

From Ego states to Functional Fluency

The Integrating Adult as the most dynamic part of our personality

While preparing for my CTA exam many years ago, I encountered the concept of the 'integrating Adult' for the first time. I was immediately captivated by it, as from my perspective, it added a new dimension to the ego state model, giving me answers to many questions I had about this model.

In this article I would like to describe my own development around the integrating Adult. Step by step I will walk you through the structural model of ego states, the functional model of ego states, the integrated Adult, as described by Berne, ending up with the concept of the integrating Adult. Together they will form the prelude to the last part of this article: the model of Functional Fluency as a teachable and transferable elaboration of the model of the integrating Adult, and the Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF®), a validated 'actometric' personal development tool.

The foundation

When Eric Berne developed his model of Ego states, he could not have imagined that three simple circles placed on top of each other would lead to - often fierce - opinionated rhetoric. Pearl Drego alone described some 20 variations, leaving out numerous, sometimes obscure, ones from the early days of Transactional Analysis (TA).

The structural model

Berne defined an ego state as 'a consistent pattern of feeling and experience directly related to a corresponding consistent pattern of behaviour'. He recognised that there were three types of ego-state in his structural model.



Parent ego state the ego state that contains behaviours, thoughts, and feelings based on past experiences with Parental figures.



Adult ego state the ego state that contains behaviours, thoughts, and feelings that are direct responses to the here and now.



Child ego state the ego state that holds the behaviours, thoughts and feelings of childhood.

Thus far, I could make sense of the ego state model. The Adult ego state responded in the here and now. The Parent and Child ego states reacted from past experiences, which they projected into the here and now.

The functional model

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, TA became popular. Many people began to engage in TA, and this led to numerous, often one dimensional, variations on the original ego state model. The functional model, as a communication model, is the best-known example of this. In it, the original interpretation of the Parent ego state (behaviours, thoughts and feeling patterns of past experiences with parental figures) and the Child ego state (thoughts, behaviours and feelings of childhood) was narrowed down to the two pairs 'Critical Parent/Nurturing Parent' and 'Adjusted Child/Free Child'.



The functional model has been widely embraced because it clarifies communication patterns in a simple way. Therein lies a great strength. The expressive metaphors of Critical and Nurturing Parent and Adapted and Free Child, guided by a rational Adult proved to be recognisable and useful. The complex psychology of communication was reduced to a simple model understandable to all.

After a number of years however, I started to have a nagging feeling. The model no longer sufficed to understand on a deeper level what was happening within and between people. Did the Parent ego state consist only of a 'Critical' and a 'Nurturing' part, and the Child only of an 'Adapted' and a 'Free' part? Didn't the Adult ego state in particular come off poorly as a kind of 'rational cool fish'? This was at odds with the image I have of my own development over the years, in which I experience my spontaneity, pleasure, care, my ability to accept leadership from others and to give direction to myself, increasingly interrelated and balanced in my response to what is happening in my environmental context.

Furthermore, how did the functional model relate to the structural model, in which the Adult includes (all) behaviours, feelings and thoughts, which are direct responses to the here-and-now, the Child includes (all) behaviours, feelings and thoughts from childhood, and the Parent includes (all) behaviours, feelings and thoughts from past experiences of parental figures? This description was so much more comprehensive than those expressed in the functional model.

In an article in 2001, Ian Stewart indicated the limitation of the functional model, stating that the various ego states (CP, NP, A, AC, and FC) were not defined, or were barely defined, and therefore were extremely difficult to distinguish from one another. A clear insight that Stewart's article gave me was the idea that a model, any model, has only a limited scope. A model is about 'creating understanding by sacrificing information'. The leading question is always: what do I want to make clear? Each model suffices in so far as it makes clear what I want to make clear. In my research into 'what is happening on a deeper level within and between people', the simplification was not working for me. It raised too many questions, both for myself personally and in my work as a trainer/coach. I had to go back to basics and

read and understand what ego states are all about.

The Integrated Adult

In his book 'Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy', Eric Berne outlined the second order structure of the Adult as follows:

In his explanation of this diagram, Berne indicates that people in the Adult ego state show 'Child-like' or 'Parental' behaviours, which are not directly ascribed to the Parent or Child ego state, because they are related to the here and now. He mentions that



"certain people when functioning qua Adult have a charm and openness of nature which is reminiscent of that exhibited by children. Along with these go certain responsible feelings toward the rest of humanity which may be subsumed under the classical term "pathos". On the other hand, there are moral qualities which are universally expected of people who undertake grown-up responsibilities, attributes such as courage, sincerity, loyalty, and reliability, and which meet not mere local prejudices, but a world-wide ethics. (Editor's note: which do not merely constitute accepted behaviour in particular cultures, but globally applicable human ethics). In this sense the Adult can be said to have child-like and ethical aspects."

He states that every person functioning as an 'Adult' should ideally exhibit three kinds of tendencies: personal attractiveness and responsiveness (Pathos), objective data-processing (A2) and ethical responsibility (Ethos). Berne assumed that there was some kind of integrative process in the Adult, which would require further investigation in the future.

This interpretation of the Adult ego state resonated with me. The integrated Adult made things come to life and I felt it to be much more in line with what I considered true to the original definition: behaviour, thinking and feeling related to the here and now. Moreover, I was able to recognise my own

ongoing development in the context of this interpretation, in which I was harvesting the benefits of my intense life at home, my work and my developmental path. And in these various contexts - always in relationship with other people - I was able to shape my own further development.

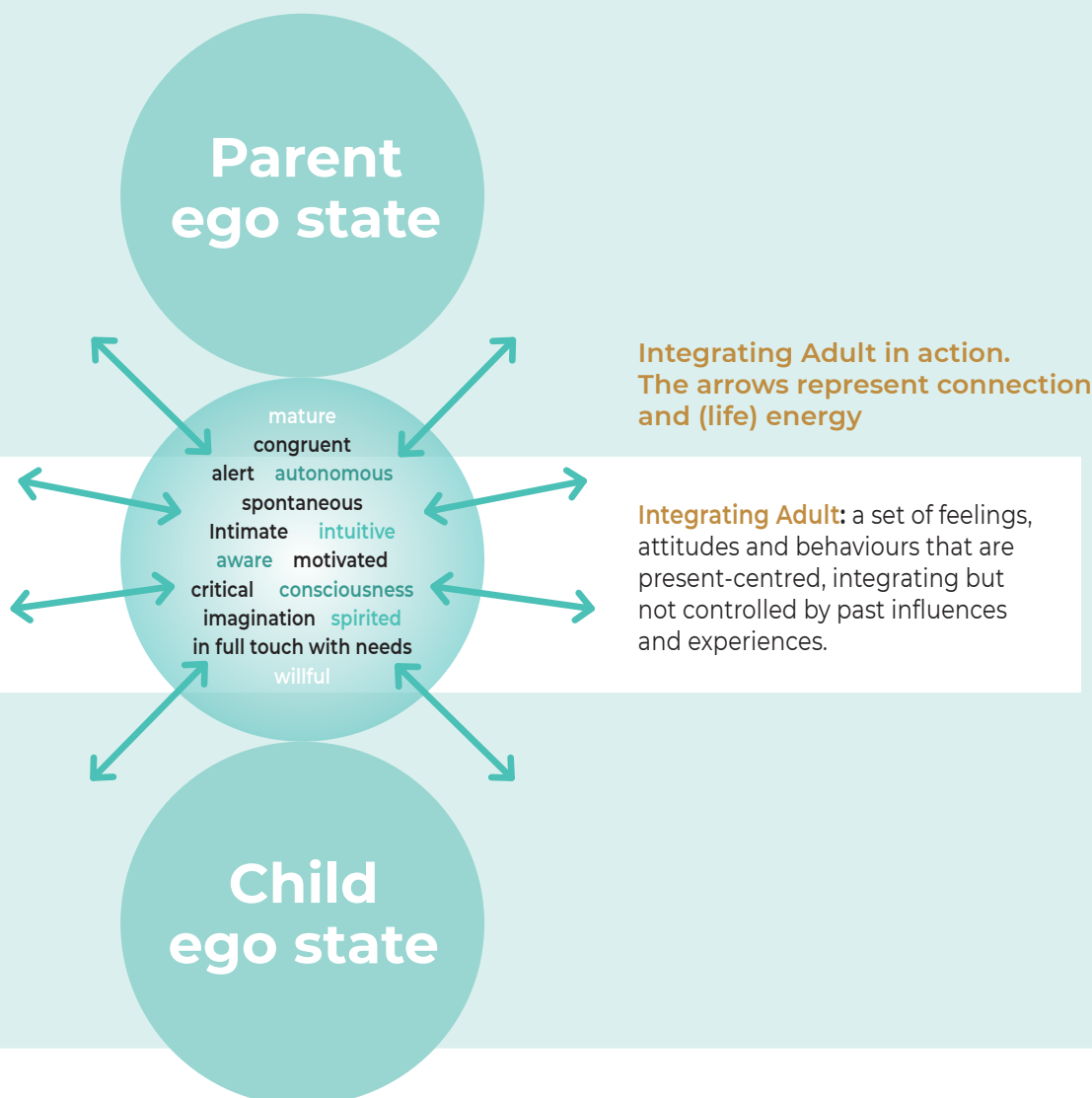
The Integrating Adult

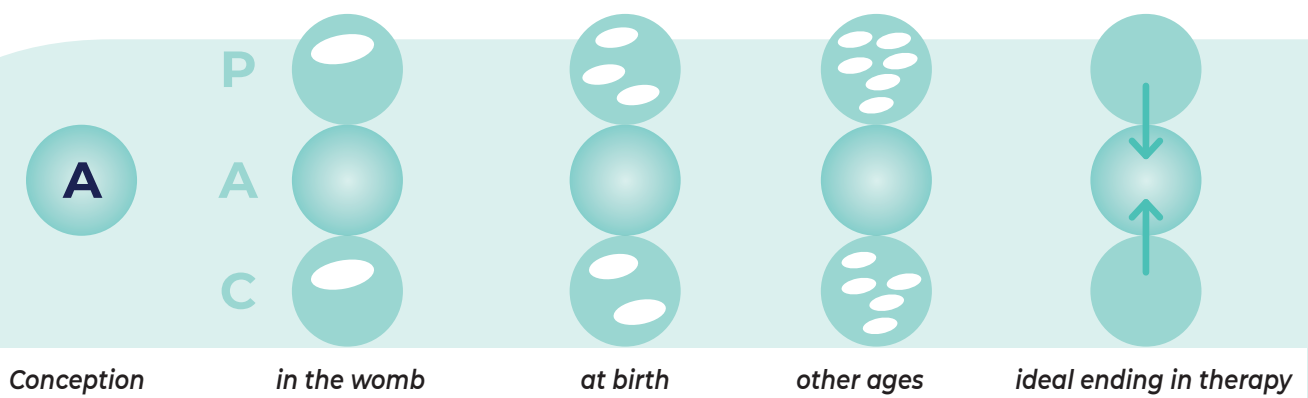
Subsequent authors have elaborated on the integrated Adult. For the purposes of this article, I will mention two; Keith Tudor and Landy Gobes.

Keith Tudor argues that the model of the integrated Adult is a somewhat dull and static one. Instead, he speaks of an integrating Adult; an evolving and expanding Adult ego state, which is characteristic of a pulsating personality that processes and integrates feelings, attitudes, thoughts and behaviours into the here and now of all ages-from birth till death.

This article really touched me. Suddenly I could see the Adult ego state as the most dynamic part of our personality; processing past experiences and integrating them into personal growth in the here and now. Letting go of the transference ideally, then, the Adult grows, and the Parent and Child ego states shrink. The integrating Adult become a part of personal growth. I recognised this in my personal life, and it gave me a better understanding of how to be and work with people in my capacity of trainer/coach.

The above ties in with the thinking of Landy Gobes. She goes one step further and states that the Adult is the first ego state to arise. Subsequently, the Parent and Child ego states develop in reaction to one's own experiences, often difficult to process, and those of parental figures. In Gobes' thinking these unprocessed experiences are given a place and determine to a large extent our reactions to what is happening in the here and now.





The ideal ending in therapy (or personal development: addition by LK) is the integrating of all these experiences in Adult.

Functional Fluency

Tudor's and Gobes' vibrant and dynamic approach appealed to me. At that time, professionally I was looking for more tools that could help make personal effectiveness more insightful, and also more teachable and transferable. This would require creating a certain structure or framework, while remaining cognisant of the fluid dynamics behind it.

In June 2008, Joost Levy from Pro Consult organised a workshop on Functional Fluency, which was given by Susannah Temple. Susannah is an Educational Transactional Analyst from the UK, who is the creator of Functional Fluency and the author of the Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF®), an 'actometric' personal development tool, for which she gained a doctorate in 2002. The Functional Fluency model gave me structure and a 'structuring' to Keith Tudor's and Landy Gobes' thought processes as described. The Functional Fluency model offered me the tool I was looking for! Concrete, focused on developing people's ability to act adequately and effectively.

The Functional Fluency model can be used separately from, and also in relation to, the ego state model.

Susannah Temple thus builds on the thinking of the integrating Adult. She connects it to personal effectiveness and emotional intelligence and on that basis, she developed her model of Functional Fluency. Functional Fluency is about the behavioural aspects of the integrating Adult. It is a model that helps you examine your own behaviour in all realms of life and helps you find ways to change it if you wish to. It gives you a menu of effective behaviours

to choose from – your go-to strengths. Leading questions are: 'Do I and others benefit and am I achieving what matters most.' It helps people become aware of the effect of their behaviour on self and others in all kinds of situations. Temple thus looks at a person's personal effectiveness and his/her ability to use energy appropriately.

As a starting point for her model Susannah Temple defined three basic aspects of social behaviour that are crucial to survival as a human species: **growing up, surviving and upbringing** (raising the next generation). These three categories are referred to as:

Self-actualisation (growing up)

This is about using energy for further self-development. It is about becoming Adult, or "yourself. It is about development of identity.

Reality assessment (surviving)

This is about using energy to respond to the demands of life. It is about being 'with it', responding to the here and now questions of life and finding answers for current issues.

Social responsibility (upbringing)

This is about using energy on behalf of others and self. It is about taking responsibility, not only for children, but also taking professional responsibility, leading, guiding and influencing others, taking charge and taking care of people. It is also about self-responsibility.

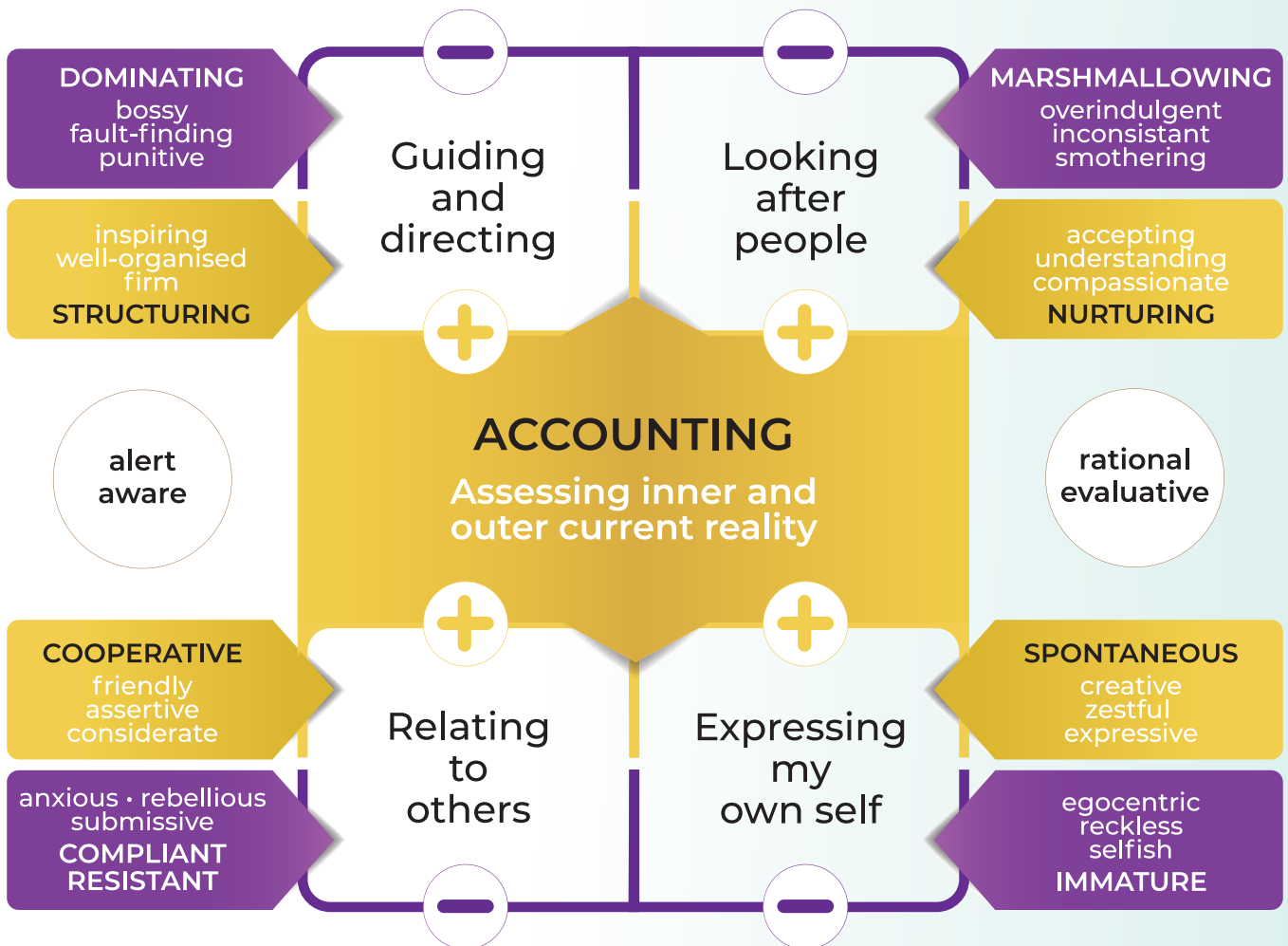
These three categories are then divided into five elements of human social behaviour (level two), showing more detail of the three categories. These five elements name **WHAT we do** with our energy socially.

Social Responsibility is divided into an element of 'control' and an element of 'care'. Reality assessment remains undivided, because in the research process it became apparent that this was difficult to separate; there is only one here and now. Self-realisation is divided into the 'socialised self' and the 'natural self'.

A qualitative distinction is then made between (5) effective modes of behaviour and (4) modes of behaviour, which are comparatively less effective. This qualitative assessment is reflected within the areas of 'social responsibility' and 'self-realisation' in the central question 'how well do I do?'

The element of 'reality assessment' is called the accounting mode. It is the positive opposite of the term 'discounting' which is much better known in TA and has the meaning of: an internal mechanism where the individual minimises or ignores some aspect of reality in the areas of self, others, or the situation.

Accounting is about the ability to properly assess the reality of the moment and be able to determine what behaviour is necessary. As an internal value-free function, the Accounting mode is about doing enough or too much rather than 'effective or ineffective'.

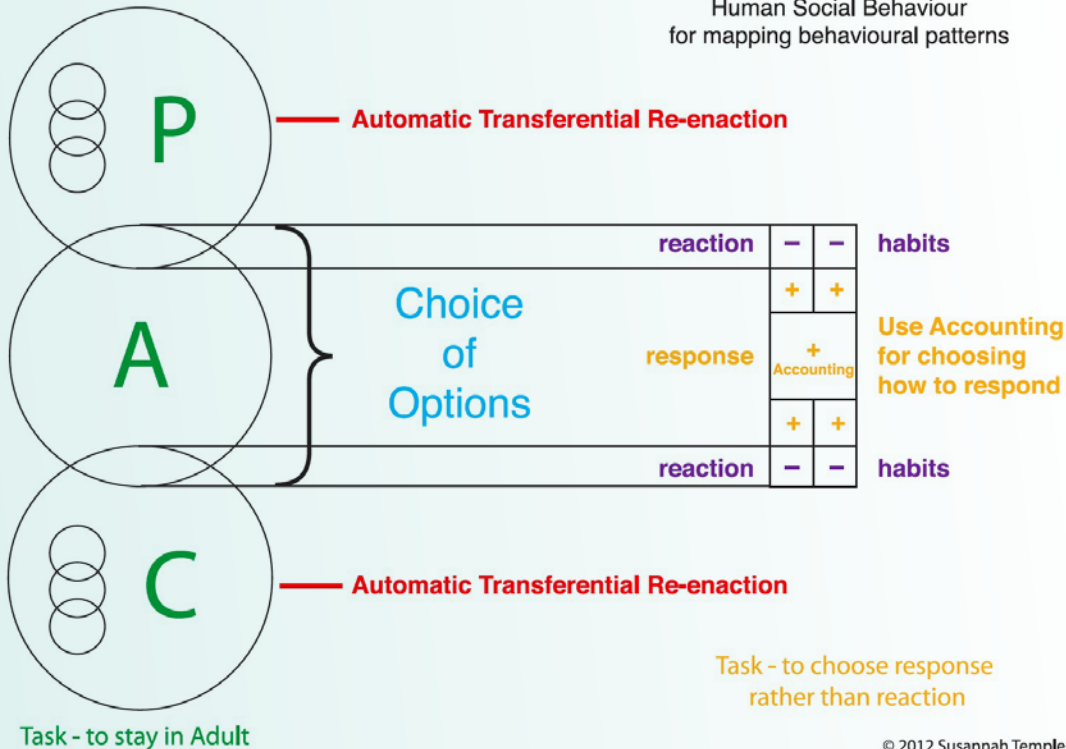


The effective modes of behaviour can all be placed in the integrating Adult part of the ego state model. The ineffective modes are contaminations, formed by (transferential) experiences from the past.

Ego States and Functional Fluency

Integrating Adult Model of Ego States
for mapping transference

Functional Fluency Model
of
Human Social Behaviour
for mapping behavioural patterns



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About Liewe:

Liewe Koopmans is TSTA-O. Together with Rian Hoorens, he translated the work of Susannah Temple into Dutch and introduced Functional Fluency to The Netherlands. He has his own practice for (team) coaching and (group) supervision. He also contributes to Transactional Analysis training in The Netherlands and abroad. Liewe is author of 'This is me; becoming who you are with Transactional Analysis' and 'This is us; the power of the encounter'. 'This is me' has been translated into English, Bulgarian and Russian.

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TIFF® as a Tool for intra- and interpersonal effectiveness

The Functional Fluency model by itself allows a person to 'structure' the dynamics of the integrating Adult. The model is easy to comprehend and to teach. After creating it, Temple developed The Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF®), an instrument that measures a person's distribution of energy over the various modes of behaviour as well as the effectiveness of a person's behaviour. It also shows what one could do to develop greater (intra- and inter) personal effectiveness. After a lengthy research process, she developed a scientifically validated questionnaire with a high degree of reliability. The questionnaire, when completed, provides an individual profile of communication and behavioural patterns.

The 9 behavioural modes of the Functional Fluency model and 6 behavioural descriptors related to each mode, form the basis for the TIFF® questionnaire. TIFF® works as a behavioural diagnosis and as a tool for personal development with the aim of developing self-knowledge and emotional literacy and promoting social skills. The special feature of TIFF® is that it produces a unique personal profile. Unlike many, psychometric, instruments it does not provide 'Types' but gives insight into the way someone does things, how energy is used on behalf of self and others and the effectiveness of this behaviour. It is therefore called an 'actometric' instrument.

In the TIFF®-feedback process, much attention is paid to clarifying the information locked in the profile in such a way that it helps clients to gain insight into their personal strengths, beneficial for themselves and others, and which behaviour might be getting in the way of achieving what really matters most to them. As such, TIFF® is only offered by licensed helping professionals who are trained to provide the necessary guidance. They can help a client explore the deeper meaning of the profile and the way in which they can optimally benefit from the results. Knowledge of Transactional Analysis is a requirement for becoming a TIFF® provider.

Functional Fluency and TIFF® are powerful instruments that can be added to the TA models and concepts for training and coaching purposes.

Training and education

Coaches, trainers and other helping professionals who would like to work with Functional Fluency and TIFF® in their professional practice can become licensed TIFF® Providers. Functional Fluency International offers a four-day TIFF® Provider Licensing Training which is designed to help professionals seeking to enhance their effectiveness with their clients or teams. This accredited experiential course spans approximately 3 months and can be delivered both live and online.

Successful completion of the training will enable participants to access the online TIFF® questionnaire for use with their clients. They will also learn how to use a coaching approach to explain their client's profile to them in a subsequent feedback session.

By completing the TIFF® Provider Licensing Training they will gain a thorough understanding of the award-winning self-development and people development tool, TIFF® – Temple Index of Functional Fluency – and its research base.

All participants also receive a one-year Standard Membership to the global Functional Fluency network when they qualify.

More information

For more information about other Functional Fluency training programs, visit: www.functionalfluency.com