

Use of the Integral Framework to Design Developmentally-Appropriate Sustainability Communications¹

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Abstract

The Integral framework, articulated by Ken Wilber, provides a comprehensive overview of the systemic, cultural, psychological, behavioral and developmental dynamics that influence any sustainability initiative. This comprehensive map of reality helps teams to better assess, strategize, and design sustainability communications for any scale. In this article, we explain the Integral framework and its implications for sustainability communication. We draw particular attention to eight distinct stages of consciousness development, identified through developmental psychology research. These stages can be used to guide the creation of developmentally-appropriate communications for sustainability initiatives. We highlight two case study applications: a successful market-transformation initiative in the US Building Industry and an emerging application of the Integral framework to influence climate policy discourse in Australia.

Keywords: Integral theory, sustainability, communication, developmental psychology, green building, climate change

Introduction

The Integral framework, articulated by Ken Wilber (e.g. Wilber, 2000c, 2001), is used to guide sustainable development communication strategies worldwide. The framework has been applied to Appropriate Communication with a focus on sustainability (Brown, 2006; Cary, 2005; Leonard, 2004). Integral approaches have been applied by senior leaders in UNICEF and in the HIV/AIDS group at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Civil society organizations (CSOs) and business consultants on six continents apply it to support organizational and societal transformation toward sustainability (Brown, 2005).

In essence, the Integral framework seeks to weave together the many threads of human knowledge in an inclusive way. It attends to objective and subjective, and individual and collective, ways of knowing. At the same time, it is sensitive to the development of people and cultures over time and the

¹ This article is a chapter in the forthcoming book *Innovation, Education, and Communication for Sustainable Development*, published by Peter Lang Scientific Publishers, 2006. The book is a contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

impact this has on the way individuals and groups perceive the world. This comprehensive, developmentally-aware approach can aid communication by ensuring that messages do not marginalize particular groups and are designed to resonate with the concerns, values, and interests that emerge at different stages of development.

In this paper, we provide an overview of two main elements of Integral theory: quadrants and developmental stages. The quadrants highlight four universal perspectives that should be taken into account when designing sustainability initiatives. The eight developmental stages we discuss here arise out of developmental psychology research and represent the general evolution of how people see the world. We draw on this theory, and the work of practitioners, to outline an Integral framework for sustainability communication. To ground this framework, we provide two case studies of Integral sustainability communication in practice. The first focuses on market transformation in the United States building industry, the second on influencing climate policy discourse in Australia.

An Integral framework for sustainability communication

Over the course of more than 20 books, some of which have been translated into more than 30 languages, Ken Wilber has developed a map of reality that integrates the different ways of knowing that humans have discovered or developed throughout human history. He seeks to include objective and subjective knowledge, individual and collective knowledge, scientific and spiritual knowledge and Eastern and Western knowledge within a coherent framework that finds room for the valuable contributions of all. The most comprehensive descriptions of Wilber's Integral map of reality are found in *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Wilber, 2000c) and *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 2000b). Summary versions include *A Brief History of Everything* (Wilber, 2000a) and *A Theory of Everything* (Wilber, 2001).

Numerous theorists and practitioners around the world are applying the Integral framework to diverse areas of practice, from medicine and law, to business and organizational leadership, to politics and sustainability. An Integral Institute and Integral University have been established to coordinate this work.^[2] In this paper, we draw not only on Wilber's work but also on some of the many researchers that carry the Integral framework forward.

An all-quadrant approach to sustainability communication

Integral theory contends that reality is composed of *holons*, or wholes that are parts of other wholes. All holons, from atoms to molecules to humans, have both an objective exterior expression (e.g., body) and some form of subjective interior experience (e.g., feelings). At the same time, all holons are both whole individuals and members of a collective (Wilber, 2000c). These twin distinctions between the exterior and interior, and the individual and collective, give rise to four native perspectives, or four universal ways of knowing, represented by the quadrants in Figure I:

² See Integral Institute (www.integralinstitute.org) and Integral University (www.integraluniversity.org).

- Behavioral quadrant (Upper Right in Figure I): an *exterior* perspective on *individual* holons, revealing the structure and actions of organisms (e.g. humans)
- Systemic quadrant (Lower Right in Figure I): an *exterior* perspective on *collective* holons, revealing the shared structures and actions of groups and systems (e.g. technological, economic, institutional and ecological systems)
- Psychological quadrant (Upper Left in Figure I): the *interior* perspective of *individual* holons, which is the realm of individual mindsets, the self, consciousness, personal experiences, and values
- Cultural quadrant (Lower Left in Figure I): the *interior* perspective of *collective* holons, which is the realm of shared values and visions, culture, worldview, and discourse.

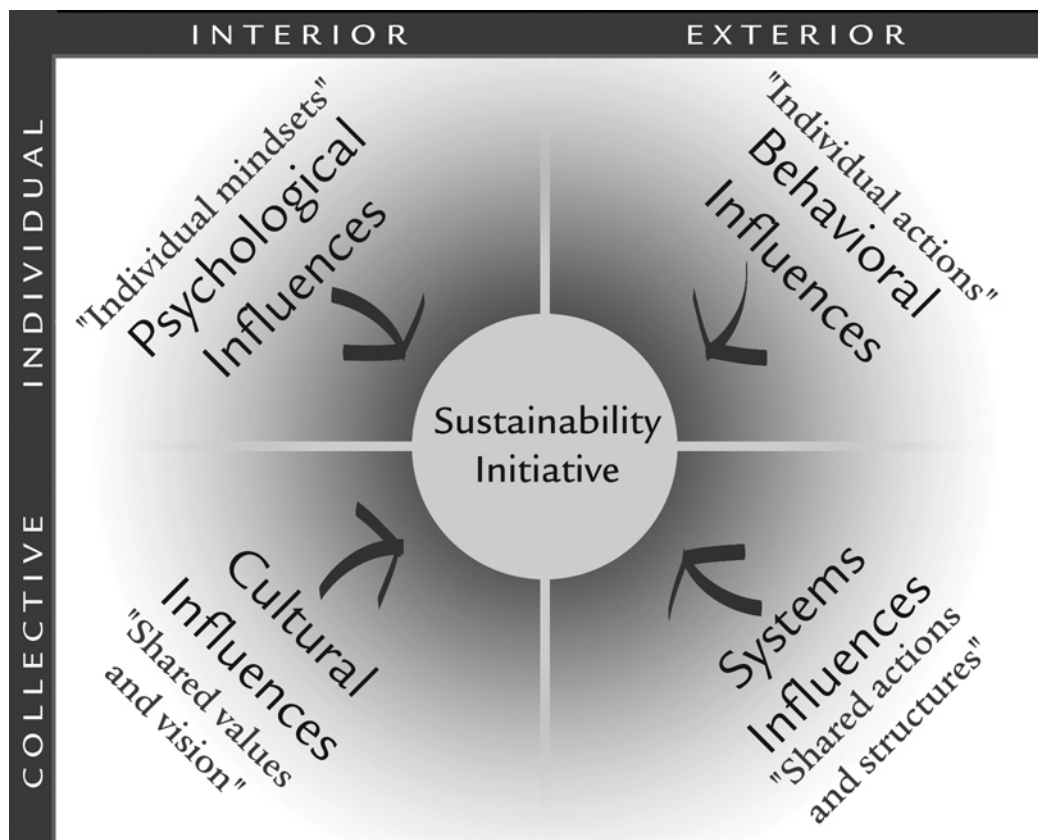


Figure I: The quadrants and their influence on sustainability initiatives.

The quadrants are not arbitrary theoretical constructs; they are categories or perspectives that emerged from detailed study of hundreds of ways of generating and organizing knowledge. Further, and this is particularly important for communication design, the quadrants are embedded in language as first-, second- and third-person perspectives: “I” for the psychological quadrant, “we/you” for the cultural quadrant, “it/him/her” for the behavioral quadrant and “its/them” for the systemic quadrant.

Integral theory contends that all quadrants should be considered in any comprehensive approach. Otherwise, our explanations are partial and actions based on those explanations are likely to deliver unintended results or marginalize particular perspectives. Consequently, an Integral approach to sustainability communication would, as much as is practically possible, seek to consider and include each of the quadrants in the design and delivery of sustainability messages. The sections below outline some of the key considerations from the perspective of each quadrant.

Behavioral quadrant

A behavioral perspective reminds communicators to accurately represent scientific facts (Leonard, 2004). As the transition to sustainability often threatens established interests, factual errors in communication will be rapidly identified and exposed, to the detriment of the message.

A behavioral perspective also encourages communicators to focus on the actions they seek to encourage through the communicative act. Our current society is not sustainable, and is not on a trajectory towards sustainability. Consequently, sustainability is only possible through the combined actions of numerous individuals. Every communication about sustainability should seek to encourage a particular type of action or behavior that will hasten the transition to sustainability. These intended actions should be within the power of the audience. All too often, sustainability communicators emphasize environmental and social threats, without providing positive actions the audience can take to respond to these threats.

Finally, a behavioral perspective encourages the communicator to consider how verbal and visual behaviors can support effective communication. This draws attention to the mannerisms, body language, and attentiveness of verbal communicators, and the design and layout of visual communications. Attention to the ways that individuals actually view, read, or use communication materials is critical.

Systemic quadrant

A systemic perspective reminds the communicator to attend to the demographic characteristics of the audience – for example, their age and gender, language, access to technology (particularly for web-based communication), media use, socioeconomic profile, and educational attainment. Messages that do not take into account these demographic factors, for example by translating materials for different language groups, can easily miss their target audience.

In addition, systems theory provides a particularly rich source of content for sustainability communicators. From this perspective, sustainability problems are understood and presented as the result of a complex interplay between technological, ecological, economic, and social systems. Good sustainability communicators will usually have an intuitive grasp of systems theory, which they can draw on to explain problems, design solutions, and anticipate barriers to the implementation of those solutions.

Psychological quadrant

A psychological perspective reminds the communicator that individuals hold different values, adhere to a different sense of self and identity, and vary in their interests, experiences, and mindsets.

Consequently, a message that appeals to one individual will leave another unmoved. Communicators that recognize this subjective variation typically attempt to segment the audience in some way and to design separate messages to appeal to these different segments. However, approaches to audience segmentation tend to be eclectic and poorly coordinated with each other, resulting in a rash of conflicting messages that leave the audience confused.

Integral theory draws on developmental psychology to provide a more coherent basis for audience segmentation. In essence, Integral theory argues that human psychological development moves through distinct, recognizable stages, at which mindsets, values, interests, and ways of relating to the worlds are markedly different. We will return to these stages, and their implications for communication, later. Here, it is sufficient to note that sustainability communicators need to understand the psychographics of their audience and design multiple messages to appeal to varying values and interests.

Cultural quadrant

As people move through the stages of their own individual development they find points of commonality and mutual understanding that manifest as distinct cultural structures, expressed linguistically through discourse. A discourse is a shared way of apprehending the world, characterized by particular language, assumptions, metaphors, and worldviews (Dryzek, 1997). Sustainability communicators can use an understanding of the characteristic elements of an identified discourse to design messages to appeal to that discourse. The Integral framework provides a credible, consistent basis for identifying discourses, linked to the developmental stages discussed in the next section. This consistency is critical to help globally coordinate the effort required to achieve mainstream commitment to sustainability.

A cultural perspective also reminds us that communication is most likely to be effective if the communicator can enter the cultural space of their audience and reach some degree of mutual understanding. This task can be assisted by becoming familiar with the symbols, metaphors, and narratives of the cultural group. A very effective approach is to engage respected members of the cultural group to deliver sustainability messages, as these leaders will already be immersed in the language of the group.

Developmental levels and communications

As noted above, the Integral framework encourages attention to psychological and cultural development. In this section, we focus on how knowledge of psychological development can profoundly influence the effectiveness of sustainability communications. The impact of cultural, systems, and behavioral development are reserved for future research.

Developmental psychologists have identified numerous features of an individual's consciousness, such as cognition (what one is aware of), values (what one considers most important), and self-identity (what one identifies with) (Wilber, 2005). These and other aspects interact to form an individual's worldview. Over time, worldviews mature and become increasingly complex (Wilber, 2000b). These features of consciousness develop through recognizable stages, each offering a markedly different understanding of the world (e.g. Beck & Cowan, 1996; Graves, 2005; Kegan, 1982; Loevinger, 1976). Although these stages vary in detail, they have key, universal characteristics. As such, developmental

stages in consciousness provide a promising basis for a more coordinated and customized approach to audience segmentation and communication delivery for sustainability.

Empowered with this initial recognition, we can identify two meta-types of communication that can occur through any medium (dialogue, media, informational pamphlets, etc.). They are: *transformative communications* and *translative communications*.

Communication that attempts to fundamentally change the way someone sees the world—so as to foster sustainable behavior—is considered transformative communication. Many sustainability communications are transformative; they try to get people to see things differently (such as the interconnectedness of nature and humanity) so that they choose different actions.

Translative communications do the opposite. They strive to connect with people just as they are, motivating and informing them in a way that is in alignment with how they already see the world. These communications resonate with a person’s existing worldview, without requiring them to be a different person in order to take action.

Both of these approaches to communication can be effective. However, transformative communications face a major obstacle: people change their worldview rarely, and there is no clear understanding of how to catalyze that change. Harvard developmental psychologist, Robert Kegan, points out in *The Evolving Self* (1982) that it takes approximately five years to change a worldview *if* the right conditions are present. Jane Loevinger, pioneer in understanding ego development (which is central to one’s worldview), states that “Ego development is growth and there is no way to force it. One can only try to open doors” (Loevinger, 1976, p. 426).

The bottom line is that people rarely make major changes in how they see the world, it’s hard to trigger that change, and the workings of that change process largely remain a mystery. As such, sustainability communications that only focus on changing someone’s worldview face less chance of success. To reach people, and to honor them, most sustainability communications should not encourage others to see the world anew, but rather align the core message with their existing worldview(s). The rest of this section outlines how to do this.

Essentially, translative communications for sustainability are *developmentally-appropriate*: they resonate with the stage(s) of consciousness—and the correlative worldview(s)—of an audience. The more tailored sustainability communications are to these different worldviews, the greater the chances of the communication actually “sticking,” such that it fosters sustainable behavior.

Below we describe the stages of consciousness most relevant to sustainability communications. Each is identified with a color, for easy reference (Wilber, in press). It is important to recognize that these “stages” of consciousness are not strict levels, like rungs on a ladder. They are more like loosely delineated areas along a spectrum of development. Thus a stage is more like a probability wave than a concrete level of consciousness.

The descriptions below give insight into the values and self-identity associated with each stage.³ Other factors contribute to a worldview and influence behavior (e.g., forces in all four quadrants), but these aspects are among the most important. Also included are details about the *Eco-Self* correlated with each stage (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005). An Eco-Self represents the *environmental worldview* which a stage of consciousness is likely to express—or develop into—when healthy.^[4] The purpose of translative communications for environmental sustainability is to bring forth the Eco-Selves present within a group. They represent a way of “reaching” different worldviews about environmental issues: appeal to their Eco-Self. Even if an individual doesn’t seem to express her Eco-Self, it is a hidden potential at her current stage of consciousness. Essentially, the Eco-Selves clarify the natural motivational currents, and positioning, of different stages of consciousness with respect to the environment. The most effective environmental sustainability communications may be those that succeed in aligning sustainability goals with the (emerging or existing) Eco-Selves of the stakeholders involved.

To help create translative communications for both social and environmental sustainability, we’ve listed initial research (Beck & Cowan, 1996) about how to design communications that align with the values of each worldview. This is followed by examples of sustainability communications that seem to appeal to those worldviews (Brown, 2006). We close this section with a simple process for constructing translative communications that appeal to multiple worldviews.

The Magenta Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Safety and security. *Basic theme:* Keep the spirits happy and the ‘tribe’s’ nest warm and safe.

What’s important: allegiance to chief, elders, ancestors, clan; obeying the desires of spirit beings and mystical signs; preserving sacred objects, places, events; rites of passage, seasonal cycles, tribal customs; kinship and lineage.

Where seen: Belief in voodoo-like curses, good-luck charms, family rituals, ancient grudges, magical ethnic beliefs and superstitions; strong in some less developed countries, gangs, athletic teams, and corporate ‘tribes.’

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: safety and gratification of basic needs; following one’s impulses.

Description: Often found in very young children governed by their impulses; adults at this stage have an inadequate conception of the complexities of life and may easily feel confused and overwhelmed; most at this stage have an expedient morality (actions are only bad if one is caught).

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Guardian: Respects nature; takes a magical approach to the environment; often emphasizes magic or unseen forces; appeals to the mystery of nature, especially through signs and omens; shamans

³ To learn more about the development of values, see www.spiraldynamics.net; for more on the development of self-identity, see www.harthillusa.com.

⁴ Technically, the Eco-Selves are a theoretical amalgamation of the values line and the self-identity line, with a focus on the facets of those developmental lines that relate to the environment.

and witches are seen as the gatekeepers of the world of spirit/nature.

Where aspects may be seen: Storytelling about caring for land and animals that is based in animism, magic, pre-modern mysticism, or some tribal traditions; simplistic nature worship; naïve appropriation of indigenous views/practices.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Counsel from revered elders, chieftain, or shaman; from within the family/tribe/clan; through spirit/Natural realm signals; the word and ways of ancestors; traditional ways.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Refer to traditional rituals, ceremonies, icons; reference mystical elements, superstitions, magic, signs, omens, the desires of spirit beings; appeal to extended family, harmony and safety; give tokens and tangible goods; appeal to respect for elders, ancestors, and powerful figures; honor blood bonds, the folk, the group, taboos; reference home and hearth, and traditional ways and customs; use familiar metaphors, drawings, and emblems; rely little on written language and facts; use storytelling, emotions, drama, songs, dances, imaginative 2D images.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Disrespect chief, tribe, elders, ancestors; desecrate sacred grounds; violate taboos or ritual ways; introduce ambiguity; threaten family.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“I am the Lorax, I speak for the trees. Stop cutting down the forest, I’m begging you please.”

~ Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*.

A superstition that works against sustainable development and is communicated orally: Virgins have a magical power to rid themselves of impurity after sexual contact. Therefore, sex with a young girl prevents HIV infection, while sex with a virgin cures AIDS. The younger the virgin, the more potent the cure (Loosli, 2004, p. 15).

The Red Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Power and action. *Basic theme:* Be what you are and do what you want, regardless.

What’s important: Power, spontaneity, heroism, immediate gratification; standing tall, calling the shots, receiving respect, and getting attention; being daring, impulsive, enjoying oneself without regret; conquering, outsmarting, dominating.

Where seen: The “terrible twos”; rebellious youth; frontier mentalities; feudal kingdoms; epic heroes; wild rock stars; gang leaders; soldiers of fortune.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Own immediate needs, opportunities, self-protection.

Description: First step toward self-control of impulses; sense of vulnerability, guardedness; fight/flight response is very strong; very attack-oriented and win/lose in nature; short-term horizon; focus on concrete things, personal advantage; sees rules as loss of freedom; feedback heard as an attack.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Warrior: Takes a heroic approach to the environment; wants to conquer nature, reject civilization, fight “the system”; appreciates the “Law of the Jungle” and “Nature red in tooth and

claw”; prizes “hands-on,” “survival,” and “street” skills.

Where aspects may be seen: EarthFirst!; eco-terrorism; eco-hero initiatives; the stoic mountain climber; extreme sports; trophy and sport hunting; frontier mentalities; survival skills; off-the-grid housing; Monkey Wrenching; Social Darwinism.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Person with recognized power or something to offer; straight-talking Big Boss; respected, revered, or feared other; celebrated “idol” with reputation; someone of proven trustworthiness; proven tough entity.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Demonstrate “What’s in it for me, now?”; offer “Immediate gratification if...”; challenge and appeal to machismo/strength; point out heroic status and legendary potential; use heroic images; offer more clout, personal power; appeal to looking good, getting due respect, gaining control over nature; be flashy, unambiguous, reality-based, strong; use simple language, fiery images/graphics; appeal to narcissistic tendencies.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Challenge power or courage; denigrate person/group; move onto turf uninvited; display more powerful weapons; be derisive; make gestures, name-call; taunt as an outsider; appear or talk weak; make excuses.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“Are you tired of namby-pamby environmental groups? Are you tired of overpaid corporate environmentalists who suck up to bureaucrats and industry? Have you become disempowered by the reductionist approach of environmental professionals and scientists? Our front-line, direct action approach to protecting wilderness gets results.”

~ Earth First! Website

“Be a habitat hero! How do *you* plan on saving the environment?”

~ 2003 National Geographic Kids public awareness campaign with Leonardo DiCaprio

The Amber Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Stability and purposeful life. *Basic theme:* Life has meaning, direction, and purpose with predetermined outcomes.

What’s important: Sacrificing self for a transcendent Cause, (secular or religious) Truth, Mission, future reward; laws, regulations, rules; discipline, character, duty, honor, justice, moral fiber; righteous living; controlling impulsivity through guilt; following absolutistic principles of right and wrong, black and white; convention, conformity.

Where seen: Puritan America, Confucian China, Dickensian England, and Singapore discipline; totalitarianism; codes of chivalry and honor; charitable good deeds; religious fundamentalism (e.g., Christian and Islamic); “moral majority”; patriotism.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Socially expected behavior, approval.

Qualities: Self-identity defined by relationship to group they want to belong to (including gangs, peer-groups), whose values impart strong sense of “shoulds” and “oughts”; values differing from one’s own

are denigrated, avoided; think in simple terms, speak in generalities, platitudes; attend to social welfare of own group; “us vs. them” mentality; feedback heard as personal disapproval.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Manager: Takes a stewardship approach to the environment; nature is managed properly today—from a secular or religious framework—so the future will hold nature’s bounty; follows higher authority, complying with rules to avoid punishment.

Where aspects may be seen: Earth as Garden of Eden; Boy and Girl Scouts; environmental legislation and protection agencies; endangered species regulations; fish and game wardens; national and state parks; wildlife management.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Rightful, proper kind of authority; a higher authority in the One True Way; down the chain of command; according to book’s rules, regulations; person with position, power, rank; in compliance with tradition and precedent; revered Truth keepers; as directed by divinely ordained Power.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Invoke images of duty, honor, country, righteousness, discipline, and obedience; call for good citizenship, responsibility, stewardship, delayed gratification for future rewards, self-sacrifice for higher cause and purpose; appeal to traditions, standards, norms, laws, stability, order, being prepared.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Attack religion, country, ethnic heritage, or standards; desecrate symbols or Holy Books; put down the One True-Way; violate chain of command; disregard rules, directives; appear unfair or sleazy; be wishy-washy; use profanity.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“Protecting the environment is the moral and spiritual duty of all believers.”

~ Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

“Labor is committed to accountability, shared responsibility and transparency in addressing environmental issues at all levels of government and society.”

~ Australian Labor Party, National Platform and Constitution

The Orange Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Success and autonomy. *Basic theme*: Act in your own self interest by playing the game to win.

What’s important: Progress, prosperity, optimism, and self-reliance; strategy, risk-taking, competitiveness; goals, leverage, professional development, mastery; rationality, objectivism, demonstrated results, best solutions, technology, the power of science; use of the earth’s resources and technology to spread the abundant “good life”.

Where seen: The Enlightenment; Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*; Wall Street; emerging middle classes; colonialism; political gamesmanship; sales and marketing; fashion industry; Chambers of Commerce; the Cold War; materialism; The Riviera.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Delivery of results, effectiveness, goals; success within the system.

Qualities: Primary elements of adult “conscience” present, including long-term goals, ability for self-criticism, and a deeper sense of responsibility. Interested in causes, reasons, consequences, and the effective use of time; future-oriented and proactive; initiator rather than pawn of the system; blind to subjectivity behind objectivity; feel guilt when not meeting own standards or goals; behavioral feedback accepted.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Strategist: Takes a rational approach to the environment; manages, uses, exploits nature for profits or play; desires to make things better through competition; emphasizes universal rights; respects invisible hand of the economy; has opportunistic vision of the future.

Where aspects may be seen: Natural Capitalism; conservationism; the science of ecology; urban planning; utilitarian perspectives; environmental psychology; industrial agriculture.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: One’s own right-thinking mind; successful mentors; credible professionals and “gurus”; scientific findings; elite contacts; data from one’s own observations, experiments, or proven experience.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Appeal to competitive advantage and leverage; draw upon success, progress, abundance, winning, achievement, status motivations; inspire to face the challenge; reference bigger, better, newer, more popular, state-of-the-art; cite experts; show increased profit, productivity, quality, results; demonstrate as the best option, strategy; treat like VIP.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Demean profit or entrepreneurship; talk about collectivization, accuse of games, demean outcomes; challenge compulsive drives; deny rewards for good performance; force sameness; trap with rules, procedures; seem inflexible, ordinary; treat as one of the herd.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“Beating regulators to the punch in terms of environmental and social standards can be a source of competitive advantage, lowering financial risk, encouraging loyalty among employees, and serving as a powerful marketing tool in an increasingly competitive marketplace.”

~ Chris Lazlo, *The Sustainable Company*

“Furthering technological and economic development in a socially and environmentally responsible manner is not only feasible, it is the great challenge we face as engineers, as engineering institutions, and as a society.”

~ Paul E. Gray, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989

The Green Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Community harmony, equality. *Basic theme:* Seek peace within inner self and explore, with others, the caring dimensions of community.

What’s important: Sensitivity to others, environment; feelings, caring, harmony, equality; reconciliation, consensus, dialogue, participation, relationships, and networking; human development and spirituality; diversity, multiculturalism; relativism, pluralism; distributing earth’s resources,

opportunities equally.

Where seen: helping professions (e.g., social services, feelings-oriented business activities); John Lennon's *Imagine*; Netherlands' idealism; sensitivity training; cooperative inquiry; postmodernism; politically correct; human rights, diversity issues.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Self in relation to the system and in interaction with the system.

Qualities: Makes decisions based upon own view of reality; aware that interpreting reality always depends on observer's position; more tolerant of oneself and others due to awareness of life's complexity and individual differences; questions old identities; more interested in personal accomplishments independent of socially sanctioned rewards; systematic problem solving; begins to seek out and value feedback.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Radical: Takes a postmodern approach to the environment; works to save nature for humanity and its intrinsic value; wants to liberate all humans and animals from greed and domination; commits to promoting community and sharing resources; uses socially engaged activism to overcome oppressive hierarchies and power structures.

Where aspects may be seen: Deep Ecology; Ecofeminism; animal rights; Biocentrism; Ecopsychology; Environmental Justice; green politics; social construction of nature; corporate citizenship.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Consensual, communitarian norms; enlightened colleague; the outcome of sharing, participation; the result of self-growth; the here and now; appeals to feelings/emotions; team's collective findings.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Create a sense of belonging, participation, sharing, teamwork, consensus, harmony; show sensitivity to human issues, Nature; invite expanded awareness, self-understanding, and liberation of oppressed; use symbols of equity, humanity, and bonding; use gentle languaging and Nature imagery; demonstrate openness, build trust; present real people and authentic emotional displays; show respect for political correctness, inclusion, social responsibility, and awareness.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Assault group's goals, ideals; divide group; try to get centralized control; reject the collective for individual accountability; deny affect, feelings; degrade quality of life. environment; rely on "hard facts" and exclude people factors; act elitist, exclusive; support aggressive competition.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

"In the mid 20th century greedy agriculture corporations began modifying sustainable family farming to maximize their profits at great cost to both humans and animals...the corporate machine began systematic mutilations [of animals]...factory farming corporations have been destroying communities and mistreating workers for decades."

~ *The Meatrix*, BanCruelFarms.org animation

"Did someone die for that diamond? The Revolutionary United Front terrorizes Sierra Leone's local population, and controls the country's diamond rich regions...their trademark is amputating the limbs and body parts of men, women, children and babies. Refuse to take part. Tell your member of

Congress to support effective legislation that bans the sale of ‘conflict diamonds’.
~ Amnesty International animation

The Teal Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Qualities and responsibilities of being. *Basic theme:* Live fully and responsibly as what you are and learn to become.

What’s important: Flexibility, spontaneity, functionality, knowledge, competency; integration of differences into interdependent, natural flows; complementing egalitarianism with natural degrees of ranking and excellence; recognizing overlapping dynamic systems and natural hierarchies.

Where seen: Peter Senge’s learning organizations; W. Edward Deming’s objectives; Stephen Hawking’s *Brief History of Time*; chaos and complexity theories; eco-industrial parks (organizations using each other’s outflows as raw materials).

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Linking theory and principles with practice; dynamic systems interactions.

Qualities: Comprehends multiple interconnected systems of relationships and processes; able to deal with conflicting needs and duties in constantly shifting contexts; recognizes higher principles, social construction of reality; problem-finding not just creative problem solving; aware of paradox, contradiction in system and self; sensitive to unique market niches, historical moment, larger social movements; creates “positive-sum” games; seeks feedback as vital for growth.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Holist: Takes a holistic-complex approach to the environment; holds conflicting truths simultaneously; demands flexible, open systems that enable the full range of reality to express itself; celebrates the diversity of people and perspectives on their own terms; embraces multiple “big-picture” views to make meaning; uses skilful means to maintain flows within systems and meet people where they are; has little anxiety or fear and a reduced drive for status, power, image.

Where aspects may be seen: sustainable development; the Gaia hypothesis; Aldo Leopold’s land ethic; Teilhard de Chardin’s noosphere; Gregory Bateson’s ecology of mind; biodynamic agriculture; Leonardo Boff’s liberation theology.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Any useful information from any previous developmental stage; a competent, more knowing person; more relevant, functional data; the merging of hard sources and hunches; individualized discoveries.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Interactive, self-accessible, relevant media; functional, “lean” information without fluff, but access to more details if wanted; draw upon facts, feelings, instincts; show big picture, total systems, linkages, interconnections, integrations; connect data across fields for holistic view.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Force rules without reasons; impose dysfunctional structures; close access to varied information or learning resources; pass the buck to the future; force groupness; ignore diversity of thinking.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“This is your home [Earth], it’s the only one you got. Cherish it, protect it, it’s the only one you’re gonna get. These guys [all humans], they’re your neighbors, they ain’t going away, they ain’t leaving, you have to get along with them, so you have to learn to share. All this stuff: the animals, the waters, the sky, the ground, the bugs, the fish, the people—they’re all connected, they all depend on one another. If you ignore that, you’re doomed. It’s all one.”

~ *The Wombat*, Foundation for a Global Community animation

“We live in two interpenetrating worlds. The first is the living world which has been forged in an evolutionary crucible over a period of four billion years. The second is the world of roads and cities, farms, and artifacts, that people have been designing for themselves of the last few millennia. The condition that threatens both worlds—unsustainability—results from a lack of integration between them.”

~ Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan, *Ecological Design*, p. 17

The Turquoise Stage of Consciousness

Values (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 2001)

Bottom line: Global order and renewal. *Basic theme:* Experience the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit.

What’s important: Holistic, intuitive thinking and cooperative actions; waves of integrative energies; uniting feeling with knowledge; the possibility, actuality of a “grand unification” (theory of everything).

Where seen: David Bohm’s theories; Rupert Sheldrake’s morphic fields; Gandhi and Mandela’s pluralistic integration; integral-holistic systems thinking.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Interplay of awareness, thought, action, effects; transforming self, others.

Qualities: Highly aware of complexity of meaning-making, systemic interactions, dynamic processes; seeks personal and spiritual transformation; creates mythical events that reframe meaning of situations; increasingly sensitive to the continuous “re-storying” of who one is; continually attend to interaction among thought, action, feeling, and perception as well as influences from individuals, institutions, history and culture; rarely feel understood in their complexity by others.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Integralist: Takes a holonic approach to the environment; appreciates the entire living system, global networks; uses multidimensional thinking (i.e., systems of systems); emphasizes psychological development and macro-management, using meta-theories to hold complexity; has a sense of belonging to the universe and awareness of the multiple flows (e.g., evolutionary, chaotic, conceptual) within social and ecological processes.

Where aspects may be seen: Brian Tissot’s work with marine fisheries; Michael Zimmerman’s environmental philosophy; Brian Eddy’s Integral Geography; Joel Kreisberg’s environmental medicine; Gail Hochachka’s Integral Community Development; David Johnston’s green-building market transformation work.

Appropriate Communication (Beck & Cowan, 1996)

Best sources of communication: Experience of discovery; learning in a communal network; holistic conception of multiple realities; any other person at the same developmental stage; information from beyond the rational mind; global systems.

Best-Fit approach (hot buttons): Multidimensional chunks of insight; access through the use of multi-tiered consciousness; cite ecological interdependency and interconnections; call for macro (global) solutions to macro problems and community beyond nationalities or partisanship; utilize high-tech and high-touch experientials; call to be above self-interests and group pressures; inspire to find unity in ideas and goals for whole-Earth impact; call to be responsible for overall good of system; draw upon spiritual aspects of reality.

Demotivators (cold buttons): Hide reality; set short-term goals at expense of living or social system; deny spirituality; make self-serving excuses.

Communication Examples (Brown, 2006)

“[Sustainable] development involves personal, collective and systemic transformation...[T]o engage effectively in this requires a broader and deeper understanding of development—broader in terms of including qualitative and interior needs of humans, and deeper to more adequately understand individual and collective transformation itself.”

~ Gail Hochachka, *Developing Sustainability, Developing the Self*, p. 1

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future...The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life... We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more...Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.”~ Earth Charter

The Indigo Stage of Consciousness

Values

Currently under research.

Self-Identity (Cook-Greuter, 2005; Ingersoll & Cook-Greuter, submitted)

Main focus: Being, non-controlling consciousness; witnessing flux of experience and states of mind.

Qualities: Emergence of perspective that is ego-transcendent or universal; people seem to “...experience themselves and others as part of ongoing humanity, embedded in the creative ground, fulfilling the destiny of evolution” (Cook-Greuter, 2002, p. 32); consciousness ceases to appear as a constraint but rather as one more phenomenon that can be foreground or background; multiple points of view taken effortlessly; pattern of constant flux and change becomes the context for feeling at home; one is able to respect the essence in others, no matter their difference.

Eco-Self (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005)

The Eco-Sage: Approaches the environment from an authentic transpersonal perspective that transcends and includes the previous Eco-Selves; focuses on subtle ways of being connected with the natural and human realm; experiences variety of unitive states with Gaia; holds deep commitment to all sentient beings.

Where aspects may be seen: Transcendentalism; J. W. Goethe's *Urpflanze*; St. Francis of Assisi's Cantic of Brother Sun; Joanna Macy's ecological self; Non-dual spiritual activism; Masanobu Fukuoka's natural farming; McClellan's non-dual ecology.

Appropriate Communication and Examples

Currently under research.

The 1-2-3 of Communicating to Multiple Worldviews Simultaneously

A variety of worldviews are present within any audience. Additionally, some people may be “in-between” stages and thus be grounded in two worldviews. Therefore, a realistic strategy for sustainability communications is to use language and imagery that appeals to multiple worldviews simultaneously. Here is a simple 1-2-3 process for crafting these communications.

First, identify the two or three predominant worldviews within the audience. Initial estimates suggest that the vast majority of the global population holds values at the Amber stage of consciousness or lower (Beck & Cowan, 1996). Approximately 75% of the adult US population appears to have a self-identity between the beginning of the Amber stage and the end of the Orange stage, with others at Red (4%), Green (11%), Teal (5%), Turquoise (1.5%), and Indigo (0.5%). Most children are at Magenta, Red, or Amber (Cook-Greuter, 2002). Scientifically measuring an individual's stage is possible, but in most cases communications designers need to estimate the predominant stages in their audience.

Second, develop a sustainability communication for each major worldview within the audience. Draw upon relevant authorities and sources, as well as using the “best-fit approach” guidelines above. Finally, combine the separate communications, being careful not to trigger any demotivators. As long as no “cold buttons” are pressed, people will tend to hear only that which resonates with their worldview. As with any communications strategy, repeatedly test to see what ultimately works with an audience.

Any tool can become a weapon if used irresponsibly. This communications tool should, above all, be used with the greatest of integrity and in a spirit of true service to the audience. Used as such, it provides a tremendous opportunity to truly reach the hearts and minds of people everywhere whose efforts are vitally needed to achieve global sustainability.

Case studies of Integral Communications for Sustainability

Market transformation in the US building industry

Since 2001, David Johnston and his organization, What's Working, have used the Integral framework to help design and catalyze market transformation toward sustainability in the US building industry. The strategy has been to stimulate adoption of green building within conventional channels by influencing market forces. Johnston has been working with public, private, and civil society groups to simultaneously stimulate demand and build supply capacity for green building services and products (Johnston, 2003).

The flagship program is the San Francisco Bay Area's "Build it Green" program which is sponsored by manufacturers, builders, architects, remodelers, and public agencies from all nine counties. This organization has evolved into a horizontally and vertically integrated non-profit. It connects manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of green building products (the vertical axis) with homeowners/buyers, builders, remodelers, architects, and realtors (horizontal axis). Johnston has directly trained these parties in the Integral framework, focusing on the quadrants and developmental stages. He has demonstrated the importance of integrating social, economic, and political systems (the exteriors) with the motivations and values of different stakeholder groups (the interiors) (Johnston, 2005). This process of helping stakeholders to see how their deepest values and businesses can align with green building has led to over 300 builders, remodelers, and architects becoming certified as green building professionals (Johnston, personal communication, 18 August, 2005). Johnston is currently working to launch a similar residential construction market transformation in New England.

Use of the Quadrants

Johnston uses the quadrants primarily for intrapersonal communication: to help leaders and stakeholders better understand and design sustainability programs. His basic process is to place the initiative in the "middle" of the quadrants and then have leaders identify the main forces from each quadrant that either support or thwart its success. He simplifies this analysis by looking at the "Why Do" (interior quadrants) and the "What Do" (exterior quadrants) of individuals and collectives. Thus, *why* would an individual or group want to support or block a certain sustainability initiative? *What* would an individual or group need to *do* to make that initiative actually happen, and what are other individuals or groups doing that may obstruct the initiative? This Integral analysis provides key insights into the leverage points for fostering change (Johnston, personal communication, 21 February, 2006).

Use of Developmental Stages

To effectively translate green building to different stages of consciousness, Johnston has identified the specific green building language and reasoning appropriate to each stage. In his trainings to business, political, and civil society leaders, he teaches about the different values and worldviews held by the stakeholders with whom they work (consumers, citizenry, members, etc.). Johnston does not always present these as the stages of increasing complexity which they are, but as a horizontal typology (i.e., simply different ways of seeing the world), which makes it more palatable to some. Here is his summary of "why to build green" for several levels (Johnston & Leonard, submitted):

- **Magenta** (*Eco-Guardian*): Family security and health; better indoor air quality
- **Red** (*Eco-Warrior*): Personal expression; self-reliance (off the grid)
- **Amber** (*Eco-Manager*): Our town, our company, our organization; green is the “right thing” to do; energy efficiency saves money; green homes are more durable
- **Orange** (*Eco-Strategist*): Market differentiation; greater profits; real estate appreciation; status symbol
- **Green** (*Eco-Radical*): Environmental health; saving old growth forests; recycled content products; supporting green companies with triple bottom lines (profit, people, planet)
- **Teal** (*Eco-Holist*): Trim-tab effectiveness of programs and market transformation; voting for planetary environmental health by being a green consumer; providing for the future.

Johnston’s focus on responding to the whole picture of the market, including the cultural and psychological forces—and then striving to align green building with the worldviews held by stakeholders—has made him one of the leading change agents in the building industry. This strategy is transferable to any other type of social or environmental change initiative.

Climate policy discourse in Australia

The eight stages of consciousness described above manifest in both the psychological and cultural quadrants. When people identifying with a particular stage come together and communicate with each other, they find a degree of mutual understanding that is expressed through a shared discourse. In recent work at the Institute for Sustainable Futures in Sydney, Australia, Chris Riedy has used the Integral framework to explore and influence the role of discourse in the development of climate policy in Australia (Riedy, 2005a, 2005b).

Several theorists, working independent of the Integral framework, have classified climate policy discourses. For example Thompson & Rayner (1998) identify hierarchical, individualist and egalitarian discourses that have been influential in the climate policy literature. In Australia, Bulkeley (2000) identifies a resource-based discourse coalition and a greenhouse action discourse coalition. In doctoral research, Riedy investigated whether there was any correspondence between these discourses and the eight stages of consciousness discussed above. The results are briefly summarized in Table I; readers seeking more detailed evidence for these correspondences should refer to Chapter 7 of Riedy (2005a).

Riedy found close correspondence between the Amber stage of consciousness (*Eco-Manager*) and the *hierarchical* discourse. Hierarchists see the effective response to climate change as an authoritarian one, centered on the nation-state. They do not recognize the ethical rights of those outside their own nation-state (e.g. in developing countries), preferring to focus on the national interest. Amber consciousness was also evident in those members of Bulkeley’s resource-based discourse coalition that were primarily concerned with defending the status-quo.

Integral stage of consciousness	Thompson and Rayner (1998)	Bulkeley (2000)	Concerns of the discourse
Amber (Eco-Manager)	Hierarchical	Resource-based	Concerned with maintaining order, defending the status quo and following the law (either religious or secular). Prefers hierarchical, authoritarian, rule-based responses to climate change that are in the “national interest”.
Orange (Eco-Strategist)	Individualistic	Resource-based Greenhouse action	Emphasizes economic rationalism, resource exploitation and the use of market instruments to respond to climate change. Self-interest is placed ahead of ecological interests.
Green (Eco-Radical)	Egalitarian	Greenhouse action	Places ecological values ahead of self-interest and emphasizes equity, participation and consensus. Often engaged in activism to overthrow oppressive hierarchies and power structures. Prefers equitable responses to climate change, such as contraction and convergence.

Table I: Correspondences between climate policy discourse descriptions and the Eco-Selves of the Integral framework.

Likewise, there was close correspondence between the Orange stage of consciousness (Eco-Strategist) and the *individualist* discourse. For individualists, the climate problem is a result of market failure and inappropriate pricing, best addressed through market mechanisms such as emissions trading. Individualists are committed to free markets, competition and rational responses. Orange consciousness was also evident in the many members of Bulkeley’s resource-based discourse coalition that were concerned primarily with the economic threats posed by climate change, given Australia’s reliance on fossil fuel resources. Further, some members of Bulkeley’s greenhouse action discourse coalition displayed Orange consciousness in their characterization of climate change response as an economic opportunity (e.g. renewable energy companies) or of the failure to respond as an economic threat (e.g. insurance companies).

Further, there was close correspondence between the Green stage of consciousness (Eco-Radical) and the *egalitarian* discourse. Egalitarians argue that the climate problem stems from profligacy in developed countries and that the appropriate response is to scale back consumption in these countries. Egalitarians argue for an ethical, contraction and convergence response to climate change in which all countries must reach the same per-capita level of greenhouse gas emissions by a specified date. They emphasize pluralism, cooperation and ecological values. Many of the members of Bulkeley’s

greenhouse action coalition, particularly those from environmental or social advocacy groups, also displayed Green consciousness.

The close correspondence between climate policy discourses identified by other authors and those implied by the Integral framework provides some confidence that the Integral approach offers a suitable basis for designing translative, discourse-focused communications. In a current research project, Riedy is collecting examples of the language, metaphors and symbols employed in Australian climate policy discussions to better characterize the three discourses already identified and determine whether discourses are also evident that correspond to the other Eco-Selves. Already, this project has identified elements of a Red (Eco-Warrior) discourse in certain environmental activist mailing lists. This discourse calls for large, rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, draws analogies to warfare and revolution and emphasizes strong leadership. It often coexists with an Eco-Radical discourse, as both discourses conceive of themselves as “against the system”.

This research has led to a proposal for a nation-wide climate change communication project, under the working title of the National Conversation on Climate Change (NCCC). The NCCC aims to stimulate public debate on Australia’s response to climate change by undertaking a series of high-profile citizen forums in all Australian states and developing an associated website and other media outputs. Each forum will bring together a group of about 15 randomly-selected citizens to participate in a deliberative process, modeled on the idea of a citizen jury (e.g. Carson et al., 2002) or consensus conference (e.g. Einsiedel, Jelsoe & Breck, 2001). In addition to the Integral framework, the NCCC is inspired by theorists of deliberative and discursive democracy, who emphasize the role of discursive contestation, deliberation and communication in an authentic democracy (e.g. Dryzek, 2000; Gundersen, 1995; Habermas, 1996).

Some of the ways in which the design of the NCCC seeks to address all quadrants and levels include:

- Behavioral quadrant:
 - Offer citizen participants access to the empirical evidence for climate change and data on impacts of alternative responses through invited experts
 - Provide a physical environment conducive to creative deliberation and a facilitator whose behaviors encourage participation and creativity
- Systemic quadrant:
 - Use information and communication technologies to connect the forums with experts in other locations and with each other
 - Provide analysis of barriers and opportunities for climate change response associated with technological, economic and social systems
- Psychological quadrant:
 - Use a variety of engagement techniques, including rhetoric, argument, artistic approaches and storytelling, to reach individuals “where they are” and encourage individual participation
 - Use of visioning exercises to make the impact of climate change more tangible for individuals and to link it to their phenomenological “sense of place”, e.g. explore how it

would feel to have different birds, insects and plants appearing and familiar ones disappearing

- Cultural quadrant:
 - Encourage discursive contestation through active facilitation and formation of small groups with shifting membership
 - Develop images and narratives of the future to draw out the normative commitments of the discourses represented in each forum.

Conclusion

The Integral framework is gaining widespread acceptance around the world as a way of helping practitioners in numerous fields to integrate relevant knowledge and improve the inclusiveness of their practices. Fundamentally, the framework is a way of clarifying complexity and bringing alignment to fragmented efforts at change. For sustainability practitioners, the Integral framework helps to expand thinking beyond the traditional focus on the ecological, economic, and social dimensions of a problem. From an Integral perspective, we need to consider at least the behavioral, systemic, psychological and cultural dimensions of sustainability challenges. Further, we need to be aware of how these dimensions develop over time.

In this paper, we have focused on how the Integral framework can be used to guide sustainability communications. Both the content and the delivery of Integral communications should, as much as is possible, account for the dimensions of reality revealed by the quadrants. Additionally, the core of these communications is making them developmentally-appropriate, so that they are tailored to the worldviews of stakeholders. We have provided an introduction to eight stages of consciousness that provide a coherent theoretical basis for segmenting audiences and designing communications that resonate with each audience segment.

The two case studies discussed provide initial examples of applying the Integral framework to sustainability communication. However, the application and exploration of the Integral framework in this field is nascent and there is much to learn from new research and practice. We hope that the framework presented here will encourage a more comprehensive approach to sustainability communication that avoids marginalization of key audience segments and speaks to people where they are. Ultimately, it is only by working together that we can respond successfully to the pressing challenge of developing a sustainable civilization. Communication that reaches across the invisible boundaries of consciousness may be a key to this cooperative project.

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