



FRAMEWORKS FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

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1. Introduction

The organisational learning concept has become a hollow phrase. It is popular with managers, HRD departments, consultants and trainers. It is also discussed in the world of science & research and theories and models have been developed. The theories and models regularly build on each other. Equally frequently, one aspect of organisational learning is magnified and the image of organisational learning remains limited. You feel the elephant's tail and you imagine an elephant looks like a rope with a tassel at the end.

What is organisational learning and what is a learning organisation? (Appendix 1)

What does organisational learning have to do with quality management, with competence management, and with knowledge management?

Is knowledge management the same as organisational learning?

Is Kolb's learning cycle comparable to Korthagen's reflection circle? Can you only apply these models individually or also at a team or organisation level?

How does an organisation benefit when you have learnt something? How do you benefit when your organisation wants to introduce competence management? And how does the organisation itself benefit?

And last but not least, what can you deploy to actually become a learning organisation? What are the instruments and interventions and when and why do you use them?

2. Objective

Without having the pretence of dealing extensively with all components of organisational learning, I will attempt to interconnect a number of theories, concepts and models.

This simplifies the discussion of the subject and provides a picture of what is related to what. However, the objective to link the theories to tangible areas of action, interventions and methods is more important. This helps PSO in the substantiation of its support to member organisations that want to work on organisational learning and offers handles to member organisations for supporting partner organisations in the development of organisational learning. The premise is that 'being a learning organisation' directly contributes to capacity building.

The following subjects will be discussed in a more or less organic interconnection:

- ❖ Learning
 - Kolb's learning styles
 - Korthagen's reflection circle
 - Schön's Reflective Practitioner
 - Single-loop and double-loop learning / enhancing and innovative learning
- ❖ Organisation
 - Disciplines of the learning organisation according to Senge (Senge, 1992)
 - The key functions of a learning NGO (Britton, 1998)
- ❖ Relation to
 - Knowledge management
 - Quality management (ISO, EFQM, IIP)
 - HRM (competence management, comprehensive learning plan, personal development plan, discussion cycle)
- ❖ Instruments, incl. Learning Landscape, Learning History, The "Learning NGO" Questionnaire, Action-reflection groups, intervision, coaching, training etc.

3. The Learning Organisation (Peter Senge)

A lot of thought has gone into and much has been written and published about organisational learning. The term was adopted by every self-respecting organisation mainly through Peter Senge's ideas. His ideas are a continuation of various other theorists' ideas involved in organisational learning. Below, a brief description of the Five Disciplines of the Learning Organisation according to Senge. Links to other models and instruments to be deployed are given.

<p><u>Personal mastery</u></p> <p>Continuous clarification and deepening of the personal vision, keeping our efforts permanently focused, developing patience and an objective perspective of reality. Consistently giving shape to the ideas you really consider important.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>The micro or individual level is in the picture. A learning organisation does not exist without learning individuals. The ability to reflect is essential for being able to learn. This offers a place for <u>Korthagen's reflection circle</u> (Appendix 2).</p> <p>For individual learning, too, <u>Kolb's theory on learning styles</u> immediately comes to the fore (Appendix 3).</p> <p>There is a third link to <u>Schön's theory on reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action</u>. Of course, within this discipline, <u>substantive knowledge</u> and <u>competence</u> have their places. The organisation 'steers' in the individual personal mastery by deploying <u>HRM instruments</u>. This results in a link between the micro (HRD) and meso (OD) level.</p> <p>The organisation supports the personal mastery by offering the option of discussing the personal vision to eventually arrive at a <u>shared vision</u>.</p> <p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning reflection skills - Personal development plan - Using coaching, training and education - Interview cycle tuned to development (PDP interviews, progress interviews and evaluation interviews) - Comprehensive training plan geared to organisation objectives
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<p><u>Mental models</u></p> <p>'Mental models' are deeply rooted assumptions. We are usually not aware of such a model or its influence. For example, it strikes us that somebody at work is elegantly dressed and we think to ourselves, 'She is probably from a respectable family'. The discipline of working with mental models starts with introspection; we have to learn to uncover and scrutinise our own subconscious images.</p> <p>Our mental models influence the way we see things and the way we react to them.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>Mental models can occur both at individual and at group level. We sometimes suffer from 'group thinking' and from collectively shared convictions. Becoming aware of a mental model happens at an individual level. But working on it is almost always done with the help of another or several other persons. This is a link to Argyris' and Schön's theories, particularly the ideas concerning <u>The Reflective Practitioner</u> and <u>single-loop and double-loop learning</u>, also known as <u>enhancing and innovative learning</u> (Appendix 4).</p> <p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication training (working on respect, safety and openness; asking open questions, summarising, giving and receiving feedback) - Training to learn how to reflect - Coaching - Working with reflection groups - Intersision
<p><u>Building a shared vision</u></p> <p>Leaders who learn to put this discipline into practice find how wrong it is to impose a vision, however heartfelt it may be. It has to come from each person separately. A shared vision ensures that people perform because they want to, not because they have to.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>Building a shared vision primarily has a link with <u>leadership style and skills</u> and with the perception of togetherness, of forming a <u>community</u>.</p> <p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaching and training management - Team building, formal and informal activities - Setting up a structure for vision building and maintenance (!)
<p><u>Team learning</u></p> <p>How can a team of well-meaning managers with individual IQs over 120 have a collective IQ of 63? This is the paradox to be solved by this discipline. Team learning is of essential importance; only when the teams can learn, can the organisation learn.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>Team learning advances personal mastery, but team learning is more than the sum of the knowledge of the individuals. Here is a link to <u>collective learning</u>. A condition is familiarity with each other's <u>mental models</u>.</p>
	<p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural interventions for trust, safety and openness - Communication training (dialogue, reflective listening, skilful discussion, giving and receiving feedback) - Working with team discussion rules - Training for dealing with differences (Human Dynamics, core quadrants, Belbin roles, team styles, etc.)

<p><u>Systems thinking</u></p> <p>The fifth discipline, systems thinking, interconnects the other disciplines: team learning, mental models, shared vision and personal mastery. This results in a fully integrated system. System learning stands for seeing interconnections and seeing change processes in time (instead of random indications). From these helicopter positions, actions and organisation processes can be reviewed to reinforce or reduce them. Due to the coherence between all activities and processes, everyone is responsible for the problems that occur within the system. Problems can be solved through incorporating new insights in the system, resulting in a learning system.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>Systems thinking has a link with the <u>chaos theory</u> and for example also <u>Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)</u>. An important characteristic of the chaos theory is not primarily complexity, but the non-linear cause-effect thinking involving broadening both the time horizon and the place horizon. To use systems thinking, there is a <u>system language</u> (causal loop behavioural patterns, archetypes, computer models)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning to use system language
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4. Eight key functions of a learning NGO (Bruce Britton)

Bruce Britton fills each field with indicators for the key functions (Appendix 5). Below, the key functions are briefly described and, just as for Senge's disciplines, the links with other models and the instruments to be deployed are explored.

<p><u>1 Creating a supporting culture</u></p> <p>Mistakes are allowed to be made. Personal contributions to organisational learning are explicitly rewarded. Political and power games do not hinder organisational learning. All employees have access to tools for individual development. Employees feel free to explore each other's assumptions and to discuss them.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>There is a clear link here with <u>liP</u> ideas. In these, great value is attached to a demonstrable learning culture for all employees. There is also a link with the <u>mental models</u> discipline.</p> <p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitable management style - Reward/incentive system - Comprehensive training plan - Communication training (working on respect, safety and openness; asking open questions, summarising, giving and receiving feedback) - Training to learn how to reflect - Working with action-reflection groups - Knowing and using liP
<p><u>2 Gathering internal experience</u></p> <p>There is a smooth-running M&E system. The work pressure is such that people have space to reflect on their own work and to learn from this. Expressing and disseminating lessons learned is facilitated by the organisation. The organisation's explicit wisdom is growing. Employees, teams and departments see each other as partners in work and are focused on each other's needs and expectations. Lessons learned are exchanged throughout the organisation.</p>	<p><u>Link</u></p> <p>Here is a link with <u>Monitoring and Evaluation</u>. And with the <u>team learning</u> discipline. <u>Explicitising</u>, <u>reflecting</u> and <u>exploring</u> are important for gathering internal experience and converting it into organisation wisdom.</p> <p><u>Action areas for further development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M&E protocol, including analysis systematics - Internal customer orientation - Intervision, action-reflection groups - Training to learn to reflect - Cultural interventions for trust, safety and openness - Communication training (dialogue, reflective listening, skilful debating, giving and receiving feedback) - Working with team discussion rules - Training for dealing with differences (Human Dynamics, core quadrants, Belbin roles, team styles, etc.) - Working with the Learning landscape (Appendix 6) - Action research (Appendix 7)

<p><u>3 Access to information from outside the organisation</u></p> <p>Employees pick up relevant information from the outside world and are regularly debriefed on this by their manager. There is contact with several organisations to learn from each other's experiences. Employees are encouraged to make contacts in the outside world. They document and share with others what they learn from other organisations. The organisation participates in various (relevant) networks.</p>	<p><i>Link</i></p> <p>The organisation is not isolated, but functions in a broader context. Here is a direct link to the discipline <u>systems thinking</u>.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective participation in networks - Incorporate debriefing in work structure - Include accountability for sharing knowledge in fg - Accessible (digital) systems for communication, documentation and filing of lessons learned - learn to use system language
<p><u>4 Communication systems</u></p> <p>There are open communication channels throughout the organisation, between teams, departments and locations. There are various mechanisms (incl. email and bulletin boards) for sharing experiences and they are easily accessible to all sections and employees in the organisation. The employees are capable of making their personal knowledge and wisdom accessible to the organisation.</p>	<p><i>Link</i></p> <p>For 'personal knowledge and wisdom' there is a link with the discipline <u>personal mastery</u>. Availability of communication mechanisms has a link with an organisation's <u>consultation structure</u> on the one hand and a strong link with <u>ICT</u> and with <u>documentation systematics</u> on the other hand.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessible digital communication tools - Training for working with digital tools for e-learning and exchange - Accessible documentation systematics - Transparent consultation structure; investigation of blockades - Training for reflecting and documenting; making learning products (Appendix 8) - Experience reports - Learning History (Appendix 9)
<p><u>5 Mechanisms for drawing conclusions</u></p> <p>Learning from experience concerns everyone and learning lessons from M&E reports and field visit reports goes without saying. The organisation is capable of turning raw information into useful wisdom. Experiences are not just analysed individually, but also by theme, using all recent experiences with regard to that theme. The organisation is continuously focused on work improvement.</p>	<p><i>Link</i></p> <p>Here is a link with <u>Monitoring and Evaluation</u> and with <u>quality management</u>.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M&E protocol, including analysis systematics - Learning to analyse - Working with thematic advancement circles
<p><u>6. Developing an organisational memory</u></p> <p>There are mechanisms for 'remembering' recent and earlier experiences through accessible</p>	<p><i>Link</i></p> <p>Here is a link with <u>knowledge management</u>, <u>ICT</u> and <u>documentation systematics</u>.</p>

	<p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management Information System - Learning histories - Digital archive system - Accessible digital and physical documentation system - Exit procedure for employees who leave - Information/documentation employee - Estimate visible on budget
<p><u>7 Integrating learning into strategy and policy</u> Strategy and policy development in the organisation have been consciously set up as learning processes; feedback loops have been built in to improve policy based on experience. People from most layers of the organisation are involved in policy development. An effective MIS serves learning. There are systems, operational procedures and other ways to support sharing and learning from individual experiences. Lessons learned by part of the organisation are quickly available for the other sections of the organisation, even if they do not appear to be immediately relevant at first sight.</p>	<p><i>Link</i> Here is an overlap with the key function <u>communication systems</u> where it concerns the rapid availability of information for all parts of the organisation. There is link with <u>ICT</u> and with <u>documentation systematics</u>. There is also a link with <u>integral policy planning</u> and the <u>Deming circle</u> of quality improvement. An effective <u>MIS</u> is indispensable for responsible policy planning.</p> <p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of comprehensive cyclical policy planning - Procedure for policy development in which both reflection and participation have been recorded. - Effective management information system (MIS)
<p><u>8 Applying the lessons learned</u> The organisation applies what has been learned in improving its practice and influences the policy and practice of other organisations. The organisation publishes the experience gained and lessons learned to a wide audience. The organisation develops an even more powerful impact, becomes more effective, more innovative and continues to build on its capacity.</p>	<p><i>Link</i> Overlap with the <u>integration of learning in strategy and policy</u>; if the lessons learned are integrated there, this must become visible in the organisation's practice. When applying new knowledge in practice, we arrive at <u>innovating</u> where it concerns double-loop and particularly triple-loop learning. External communication and profiling yourself more powerfully in the environment where you operate is also linked to <u>marketing</u>.</p>
	<p><i>Action areas for further development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating in networks - Producing publications - Deploying single, double and triple-loop learning; - Mental models - Working with the learning landscape - Investing in innovation projects - Experimenting - Image building / deploying marketing instruments

5. Why NGOs are slow learners¹

External barriers

- The pressure to show low overheads decreases the willingness to invest time and resources in organisational learning.
- Competition in fund raising results in pressure to focus mainly on success stories. This counteracts an internal critical attitude of self-assessment and analysis.
- Environmental factors in developing countries can be so complex and situations so unique that the transfer of lessons learned is not possible. In another area, another country, the basic conditions are so different that best practices are not available.
- Sometimes, the circumstances have changed and mistakes made earlier are blamed on previous deficiencies (e.g. lack of money or well-trained staff) and the belief (without substantiation!) that this will now go differently.
- Models generally accepted in the sector are often held onto although they are less useful based on continuing new insights. An example is the 'Logical Framework' model (Appendix 10). This is aimed at performance indicators and results and forms a blueprint approach for project design. When the focus shifts to less hard and therefore less measurable subjects, such as capacity building, institutional change etc., this model is less useful.
- Countries that lean heavily on development cooperation often depend on local donor / financier organisations. This is not a favourable circumstance for open and honest feedback to the donor and therefore impedes learning from experiences.

Barriers with regard to formal evaluations

- There are too many and the reports are very bulky.
- They are read by few people; they are often regarded as confidential and consequently do not go to e.g. research institutions or universities.
- The evaluation process serves several purposes (improving decision-making, accountability, learning, dialogue) and the learning objective often receives little attention. Often, the lessons learned referred to are general in nature and not very informative, in general, always applicable wording.
- If an evaluator exposes things openly and critically, this is taken as a charge against project designers, implementers and supervisors. It is better to conceal mistakes, report in guarded terms and to rapidly proceed to the recommendations (is connected with internal barrier of organisation sharing and not tolerating mistakes). This means that an analysis of and collective learning from what actually works is sadly lacking.
- There is a lack of long-term effect studies, exploring what interventions and projects have produced after three, five or ten years.

¹ This chapter is based on information from:

- The Learning NGO, Bruce Britton, July 1998 INTRAC Occasional Papers Series Number 17, Chapter 5 Barriers to learning in NGOs
- Why Aren't Aid Organizations Better Learners? Elliot Berg. Discussed at the EGDII seminar "What do Aid Agencies and their Cooperating Partners Learn from their Experiences" on the 24th of August 2000

Internal organisation barriers

- An activist culture regards learning as a luxury, subordinate to 'the real work'. There is spending pressure.
- Differences in learning styles in the event of a multicultural workforce.
- High staff turnover on projects.
- A hierarchical, centralist structure focused on control is destructive for learning.
- Obstructed vertical information flows; managers report to 'the top' on the results of their department / team and these reports are often not informative and sometimes even misleading.
- Work sharing in the sense of: having different people in a project assess, design, implement, monitor and evaluate is not beneficial for an open culture that is aimed at learning. Pointing out mistakes or failures is then quickly seen as pointing the finger at a colleague.
- Encouragement of and reward for learning is not developed well, whilst making mistakes is rejected and penalised. This, in combination with job insecurity and temporary contracts, does not encourage employees to openly discuss 'what could be better'.
- Systems for easier access to, filing, transfer and dissemination of lessons learned are poorly developed. There are insufficient resources and they are inefficient. Horizontal information flows are often obstructed, i.e. between different departments, units and locations.
- The mechanism of defensive routines through the development of unwritten and unexpressed rules that do not just make certain subjects taboo subjects, but even make the taboo unmentionable!

6. Relation to Knowledge Management

Knowledge management concerns the organisation of knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer in professional knowledge intensive organisations. This could be direct, in contact between people. People and their interaction are then centre stage. This could also be indirect. The communication then runs through a medium (often intranet) and documentation and digitalisation take centre stage. This is a knowledge system. Knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing are essential for a learning organisation. Whether the accent should be on the direct or indirect method depends on the type and culture of the organisation. Both are of importance. Weggeman² has fleshed out knowledge management in his so-called Knowledge Value Chain. This consists of the following links: gathering information, recording it, managing it, enriching information and turning it into knowledge, unlocking it, followed by the distribution of knowledge. Such a knowledge system contains a *knowledge infrastructure* and (very important) a *knowledge information culture*. This knowledge information culture focuses on the 'soft' aspects of knowledge management. 'Soft' aspects such as the culture of an organisation and individuals' competencies determine the willingness to share knowledge.

² Bron: http://www.geocities.com/hno1/Informatie_Kennis.html (last opened op 11 maart 2009)
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7. Relation to Human Resource Management

A number of instruments for Human Resource Management can be deployed for the development of a learning organisation. Competency management, working with personal development plans (PDPs) and monitoring this staff development through a cycle of performance interviews, progress interviews and evaluation interviews advance individual learning and are related to the discipline of personal mastery. This individual learning benefits the organisation and this is how the organisation works on its learning capacity. A training budget is often distributed across the departments and individual members of staff in a reasonable manner. To let the organisation and the policy pursued by the organisation benefit even more from this individual learning, the organisation can formulate a number of key competencies that are important for the organisation and the realisation of the organisation policy and that are subsequently leading for the deployment in the personal development plans.

8. Relation to Quality Management

Quality management concerns the care for consistent quality, with quality being defined by the customer or purchaser of the product or the service. Controlling processes can make this quality consistent. In order to do so, you make process descriptions, record the checkpoints and responsibilities and you ensure that people follow the process steps neatly. If there are hiccups, you look at where it went wrong. If it often went wrong at a particular point, you look into whether the process must be adapted / improved. This concerns single-loop learning and an instrumental approach aimed at product and process quality. The following step in quality care, taken by many organisations based on the practical experience 'that things are not quite right' is to look at organisation quality. This involved TQM (Total Quality Management), in which the learning organisation in all its facets comes into view. Questions arise that concern the quality of the organisation in one way or another. And that are to do with issues that ultimately also influence the quality of the performance (product or service). This concerns questions such as: What is our vision, what do we mean by quality, what should that mean to us and how do we view the relationship with our customers, purchasers, employees (building shared vision)? Do we have the right people in the right places and are we taking good care of them (personal mastery)? Do we work together, do we learn from each other, or does everybody work for themselves (team learning)? How can we learn from and anticipate the fluctuations and changes in our environment? We want to be innovative and creative, but cannot get out of our own patterns (systems thinking and mental models). The context in which we work is so complex, we can no longer see how we can operate purposefully and systematically in it (systems thinking).

When the organisation quality has come into the picture, focus has shifted to consistent quality. This requires a collective learning process. "Failures occur when organisations expect too much from the quality programme and too little from themselves"³.

ISO-9001 is the norm for assessing and certifying a quality management system based on particular criteria. The EFQM model (Appendix 11) is a useful model for deploying the quality programme to improve quality and as an instrument for self-assessment, particularly in services. Investors in People (Appendix 12) is an intensive programme that entails both a standardisation and a system for guaranteeing continuous organisation improvement and that puts a lot of emphasis on learning, by people, teams and the entire organisation.

³ Peter Senge a.o., *Het Vijfde Discipline Praktijkboek* page 381
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Appendix 1

Learning Organisation vs. Organisational Learning

In literature, we come across a lot of definitions for the terms organisational learning and learning organisation. Senge defines a learning organisation as 'a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create' [Senge, 1990]. According to Addleson, a learning organisation is 'an organisation where actions and decisions are guided by an appreciation of the importance of communities in organisational life and where managing is focused on building and sustaining relationships' [Addleson, 1995]. Argyris defines organisational learning as the process of 'detection and correction of errors' [Argyris, 1977]. Fiol and Lyles see organisational learning as 'the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding' [Fiol and Lyles, 1985]. Huber says that organisational learning happens 'if through its processing of information, the range of its (organisational) potential behaviour is changed' [Huber, 1991].

The difference in definitions demonstrates that there is not yet a generally accepted picture of what organisational learning and the learning organisation are. Schein makes a clear difference between organisational learning and a learning organisation. Organisational learning is seen as individuals and groups *in* the organisation learning and a learning organisation is seen as learning *through* the organisation as a total system [Schein 1999]. Watkins and Marsick say the following about this: 'Teams, groups and networks are the medium for moving new knowledge throughout the learning organisation. The organisation can take advantage of the teams' combined thinking to build new systematic capacity. In this view, teams are a crucial bridge between individuals and Organisational Learning' [Watkins and Marsick, 1993]. According to them, organisational learning happens through individuals working in groups. Knowledge can only be built up individually and in groups, because implicit, intuitive knowledge can only be shared by intensive cooperation and exchange.

The more types of knowledge there are in the collective learning process, the more limited the group of people can be to let this process run effectively. When it concerns the exchange of explicit, declarative knowledge (facts such as figures, management board announcements), the entire organisation can learn from this through the familiar media. However, when it concerns knowledge building and sharing with regard to implicit, procedural and conditional knowledge, this can only be done in a small group. If we want to learn in the organisation, we will consequently have to focus on individual and group learning within the organisation.

Collective learning in the organisation?

'Collective learning can be understood as a label for a situation in which several people belonging to the same collective improve their knowledge within the same domain in the same period, either individually or interactively' [Weggeman, 1997]. This definition says that collective learning is done by individuals who work in groups. Based on this definition, it is not at all self-evident that learning is collective. The results of participation in a collective learning process can be very different at an individual level, because individuals had different types of knowledge before the collective learning process started. But when is learning collective? Huber goes beyond this and provides four arguments that indicate the level to which organisational learning could occur [Huber, 1991, p.90]:

- a. '*Organisational learning occurs if any of its units acquires knowledge that it recognises as potentially useful to the organisation*'. This first argument leans especially heavily on the individual learning in organisations. According to Huber, organisational learning occurs when somebody in the organisation learns something that is potentially useful for the organisation. What an individual learns does not always have to be of importance for the organisation.

- b. *'More organisational learning occurs when more of the organisation's components obtain this knowledge and recognise it as potentially useful'*. This second argument goes more in the direction of collective learning. When more people learn the same and experience this as useful, more organisational learning occurs, according to Huber.
- c. *'More organisational learning occurs when more and more varied interpretations are developed, because such development changes the range of potential behaviours'*. Projects are often worked on in teams. These teams comprise specialists who all look at problems from a different angle. Because the problems (and solutions) are all interpreted differently, different solutions will be offered for the problems. Based on these different interpretations, specialists can view their own solution from a different angle and maybe arrive at a better solution.
- d. *'More organisational learning occurs when more organisational units develop uniform comprehensions of the various interpretations'*. This last argument strongly continues to build on argument c. Through the different solutions for a problem, a team can jointly choose the best solution for the problem. One solution can be chosen, but solutions can also be combined to achieve a better result.

Source :

www.zbc.nu

(last opened: 19th of February 2009)

In the text above, references are made to the following literature:

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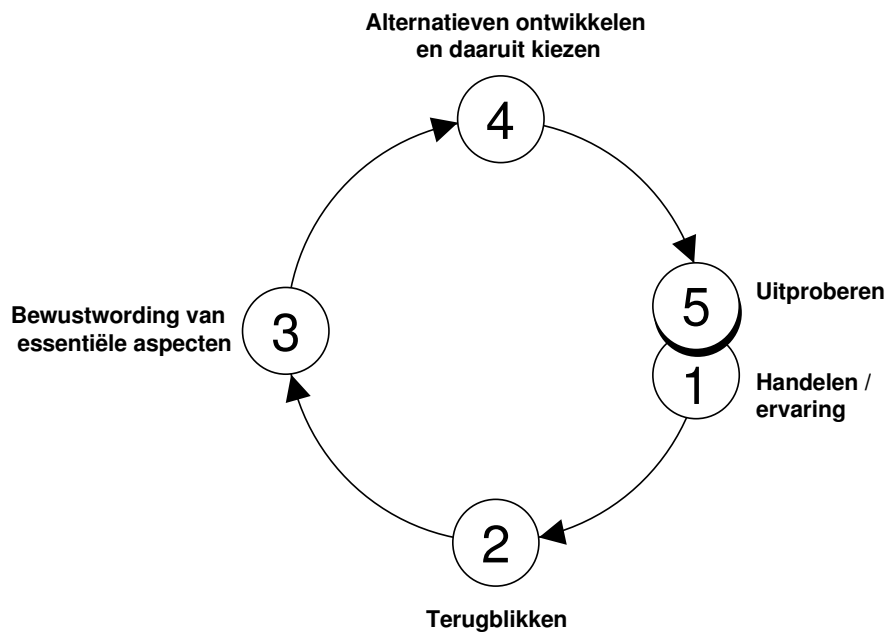
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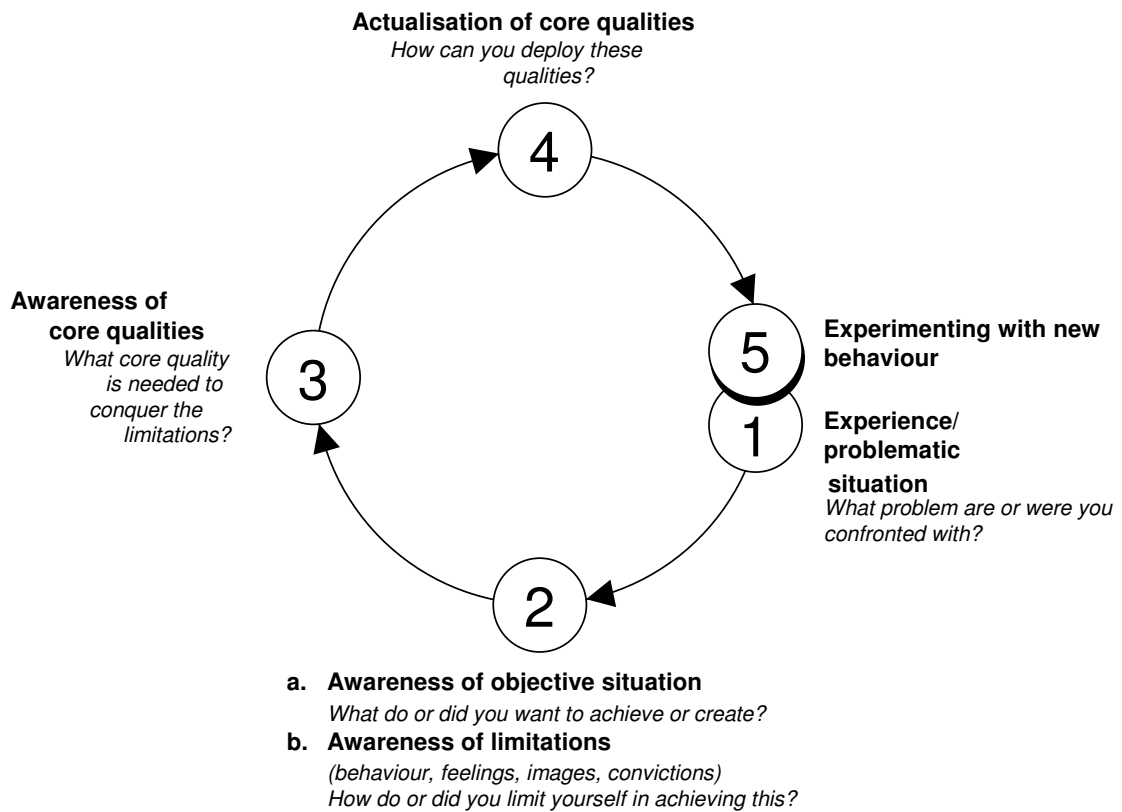
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Appendix 2

Korthagen's Spiral Model for Reflection



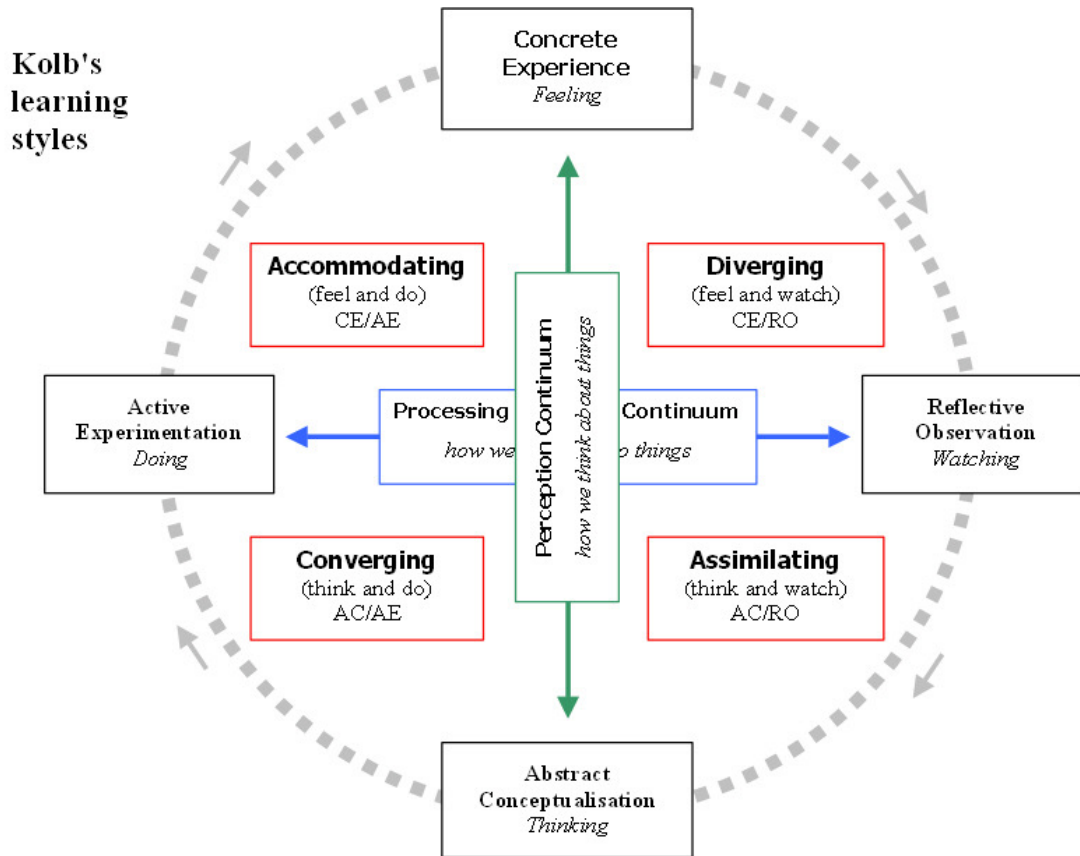
Korthagen's phase model for reflection



From: Korthagen, F.A.J. (2001), Waar doen we het voor, Oration Utrecht University

Appendix 3

Kolb's learning circle



© concept david kolb, adaptation and design alan chapman 2005-06, based on Kolb's learning styles, 1984
Not to be sold or published. More free online training resources are at www.businessballs.com. Sole risk with user.

Source:

<http://www.businessballs.com/kolblearningstyles.htm> (last opened: 19th of February 2009)

Appendix 4

Single, Double and Triple-Loop Learning

Learning loop	Learning domain	Learning category	Learning result
Single-loop	Rules	Must/ may	Improve
Double-loop	Insights	Know/ understand	Innovate
Triple-loop	learning Principles	Dare/ want	Development

Diagram from:

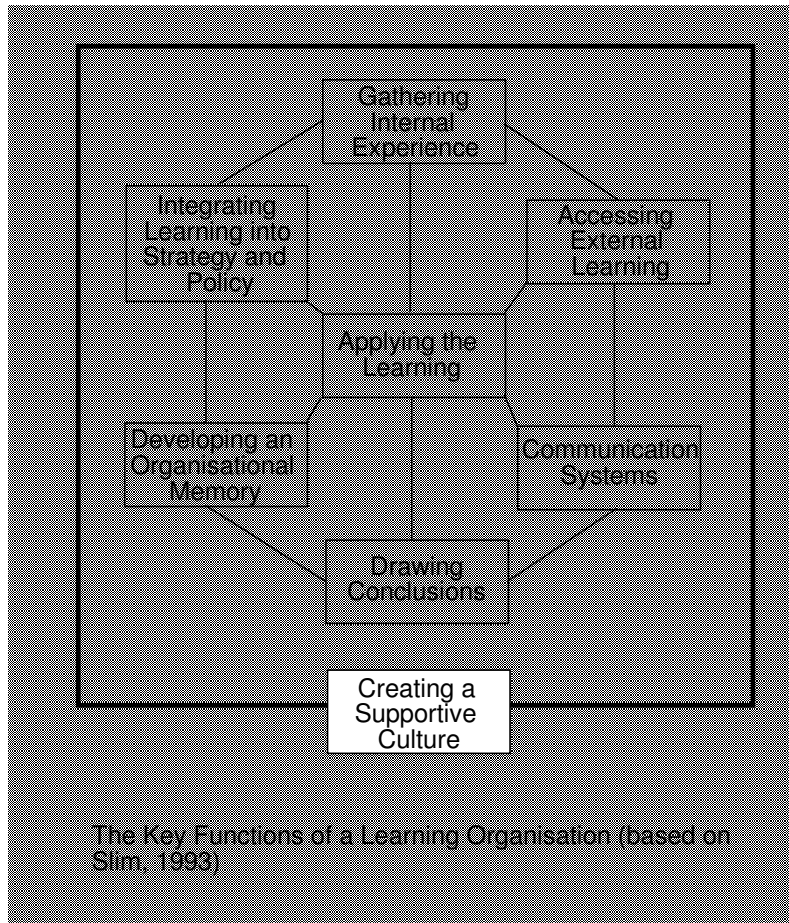
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Source:

http://www.markensteijn.com/lerende_organisatie.htm (last opened 19th of February 2009)

Appendix 5

Eight Key Functions of a Learning NGO



1. Indications Creating a Supportive Culture

- Staff are rewarded for the contribution they make to the organisation's learning.
- Organisational politics and power relations are not allowed to get in the way of sharing experience and knowledge in the organisation.
- Senior managers create a climate which encourages experimentation and acknowledges that mistakes are an inevitable part of this.
- Resources and facilities for individual development are made available to all members of the organisation.
- People feel free to enquire about and challenge each others' (and their own) assumptions and biases. There are few (if any) undiscussable subjects.

2. Indications Gathering Internal Experience

- The organisation uses systematic procedures for the regular monitoring, review and evaluation of all of its project, programme and advocacy activity.
- The organisation has enough built in 'spare capacity' to allow staff to take time out to reflect on their work experience and learn lessons from it.

- The organisation continually enables individuals to voice important lessons that they have learned in order to constantly expand the organisation's base of explicit wisdom.
- Individuals, groups and sections view each other as working partners and constantly strive to find out and meet each others' expectations and needs.
- People at all levels of the organisation are encouraged to learn regularly and rigorously from their work and feed such learning to other parts of the organisation.

3. Indications Accessing External Learning

- All organisation members who have dealings with the 'outside world' are expected to gather and share relevant information. Their managers take an active interest in 'debriefing' them about what the information they have gathered.
- The organisation enters into open co-operation with other organisations in order to share and encourage mutual learning from each other's experience.
- The organisation encourages its staff to develop a wide range of contacts with other agencies and to actively learn from their experience.
- Staff are encouraged to visit other organisations and are expected to write up and share in other ways what they learned from their visit.
- The organisation is linked to a wide range of networks and uses its contacts with other agencies to gather useful knowledge and skills.

4. Indications Communication Systems

- Information flows freely throughout the organisation, crossing departmental, sectional and locational boundaries without hindrance.
- The organisation has a wide range of mechanisms for sharing experience between staff in different teams, sections, departments and locations.
- It is easy to access information on the lessons learned from other parts of the organisation.
- Staff have access to email and are encouraged to share information using electronic media such as the internet and bulletin boards.
- The organisation's staff are skilled at making their personal knowledge and wisdom available to others.

5. Indications Mechanisms for Drawing Conclusions

- Learning from experience is seen as 'everyone's business' and not left to specialist units or senior managers.
- Monitoring and evaluation reports and field visit reports are routinely analysed to identify what has been learned from the work and what lessons could be applied in the future.
- The organisation is skilled at converting raw information from evaluations into useable wisdom.
- The organisation regularly identifies a theme of work and draws conclusions based on an analysis of all of its practice experience and an understanding of the current 'state of the art'.
- The organisation uses a continuous improvement approach when analysing the knowledge and experience gained from its practice. Staff are encouraged to constantly ask themselves "How could we do this better?"

6. Indications Developing an Organisational Memory

- The organisation has mechanisms for 'remembering' the experience of its current and previous work through the development of highly accessible databases, resource / information centres and data retrieval systems.
- All written reports and key documents are cross-referenced and made easily accessible to all staff.
- The organisation is not vulnerable to losing its experience when individuals leave. For example, staff who leave the organisation go through a systematically recorded de-briefing to ensure that the organisation retains their knowledge.
- The organisation has a systematic database of all its project and programme work which can enable staff and 'outsiders' to identify where expertise resides.
- The information function is given sufficient prominence and is resourced adequately to enable the organisation to keep its records up to date.

7. Indications Integrating Learning into Strategy and Policy

- The development of strategy is deliberately organised as a learning process. Feedback loops are incorporated to enable continuous improvement in the light of experience.
- Policy making involves people at most levels in the organisation, according to what they can contribute not their status.
- The system of planning, accounting, budgeting, financial reporting and other management processes are organised to assist learning.
- Learning is built into the organisation through the development of systems, operational procedures and other ways of sharing the lessons gained from individuals' experience.
- The learning gained by one part of the organisation is quickly made available to others even if at first it appears of little immediate relevance.

8. Indications Applying the Learning

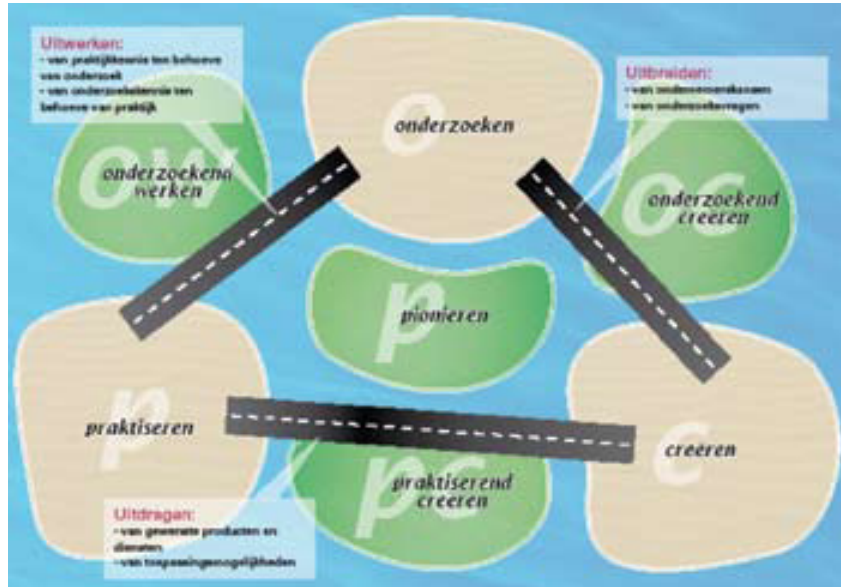
- The organisation systematically uses its learning to improve its own practice and influence the policy and practice of other organisations or agencies.
- The organisation writes up and publishes its experience for a wider readership without using unnecessary technical jargon.
- The organisation has a strategy for scaling up its impact which reflects the learning it has developed on 'what works'.
- The organisation changes its practice and priorities to reflect new knowledge and insights in its efforts to constantly improve its effectiveness.
- The organisation is constantly building its capacity and innovating based on what it has learned.

Uit:

Britton, B. (1998) *The Learning NGO*, Occasional Papers Series Number 17, INTRAC

Appendix 6

The Learning Landscape, Manon Ruijters and Robert-Jan Simons



Learning orientations: highlighting the 'learning' question

Islands

- Does the phrasing of the question revolve around the better utilisation of everything we know and are capable of in our primary process (practise)?
- Is there a need for more knowledge and insight (research) behind the question?
- Is there a need to create tools (products, manuals, etc.) to realise (create) a desired situation?

Bridges

- Does the knowledge circulate enough?
- Is there a need for more explicitising? Is (empirical) knowledge sufficiently explicit to be able to share and connect?

Polders

- Is there a need for making/doing things together (combining practice, research and creation)?

Sea

- How large is the urgency/pressure?
- How large is the free space, the playing field?

From:

Ruiter, M.C.P. (2007) 'Goh, het lijkt net werk ...' Het organiseren van informeel leren, *Leren in organisaties* 12th of December 2007 14-18

Appendix 7

Action research

Action research is a combination of study and change. People doing action research, do not just want to obtain knowledge, but also (help) improve things. Action research is originated in the US immediately after the second world war with social-psychologist Kurt Lewin. This led to a movement that emphasised that people in social contexts (communities and organisations, including for example schools) could improve their own situation through investigating that situation itself, collectively (instead of an external expert performing research and giving advice). Meanwhile, there are all sorts of forms of action research, in varying social sectors such as health care, social work and education.

A *first variant to be distinguished* is the one in which a researcher cooperates with people involved, on the basis of equality. The researcher uses particular general keynotes in his (or her) work, based on values and objectives such as democracy, emancipation and improvement of people's social circumstances. He tries to involve all interested parties in the project. The research leads to an analysis of the problems and needs, in their (overall, but at the same time specific) context. Everyone (interested parties and researcher) goes through a joint learning process. The analysis changes their thinking about the problems at hand and, based on that, they design changes (as much as possible on the basis of consensus), which are subsequently implemented and researched (again). The more the interested parties can do themselves, the more the researcher only has to act as a supporter of the process. He helps the people involved get a grip on their own situation, as it were, both mentally and with regard to action. Methodically speaking, work is done according to the practice cycle: formulating a problem, partly based on research and analysis; making a plan; implementing the plan; researching and evaluating the effects; reformulating the problem; etcetera.

A *second variant to be distinguished* for action research goes one step further as it were, and states that the people involved have to be their own researchers.

Advocates of action research are optimistic about its opportunities. In practice, however, problems may arise. We briefly mention the following potential bottlenecks:

- problems in the cooperation (in the variant described first):
 - not all interested parties can be interested in participation;
 - people involved and researcher cannot agree on the methods to be pursued;
 - people involved use conceptualisations that are inadequate according to the researcher;
 - people involved do not reach consensus about interpretations and/or action to be undertaken (e.g. as a result of conflicting interests);
- problems of a methodical nature (in both variants):
 - in the researcher's thinking or the person-involved-as-a-researcher's thinking, wish (e.g.: favourite interpretation) and reality are in each other's way (cognitive difficulty);
 - in actions, the implementation of changes and monitoring changes (and their effects) become entangled;
 - whilst working, objectives and/or implementation keep getting adapted ('advancing insight'), making it unclear against what changes have to be measured, or to what effects can be attributed.

On the other hand, a methodical argument that argues in favour of performing action research is that, if you want to know what is possible, this is best done by trying to change things, and to see how far you can get. This argument is valid both for the person who has an interest in the changes, and for the academically interested person, who purely wants to know what is possible. Within this scope, action research can be regarded as a form of assessment research: hypotheses about (im)possibilities are assessed by trying to realise them.

Source:

<http://studion.fss.uu.nl/Bouwstenenonline/startpagina.doc> (last opened: 19th of February 2009)

Appendix 8

What do we think a learning product is?

A learning product is a tool for sharing knowledge and experiences that inspires others to learn (and ultimately apply those lessons in their own practice!). It goes beyond 'simply' documenting best practices or lessons learned: knowledge sharing is not the equivalent of document distribution or web traffic as people sometimes tend to think – how information is put to use very much determines knowledge sharing success. Developing a learning product also helps you to focus on your own learning activities and is in fact a learning process in itself (what is it that you would like to share, why, and with whom?) which can also guide you in monitoring the impact of your knowledge sharing. Tailoring your learning product to the immediate needs of the recipient definitely increases the impact of knowledge sharing. Whatever learning product you develop (for example: stories in images or words, a film, publication, illustration, fact sheet, poster, PowerPoint, brochure, games etc), an effective learning product stimulates reflection and feedback, and therefore provides new insights and learning processes, both for the developer of the learning product as for the receiver (s). Knowledge sharing, for which learning products are tools, is an iterative process, evolving step by step using early knowledge for later understanding.

Uit:

Gilting, I. (2007). Food for thought when developing your own learning product!, PSO

Appendix 9

Learning Histories

The organisational learning idea indicates that not just people at the top, but in various other places throughout organisations work on revitalisation, improvement and innovation based on internal entrepreneurship. Roth and Kleiner (MIT; Society of Organisational Learning) developed a method in continuation of this: learning histories. Their basic idea is: a lot of people work on innovation, but seldom do we organise the collective memory. Due to this, clever ideas that are the result of trial-and-error learning disappear in the course of time. To tackle this loss of memory, Roth and Kleiner suggest to write 'learning histories', to organise deeper or *investigative* learning processes.¹

How does this work? In companies, a 'research team' is formed to 'reconstruct' particular projects, situations or episodes from very recent history, to learn from them. The research team has been supplemented with an external advisor to create distance and prevent blind spots. The team explores with all the people involved the noticeable results and who, what and which method has ensured that it became a success. The team makes a list of these results and presents this to the new discussion partners. They can choose what they want to discuss and add results. The team asks question such as: 'What happened then? What did you see, what did you feel?' The meetings are recorded in detail. The outsiders distil themes from the material. The team subsequently constructs a jointly told tale and a representation composed in columns. The 'large' column contains a tale, as told by the side of a campfire, to which different people contribute. The narrow column contains the researchers' reflection with a justification for the choice of the quotes. There is space for elaborations in separate boxes. It is important that the chain of 'results', actions, strategies and the convictions behind them is presented from different perspectives. Letting various people involved give their opinion is called *multi-voicing*. This principle ensures that the story is not final, but that it gives the perspectives of the various actors involved and stays close to the emotion. The patterns of innovation or change are well-presented.

From:

Smid, G., G. den Boer e.a. (2006-3/4) Learning histories in leer- en veranderingstrajecten *M&O*

Appendix 10

Logical Framework Approach

Figure 1: General structure and content of a Logframe Matrix

Activity Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal or Impact – The long term development impact (policy goal) that the activity contributes at a national or sectoral level	How the achievement will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Goal indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	
Purpose or Outcome – The medium term result(s) that the activity aims to achieve – in terms of benefits to target groups	How the achievement of the Purpose will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Purpose indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Purpose to Goal linkage
Component Objectives or Intermediate Results – This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)	How the achievement of the Component Objectives will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Component Objectives indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Component Objective to Output linkage
Outputs – The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver	How the achievement of the Outputs will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Output indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Output to Component Objective linkage

The core of the Logical Framework is the "temporal logic model" that runs through the matrix. This takes the form of a series of connected propositions:

- If these Activities are implemented, and these Assumptions hold, then these Outputs will be delivered
- If these Outputs are delivered, and these Assumptions hold, then this Purpose will be achieved.
- If this Purpose is achieved, and these Assumptions hold, then this Goal will be achieved.

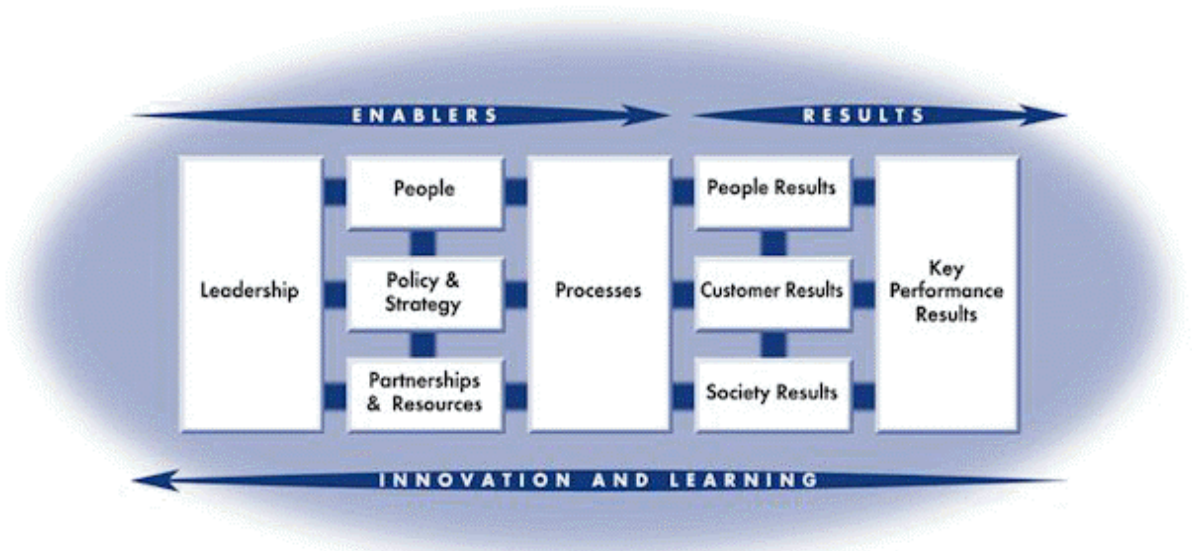
These are viewed as a hierarchy of hypotheses, with the project/program manager sharing responsibility with higher management for the validity of hypotheses beyond the output level. Thus, Rosenberg brought the essence of scientific method to non-scientific endeavours.

Source:

www.wikipedia.org (last opened: 19 februari 2009)

Appendix 11

The EFQM Model for Improvement of the Organisation



Areas for attention	Explanation
Organisation	
Leadership	The attitude and behaviour of people within the organisation who have a directive responsibility, so all directors, managers, team leaders, etc. They have to be an inspiring and driving force behind the continuous improvement of an organisation.
Policy and strategy	What is the organisation’s mission, what are its objectives and how does the organisation think it is going to achieve this? In this field, the focus is on how an organisation can become an excellent organisation through continuous improvement.
People	The full use of knowledge and expertise potential within the organisation, so that continuous improvement can be worked on in optimum fashion.
Partnerships & Resources	The way in which the organisation’s means (finances, materials, information, buildings, etc) are dealt with. The available resources should be used as well as possible.
Processes	The way in which it is attempted to continuously improve both the internal and the external processes.

Results

Customer results	Is the customer satisfied with the end result we delivered and is the customer also satisfied with the way in which the end result has come about? This is truer for one organisation than for another. What is done to keep/make the customer satisfied?
People results	To what extent are staff members in the organisation satisfied? An important point, because dissatisfied staff makes for dissatisfied customers. What is being done to keep/make the staff satisfied?
Society results	What does the organisation do in return for society and how is this experienced by society? (recycling, childcare are some examples). Active involvement in society is important here.
Key performance results	This concerns both financial and operational results. The organisation must ask itself to what extent it is managing to realise its objectives (financial and operational). To what extent are the expectations of financial stakeholders met? Benchmarking , comparing results with other companies, is a popular instrument.
Other	
Improving and innovating	This is the feedback loop in the model.

Source picture:

http://www.12manage.com/images/figure_efqm.jpg (last opened 20th of December 2009)

Source: tekst:

<http://nl.wikipedia.org> (last opened 19th of February 2009)

Appendix 12

Model of Investors in People (IiP)



Source:

http://www.bankseta.org.za/images/iip_wheel.gif (last opened 20th of December 2009)