

Take It Out of Context

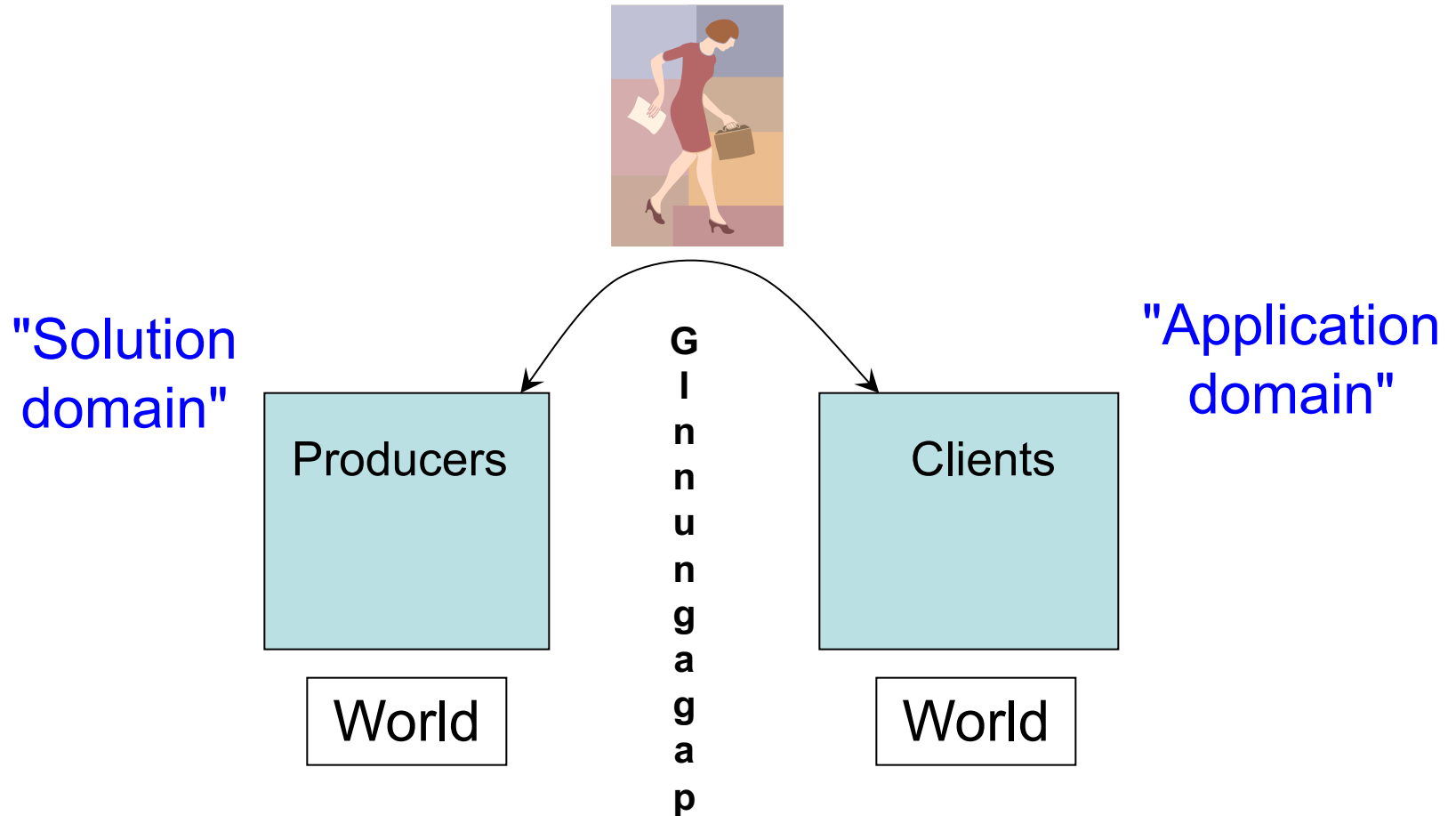
Applying therapy concepts in
other arenas

Computer Systems Analysis

- A crucial step in building software for clients
 - Perhaps *the* crucial step
- Goal: figure out what the system is do to for the clients
- Or: what the clients will do with the system
- "Give them what they would ask for if they knew what we know."

Crossing the Ginnungagap

In Norse mythology, the yawning gap between the world of ice and the world of fire, in which nothing lived.



Clients can't tell analyst what they want

- Clients: experts in how to do their work
- Analyst: expert in how computers work
- To give clients what they would ask for if they knew what analyst knows, analyst has to
 - Understand client work, completely and in detail
 - Client statuses and relationships
 - Client practices
 - Client organization choice principles
 - Identify computer functions that would make that work better

1. "Be on the client's side"

- Analyst is the 800-pound gorilla
- If analyst says, "You need System X," client can't argue.
- Client needs to know: analyst there to make their work better ("better" by client values, not analyst)
- "Appropriately Intentioned Analyst" (AIA)

"AIA"

- Formulation for computer science graduate students
 - Don't understand "be on the client's side"
 - Acronyms make it real
 - Name reminds them of the status
- Purpose: teaching them how to be, in client community

2. "Little white balls"

- "Knocking a little white ball into a hole in the ground with stick, and then doing it all over again."
- Systems analysis version:
 - Analyst: "Tell me about what you do."
 - Client: "I pick up this piece of paper in my in-box, check this box, and put it in my out-box."
- Can't build software based on that

Analyst needs to know

- What boxes on forms mean
- What checking box means
- Where forms come from
- Where forms go

- To get that, analyst needs to find out the *behavior* of which "checking boxes" is the performance

3. Legitimize

- "The key business attributes of the new system -- I am sorry these are a bit vague but that is one reason why we need your help -- are to give an appropriate customer service in supplying products, ..."
- "Why, no, they're not vague at all – they're just not fleshed out yet. That's why I'm here."

4. Body language

- Analyst needs lots of details about how clients do their work (the practices, stages, stages of stages, etc.)
- Found by: asking, "How do you do that?"
- Eventually:
 - Client looks blank
 - Sometimes accompanied by “I just know”, “I get a feeling that ...”, “I’ve been doing this a long time, and you learn those things”

Example: Running the bin

- Practice: McDonald's mgr runs the bin
- Stages:
 1. Decide how much of each item to prepare
 2. Tell cooks to prepare that amount of each item



How?

Decide how much of each item to prepare

- **How?**
- (Blankly) -- "Well, I just sort of look around, think of what's happening, think of events, the weather, I don't know – and decide."

Uh-oh!

A typical analyst error

- "OK, how do you know?"
- "OK, what's your mental process when you're figuring this out?"
- "Well, I understand that, but there's a process, so how do you figure it out, really?"

➤ Yikes!

What to do instead

- Blank looks don't mean, "I don't know."
- They look blank because they *are* blank: there isn't any answer
- Change the question:
 - Instead of "How," ask, "What"?
 - "What's important in running the bin?"
 - "What kinds of things matter in running in the bin?"
 - "What did you look at when you did it yesterday?"

Puzzle

- Why does this work?
 - How come therapy techniques work in computer systems analysis?
 - At first glance:
 - Therapy is to systems analysis as a raven is to a writing desk.

➤ **"We don't read minds; we read situations."**

Peter G. Ossorio

The "situation"

- Therapy both SA require thorough understanding of the person in their community
 - Relationships
 - Behaviors and significance of them
 - The details of the behaviors
 - Choice principles (client's "organizational values")

Applying the principle

- Situation: analyst needs client to understand how they will do their work with the proposed new system
- How do we do that?
 - Verbal explanation? Show features of system? Show a couple of screens?

None of the above

- Maxim: "Seeing is better than believing"
- So: let the clients see it:
 - Show them exactly how they'll do their work practices, using the new system, step by step
 - What they will see on the screen at each step of the practice
 - a super-slo-mo video

The public arena

I am writing to celebrate a rare moment of agreement with David Harsanyi. His quote from the British parliament — “Poppycock, Sir!” — perfectly illustrates both where we could use less “civility,” namely in our disagreements over fact and in the passion with which they are expressed, and where we could use more of it, namely in the **recognition of a worthy opponent**. Such recognition includes respecting the **status of the opponent as a legitimate participant** in the debate, as a **representative of whatever groups** and opinion blocs he is speaking for, and as one whose **eligibilities to participate** in the debate with equally strong conviction and passion are sacrosanct. I look forward to future engagements with Mr. Harsanyi on these grounds.

H. Paul Zeiger
Denver Post, 9/22/09

Now: your turn

- Other maxims/principles/rules from therapy
 - Perhaps:
 - "You only have to strike out the batter that's up."
 - "Promise them anything, but give them increased behavior potential."

Your turn

- Other arenas
 - Perhaps:
 - Organizational consulting?
 - Being a parent?
 - Teaching & classroom management?
 - Others...

Let's make some lists

1. List maxims, rules, reminders, **images** from therapy
2. List some areas of human and/or professional life:
 - Organizational intervention
 - Education
 - Parenting
 - etc.
3. List some things you do in those areas