



Newsletter of the International Academy of Family Psychology



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Welcome to the International Academy of Family Psychology (IAFP)

I want to welcome you to the International Academy of Family Psychology (IAFP). Because of its systemic approach which views persons as residing in relational networks, IAFP is perfectly positioned to work with diverse cultures in the field of International psychology. While contemporary psychology has a significant presence in only 47 out of 129 countries, it is expanding rapidly in the 21st century and as it expands into non-Western countries, a process of syncretistic indigenization is taking place, where indigenous psychologists are re-making the discipline according to their own cultural zeitgeist. IAFP strongly supports the development of indigenous based psychology and is therefore an excellent place for cross cultural dialogue, shared treatment innovations and for scientific cross pollination.

Some of the leading figures in family psychology were founders of IAFP; Kenji Kameguchi, Florence Kaslow, Luciano L'Abate and David Olson to name a handful. They recognized decades ago that the future of psychology is in a family based approach and that psychology is a discipline that knows no borders. The Academy has been in existence for decades and has

convened landmark congresses in Atlanta Georgia, Cardiff, Wales and most recently in Tokyo, Japan. The next congress is slated to take place the summer of 2017 in



Seattle, Washington. As a member of IAFP you will be poised to interact with the leading family psychologists in the world. You will be in a position to give and receive the latest research data and clinical innovations in disciplines as diverse as disaster psychology, international psychology ethics, child and family psychology, cultural diversity, clinical psychology around the world and more. We want to extend a heartfelt hand to you as you contemplate joining us in an exciting adventure, embracing the future now.

John W. Thoburn, Ph.D. ABPP
Seattle Pacific University



President's Farewell

Kenji Kameguchi

Future Collaboration in International Family Psychology

I want to say thank you to all those who participated to Tokyo Conference of IAFP held in 2013. It was jointly organized with The 30th Annual Conference of Japanese Association of Family Psychology (JAFFP). Around 500 participants gathered to the 2013 theme, "Family Collaboration against Global and Local Crisis."

The Japanese people have suffered immensely from the disasters that occurred on March 11, 2011. Many people continue to experience psychological problems from the tragic loss of family members. However, we are gradually overcoming these traumas through social support and family collaboration.

Similarly, other countries have been confronted with local and global crises. It is clear that we need effective programs for the prevention and intervention of psychological problems of families trapped in multiple crises. IAFP will be a symbolic organization for the international collaboration of the global family support system. The new president of IAFP, Dr. John Thoburn, will address this important role of IAFP at the Seattle Conference in 2017.

Respectfully,

Kenji Kameguchi, Ph. D. Professor emeritus, The University of Tokyo

A Florentine Visionary Lives in Decatur, Georgia

Are Relational Competence Theory and Its Applications the Wave of the Future?



The first time I met this Florentine visionary was about seven years ago in Franco's Pizzeria off Cheshire Bridge Road in Atlanta. I was assisting another psychologist, David Ryback, in the completion of a chapter commissioned by Luciano L'Abate for one of his edited books. L'Abate appeared as a unique individual with a proclivity for conversation, and I was glad to have the opportunity to practice my Italian since I studied it in Florence with Middlebury College.

L'Abate's proficiency in Florentine Italian was superb, making me suspect he would have been an excellent editor even in his own country of Italy. Never before had I met such an interesting guy who was obviously an imaginative, innovative, and creative visionary.

We spent what seemed like a three short hours at Franco's Pizzeria. L'Abate is such a humble and medium size gentleman that one might not have recognized him as a vital, world-wide known scholar except for when he expanded upon psychological theory. He seemed to relate well to our group of friends as well as waiters and staff. He is called Lu by all his friends who know him in the USA. He quips that his enemies call him Dr. L'Abate.

Personally, Lu is the polar opposite of the stereotypical researcher. Rather than being introverted and aloof, he is agreeably gregarious and makes friends easily. He regularly enjoys spending time with his two grandchildren, especially when they play amusing games like Scrabble. His daily routine typically begins with answering email correspondence and working on his publications. After lunch, he swims for 30 minutes with some weight training. A lover of classical music, Lu regularly attends the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Atlanta Master Chorale, which is located very near his home. As an extravert, he makes friends with people from all walks of life and can

speak effectively with anyone he meets. He is also involved with the *Societa' Italiana* of Atlanta and enjoys also attending the annual Italian film festival. In addition to playing cards with two different groups of Emory-area and neighborhood friends, during the last two years, Lu has become involved with the Society for Technology and Psychology in an effort to help it become another division of the American Psychological Association (APA).

As busy and engaged as ever, last year Lu gave seminars at the Catholic University in Milan and the Psychiatry department of the University of Rome. He also gave a plenary speech at an international convention of counselors in Padua. In August of 2013 he presented a paper during a symposium at the annual APA convention in Hawaii, which focused on the slow decline and possible demise of the traditional family. In late August 2013, Lu was invited to give two workshops in Tokyo, Japan, for the International Academy of Family Psychology (IAFP) which he helped found in Kyoto 23 years ago. Last year in Tokyo for the 8th convention of this Academy, Lu received star treatment from his Japanese colleagues and friends some of whom sent him delicious Japanese chestnut candies that Lu really enjoyed.

There is the possibility that Japanese family therapists and academic researchers might embrace the models and theories of this Florentine visionary. His theory and mental health applications could impact the culture of mainstream psychology across the globe in its transition from an auditory-verbal (ears-mouth) to a visual-digital (eyes-fingers) technology.

Why do I keep calling him a visionary? Over his academic career, Lu, in addition to over

300 articles, chapters, and book reviews in professional and scientific journals, authored, co-authored, edited and co-edited fifty-eight books, with the 59th and 60th in preparation. This prolificacy has been met by many comments from his colleagues, not all of them included here. Some of these testimonials come from colleagues and friends who are familiar with his record of publications. For instance, Gerald Weeks, Professor in the Marriage and Family Program, University of Las Vegas, his former student and co-author with Lu of an extremely successful book on paradoxical therapy, wrote,

"Luciano L'Abate is considered the founder of the field of family psychology. He is highly creative, has an enormous command of the literature in a wide range of fields, and can effectively synthesize this information."

Recently, Gerald asked:

I am curious about something, Lu. You keep up with all the literature yet you are retired and not at the university. How do you keep up? Do you have someone do the literature reviews for you? I want to keep up when I retire but I don't know how it is done?

Lu replied to this question with this answer:

This is a question that all my friends keep asking me. First of all, I kept a large library which I used to write and support my latest "Beyond the systems paradigm: Emerging constructs in family and

personality psychology." (Springer). *Afterwards, I donated these 900+ books with hundreds of journals to my Alma Mater, Tabor College in Hillsboro, KS. Second, I kept notes, collected over the years, with copies of relevant articles in separate drawers for each topic of interest. Third, I tried to remember as many details as I could about a particular topic. Fourth, I do not have worries of classes, faculty meetings, spoon-feeding students, and private practice. So I do have ample time to think and write besides playing cards 2 or 3 times a month with two different groups of buddies, attending concerts at least once a week, and travel when I can (one month off last June to Italy and Europe).*

In a Foreword to one of Lu's latest books, Richard Sauber, Chief Editor of the *American Journal of Family Therapy*, stated, "A growing force of international leaders in Germany, Italy, Japan, and Poland have always valued his original thinking and foundation milestones . . .". Similarly, Danny Wedding, the editor of *Psyche-CRITIQUES*, the online book review journal published by the American Psychological Association, noted that Lu was the most frequently reviewed author who wrote also more book reviews than anyone else in that journal.

Beyond the testimonials that relate to the importance of Lu's work in the field of psychology, many others focus on more global contributions. For instance, Rubin Battino, a friend of Lu since their graduate years at Duke, Professor Emeritus of

Chemistry from Wayne State University and author of several books on psychotherapy, considers Lu's work on *Hurt Feelings* (Cambridge, 2011) to be nothing short of outstanding:

"Hurt feelings are an overlooked area in psychotherapy (and other fields), and this book will get many professionals to thinking in new and productive ways. His work on programmed writing (also called workbooks and distance writing) is pioneering and he has established himself as a central figure in this new and emerging area."

Arthur Horne, former Dean of Education at the University of Georgia, notes that Lu "... has been one of the primary scholars in applied psychology for more than five decades." He added that L'Abate made psychology more effective and more affordable. University of Nebraska at Omaha professor of psychology Robert Woody observes, "Dr. L'Abate has dared to investigate and create highly innovative ideas and strategies." Alan Kazdin, John M. Musser Professor of Psychology & Child Psychiatry, Department of Psychology at Yale and a former APA President offered his thoughts on that subject:

"Dr. L'Abate has made remarkable contributions. His most recent work has reflected a wave of thoughtful and innovative books, points the way for expanding how we conceptualize and provide services to reduce the burdens of mental illness and elevate the well-being, functioning, and happiness of our citizens. Traditional psychological services have their own contributions—Dr. L'Abate has shown how greatly

expanded interventions beyond the limited purview of psychotherapy techniques and novel, low-cost ways of delivering these expanded ways can make a huge difference. He points the way—now we have to mobilize researchers and clinicians to pursue the paths. (email to author, August 2013).

Mario Cusinato, his Italian collaborator and author of an Italian book on Relational Competence Theory (RCT), described his relationship with Lu:

My friendship and collaboration with Luciano dates back to 1988 when I invited him to the University of Padova as a visiting professor to teach a course on Family Psychology. Then I spent a semester (1989-90) with him as Visiting Professor, thus, working together for six months, during which time was born the idea of the International Academy of Family Psychology (IAFP), which we formalized in Tokyo in 1990. Then followed international meetings in Padua, Athens (GA), Heidelberg (Germany), Cardiff (Wales), and Callaway Gardens (GA).

Cusinato also described the collaboration that occurred between the two as:

"We have worked in the construction of RCT: him mainly at the theoretical level and I at the empirical level, creating and validating assessment tools and validation of (models) of the theory."

Eleonora Maino, a student of Cusinato,

who now teaches both at the State University of Milan and the Catholic University of Milan, remains an avid follower of L'Abate's theory in her practice:

"I find it extremely useful in my (clinical) practice to help people reflect on the crucial concepts of models in the RCT, especially with regards to the attribution of importance to oneself and other significant individuals, the capacity of differentiating oneself from other significant individuals, the necessity of utilizing the five components of the first model, ERAAwC (emotionality, rationality, activity, awareness, and context), in a balanced manner as well as the crucial role of feelings (emotions and sentiments) in relationships and the importance of sharing emotions with others".

In addition to Lu's professional contributions, his generosity and devotion to his Alma Mater seems boundless. For example, Robin Ottison, a former librarian at Tabor College, thanked him recently for having donated more than 900 psychology books and hundreds of professional and scientific journals from his personal collection:

"Indeed, Lu's impact on Tabor College has been tremendous. Not only does he continue to hold Tabor close to his heart, he is always ready to assist that institution in any way he can."

In a recent interview, Lu explained how his connection to Tabor College and his strong Waldensian identity represented the foundation for his pursuing a career in

psychology. Lu's experience at a small American Mennonite college enabled him to combine the best of both worlds and prepared him to eventually expand in theory and practice in his later years.

Given the depth and seeming validation of Lu's work, it is indeed surprising that US psychologists have not yet begun to employ his theory and its applications, despite him having been recognized as Family Psychologist of the Year (1994) by the Family Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association (APA) and despite him having received an award in 2009 from the APA for Distinguished Professional Contribution to Applied Research. There certainly would be many opportunities to put his theories to more use in America as has been done in Italy.

Born in Brindisi, Italy in 1928, Lu was raised in Florence where he was exposed very early in life to great thinkers from a variety of disciplines. Due to Florence's distinguished history as a cradle of the Renaissance, Lu was exposed to the timeless works of Italian literature and poetry. His ideological idols were fellow Florentines Galileo Galilei and Nicolo' Machiavelli, who inspired him to expand his own empirical philosophy. Although he concentrated on athletics (including wrestling, volley-ball, and gymnastics) rather than on academic works during the time he spent in a scientific lyceum, Lu relaxed at the youthful age of eleven onward by insatiably reading translated works of American authors including John Steinbeck (*The Grapes of Wrath*), John Dos Passos, Pearl S. Buck, Jack London—and of course, Margaret Mitchell. Little did he know then, that he would end up in Decatur, Georgia, a close

suburb of Atlanta.

Lu started his first year at the University of Florence as a student of architecture, a field that taught him to "think big." Architecture had a profound effect on Lu's perception of visual models and paradigms, which he eventually translated to psychology. In fact, even before he realized that his future would focus on psychology, he already laid out the course those studies would take, as well as the approach he would use to incorporate the precision and creativity of architecture in his application of psychological counseling. Having been raised a Protestant Waldensian, Lu developed a strong work ethic and a passion for helping people, which allowed him to realize that, as a psychologist, he would finally be able to contribute to the well-being of people—of any nationality.

When he was 20 years old, Lu garnered sponsorship by the Mennonite Central Committee, and thanks to the help and friendship of the late Dick Bentzinger, a WWII-era Conscientious Objector and former Bishop of the United Methodist Church of Iowa, Lu was selected to attend Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas. The Tabor faculty was excellent in Lu's opinion, particularly when its members demonstrated that they wanted to learn about him and were genuinely concerned with helping him succeed in his studies. Not only did Lu benefit from close, personal interactions with the faculty, but he also made many friends at the small school. He graduated from Tabor College in just two years with majors in psychology and English and a minor in Bible studies. Meanwhile he worked part-time at night in the local creamery. Soon afterward, he received a scholarship to attend Wichita (State) University where he earned an MA

Degree. Even then he worked first as a janitor and later as an attendant in the psychiatric ward of the local medical center.

While in Wichita working on a Master Degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology, Lu took a course on Family Sociology that inspired him. When he tried to introduce a course by the name of Family Psychology at Georgia State University, the head of the sociology department protested because at the time, the “family” belonged to sociology rather than psychology. Coincidentally, Lu finessed the name of the course to Personality Development in the Family.

Following the MA Degree in Psychology, Lu was awarded an assistantship, and three years later he completed coursework and a dissertation for a PhD from Duke University. The time he spent at Duke was singularly valuable as the experience allowed sufficient time for introspection. This helped L’Abate coin his own philosophy, a professional, academic achievement that was markedly different from his peers of the time.

With his first job as a clinical psychologist at the Pitt County Health Department in Greenville, North Carolina, he also received a research appointment at Eastern Carolina College, now a University. Lu later received a US Public Health-sponsored postdoctoral fellowship at Michael Hospital in Chicago. As Dr. L’Abate explored the myriad paradigms that define child psychotherapy, he became acquainted with Chicagoan Bess “Basiliki” Lukas, who would become his wife of 53 years and mother of their twins, John and Elizabeth. Bess L’Abate unflinchingly supported her husband’s

endeavors more than anyone else and eventually collaborated with him in part-time private practice after she earned a degree in social work from Atlanta University on a National Institutes of Mental Health.

Not long after the honeymoon, Lu accepted a position in the Department of Psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, where he was able to build the first psychological laboratory in St. Louis’ Children’s Hospital. After the next move to Atlanta, Lu practiced for a year at Emory University’s Department of Psychiatry, but he soon discovered that his ideas were distinctly different from those of his psychiatric colleagues. Thus, after a very brief tenure as an associate professor, he accepted a full professorship at the institution that would eventually become Georgia State University (GSU). There, Lu was given the laboratory space he needed to develop the world’s first *monitored play therapy room*. Shortly after, he developed the world’s first PhD program in family psychology in which he mentored 30 doctoral candidates and an equal number of master’s degree theses. Indeed, a significant portion of GSU’s growth can be attributed to L’Abate’s active promotion of its once fledgling department of psychology and his publishing in the field.

At the time, Lu received calls from colleagues across the country wondering how he would have ruined his reputation by signing on to what they deemed a small, irrelevant school. Some believed that one needed to teach at an Ivey League school to achieve success, but L’Abate proved them wrong. As he now says, “It’s not where you get the degree, it’s what you do with it that counts.” Ten years later, some of those same colleagues called him wishing to jump on board to what had become

Georgia State University (GSU), a Level IV Research University. The psychology department had grown from a handful of beginning instructors to a full-time faculty of thirty professors at various levels. One condition for accepting his position at GSU was the construction of a first-of-its kind, electrically monitored therapeutic playroom. With the help of his students, Lu also created and tested structured enrichment programs for couples and families that would pre-date the creation of dozens interactive practice exercises or workbooks for functional and dysfunctional individuals, couples, and families.

GSU became the home of Lu's first automated playroom leading to a laboratory method in clinical psychology and technology in the neurosciences. According to Lu, "Play is a relational behavior because it occurs between one individual alone and the individual's environment or among individuals through the mediation of objects used as toys" (L'Abate, 2009, p. 215). It was in Atlanta that he first put this philosophy into practice with children who interacted with toys in the automated and monitored playroom.

Since its first "field" application, play therapy has continued as an effective and well-liked means of dealing with issues faced by troubled children. The approach was recognized in a full-page story in the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* (Nov. 1971). Children enjoyed the process. Lu's very successful efforts in play therapy eventually led to his book, *Play Across the Life Cycle* (ABC-Clio, 2009).

In spite of early retirement from GSU in December 1990 to concentrate on research and writing, Lu remained in touch with GSU's Emeriti Professors group as well as with the former department head and friend

Duane M. Rumbaugh, a renowned primatologist and founder of GSU's notable Language Research Laboratory. After Lu went into retirement, the PhD Program in Family Psychology, a first in the world, was terminated at GSU. This was a great loss to the city and community. Hopefully, the university will one day revisit the idea of offering a PhD in Family Psychology.

Certainly, Atlanta was privileged to be the home of such important research. Atlanta certainly provided L'Abate fertile ground for the growth of his theoretical and practical contribution. Atlanta, a regular entry on the list of America's most prosperous cities, has grown by leaps and bounds in the past half century alone. After losing his wife of 53 years, Lu moved to Decatur, an important suburb in the city. Atlanta is a transportation nexus in every sense of the word. The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has consistently been the world's busiest airport since 1998, thus making Atlanta a favorite convention destination both nationally and internationally.

Atlanta has become not only an important US city, but also a vital global metropolis that ranks economically in the world's top 20 cities. Founded originally as Terminus, a link between Savannah and the Midwest along the Western and Atlantic Railroad, the little town was renamed Thrasherville and then Marthasville. It was not known as Atlanta until 1847. From the start, Atlanta has been an epicenter of expansion, innovation, and originality, and it has always attracted some of the world's most gifted people and promising businesses. These attractions keep Luciano here even when he has been tempted to return to lovely Florence.

Atlanta has achieved far too many firsts to be listed in an article this length, but its noteworthy historical facts are numerous and varied. For instance, Atlanta was the home of *Atlanta-Journal* writer and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Margaret Mitchell. Accordingly, the Academy Award-winning film version of her work, *Gone with the Wind*, premiered in Atlanta on December 15, 1939. Further, the city was (and is) home to the Coca-Cola Company, which developed the formula for a health elixir into a global brand worth billions of dollars. Of course, Atlanta is the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the acknowledged headquarters of the civil rights movement in the United States. In fact, when the movement began, Atlanta laid claim to a million residents in three counties, but after it hosted the Summer Olympics in 1996, the population had grown to 6 million people living in an area that spans 23 counties.

A distinguished home of the Arts, commerce, high technology, and applied logistics, Atlanta is also an advanced education destination as evidenced by many highly accredited institutions including Spellman College, the Clark-Atlanta University, Morehouse College and its Medical School, the Georgia Institute of Technology, SCAD-Atlanta, and Emory University. Indeed, GSU has grown from its humble beginnings as an extension division of the University of Georgia to become a Level 4 research university.

Of course, Atlanta's own success, as well as the achievements of its many businesses, educational institutions and media concerns (to name a few), can

be attributed—at least in part—to visionaries who were able to see well beyond their extant circumstances. In addition to luminaries such as Ted Turner (CNN), Spike Lee (film), Bernard Markus and Arthur Blank (Home Depot) and Catherine Cox (Atlanta-Journal Constitution), Atlanta is privileged to include Luciano L'Abate among its most distinguished residents. Lu is known as the father of family psychology and of the relational competence theory (RCT). Having integrated psychological studies with online workbooks and e-books, Dr. Luciano L'Abate has been able to spread his expertise beyond the United States to Australia, Japan, Germany, New Zealand, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Canada. He is a sought-after presenter whose groundbreaking work could influence the lives of thousands of people the world over.

Atlanta, the hub of this research, has grown in the last 45 years from 3 counties and 1 million people to 23 counties and 6 million people. This city remains a nucleus for transportation via Atlanta Hartsfield Airport, a city where people hold conventions and meetings to share ideas from across the world. Writers, psychologists, artists, and business people meet in this city to share exceptional concepts that benefit the world in which we live. Luciano loves getting to know people from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests in this city, and he has developed an extensive network of friends with whom he likes to attend shows like the Rockettes that recently visited the Cobb Center.

The city offers much culture and arts like the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in addition to Emory University's Chorus and Clayton State's Spivey Hall. It is no wonder that in such a stimulating city of arts and

communication, Lu's Italian creativity emerged and expanded upon Relational Competence Theory (RCT).

RCT explores the individual in the context of extended intimate relationships.

Of much importance is Lu's creation of relational competence theory, a conceptual hierarchical framework that explores individuals in the context of prolonged intimate relationships. It is not enough to explore the patient's personality alone in a vacuum. As an alternative, one must understand the triangle in which the patient plays various roles of victim, persecutor, and savior, while moving in and out of these roles, something that we all do. Another of his major accomplishments was his treatise on Relational Competence Theory, the first hierarchical theory rather than a linear one, consisting of one-chapter after another, without connections among its parts.

Lu concluded that typical psychological approaches to exploring an individual's personality within an artificial environment were not effective. He noted that therapists must understand the nature of underlying relationships by identifying a new range of human relationships that include the ways we relate to each other in short and factitious, as well as enduring relationships. After refining and expanding his novel approach in various publications between 1976 and 2013, Lu constructed his theory by applying informative architectural precepts from which its formal, pyramidal, and hierarchical structure derived.

Lu created 16 models and evaluated all of them in Padua, Italy, with the help of

Cusinato. He connected these models to tests and to workbooks as well as linked evaluation with intervention. This method of construction represented a distinct departure from linear personality theories in which topics flowed one after another, and all exhibited only vague relationships with their respective components. In contrast, Lu asserted that this theory had to satisfy some primary requirements. For instance, the RCT had to be verifiable through experimental evidence. The theory had to be applicable to both normal and abnormal individuals, couples, and families. It had to offer some redundancy, such that certain multidimensional constructs (such as love as well as normal and abnormal behavior) could be assessed by models capable of describing elements such as closeness, community, importance, intimacy, and priorities.

Finally, Lu realized that his RCT had to facilitate the ways and means that it would be used to evaluate each of its components. Understandably, models not only need to be redundant in their ability to view the same constructs from a variety of perspectives, but they must also stimulate research and introduce preventive and psychotherapeutic applications.

The hierarchical structure of RCT is difficult to understand, even by the most accomplished psychologists since it includes 16 models divided hierarchically into four levels of complexity. All models must be demonstrable in the laboratory and clinic and apply to normal as well as abnormal relationships. The first level contains three assumptions that surpass the theory itself and includes elements that have been verified repeatedly prior to

and outside the theory. The first and most fundamental Model¹ was mentioned above by Eleanora Maino as the ERAAwC progression, and finally after ten years of research, Mario Cusinato successfully differentiated between two types of awareness: awareness of awareness, and awareness as a corrective loop over the preceding components of ERAAwC, to include an awareness of context.

L'Abate says that various schools of thought and therapy can be classified according to five components. For instance, humanism and phenomenology emphasize the importance of subjective experience or emotionality; psychoanalysis and cognitive therapy emphasize rationality; behaviorism emphasizes actions over rationality and emotionality. Further, Western religions emphasize the importance of awareness as a corrective loop over emotionality, rationality, or activities. In comparison, family psychology and therapy emphasize the importance of the immediate context as perceived by those within that environment; however, that contextual perspective tended to be subjective and susceptible to change based on the perceiver's point-of-view. Model², also referred to as "levels of descriptions and explanation," deals with how we behave publicly versus how we behave privately according to the dimension of depth. This helps explain the consistency and diversity of the two. Public and private dimensions are based on one's identity and have a developmental or generational background. For example, one can behave "nicely" in order to make a good

impression in superficial, short-lived relationships but behave disagreeably at home in a long-term relationship. The changes stem from the context in which the individual is situated.

L'Abate's Model³, which does not use generic terms such as "environment" or "situation," classifies physical settings as concrete, specific places where relationships start, grow, and end. These situations include home, school/work, transit (airports, hotels, and roads), and transient or transitory environments (such as barber shops, beauty salons, grocery stores, and theaters). In contrast to context, which is a subjective view of how an individual relates to a given set of circumstances, settings such as those mentioned above are clearly physical and deal primarily with survival as well as enjoyment. Thus, such settings determine the person's behavior.

The second level of the hierarchical structure deals with three models related more specifically to the theory. Model⁴ in the sequence articulates the distance in space along the dimension of approach and avoidance of others. It shows how inevitable alliances like favoritism, marital and parental preferences, and maternal protection may lead to dysfunctional rivalries among siblings. One partner may disagree with the other regarding parental responsibilities to the point of favoring one child while avoiding another. This model seeks to describe increases in the number of internalization disorders, including dependent and depressive personalities. Individuals with such characteristics are more susceptible, in their extremes, to suicidal ideations, and are indeed candidates for therapeutic intervention enhanced through workbooks.

Model⁵ deals with self-control in time (along a

dimension of speed) and illustrates the time needed by an individual to respond to a given event. Ultimately, this model explains the development of externalization disorders, where impulsivity and thoughtless acting out could lead (in extreme cases) to criminality and possibly homicidal behavior.

Model⁶ combines models four and five to form three degrees of functionality. When approach-avoidance and discharge-delay are balanced according to the various life cycle stages, functionality typically ensues. However, when either of these two are unbalanced (low versus high), borderline functionality results. Finally, when both are low and unbalanced, dysfunctional behavior arises.

The third level of the structure includes five developmental and normative models. Model⁷ deals with content, what we exchange continuously among each other. Whereas the other models all referred to content-free processes, this one, introduced by Uriel Foa' and Edna Foa' in the 70s, adds three major modalities of Bring present through the attribution of importance expanded in Model¹¹ and intimacy expanded in Model¹⁵. Doing or performance is comprised of information and services while Having or production is composed of money and possessions. By combining modalities of *Doing* and *Having*, we arrive at a super-modality of Power. This *Triangle of Living*, is based on *Presence*, how one must be emotionally available to oneself and to important, intimate others as well. If the base of this triangle is narrow, it will lengthen the factors of *Performance* and *Production*, which may lead to sexual deviation or obsessions

with accumulating money or possessions (such as effects in hoarders and some tycoons.) In L'Abate's words, "Widening-of-Being-Present tends to minimize production or performance and eventually physical survival, as the Indian gurus who stay put on the same bed of nails surviving from their faithful's offerings."

Model⁷ deals with how developmental and normative self-identity becomes differentiated over time according to a dimension of likeness or resemblance. In the relational science literature, there is still a simple dichotomy between same/different relationships. We become adults according to how we learn from those who raised us. Along this continuum, sameness can be differentiated into symbiosis, where one cannot live without the other, or it can differentiate into sameness proper, a condition in which individuals require conformity by their intimates to conform blindly and uncritically to their own behavior. Such sameness can also become similarity when the individual fails to conform precisely to the precedent set by an important other. Differentness allows one to develop into a person in his or her own right, while oppositeness represents the reverse of the conformity required by sameness. Extreme differentness is tantamount to alienation, which can lead to personality, relational, criminal and psychiatric deviations.

Model⁹ derives from its predecessor by narrowing six degrees of differentiation into three styles. Combining symbiosis with alienation tends to produce a dysfunctional, abusive/apathetic, neglectful style. *Sameness* combined with *oppositeness* often produces a borderline reactive-repetitive style. Finally,

combining similarity with differentness usually produces a functional creative/conductive style.

Model¹⁰ expands on the two previous models by offering an arithmetical means of classifying human interactions (e.g., multiplicative, additive, positive static, negative static, subtractive, and divisive). Multiplicative interactions describe individuals who make noteworthy contributions to society in leadership roles and contribute positively to interdependent intimate relationships—apparent in about 5% of the population. Additive interactions describe individuals who make worthwhile contributions to people with whom they are intimate but not to society as a whole—apparent in about 20% of the population. Clearly, contributing positively to one's family and friends would produce a positive outcome in the offsprings.

Lu shows us that positively static interactions remain constant over time and affect about 25% of the population. There may be bickering and conflict but the couples and families remain together. Negatively static interactions are characterized by continuous conflict that remains constant over time, a condition that also impacts about 25% of the population. Subtractive interactions describe individuals who are dependent upon society and who rely on it for subsistence and welfare. These interactions affect about 20% of the population. Divisive interactions, which describe those who are completely unable to fend for themselves (such as homeless people suffering from psychosis) are apparently 5% of the population. Of note, the arithmetical predictions afforded by

this model were validated recently by Colesso, Cusinato, and L'Abate (2013).

Selfhood Model¹¹ is based on attributing and bestowing importance on oneself and intimate others, which produces four possible relational outcomes relevant to psychiatric classification. When a sense of importance is attributed and bestowed positively on oneself and intimate others, a relational propensity called *Selffulness* typically arises. When importance is attributed positively to oneself but negatively to others, *Selfishness* tends to arise as present in criminality. When importance is attributed positively to others but negatively to oneself, *Selflessness* is the most likely outcome with a possible depressive outcome. When the attribution of importance is bestowed negatively on oneself and others, a very likely outcome is No-Self, present in most abnormal disorders, such as schizophrenia, deep depression, and bipolarity.

Model¹² addresses personal, dyadic, and multi-relational priorities, such as goals, desires, and motivations. Two kinds of priorities are involved, one of which regards the self and the other relationships with intimates (Model¹¹). Regarding these priorities, hypothetical questions are posed, including whether the self is more important than a partner, children, parents, and so on. Where settings are concerned (Model³) one poses the questions: Is home more important than work? Is surplus time spent on entertainment more important than time spent at home or at work?

In the fourth layer of the hierarchy, the three other models result directly from their predecessors and relate mainly to dysfunctional relationships. Model¹³ stems

from Model⁴ about approach-avoidance. It deals with distance regulation and produces three extreme roles in a triangle composed by the Pursuer, the Distancer, and the Distance Regulator.

Model¹⁴ is composed of the most pathogenic "Drama Triangle" conceived in 1968 by Stephen Karpman. It relates to the three destructive roles played by the Victim, the Persecutor and the Rescuer. With the help of authors who collaborated with Lu in the latest book on *Models of Psychopathology* (Springer, 2014) this model was expanded to include generational processes of Parentification (Lisa Hooper), when a child assumes the role of the adult parent; Parental Alienation Syndrome (Laura G. Sweeney), when one parent demonizes the other parent and oftentimes takes the children away from the vilified parent; Bullism (Giovanna Ganesini), bullies were usually victims themselves; and the Stockholm Syndrome (Peter Jamkoski), when a hostage assumes the role of those who took him or her prisoners, as took place in the well-known Patty Hearst case years ago.

Model¹⁵ focuses on intimacy, defined behaviorally as sharing joys and hurts as well as fears of being hurt. This behavioral definition prompted the writing of an entire book on this topic, "Hurt Feelings" (Cambridge, 2011). However, for individuals who become overwhelmingly sad after reading about hurt feelings, L'Abate shifted his efforts to another text entitled "The Seven Sources of Pleasure in Life" (ABC-CLIO, 2011).

The final Model¹⁶ involves negotiation and problem-solving. It is based on assessing

who has the authority to make decisions and who has the responsibility to carry them out in relation to the degree of functionality, and the ability and motivation to negotiate. These models are too complex to give justice to in this brief article, but this short outline might inspire readers to explore these significant models more fully as has been done in Italy.

A large number of already-validated, American research measures were used in Padua, Italy, to verify the empirical research. When some models were not evaluated empirically, a good case was made to support their existence and significance from reviews of the relevant literature and illustrative case studies. Models that received the most research attention were: (1) information processing, (2) self-identity, (3) selfhood, (4) priorities, (5) intimacy, and (6) negotiation.

Lu has always been a thorough and exhaustive empiricist where clinical practice is concerned. In his own words, "If an observation or operation cannot be replicated, it does not belong within the realm of clinical professional practice." Therefore, psychological evaluations and interventions in mental health (prevention, promotion, rehabilitation, and psychotherapy) must be made systematically and in writing. Lu believes that participants must be evaluated objectively to establish a baseline and to develop an understanding for the referral in terms of intensity, frequency, duration, and contextual nature. Interventions should consist of homework assignments comprised of interactive practice

exercises or workbooks interspersed with occasional control sessions, either online or offline. Patient reevaluation should occur after the prescribed number of sessions has ended, and follow-ups must be conducted after termination.

On the basis of that position, Lu has accused many of his fellow clinical psychologists and psychotherapists of practicing as artists without internal or external controls. He urges them to describe the line that separates art from “charlatany” and define the point at which empiricism begins. Of course, Lu’s perspective is controversial and will indeed stimulate extreme reactions from those who employ traditional, face-to-face, verbally-based psychology interventions.

In the 70s, Lu met Dan McDougal, an eccentric attorney who effectively used writing to help inmates. Although McDougal was rejected by bureaucrats in the state criminal justice system, his work seemed to produce positive results. After learning and validating some of McDougal’s work, Lu began to employ similar distance writing provided the therapist assessed the patient’s progress from the beginning to the end. Alternatively, he discovered that such therapy had the potential to enhance traditional face-to-face therapy. At that time, few if any mental health professionals had considered the possibility of conducting therapy from a distance. Lu also wrote at length on programmed writing with accompanying workbooks.

In the vibrant 1970s, even before the advent of the Internet, Lu had already employed the use of distance writing

without the need for therapists literally seeing their patients. Alternatively, such a distance-writing treatment often enhanced therapy provided face-to-face in the traditional office. It became clear that patients would benefit from distance writing alone as well as from distance writing mixed with meetings in the therapists’ offices. At this point, few if any had begun to consider the possibility of therapy from a distance, so L’Abate’s ideas were clearly ahead of his time. Lu pointed out that the future would integrate more and more technology into therapeutic endeavors despite the complaints of those psychologists who argued that therapy could only be conducted in person where one experiences the expressions and gestures of both patient and psychologist. Nevertheless for many, it might be more convenient to choose a distant psychologist rather than to work with those who practice face-to-face. Finally, the Internet has changed the medium through which psychology is imparted and has demonstrated that Lu’s workbooks are relevant even more than ever.

With the help of his students, Lu also developed and published *Structured Enrichment Programs for Couples and Families* in 1987. This became one of the forerunners of what are now called programmed interactive practice exercises or workbooks. Lu established enrichment programs for couples and families that over time steered his practice into programmed writing. Such programmed writing consisted of writing assignments that were geared toward encouraging self-realization and reflection through progressive homework. Writing practice enabled the

therapist to get a better understanding of what was going on in his or her patients' minds, and it gave patients who expressed themselves best in writing an effective medium for assertiveness. Although not for everyone, programmed writing assignments by Lu have resulted in many successes while also having shortened the time patients spent in therapy. Lu has always reminded his colleagues and friends that helping clients attain effective treatment at an affordable price has also been a very important aspect of his work as he believes that healthcare should be available to everyone.

As noted above, Lu developed Structured Enrichment Programs for Couples and Families, and over time, these have steered his practice toward programmed writing. In its simplest form, programmed writing is a particularly attractive process for those who enjoy writing. It consists of writing assignments geared toward encouraging self-realization and reflection via progressively written homework assignments. Writing practice enables the therapist to gain a better understanding of what his or her patients are experiencing, and it gives patients who express themselves best in writing an effective medium through which to take responsibility for changes in their lives. Clearly, however, the approach is not suitable for everyone.

In contrast to clinicians who claimed therapy could only be conducted in person, L'Abate noted that in the future, therapy would likely incorporate increasing amounts of remote technology. Presently and even more often in the near future, for many, it might be more convenient to choose a psychotherapist at a distance rather than those who practice face-to-face.

Without doubt, the Internet has indeed added a new dimension to psychological

interventions. More specifically, recent technological advancements have demonstrated that Lu's programmed workbooks are becoming increasingly relevant online or offline. Today, numerous books that promote mental health, psychotherapy, self-help, and rehabilitation among individuals, couples, and families include interactive, "take-home" exercises and workbooks. Thus, it is quite likely that therapists will be able later in this century to link evaluations with promotional, preventative, and psychotherapeutic interventions conducted from a distance without ever seeing the patients in person.

Workbooks developed from single and multiple test dimensions will become increasingly available, and more importantly, many workbooks will be derived from RCT (such as structured interviews, planned parenting, hurt feelings, intimacy, and negotiation) as well as through extant symptoms of psychiatric disorders. But how close can one get to conducting successful evaluations and interventions when computers and distance writing are used? Moreover, who will be able to use such closely packed, highly condensed information? Thanks to Lu's work, perhaps researchers, graduate students, and clinicians will explore exciting, new horizons in personality theory, communication, and relationship science. Family relations therapy will undoubtedly benefit from an abundance of new and relevant ideas and instruments with which to evaluate promising theories.

An important and original aspect of Lu's

efforts is the introduction of workbooks that include interactive practice exercises. These can be administered as homework assignments but relate to some of the models in RCT as well as to models developed by other researchers. Instead of leaving more test instruments as they are, Lu transformed them into authentic interactive-practice exercises or workbooks by asking participants to define, in their own words, each of the items in a list of adjectives or behaviors. Each definition was to be followed by two concrete examples. Completed this first task, participants ranked the order of the items according to how relevant and important they were to the respondents. This rank-order furnishes a treatment plan where each item is considered in great detail according to its origins, duration, rate, intensity, personal and relational outcome.

This innovation illustrates how it becomes possible to link evaluation with intervention, and theory with practice, through programmed distance writing. In fact, Lu recently traveled to Italy, where he presented his perspective on his workbooks and the possibility that they could enhance the therapeutic experience. At the conference in Italy, there was some resistance to this new paradigm in which workbooks enhanced face-to-face therapy because the psychoanalytic, verbal approach (confronting the client in person) is still strongly entrenched there.

Lu recently also lectured in Japan where his theories seem well accepted and applauded. He reports that the Japanese were excellent hosts when he was in their country. They generously sent him a large box of one of his favorite delicacies, chestnut candy. He plans to write more articles for the Japanese community of

therapists as well as for other followers throughout the world.

Preventers, therapists, and promotionally-oriented professionals will find replicable methods to evaluate relational interventions on a routine pre-post-intervention basis. What else can one ask of Lu's theory and its applications?

Perhaps one reason Lu's work has been ignored in the United States is because he chose not to publish in particularly influential peer-reviewed journals (those with the largest subscriber bases). Instead, he focused on publishing almost exclusively in the *American Journal of Family Therapy*. Similarly, all research that informed his work as a whole—rather than one or two well-known experiments—was conducted at the University of Padua. Accordingly, it is unlikely that Lu will consider himself fully acknowledged in the USA until someone validates his theoretical models or applies some of his clinical approaches by publishing in a peer-reviewed journal. Simply put, Lu's theory and applications are probably well ahead of their time but need serious validation in the English-speaking world in order to be recognized.

Laura G. Sweeney

Reflection on “The Future is Now” by Luciano L’ Abate: Online Interventions are Here to Stay and to Grow

The speech from Professor L’Abate at IAFP impressed me by his positive view of distance counseling. As what he said, we counselors have to learn to work through remote writing and homework assignments at a distance, for it is hard to ignore the rapid development of IT industry which has led to the revolutions in our communication.

As far as I know, there is increased use of distance counseling through telephone, e-mail, and even video chat (e.g. Skype). In order to meet clients’ needs, counselors should first recognize

the needs of clients and then provide them with the appropriate services by using various resources and technologies. As a Chinese counselor studying in Japan, I am concerned about the mental health of Chinese clients living in Japan. Besides the economic problem, language barriers also contribute to difficulties of seeking mental health services. Professor L’Abate’s speech inspired me to consider that I, as a Chinese counselor working in Japan, could offer low-cost e-counseling services to Chinese clients.

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Hearing “International Academy of Family Psychology, Tokyo Conference”:

A Great Chance to Access Various Thoughts

There were various symposiums and discussions under the name of “*Family Collaboration against Global Crisis*”.

In the symposium, named “[*Examples of Foreign Countries: Calamity, Family-collaboration and Prevention*”, I could have a chance of hearing Yongheng You, Ph.D. (from Sichuan Normal University), Sekar Kasi (from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience), John W. Thoburn (from Seattle Pacific University), and Koubun Wakashima, Ph.D. (from Graduate School of Education, Tohoku University), where post-calamity support was discussed.

It was reported that not only individual support but also family support have been operated in case of *the Great Sichuan Earthquake*. It was interesting, in particular, that families who lost their

children due to *the Earthquake* were recommended to bear a child, based on “*One-child Policy*”. India that has also undergone natural disorders many times has operated family supports, in long-term base even after the calamities. I think that support programs for victims of natural calamities should be constructed in long-term care, as India has done.

As a member of the support group in Tohoku Univ., I, as well, came to reconsider what kinds of activities have been done, and what kind of activities *shall* have been done. Moreover, with a broad viewpoint, I realized that each victim's different cultural background should be taken care of in intercultural/international calamity-supports, and that family-, or even community-based supports are really valuable.

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Hearing “International Academy of Family Psychology, Tokyo Conference”: New Ideas and Perspectives

I was excited to have the opportunity to listen to the lectures of international researchers in person at the IAFP conference. In particular, Dr. L'Abate was stimulating. In addition to his youthfulness in appearance, I was deeply impressed by his stance to continuously challenge something new still now. In response to his proposal of counseling based on utilization of e-mail as a contemporary tool, various discussions were developed over the possibility of usage of such tools by those attended at the venue. In consideration of progress in counseling day by day, I felt he showed us an attitude to create something new. I was impressed genuinely as a clinical researcher by his stance to introduce new ideas into conventional experiences.

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Looking forward to seeing you at the 2017 IAFP Conference in Seattle, Washington!



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