



TACTics Journal

A Publication by and for TOC for Education Practitioners
August 2017 Edition

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Tribute to Eli Goldratt



The TOC Practitioners Alliance (TOCPA) in conjunction with Goldratt Consulting held a tribute to Eli on June 11 at the Goldratt House in Bene Atarot, Israel. The date this year is special because, in addition to memorializing the day of his passing in 2011, this year would have marked his 70th birthday. Those attending

shared special memories and thoughts of Eli—one of whom was **Dr. Shoshi Reiter (Israel)** and whose speech can be viewed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBRXnZ8on_8. Her written text began with a quote that truly resonates:

*"If a man can **bridge the gap** between life and death,*

*if he can live after he's died, **then** maybe he was a **great man**."* James Dean

The TOCfE conference was definitely a testament to our founder...a **great man**.

TOC for Education 15th International Conference: Bridging the Gaps to a Better Life Through TOC Thinking Pathways

By Kathy Suerken, President TOCfE



Picture Courtesy of Maciej Winiarek

“The conference was awesome; the best of any conference I have attended! To me a lot of the presentations were new knowledge or needed extensions of past knowledge”

Dr James Cox (USA) Professor Emeritus, TOCICO Lifetime Achievement Recipient

Breakthrough Implementations and Insights

Have you ever experienced the emotion from thoughts you can't easily verbalize but upon which you feel compelled to act? Perhaps that explains the standing ovation given to **Ke'Aira Smith (USA)** following her presentation to a room filled to capacity with local participants new to TOCfE and TOCfE champions from 13 countries. She began with a courageous revelation of a childhood reality of her family origins without a father and a drug addicted mother who never had custody of her; of physical and emotional abuse experienced in several foster care and group homes; and, after dropping out of high school in 10th grade, being homeless off and on for years—surviving as best she could

At age 20, Ke'Aira was taken under the wing of epic humanitarian **Vickey Bolling (USA)** where she found a mother, a family and a home. Vickey knew about TOC and, at that time, was just beginning her TOCfE training with **Petra Pouw Legene (Netherlands)**. Vickey could see that Ke'Aira was an extraordinary young woman who had dreams but no way to realize them. Survival was all Ke'Aira had known and telling her what to do was not the way to approach the problem. Ke'Aira needed to learn skills to think critically about her goals and the obstacles in her path, determine feasible solutions, and to plan her life knowing that she has a future.

The ending of Ke'Aira's presentation conveys the beginning of a new current reality as she shared a simple, but effective TOC Ambitious Target Tree to complete her GED (High school equivalency), attend college and eventually to have a business in which she will help others.

MY STORY

After signing myself out of foster care, I started to live with my biological mother.

I began to partake in alcohol and drugs.

Then I met Destin Leidner, who introduced me to my mother Vickey Bolling.

My mom, Vickey Bolling, gave me hope, love, and a second chance.

Vickey is the person who introduced me to TOCFE.

With the help of my mom and TOCFE, I have obtained my GED and I will be starting college at the end of May 2017.



Ke'Aira announced during her presentation that she had just achieved a major intermediate objective, passing the GED and that she would be starting the college of her choice later that month.

It is such a powerful experience to hear directly from --instead of about--the beneficiary of a life changing intervention. As TOCfE pioneer **Dr. Belinda Small (USA)** characterized one of her biggest aha moments: *"It is possible to help someone in dire straits heal and perform life well."*

Belinda also shared an insight gained when attending **Denise Meyer's (USA)** workshop to introduce the CLOUD, one that addresses a significant obstacle in teaching: *"The coaching cycle for TOCfE instruction can now be completed in a relatively short time."* The two day local component of the conference consisted of morning case studies and implementations that convey the breath and depth of TOCfE followed by afternoon workshops* to teach the three TOC tools that enabled them. *Several presentations and a flyer that describes the workshops can be downloaded: <http://www.tocforeducation.com/what.html>

The Ambitious Target tool workshop taught by **Debi Roberts (UK)** and **Emma Roberts (UK)** elicited the unsolicited feedback of AmeriCorps Director, **Laurie Von Kaenel (USA)** whose team of 17-25 years old youth attended the workshop: *"Your training will prove extremely useful to my group to set and accomplish some of their goals."* **Marcello Lombard Perez (Mexico)** observed: *"The interaction of such diverse groups in workshops first two days really enriched and enhanced the learning curve for everyone."*

As did the informal interaction throughout the conference as noted by **Motoi Tobita, ('Tobi')Ph.D, Japan** : *"My ahas mainly came from discussion because presentations usually include problems that have already been solved. Discussing open problems during lunch and after sessions is, I think, a source of new knowledge."* Capturing all of it was our servant leader videographer, volunteer **Daniel Brown, (TOCfE Director, Mexico)** shown here videoing a discussion group of TOCfE practitioners from 7 countries during a short break.



Our Destin Florida Embassy Suites venue perfectly supported small and large discussion groups to unpack and analyze insights such as that of educator **Beth Hoffman (USA)** who speculated one reason why participants shared so freely was because Ke'Aira-- in sharing such personal vulnerabilities in front of strangers-- made it safe for others to do so as well. After a follow-up conversation with Ke'Aira, Marcello approached me with a passionate, very compelling concern for youth that have to endure this type of trauma: *"Kathy, TOCfE has to do more to prevent this!"*

It is an undertaking already begun by **Diana Montealague (Colombia)** . She presented her work with children who, although they have already suffered abuse, have been using logic

branches which result in their being willing and able to communicate what is happening to authorities--thereby enabling an earlier intervention. A unedited video of Diana's presentation can be viewed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jefQOekACjU>

TOCfE Sustainability : Bridging the Gaps



The presentations describing break-through implementations with those who have special learning needs was not only inspiring but sparked some epiphanies shared during a 4th day post conference event for TOCfE

leadership devoted to the topic of sustainability and in some follow up feedback.

Christina Cheng (Singapore) reflected: *“After 15 years of TOC, ‘the penny dropped’ when listening to Petra’s dyslexia presentation. I realize now that certain people do not ‘like’ or are unable to grasp TOC because they tend to be ‘right-brained.’ TOC is a strongly left-brained, semantic set of tools. As such, it will not resonate with certain kind of learners. We need to make sure materials and the way we teach them must relate to the way these people learn or we will lose them along the way.”*

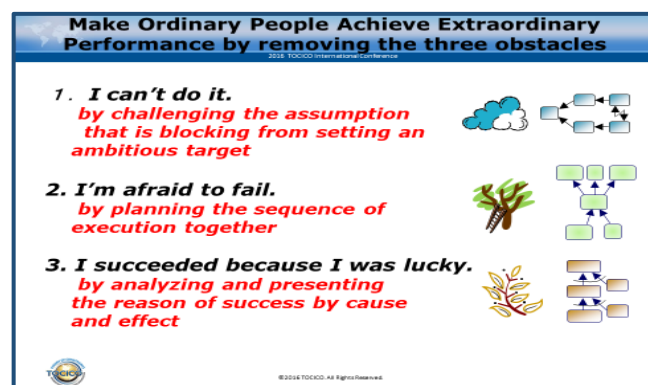
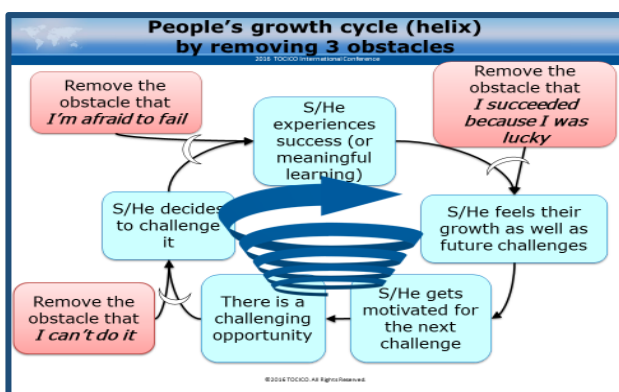
Chris’s insight is an important one for all who educate. There is a lot of research and information on how the dominance of right or left brain hemispheres affect the way people think and learn. Weakness in one or the other is not a learning disability! Generally schools tend to favor left-brain modes of thinking—specific to general rather than whole to part for right-brain thinkers who need to see the ‘big picture first. Most primary schools focus on sequential thinking before right brained children are developmentally read to learn that way. It is suggested by some researchers this can lead to some learning disabilities (dyslexia, ADHD etc) similar to Petra’s research that suggests reading should not be taught until children are developmentally ready.

Conference presentations and workshops demonstrated that our TOCfE teaching methodologies do to address learning styles that meet needs of auditory, visual and kinesthetic learners and in a way that addresses weakness of both left-brained and righted brained learners. In the words of **Cecilia de Solar (Peru)**: *“The power of the tools is universal--not only for different cultures or contexts but also they can be used by everybody no matter language, level of education, cognitive or physical development.”*

That said, knowing that something can be done does not equate to knowing why. Understanding why it works or why it does not is essential to ensure sustainable success. Given that one of the hallmarks of TOC is how it helps develop empathy, when we—as TOC

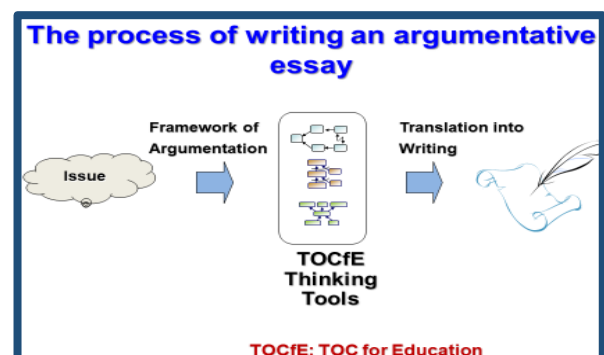
educators-- confront problems in teaching situations we try to be empathetic but... how can you effectively empathize with one way of thinking if you have only experienced the other? **John Suerken (USA)** suggests: *“There are gradations or levels of empathy and we may lack needed experiential intuition when teaching or even in everyday communication with others and may wrongly attribute why we are not being effective. This can happen not only for those who have different brain dominance but even with those who have the same but at different gradation.”* In other words, should we not be ever mindful of Eli Goldratt’s admonition to “Never Say I know!”?

Fortunately we have the tools to check what we ‘think we know’ thereby teaching ourselves as well as others to analyze pathways to success as conveyed in a keynote presentation by **Etsuko Yasada, Japan** and co-authored by Motoi Tobita in which they hypothesize 3 obstacles to human achievement:



As reflected in the right slide above, there is a characteristic evident in all TOC implementations, conference presentations and testimonial reflections. **Marnelli Tolentino, (Philippines)** is an Education Program Supervisor in English and one of 6 Philippine educators who attended the conference. As someone relatively new to TOCfE she observed: *“The simplicity of the tools appeal to me in such a way that it reduces the clutter that normally complicates the problematic situation or the given constraint for any context.”*

The simplicity of TOC was noted in written reflections by many attendees but never more so than in the many complimentary comments on **Dr. Wonjoon Choi’s (South Korea)** workshop on how to use all three tools very simply to write effective discourse.



Rosy Perez-Servin (Mexico) found Wonjoon's work highly motivating for educators as noted: *"Wonjoon's incredibly easy and clear materials made me realize that once you have simple, clear and carefully detailed exercises and procedures, students will succeed and it doesn't matter how difficult the subject may be."* As Director of Ikalo International School in Leon, Rosy is teaching all 3 tools to enable her k-12 students to achieve the goal of "A Productive, Happy and Meaningful Life" as demonstrated in her keynote presentation.

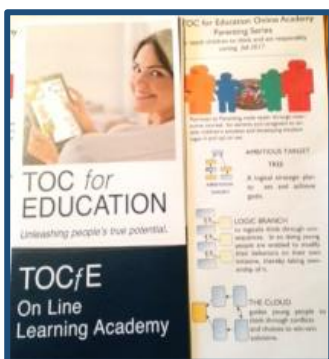
Finally, an article on this conference would not be complete without conveying some of the outcomes it inspired and enabled in the short time since the event took place:

Post Conference Results Include:



TOCICO Marta Piernakowska's (Poland) presentation (http://tocforeducation.com/TOC_Marta.pdf) of the TOC thinking pathways for youth who have autism, cerebral palsy and other special learning needs was so powerful that she was invited to be a keynote speaker at the TOC International Certification Organization (TOCICO) July conference in Berlin during which **Andrew Kay** (TOCFE Director, **Australia**) reported Marta received: *"A spontaneous standing ovation for her Key note address (6 years since the last one at a TOCICO conference.)"*

Lead Coalition. Janice Lucas (USA), who teaches at Gulf Coast College, is the Director of Lead Coalition in Panama City, Florida –an organization to deal with violence in the community. Janice was introduced to TOC in June 2016 through a "Pathways to Peace" workshop organized by Rotarians. Following her participation in the conference workshops, I was invited to teach the CLOUD on June 8 to 20 Panama City teachers who are working with at-risk students during a summer program sponsored by a government grant.



TOC for Education Online Academy in partnership with Thinking Pathways and Academy Director, **Dr. Danilo Sirias (USA)** announces that a parenting series to guide children to think and act responsibly is coming in the fall of 2017. **Ana Maria Conde, (Colombia)** who teaches TOC tools in her work at Edu 1st Inc, particularly took note of *"the potential we have to do joint projects and the online platform is the proof of what TOCfE can build together"*---something to which she very much plans to contribute.

TOCfE Partnerships with Rotary

By Kathy Suerken

After attending the conference, **Kim Koutnik (USA)** of the Rotary Club of Tallahassee commented: *“As a Rotarian, I was deeply impressed with the positive impact of TOC for Education and possible implementations for Rotary programs.”* The synergy between the goals and ideals of TOC for Education and that of Rotary makes their partnerships a



rewarding and sustainable win-win. This reality is well modelled by TOCfE's partnership with **Mid-Bay Rotary Club of Niceville, USA** and its' sister club, **Makati Central of the Philippines** which has



supported TOCfE initiatives since 1998. This year the both clubs provided funding in support of the conference which was attended by 10 Rotarians from several Florida cities. **Juan Andrada (USA)** of the Rotary Club of Panama City observed: *“The conference was the perfect way to learn the different ways that TOCfE is changing the world. Hearing how many people from all over the world are applying TOCfE –and even more are benefiting from that, gives me hope that conflict resolution through peaceful means is still alive and well and, in some countries, thriving.”*

Serendipitous Odyssey of the (TOC) Minds

By Maciej Winiarek



Seven students of Thinking Zone (TOC School from Poland) had a unique chance to meet the creator of Problem Solving Maps – Dr Danilo Sirias. They were taking part in an international creative problem solving program (Odyssey of the Mind). It was the world final competition and our students were 3rd among more than 100 teams

from all over the world! Just after their final presentation they jumped into the car and 60 min later they were at Sirias' university and spent with him around 4 hrs. These children know PSM because we use them in our school. For them it was a real privilege and opportunity to talk with him, see the university, and know how to get back there in the future.

Thank you Dr. Sirias for this huge opportunity. We believe that this visit will be inspirational for them for many years.

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