

# **MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: PARADOXES AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE POST INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE**

Publication information:

Laiken, M. (2002). Models of organizational learning: Paradoxes and best practices in the post-industrial workplace. *Organizational Development Journal*. Steve Cady ( Ed.), Fall, 2002, Vol. 21, # 1, pp. 8-19.

Marilyn E. Laiken, Ph.D., RODC<sup>1</sup>  
Associate Professor, Adult Education  
Workplace Learning and Change specialization  
Department of Adult Education, Community Development &  
Counselling Psychology  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the  
University of Toronto  
252 Bloor St. West, Toronto  
Ontario, M5S 1V6, Canada mlaiken@oise.utoronto.ca  
Phone: (416) 923-6641, ext. 2349 Fax: (416) 530-4317

## **Acknowledgements**

The research project from which this paper resulted was generously supported for three years - financially by the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning network (NALL), funded by the SSHRC, and in many other ways by the members of NALL Research Group 5. Additionally, the continuous input and energy of Reuben Roth and David Livingstone in helping to maintain the network have been especially valuable. The experience of co-researching with the group of four graduate students acknowledged below has been an extremely satisfying experience. Most importantly, I wish to gratefully acknowledge all of the participant organizations, and in particular, the ten organizations who generously contributed their time through the completion of questionnaires, and the members of the four case organizations who participated as interviewees, as well as their workplaces which provided support during all phases of the research process.

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the current paper is sole authored, I wish to gratefully acknowledge, in alphabetical order, the research team, most of whose members have been involved in this project since its inception. They are: Karen Edge, Stephen Friedman, Jan McColl and Karima West.

## ABSTRACT

In the light of current examples of reengineering, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, some Canadian organizations in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors provide an environment for individuals and teams to negotiate effectively the kind of organizational change which has become endemic in today's workplace. A focus on informal learning through basic social processes contributes to employees' collective ability to move beyond simply coping with stress to engaging in creative action.

A three-year research project, conducted between 1998 and 2001, located and studied, in-depth, four such organizations which were using organizational learning approaches to embed continuous learning within the actual work context. Predictably, our study found that no organization is a paragon of organizational learning. In fact, what became abundantly clear was that this phenomenon is much less an *outcome* than an on-going *process* of managing paradoxes. Each of the research sites provided both examples of dilemmas that challenged them continuously, and examples of creative responses to these challenges with which they were experimenting, with varying degrees of success.

These paradoxes include the tensions inherent in: action versus reflection, and the need to achieve the task by attending to the process; the need for structured leadership as well as freedom and autonomy; the challenge of translating values into action; and the use of conflict and confrontation to enable collaboration. Each of the research sites presented a unique context in which to examine these issues, while at the same time providing common, thematic approaches to creating working environments which contribute both to individual health and organizational sustainability.

## **MODELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: PARADOXES AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE POST INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE**

### **Introduction**

In the light of current examples of reengineering, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, some organizations across sectors provide a context for individuals and teams to negotiate effectively the kind of change which has become endemic in today's workplace. A focus on organizational learning contributes to employees' collective ability to move beyond simply coping with stress to engaging in creative action, for the benefit of both the individual members and the organization as a whole.

A three-year research project was conducted between 1998-2001, to locate and study Canadian organizations which are using such organizational learning approaches to embed on-going learning within the actual work processes - whether at an individual, team or strategic level. One of the challenges which organizations face in proceeding with such transformative experiments is their lack of knowledge about current examples of successful projects. This research intended to be a voice for Canadian models of organizational learning which have benefited the organization and its clients or customers, as well as its employees or volunteers, whose lives are dramatically affected by these new organizational forms. Our hope was that, by providing visibility to such "models" of organizational learning, the research would not only reinforce best practices already in existence, but also demonstrate the potential of such practices across work sectors, organizational size, and widely diverse employee populations.

The study initially identified forty-two Canadian organizations which either self-reported or appeared in the literature as examples of those attempting to become or demonstrating features of a learning organization. Ten of these organizations agreed to participate in the research and ten randomly selected employees from all levels of the organization in each completed *The Learning Organization 5 Stage Diagnostic Survey* (Woolner, Lowy, and Redding, 1995). In response to this survey, five organizations self-identified as mature

stages of development as learning organizations in the areas of individual, team and strategic learning.<sup>1</sup> Of the five, four of these organizations – a medium-sized hospital, a large retail chain, a small not-for-profit government funded organization and a large electronics manufacturer<sup>2</sup> volunteered for more in-depth study through two hour individual interviews with 8-10 employees at all levels (totaling approximately 35 participants), on-site observation and a review of organizational documentation.

All data were taped and transcribed, and the transcripts analyzed across the organizations using a grounded theory approach, to generate twelve primary codes and multiple sub-codes. These codes were then used by each member of the research team, through an on-line qualitative data analysis program, to analyze all transcripts from each individual organization. The resulting themes, represented in this chapter as “paradoxes”, emerged from a cross-analysis of the data from all four organizations, which also informed a narrative case description written about each (see Laiken et al, forthcoming).

The research surfaced key thematic insights, which seemed to be common across the four case organizations, but could be further informed by future studies that investigate larger sample sizes in relation to our findings. Additionally, since the data were extracted from work sites in the diverse and relatively wealthy urban setting of Toronto and environs, the area of inquiry could be expanded by parallel studies in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. This might provide more heft to the claim that the ideas outlined here are in fact applicable across cultural and economic boundaries. Nonetheless, we are convinced that the results of the study presented in this paper have critical implications for researchers and practitioners interested in creating cultures of continuous learning within organizational settings.

---

<sup>2</sup> The case organizations are identified in this text by pseudonyms for purposes of confidentiality.

## **Organizational Learning in its Historical Context**

Since the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, formal organizations have been the primary site of work and workplace learning for most of the industrialized world. This sounds like a neutral statement of fact until one considers the implications. Consistent misinterpretations and misuses of the concepts of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1947; Gantt, 1960), Bureaucracy (Weber, 1947) and Administrative Theory (Fayol, 1949) have left a legacy of organizational forms which are tenaciously hierarchical and inflexible, unresponsive to turbulent environments and notoriously inhospitable to human creativity and learning. Gareth Morgan, in his 1986 treatise, *Images of Organization*, refers to such organizations as "psychic prisons" and "instruments of domination" - and indeed, that names the lived experience of a majority of workers in twenty-first century workplaces across sectors and throughout the world.

Since the advent of the Behavioural School of management thought in the 1930s - 60s, through the growth of the field of Organizational Development through the 1970s - 80s, to the current exploration of organizational learning, attempts have been made to address this issue. Margaret Wheatley (1992) says: "I believe that we have only just begun the process of discovering and inventing the new organizational forms that will inhabit the twenty-first century" (p. 5).

Learning is considered by many to be the common element in ensuring the successful functioning of such organizational forms. In the last decade, a cadre of academics and practitioners have begun to explore the impact of embedding learning within the actual work processes, at the individual, team or organizational levels. The findings from our current study forms part of that literature.

### **The Paradoxes of Organizational Learning: Lessons from the “Models”**

Predictably, our research found that no organization is a paragon of organizational learning. In fact, what became abundantly clear was that this phenomenon is much less an

*outcome* than an on-going *process* of managing paradoxes. Each of the research sites presented a unique context in which to examine these issues, while at the same time providing common, thematic approaches to creating working environments which contribute both to individual health and organizational sustainability. Following are several of the key dilemmas uncovered by our study and a description of how these were responded to within our “model” learning organizations.

### **Action Versus Reflection: The Value of the Journey in an Outcome-oriented World**

#### *The Dilemmas*

As global competition increases in intensity, the pressure to produce is also intensified. Whether the product is defined as services or goods, the general tendency in the workplace is to view time spent on specific task completion as the only legitimate form of work. Meetings, especially if they contain explorative conversations prior to decision-making, are often experienced as time “away from the real work”, and therefore as time wasted.

On the other hand, workers in all four cases in our study also expressed the understanding that reflective time is an important component of learning from their experience (Lewin, 1951; Kolb, 1984), and thus increasing their productive capacity and well as their individual knowledge and skill. Research on reflective practice (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Argyris, 1990) has indicated that unexamined experience simply repeats itself; while a conscious examination of the learning to be derived from direct experience results in new approaches that often avoid the mistakes of the past. The paradoxical outcome is, in fact, a case of slowing down in order to speed up. In our research organizations, there were examples reported of improved decision-making, increased work efficiency, and enhanced overall productivity, at those times when workers were able to intersperse periods of reflection with direct action in their working day.

An example is provided by one of our research participants who explains:

*... and in our template of what we look at in a grant evaluation, one of the questions will be, what has Wealthshare learned? That's one of the questions we ask – and everybody reflects on that. It can be “what have I learned as a program manager working with this project?” or “what has Wealthshare learned?” And Wealthshare may have learned never to fund this kind of project again, or only to look at it a certain way...It has helped us improve dramatically. (Manager)*

However, apart from the lack of value often attributed to reflective activities, there are several other deterrents to incorporating reflective practice organizationally. When personality and work-style differences (Myers, 1980; Kolb, 1984) surface in a meeting, the pressure to move to action tends to reinforce a more convergent, closure oriented style, as opposed to one which continues to expand on possibilities. Although this is useful when a decision finally needs to be made, it is less helpful when the intention is to reflect on practice for the purpose of learning. Additionally, when one considers the fact that the skills involved in reflection are not as highly valued, and therefore not taught or practiced as much in the action oriented workplace, it is not surprising that these skills are generally under-developed among organizational members, regardless of personal style differences.

In a work team, reflective practice ideally would balance a task or content orientation with periods of reflection on the team's process, or discussion about *how* the team is accomplishing the task. Although the need for this balance is sometimes, though rarely, recognized, the implementation is fraught with difficulties. One worker notes:

*But it does take work, though. I mean, you think about a team – it doesn't just happen on its own. It takes its course – and the problem is, people get so caught up with doing the other work that they have to do that they don't take the time to build their team, and so the teamwork doesn't get improved. (Staff)*

*In the Learning Organization...*

In the learning organization, the central context for knowledge enhancement and skill development is shifting from the formal environment of classroom training, to the more informal learning environment of the workplace itself. Here, the teachers are colleagues and managers who are engaged with each other in “action learning” (Revans,1982), or

extracting the learning from the immediate work challenges. Although some tasks clearly require training prior to engagement, much of the on-going learning occurs in the moment, as workers proceed through an individual cycle of action-reflection-action. This may take place in individual interactions on the job or during breaks, or it might be incorporated into meetings specifically designed for this purpose. As a recent article on “Trends in Workplace Learning” notes:

... most of what people know is learned on the job just by talking to other people, milling around the coffee pot, trying out new things, and doing their work. Formal training, though essential, cannot serve as a substitute for these powerful, informal means of learning. (Bassi, Cheney & Lewis, 1999, p.7)

What makes our learning organizations unique is their *conscious intention* to legitimize and create space for such informal learning. This is accomplished through a variety of approaches which were present in some form in all four of our research sites:

- a. by helping to establish or by simply not preventing supportive, mentoring relationships in which the mentor acts as a coach, or peer partners act as coaches for one another. The activities may involve job shadowing, help in reflecting on problems or mistakes to extract learning, and the provision of resources or guidance;

*I don't designate someone on the line to be, okay, you're going to train these people, I don't do that... I think I had seven people who were trained on the new Oracle system. Of those seven people, there are four that are constantly on their feet showing people the new system. (Production Supervisor)*

*So no one really knows, so no one is really able to give you any concrete answers. So there's on-going discussion – there are chat lines, and so on – all sorts of stuff about how you interpret things – we teach each other all the time. (Line Staff)*

- b. by encouraging “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1996, 1999) which enable informal dialogue on work-related issues of concern. The expected outcome of these groups is not a decision toward action, although that might be a by-product of the discussions. Rather, it is an on-going or time-limited opportunity to learn together through open interaction. The members learn the dialogic skills of “advocacy” and “inquiry” (Elinor and Gerard, 1998; Isaacs, 1993; Brenegan, 2000) within a forum

which, although situated in the workplace, is removed temporarily from the necessity for immediate task completion.

*Oh yeah – like in the early stages we did a collective analysis of the application – to provide different views, different ways of looking at an application – it just came out of the group. That’s how I learned to do those things. (Staff)*

- c. by providing skill development, either through action learning or classroom training, in the process oriented and facilitative skills necessary to support reflective practice. These include the ability to help a team debrief its work and extract learning related to its functioning; the ability to use dialogic approaches in informal group explorations, as previously described; the ability to individually reflect on one’s experience in order to reach conclusions which can then be tested in action; and the interpersonal skills required to check assumptions, explore differing world views and learn from others through genuine, open interaction (Argyris, 1990; Senge, 1990).

In the electronics manufacturing site, one supervisor who has had to learn a whole new set of skills for dealing with a much more employee-run organization says:

*This has been the biggest learning experience of my life...people are no longer a great mystery. (Production Supervisor)*

- d. by developing a shared set of values which reinforce and make public the organization’s commitment to creating an environment for learning, as outlined in the three preceding points.

*We’re going to have a supervisory training workshop next week, with all of our people in staff positions. We’re starting to lay the groundwork for what we see as important, and then developing a collective vision about how we supervise staff, how we support staff’s autonomy. Then we’ll develop some standards coming out of that, and those become performance issues. (Manager)*

## **Structured Leadership Versus Freedom And Autonomy: “Waiting for Godot”**

### *The Dilemmas*

Across our research sites we found among our interviewees a shared desire for freedom and autonomy. Workers are clear that the more room they have to give rein to their individual creativity, the more likely they are to be satisfied and productive in their jobs. However, at the same time as they desire freedom, they expect leadership. They search for the boundaries of organizational expectations within which to exercise their creative potential, and feel lost and chaotic when such structure is not in place:

*...and you've hired people here that are very independent thinkers, and it wouldn't hurt to put some structure in place that labeled out where free thinking is a “go”, and where expectations are, so that you have an idea of what is expected of you, versus where you have leeway. (Staff)*

Similarly, work teams often require directive leadership initially, in order to become self-directed eventually. Effective work groups do not suddenly appear, fully developed and highly motivated. They need careful nurturing by a team leader who is enabling rather than controlling, empowering rather than overpowering, and facilitative rather than coercive. The dilemma for would-be team leaders, then, is to provide very strong leadership towards eventual team self-management.

In the context of the organization as a whole, the dilemma of responsibility versus authority is an issue for both individuals and teams. As teams become increasingly self managing, and able to assume responsibility, they also require the authority to make implementation decisions. However, in many organizations, employees are expected to take responsibility for decisions, but are not granted accountability for the outcomes. When the outcome of and accountability for decisions made by a team fall on the shoulders of a manager, there is little learning that results for either.

Finally, the myth of the “hero leader” (Senge et al, 1999) or, as it is named here, “waiting for Godot”, plays a large part in disempowering all organizational members. The dilemma lies in the fact that visionary leadership is essential, if an organization is to

remain aligned and focused in its efforts. However, the tendency for workers to look to the leader(s) for all solutions to the organization's problems exerts unrealistic pressure on those in a leadership role. If, as was the case in one of our research sites, there is no leader in place temporarily, the temptation is strong to expect no forward movement until "Godot" appears.

*Well, you know, we're without leadership at the moment. I'm optimistic that you get somebody new and energetic and eager to mend some of these things, and it can be resolved. (Staff)*

### *In the Learning Organization...*

The organizations that we examined have very strong *leadership*, as opposed to *management*. At the top of the organization, this translates into a strategic, visionary focus on the part of leaders who are cognizant of trends in their industry, the needs of their customer or client populations, and the context in which their organization is functioning. Through discussions within their own units, employees are then asked to interpret the organizational vision locally at the team, department or division levels. This shared interpretation provides the context within which autonomous decisions are made and personal creativity can flourish. One participant describes how the organizational vision provided a framework for independent action within a particular project:

*I think it worked well because, with the vision, there was a clear focus and a clear objective to achieve, and also a really small group – just four of us, and yeah, we had some authority to make recommendations, and design the whole thing. (Staff)*

In this setting, the key challenge for the manager is to share the leadership role with all employees. Shared leadership skills, which involve every member in playing leadership roles, are consciously nurtured - on the job, during team meetings, in coaching sessions with a supervisor or peer, and as a result of reflecting on experience. A front-line worker in the retail site notes:

*Many of the operational decisions in the store are up to my own discretion. (Staff)*

and a hospital employee says:

*We follow up with patients. I have my own business cards that I can give to patients so that they can contact me. All the nurses in the clinic have them too. Everyone has a direct link to me as a person. It makes everything more professional. (Staff)*

The leader/manager is active in modeling leadership behaviours, and then helping employees to learn these through calculated risks and careful experimentation. A climate of continuous learning and “no blame” allows workers to make provisional attempts, receive feedback from supervisors and colleagues, make changes, and try again. Teams which are not only responsible, but also accountable for their decisions, engage as well in this experiential learning cycle of action – reflection – learning/change – new action.

In the learning organization, “hero leaders” are not rewarded. Rather than being encouraged as experts who make unilateral decisions, leaders are encouraged to enlist widespread involvement, ensuring that individuals and teams affected by decisions play a key role in helping to make them. Thus, participation in decision-making at all levels is built into the fabric of the organization, providing room for individual voice within the parameters provided by visionary leadership.

*Because we have the documents, we have the figures and we have the instruction on how to do everything, if we see something wrong we can stop the line right away... It might be a short time until I see the engineer or something... Because the way we work, we're flexible. (Line Staff)*

*We have enough experience that, frankly, I could go for a week and never speak to any of them, the world will function just fine. I know the products well enough and have been here long enough, and have such confidence in people doing their job that they don't need me. (Production Supervisor)*

*Work groups were staff-driven, grass roots – meaning it was complete participation. People could just sign up and say “yeah – I'm so concerned about decision-making processes here, I want to be on that work-group. And so we figured out some parameters, and enabled staff to find their voice through these work groups. (Staff)*

## **Espoused Theory Versus Theory in Use: Values into Action**

### *The Dilemmas*

Organizational leaders and members may well value learning for its own sake, and may even believe that a learning climate, with room for reflective practice, will contribute to improved productivity. Additionally, they may recognize the importance of visionary leadership, and have gone as far as creating a shared vision among all employees.

However, there is often a gap between what is genuinely valued and what actually occurs in practice. This is to be expected, as a “vision” is just that – it is not the reality, but the goal to which energies are being directed. However, the dilemma often faced by organizational members is that the outcome orientation discussed earlier precludes a careful examination of the gaps between values and action. Also, our typically conflict adverse organizational cultures (Laiken, 1994, 1997) mitigate against open confrontation when the gaps become obvious. The result is cynicism among workers, often expressed in hallway complaints about leaders and others “not walking their talk”.

A not-for-profit staff participant verbalizes this paradox:

*We say were family-friendly – but we’re doing this off-site training where there’s evening meetings – how are we going to incorporate that? (Staff)*

### *In the Learning Organization...*

In the learning organization, work-related beliefs and values are clearly articulated as outcomes of the visioning process. Although not everyone will agree, and one of the beliefs may reflect a valuing of difference, there will be some common values to which everyone attempts to adhere. In our hospital research site, employees are rewarded for carrying the values forward into practice:

*“Values in Action” nominations are more complex and there are awards for individuals, teams and projects... There is a Values in Action Award that recognizes the 5 values. Each year, one team is recognized around each value. (Staff)*

Once the values are clear, the learning organization allocates time to examining the gaps between the vision and the reality, and these are made discussible. This may occur during staff or team meetings, in a retreat setting, or daily, as people engage in their work. Whatever the context, the culture of the organization enables and even rewards staff at any level who have the courage to confront gaps which they are experiencing, with a constructive problem solving orientation.

Those in a leadership role, in particular, are expected to model this behaviour, and to invite feedback on and take ownership for their own lapses and successes as they strive to put theory into practice. Although there are commonly acknowledged difficulties in confronting one's manager for not "walking the talk", these are offset if the organizational culture legitimizes and even rewards both the confronter for their courage, and the confrontee for their openness and willingness to make their behaviour an opportunity for learning. One participant comments:

*There were a number of times when people made a courageous step towards calling our CEO on some stuff. That was really helpful for the whole rest of the staff, when they took that step – you know, basically a "time out" – like, "I don't think you're respecting my opportunity to speak in this arena". People, including the CEO, acknowledged the courageousness of that step. (Staff)*

## **Conflict/Confrontation to Enable Collaboration**

### *The Dilemmas*

One of the concerns repeatedly expressed by our research participants, in their attempts to close the gap between theory and practice, is the potential for conflict in this endeavor. Previous research on conflict in the workplace (Laiken, 1994) has indicated that organizations tend to be conflict-adverse. Employees fear raising issues, particularly with managers, because of possible repercussions - ranging in their imagination from subtle retaliation to losing one's job. Additionally, lack of skill across the organization in constructive confrontation leads employees to believe that problems, even if surfaced, are unlikely to be satisfactorily resolved. This is exacerbated by the fact that organizations have traditionally developed a culture of blame versus problem solving, thus providing

few examples of successful conflict management. A common sentiment is expressed here:

*There's that level of frustration with differences – you know, that they feel they can't address it in that way and be open with each other. I mean, I don't think they're afraid of saying it – but I think they feel that it's not going to get resolved, anyway. (Staff)*

### *In the Learning Organization...*

Organizations that are intent on learning from experience prohibit, both culturally and procedurally, the use of threat, punishment or blame. Instead, mistakes or problems are viewed as opportunities for learning, and issues of concern are routinely surfaced, with a view to improving future performance in this area.

*We're laid back when it comes to mistakes that happen – we recognize it for what it is, it's a small thing, no problem, no blame... and we always say .. this is the phrase that always comes back - "next time we'll do it better". (Staff)*

*Everybody's included in all the good things about working in a team environment... and if you screw it up, we'll fix it tomorrow. So there's no punishment, there's no downside to making a mistake, either. (Production Staff)*

These organizations recognize the fact that, despite their positive intentions, skills in confronting conflict directly are not commonplace among employees. They therefore provide specific training in the interpersonal skills of: active listening; giving and receiving feedback; engaging in dialogue versus debate, which involves both advocacy and inquiry; problem-solving issues which are resolvable; and holding differences when the problem represents a polarity to manage (Johnson, 1992).

On the job, opportunities to reflect and address issues directly are designed into the work systems and processes. For instance, team meetings include a period of reflection on how the team has operated, in order to surface members' suggestions for improving its functioning. Day-to-day coaching by managers and peers provides opportunities for

workers to reflect on their task outcomes and learn from experience, and feedback is encouraged as part of this process.

Finally, the use of multi-rater feedback is commonplace as a source of information for developmental purposes, and this is built into the performance management systems.

In the learning organizations we researched, the entire community supports, through ad hoc meetings as well as structured opportunities, the direct and honest confrontation of problems which may be inhibiting individual, team or organizational effectiveness, and decisions are constantly informed by the discussions which ensue from these meetings.

*I feel far more comfortable to ask questions now. If you have a disagreement with something, you know that your opinion is going to be valued. And in my relationship with my manager, I can ask him anything. Absolutely anything, and I would disagree with anything. We trust the people we work with, and we trust their opinions as well. (Production Supervisor)*

## **Summary**

Indeed, managing all of the paradoxes identified here seems to be the key learning project of the twenty-first century learning organization. Transformative learning – that which truly changes the way in which a person views the world (Cranton, 1994), appears to be more about the journey than the outcome. “Being there” is not the point - as human organizations, like other growing organisms, are constantly in a state of flux. It is managing that state in a way that enhances the worker’s individual experience and consequently, the organization’s viability, that differentiates our “model” organizations from others. In this respect, the four organizations examined in our research have a great deal to contribute to the world of workplace learning and change, as they courageously struggle with the dilemmas outlined in this paper.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Marilyn Laiken is a professor of Adult Education in the Workplace Learning and Change specialization at OISE, University of Toronto. She is also Principal of Laiken Associates, a Toronto consulting firm which, since 1975, has served over one hundred clients in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Marilyn combines an interest in adult education and organizational change through research, teaching and field development in such areas as organizational learning and renewal, system redesign, work team development, participative leadership, and experiential, transformative adult education. She has published widely in all of these areas, and her book, entitled *The Anatomy of High Performing Teams: A Leader's Handbook* (U. of Toronto Press, 1998, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), focuses on work-team facilitation concepts and skills.

## **REFERENCES**

Argyris, C. & Schon, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organizational defences: Facilitating organizational learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bassi, L., Cheney, S. & Lewis, E. (1999). *Trends in workplace learning: Supply and demand in interesting times*. American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), Virginia. [Http://www.astd.org/CMS](http://www.astd.org/CMS).

Brenegan, L. (2000). *Dialogue and process consulting*. Unpublished master's thesis. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ellinor, L. & Gerard, G. (1998). *Dialogue: Rediscover the transforming power of conversation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Fayol, H. (1949). *General and industrial management*. London: Pitman.

Gantt, H.L. (1960). A bonus system for rewarding labour. In H.F. Merrill (Ed.). *Classics in management* (pp. 67-77). New York: American Management Association.

Isaacs, W. (1993). Taking flight: Dialogue, collective thinking and organizational learning. *Organizational Dynamics*, 22: 24-39.

Johnson, B. (1992). *Polarity management: Identifying and managing unsolvable problems*. Amherst, Mass.: HRD Press Inc.

- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Laiken, M.; Edge, K.; Friedman, S.; West, K. (forthcoming). From informal to organizational learning in the post-industrial workplace.
- Laiken, M. (1997). Collaborative processes for collaborative organizational design: The role of reflection, dialogue and polarity management in creating an environment for organizational learning. *Organization Development Journal*, 15(4): 35-42.
- Laiken, M. (1994). Conflict in teams: Problem or opportunity? *Lectures in Health Promotion Series No. 4*, Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of organization*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Myers, I.B. with Myers, P. (1980). *Gifts differing*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologist's Press.
- Revans, R.W. (1982). *The origins and development of action learning*. England: Brookfield Publishing.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
- Senge, P.; Kleiner, A.; Roberts, C.; Ross, R.; Roth, G.; Smith, B. (1999). *The dance of change*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
- Taylor, F. (1947). *Scientific management*. New York: Harper & Row (1st Ed., 1911).
- Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organizations*. T. Parsons (Ed.), A.M. Henderson & T. Parsons (Trans.). New York: Free Press.
- Wheatley, M. (1992). *Leadership and the new science: learning about organization from an orderly universe*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.
- Wenger, E. (1996). Communities of practice: The social fabric of a learning organization. *Healthcare Forum Journal*, July-August: 20-26.
- Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning as a social system*. Unpublished paper, presented in Toronto, April, 1999.
- Woolner, P., Lowy, A. & Redding, J. (1995). *Learning Organization 5 Stage Diagnostic Survey and Workshop Version*. Toronto: Woolner Associates.

---

<sup>i</sup> Woolner et al (1995) define a “stage 5” organization as one in which business strategies are based on a shared collective vision; structures and functions are flexible and responsive to organizational needs; there is direct information sharing and a constant questioning of assumptions and testing of reality; and work and learning are fully integrated.