holistic understanding lets meaningful disagreement play a key role in the development of knowledge and practices. Of course, meaningful disagreement is also possible outside the framework of the quadrant model. However, by clarifying the four basic perspectives (the four quadrants) and the various lines and levels of development (as well as states and types, which fall outside the scope of the present discussion), the quadrant model offers a helpful framework for systematically relating the various perspectives to one another and thus achieving a better understanding of the core aspects of one's point of view and of the fact that one's point of view is always limited by one's chosen perspective. Translating this into words and deeds will facilitate developing constructive working relationships.

The following pages outline three examples of practical applications of the quadrant model. These examples are intended merely as illustrations of the usefulness of the quadrant model. There are many other potential uses than the ones we address here. In this context, we look at what we have called

- **Quadrant analysis of phenomena**
- **Quadrant-based organisational analysis**
- **Quadrant-based conversations**

QUADRANT ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENA

Step one in a quadrant analysis of a phenomenon is to choose a phenomenon and place it in the centre of the model in order to view it in light of each of the four quadrants (Figure 4).

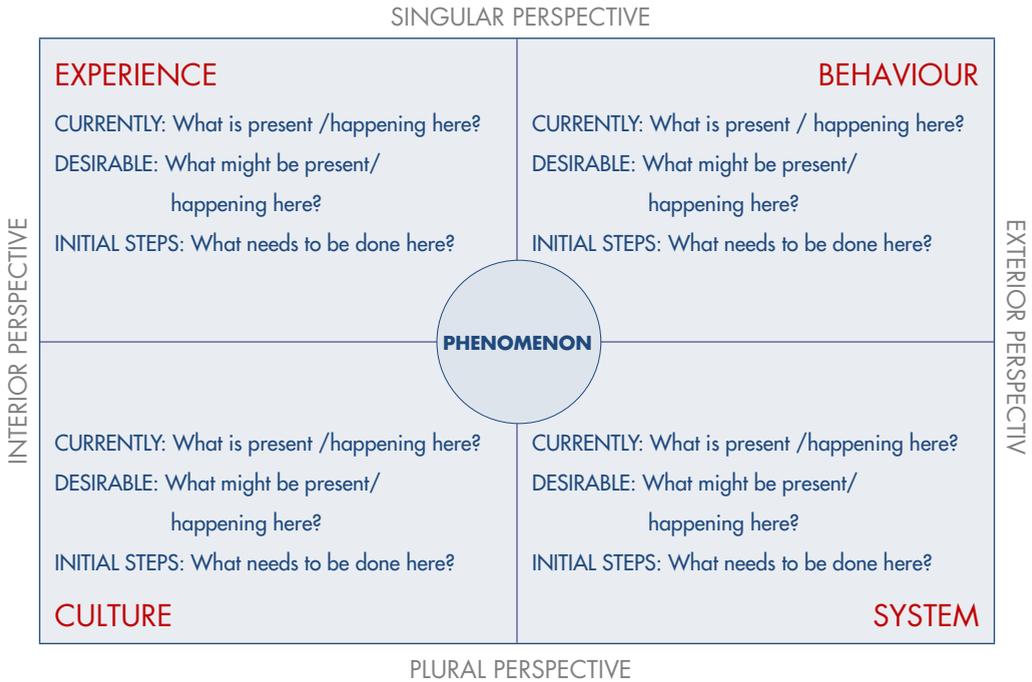


Figure 4: Quadrant analysis of a phenomenon with a focus on current conditions, desirable conditions and the initial steps to be taken in addressing a given phenomenon.

The phenomenon can be anything that poses a challenge or which one simply wants a better understanding of, such as stress, sick leave or well-being in the workplace; a dilemma in relation to choosing a field of study; young people rioting and setting cars ablaze; or the restructuring of a school or a hospital. As an illustration, we will look at the phenomenon of inclusion in primary and lower secondary school (see also Tønnesvang & Hedegaard, 2013).

In a quadrant analysis of inclusion we would first write the word ‘inclusion’ in the centre of the model. Actually writing the word down makes it easier to maintain focus throughout the analysis (see example in Figure 5). The analysis may begin in any of the quadrants, but it might be helpful to begin in the quadrant that seems to represent the most urgent aspect in relation to the phenomenon in question. In relation to the example of inclusion, the analysis may begin in the lower right quadrant, which pertains to the exterior system aspects. In relation to the lower right quadrant, we can note the political decision to make inclusion a goal for (European) primary and lower secondary schools – thus, inclusion is an official goal and requirement. Whatever a person or group thinks about the political objectives

and agenda lies outside the scope of the analysis in the lower right quadrant and should therefore not be included at this step in the analysis. Instead, the focus is on what is in fact on the political agenda. What are the official criteria for inclusion versus exclusion? What sort of funding is available for a student with special needs? Who qualifies for additional support, and how? How does the individual school and after-school programme (as system) implement inclusion – is it reflected in new rules and guidelines? Is it possible to modify existing class rooms etc. to make them accommodate a greater diversity of needs? How should the teaching be organised to accommodate greater diversity? What additional training does the staff need to handle the new requirements? These are all important elements of necessary knowledge about inclusion; opinion may be divided on the issues, but all the opinions belong in the left-sided quadrants.

Switching to the lower left quadrant, the focus shifts to the culture surrounding inclusion and to shared experiences of and with inclusion. Both teachers and parents contribute to building an inclusive culture in the way they speak about inclusion and about children with special needs. Inclusion also places special demands on the class culture, which has to be able to accommodate diversity.

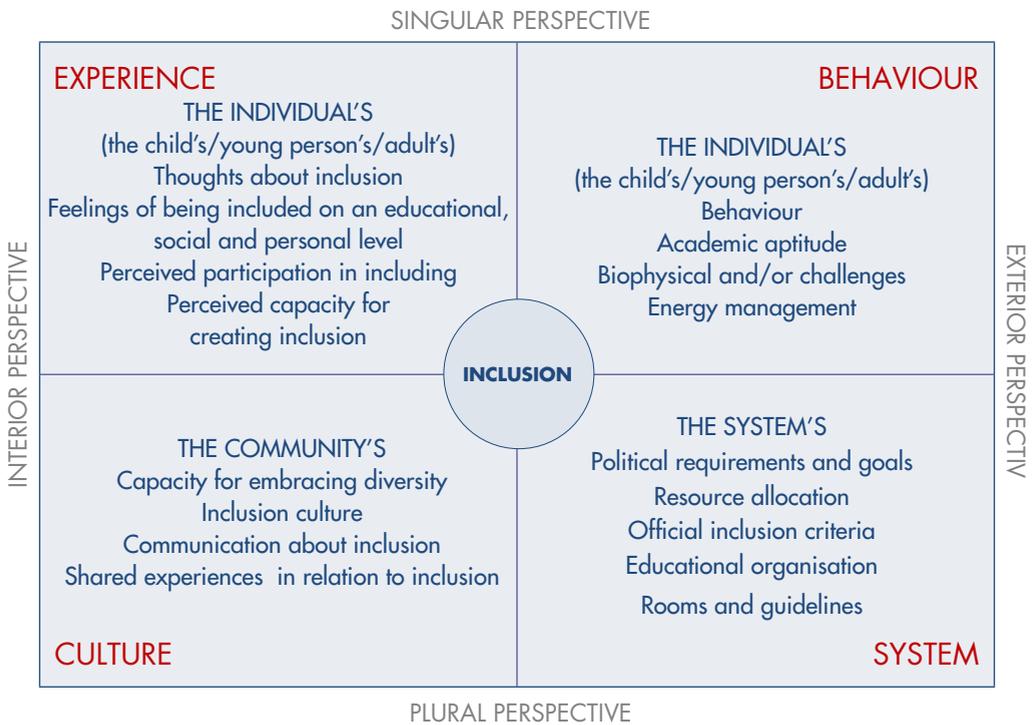


Figure 5: Quadrant analysis of inclusion.

After exploring the lower left quadrant, the analysis may now move on to the upper left quadrant, which deals with the individual's experience in relation to inclusion. This has to do with how the situation is experienced by the individual students in an inclusive classroom, and how it is experienced by the teacher in charge of day-to-day social and educational activities in the class. In this context, we can also explore when the individual student feels included on an educational, social and personal level. Furthermore, the analysis may focus on whether the individual teacher feels that he or she has access to the necessary training to handle the higher degree of diversity.

To complete the analysis, the perspective shifts again, now to the upper right quadrant, where the focus is on the individual child's behaviour (or on the actions of the individual teacher) and on how this particular person facilitates or hinders the inclusion processes. Thus, inclusion involves four areas, and a quadrant analysis of each of these areas provides a more systematic understanding of the larger whole.

During the analysis process, you can use the model to note down what you find in each of the quadrants. After the first round you can then consider whether you have discovered any connections that will enable you to act differently. As part of the analysis you may attempt to organise the knowledge that is uncovered with regard to lines and levels of development. Whether this will be a helpful step depends to some extent on the particular phenomenon in focus. To a large extent it also depends on your familiarity with the four quadrants and the basic quadrant model and thus the workload involved in examining lines and levels. Some examples of the questions you might address: What is the participants' general capacity for understanding others' perspectives? What is the level of cognitive functioning of the individual participants and generally in the group? How are energy and emotions regulated? What is the participants' moral position with regard to diversity and being together with others who are quite different from themselves?

Exploring a phenomenon in a quadrant analysis produces valuable knowledge, but this knowledge only takes on practical implications when the participants bring it into play by adopting a curious and explorative stance to the potential opportunities and desires for change in each of the four quadrants. By openly discussing and sharing their wishes and ideas the participants can determine which wishes and ideas can be turned into action-oriented possibilities. If the participants are able to define shared future goals on this basis, this shared understanding will also form the basis for coordinated action among the participants: Who does what, together with whom, when, and how?

We recommend the following three steps in a process of uncovering knowledge and transforming it into change-generating action: 1. *sharing knowledge* in relation to each of the four quadrants; 2. establishing *common change goals*; and 3. agreeing who does what, with whom, when, why and how in order to *coordinate actions* aimed at achieving the common goal. In a formalised description, then, the process involves three elements: shared knowledge, common goals and coordinated action.

QUADRANT-BASED ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS

Another use of the quadrant model is as a tool for analysis and conversations in relation to organisational change and development (Figure 6) with the purpose of discussing the potential development of the organisation: what did it use to look like, what does it look like today, and how it is continuing to develop. This endeavour may be referred to as quadrant-based organisational analysis. The model for a quadrant-based organisational analysis aims at a potential development of structures for knowledge and action within the four quadrants. Thus, the respective quadrants focus on Behavioural structures, Experiential structures, System structures and Cultural structures, all of which affect the potential for – and may itself be the result of – organisational development.²

As a tool for organisational analysis, the quadrant model facilitates the development of a shared perspective of the system that people are a part of. The model provides an analytical structure, *not* a manual. It is up to the people involved in the analysis to decide which quadrant to begin with and to ask follow-up questions that are relevant for the given organisation. However, as a common framework for the conversation the model enables a discussion with a common (varying) focus, which improves the chances of ‘meaningful disagreements’ rather than just disagreements.

2. In the book *Integrative Gestalt Practice*, Sonne & Tønnesvang (2015) demonstrate how the relationship between structure and process can be understood within each of the four quadrants. While structures develop over time as stable patterns for structuring processes, processes unfold in the moment, right here and now. You can read more about this point in the book. In the present context, when we say that organisational analysis focuses on structures over time, we mean to suggest that what one may strive to develop is the persistent organising patterns, which we call structures. In that sense, it is possible to pave the way for certain processes to become more or less likely in the future.

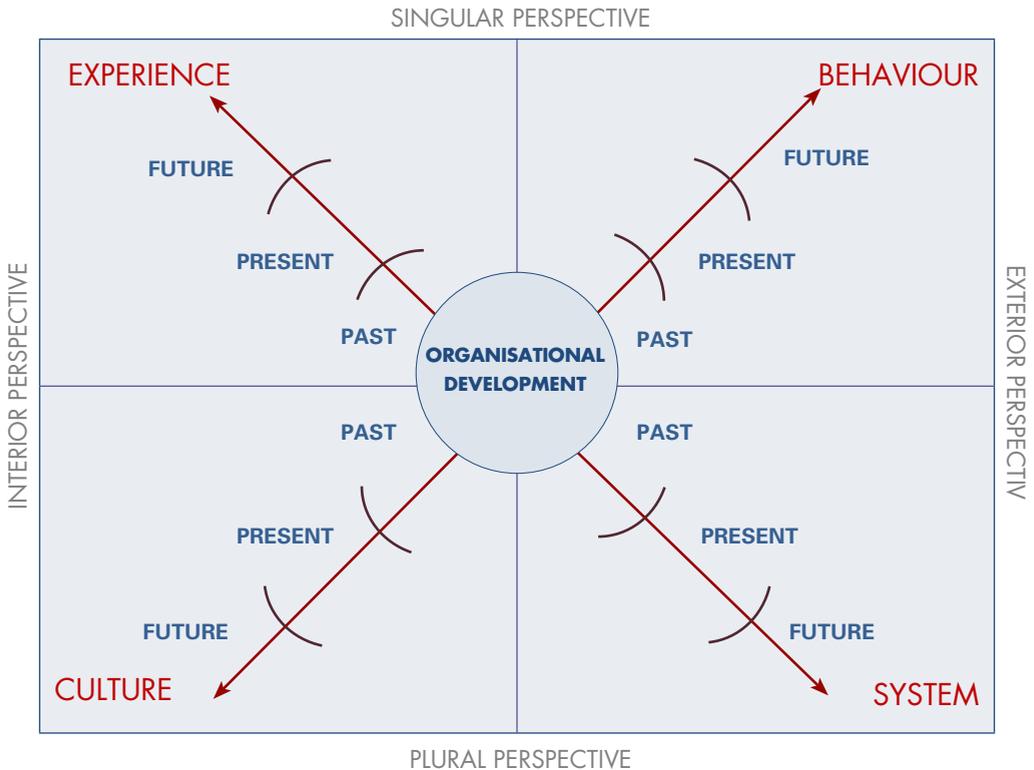


Figure 6: Model for quadrant-based organisational dialogue about the past, present and future.

Organisational development may be framed by a wide variety of success criteria, depending on whether development is viewed as something that is expressed in the lower right quadrant (the students generally have high average marks) or in one of the other quadrants – a pleasant classroom culture (lower left), a child who likes going to school (upper left) or a child who makes a real effort to learn (upper right).

Just as our own personal identity and self-concept are influenced and shaped by the stories we create about our past, present and future, the stories we tell about the organisation also influence the perception of the organisation. When we tell others about our past and present life, with the joys, pains and challenges it involves, and about our plans and hopes for the future, we develop a stronger sense of ownership of our own thoughts, feelings and actions by clarifying them and allowing them to form coherent narratives. The same occurs when we talk about the organisation we are a part of. For example, if we have a story about our workplace as a place that used to have excellent conditions with strong cooperation and outstanding leadership and achievements, but which is now merely a shadow of its former self, that narrative affects the members of the organisation and their feelings about being in the organi-

sation – probably in a negative direction. In that case, we may have to share and air out our contributions to the story to avoid developing a self-intensifying negative spiral and instead ensure that the story contributes to future positive developments. The quadrant model can help structure this organisational dialogue – for example in the set-up that we present in Figure 6.

Like the quadrant analysis of a phenomenon, which was discussed above, quadrant-based organisational analysis begins with choosing an organisational focus and entering it into the centre of the model. Some examples (among countless others) might be the introduction of new regulations for working hours, a new pay system or cross-disciplinary cooperation. Like the analysis of a phenomenon, the organisational analysis should begin in the quadrant that represents the most pressing aspect or the aspect that people have the most energy for addressing. Here, too, it is important to distinguish carefully in determining what issues belong in which quadrant. Each of the four quadrants features the words *Past*, *Present* and *Future*. The most productive approach may be to first take a look at the present in all the quadrants before moving on to key aspects of the past and hopes for the future. That produces three layers that will act as snapshots of the organisation at different points in time (past, present, future), which can be compared and help highlight strengths and possible challenges in the future development process. The analysis of the present includes an analysis of the organisation as a whole. Here are some examples of questions for each quadrant that will facilitate an analysis of the organisation's present state:

Lower right (*sample questions*):

- **What external guidelines (legislation) exist for the organisation?**
- **What internal guidelines (policies) exist for the organisation?**
- **What is the leadership structure and command hierarchy in the organisation?**
- **What are the formal procedures for employee influence in the organisation?**
- **What is the incentive structure like in the organisation?**
- **What are the working hour structures like in the organisation?**
- **What are the formal guidelines for cooperation in the organisation?**
- **What sort of technology does the organisation use?**
- **What sort of communication is used in the organisation?**

Lower left (*sample questions*):

- **What organisational narratives exist in the organisation?**
- **What alliances or informal hierarchies exist in the organisation?**
- **How are working relationships structured in the organisation?**

- **What sort of influence do the employees have in their working relationships?**
- **How is the temperature of appreciative climate among the staff and between staff and leadership?**
- **How is contact regulated (negotiated) among the employees in the organisation?**

Upper left (*sample questions*):

- **How does the employee's experience the conditions for having ambitions?**
- **What is the state of the employee's job motivation?**
- **How does the employee find meaning and identity in the organisation?**
- **How appreciated does the employee feel?**
- **How challenging does the employee find his or her work tasks to be?**

Upper right (*sample questions*):

- **How does the employee manage his or her work tasks?**
- **How does the employee move within the organisation?**
- **How does the employee eat in the organisation?**
- **How does the employee manage his or her time in relation to work tasks?**
- **How does the individual employee find room to balance his or her energy in the organisation? (For example, is it okay to take a nap/rest/power-sleep if it feels necessary?)**

Once the present conditions have been adequately explored the gaze then turns to the past, where the same sample questions can be used, only now phrased in the past tense (How did you experience the organisation? How did you feel in the organisation? etc.). Next, the focus is on the future and on questions concerning the desired development of the organisation with regard to system structures and cultural development. Here it is helpful to clarify the timeframe – are we looking at a situation one year from now, two years, ten years? Obviously, no one can know for sure what the organisation will look like in the future, but putting the question on the agenda of a dialogue can be helpful in facilitating a proactive stance, because it helps provide meaning and direction for people's everyday work life – for individual staff members as well as the staff as a whole.

Approaching the quadrant-based organisational analysis as a playful juggling of perspectives, where the four quadrants and their fundamental perspectives are brought into play along with the three time perspectives (past, present, future), is a good exercise in making sure that everyone is heard and clarifying which perspectives people tend to be guided by in what situations. As the process will show, people do not always have the same perspectives in a given situation! This can be used as a

strength if people improve their ability to spot which perspective is in play at a given time. That will increase the likelihood of disagreements becoming meaningful. As in the analysis of a phenomenon, this process too is about *sharing* knowledge or points of view (as well as the perspectives that this knowledge and these points of view spring from) as a basis for considering *shared values* and defining *shared goals* or directions. These goals and directions should then be activated by means of *coordinated actions* where specific actors take specific steps with a view to realising or implementing the shared values/goals/guidelines.

QUADRANT-BASED CONVERSATIONS

The third and last use of the quadrant model that we will present in this booklet is an example where the quadrant model is used as a conversation tool to help us understand why someone else acts as he or she does by *looking at* the person in the four quadrants and *looking as* the person in the four quadrants, that is, by attempting to ‘be in’ the other’s perspective (Figure 8).

PERSPECTIVES ON PERSPECTIVES – ‘LOOKING AT’ AND ‘LOOKING AS’

In quadrant analysis we can distinguish between what J. Hunt & L. Divine call a *looking at* perspective and a *looking as* perspective (Divine, 2009). For example, if we look at a school or an after-school programme, we will see teachers, leaders and other staff, children and young people (and their parents) who take part in the system constituted by the school or the after-school programme. Some of the people in the system will be involved in developing the culture; others are supposed to make sure the system lives up to the requirements it is faced with; and others in turn are users of the system. Everybody is busy doing something. Using the quadrant model as a tool for analysing and learning about what goes on in the system for the various participants, we can look *at* the people who are a part of the system (looking at), or we can try to see things *as* the people who are part of the system by imagining what the world looks like from their perspective (looking as) (Figure 7).

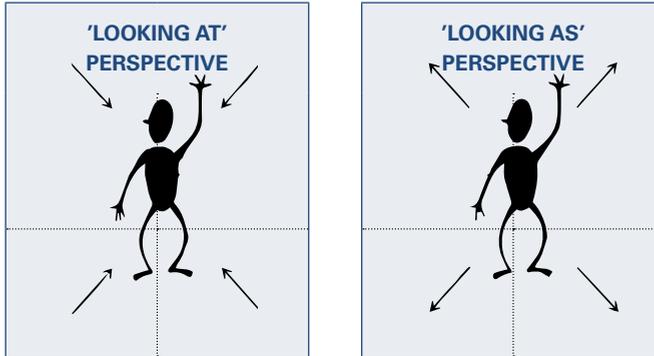


Figure 7: 'Looking at' and 'looking as' perspectives that can be applied in a quadrant analysis (based on Divine, 2009).

In a 'looking at' perspective we see the person from the outside within the four quadrant perspectives in an attempt at understanding how the person has the competence to function. In the 'looking as' perspective, on the other hand, we seek to understand what it might feel like for the person to *be* in the four quadrant perspectives, seen from the person's own perspective (that is from the inside out). Thus, we apply a 'looking at' perspective when we look at someone else, regarding them as a functional object. In that perspective, we may be curious about the functional object that we see the person as in relation to how he or she has the competence to master his or her functions in the system, being a part of the culture and mastering his or her impulses and behaviour. In a 'looking as' perspective, our focus shifts, and we ask ourselves what it might be like to be that person. Here, our focus is not on wondering how the person copes with his or her situation and demands within the four perspectives; instead, our focus is on the person's experience of *being* in the system, in the culture and inside him/herself as a thinking, feeling, acting human being.

The point of including both the 'looking at' and the 'looking as' perspective in the dialogue process is that it can help us notice when we are focusing on the other's functioning, and when we are focusing on what it is like to be the other person in relation to myself while I am being myself in relation to him or her.

For example, one may use the model to engage in a conversation *about* a child or a young person or *about* a group of children/youths in order to examine both what we think might be at play from their perspective, and what we feel is at play. At the same time, we would be aware of the perspective we apply in relating to the child/young person, and whether we are open to seeing the other's/others' perspective. As we become more adept at understanding the other's perspective and at being aware that we understand the other's perspective from our *own* perspective,

we begin to master quadrant mathematics (Wilber, 2006, Appendix II). But that lies outside the scope of the present text.

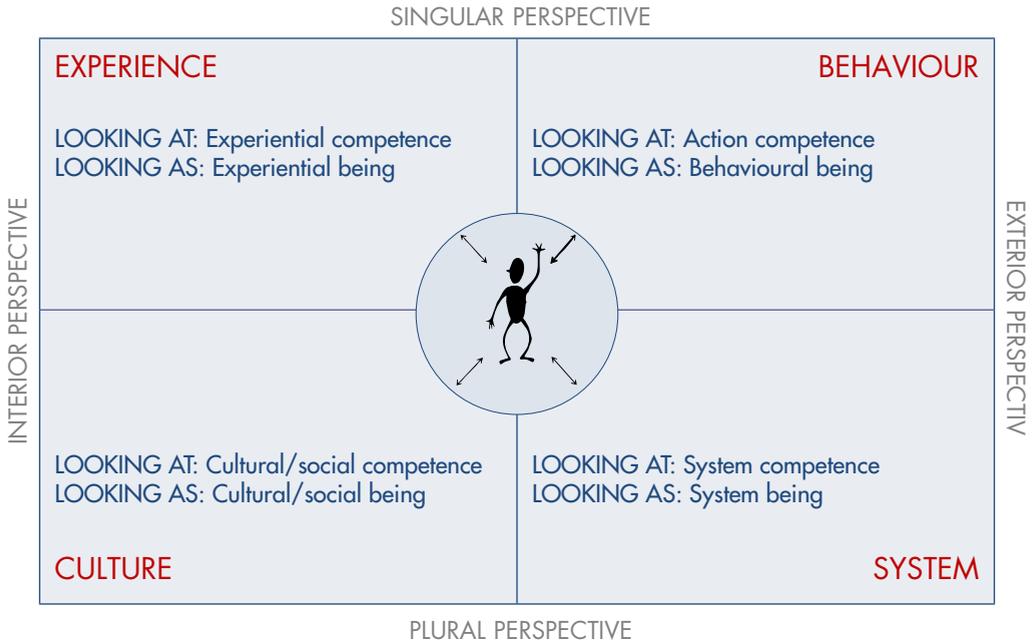


Figure 8: A tool for a quadrant conversation with a person where one distinguishes between applying a perspective **on** a person and striving to adopt the same perspective **as** the person.

The first step in the actual dialogue is to write the focus point in the centre of the model; this might be the name of the child, young person or group that the conversation should be about. The next step is to work one’s way through the quadrant model, engaging in a conversation about one’s perception of the person’s capacity for competent action in each of the quadrants from a detached ‘looking at’ perspective. Some sample questions from the ‘looking at’ perspective:

- **Lower right:**
How does (the person’s name) have the competence to master his/her system and formality quadrant? This includes whether ____ masters relevant technology as well as formal guidelines and requirements etc.
- **Lower left:**
How does ____ have the competence to master his/her cultural and relationship quadrant? This includes participating in groups and in relevant cultures, contributing to the mood in the social space and managing conflicts etc.

➤ *Upper left:*

How does ____ have the competence to master his/her experiential quadrant? This includes exercising impulse regulation, emotional contact, emotional regulation, ability to adopt others' perspectives etc.

➤ *Upper right:*

How does ____ have the competence to master his/her action quadrant? This includes completing tasks and assignments, acting adaptively, overcoming fatigue etc.

After developing an understanding of the child or young person via conversations about what is found in the four quadrants, the analysis switches to a 'looking as' perspective, where one attempts to put oneself in the individual's place. What is the best way to bring one's knowledge about the child/young person into play and develop an understanding of his/her particular experiences of being more or less competent, challenged and accommodated? Below are some sample questions to aid the dialogue – however, it is important to remember that they are merely suggestions for questions that might facilitate practice.

➤ *Lower right:*

How might ____ perceive him/herself in relation to the systems surrounding him/her? Does ____ feel that he/she is able to function within these systems or to influence the regulations that govern the systems?

➤ *Lower left:*

How, when and with whom might ____ experience a sense of belonging, community and/or appreciation? How might ____ feel in his/her relationships with others?

➤ *Upper left:*

How might ____ perceive him/herself and his/her own feelings and thoughts? What might ____ find meaningful?

➤ *Upper right:*

How and when might ____ perceive him/herself as being active and productive?

Once key features have been uncovered in all four quadrants in both a 'looking at' and a 'looking as' perspective, the analysis will have produced a more nuanced and complete impression of what is at stake for the child/young person (or group), and what is at stake for the observer, for example the teacher or social worker. Ideally, this knowledge should be expressed and serve to facilitate a sense of curiosity that

helps one steer clear of a fixed perception of what is at stake for others. Another way of achieving this may be to use the quadrant model in a direct conversation with the young person. In that case, the model provides a framework for a shared exploration of how the young person looks *at* and *as* him/herself. You can read more about this and about some other uses of the quadrant model as a direct dialogue tool in Sonne & Tønnesvang (2015).

Like the other applications of the quadrant model that we have outlined here, this latter example aims to help the participants develop the ability to embrace different perspectives in a way that is both flexible and systematic. The main idea is that a higher degree of reflected awareness of the perspectives that the various actors bring into play at various stages in their mutual interactions will facilitate the *meaningful disagreements* that move our knowledge and practice developments forwards. When we interact in the framework of systems – and certainly in professions that are about working with people – disagreement is a virtue, because we are all unique individuals. And if we want to bring out the best aspects of our differences and bring them into play in our work and collaboration, we have to strive for constructive and meaningful disagreement where our differences are seen in relation to an underlying common frame of reference. The quadrant model offers one such framework.

References

- Divine, L. (2009). Looking AT and looking AS the client. The quadrants as a type of structure lens. *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, 4 (1): 21-39.
- Sonne, M. & Tønnesvang, J. (2015). *Integrative Gestalt Practice: transforming our ways of working with people*. London: Karnac Books.
- Tønnesvang, J. & Hedegaard, N.B. (2015a). *Qualified Self-determination: what it is and how it can be used in practice*. Aarehus: Klim. http://klim.dk/bog/Psykologisk_ilt.htm
- Tønnesvang, J. & Hedegaard, N.B. (2015b). *The Vitalising model: what it is and how it can be used in practice*. Aarhus: Klim – http://klim.dk/bog/Psykologisk_ilt.htm
- Tønnesvang, J. & Hedegaard, N.B. (2013). Inklusionens facetter – et integrativt perspektiv. [The facets of inclusion]. *Kognition & Pædagogik*, 23 (89), 6-17.
- Tønnesvang, J., Nygaard, S.E., Ovesen, M.S., O'Toole, M.S., Hedegaard, N.B., Hansen, M.M., Juhl, H.V. & Nielsen, M.I. (2013). *The research unit for integrative psychology*. <http://psy.au.dk/forskning/forskningsenheder/forskningsenheden-forintegrativ-psykologi/>
- Wilber, K. (1995). *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: the spirit of evolution*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Wilber, K. et al. (2000). *Integral Psychology*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Wilber, K. (2006) *Integral Spirituality: A startling new role for religion in the modern and postmodern world*. Boston: Shambhala.