

Twenty first century visions: Systems Practice for Managing Complexity

International conference 15-17th July 2003 St Anne's College, Oxford

Day 1: Introducing different Systems traditions

Pre-conference workshops that can stand alone or be a preparation for day 2.

Workshop: Critical Systems Approaches

Workshop facilitator: Martin Reynolds (The Open University)

Synopsis of workshop

The workshop has three aims:

1. explore and generate an appreciation of the 'critical' dimension to systems thinking and systems practice;
2. provide a general understanding and overview of the critical systems tradition; and
3. explore an opportunity to practice what might constitute a critical systems approach to the problem of international terrorism, based on article from Ackoff and Strümpfer (2003)

The notion of 'being critical' is first explored through small group work activities. The output will feed into another set of activities revolved around basic systems mapping to introduce critical systems notion of boundary critique. After a short(ish!) presentation and discussion illustrating a personal overview of the critical systems tradition and the present variations in critical systems practice, the workshop will finish with some further group-based exploration centred on the application of a critical systems approach to managing a familiar situation (system) of interest and concern.

Reference:

Ackoff, R. and J. P. Strümpfer (2003). "Terrorism: A Systemic View." Systems Research and Behavioural Science **20**(3): 287-294.