

## MANIPULATIVES

Colorful and interesting/amusing objects or “manipulatives” were first placed on training tables by an early trainer of ICA methods. Now they are now widely used by ToP trainers. and facilitators. Participants find them intriguing. Placed in front of each participant or a few on each table, objects send a message that ‘at this event something different than meeting as usual is going to happen. People sense that time spent in this colorful, intentional space will be purposeful, interesting and enjoyable.

During a meeting or workshop, fiddling’ with the quiet manipulative ‘toys’ releases the natural kinetic energy in the body that often is released through tapping a pencil or foot, doodling, or squirming, and allows one to listen and focus on content and conversation without disturbing others, or losing focus on the work.

Facilitators and trainers use the manipulatives in several ways to spark creative thinking in reflection, reporting, and helping to get every voice out. The objects, often manipulated with both hands, activate both the intuitive and rational parts of the participants’ brains. Ask “Pick up an object that attracts you. Share how the object you picked represents a talent, strength or unique gift you bring to this group and our work this morning?” “How does this object represent the work of your small group you are reporting?” “How does the toy capture your experience of our meeting today?” Museums, art and unique toy stores are frequently the source of great toys and objects.