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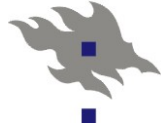
# Learning in networks - collaborative interventions for knowledge creation

**Nordisk Innovationskonferens 2012**

4 – 5 June, Oslo

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## Conceptualizing firm-network relationship

*Member 1:* This question can actually be divided into two. How a single Club firm would make itself important to Customer and how the Club as a whole could be important to Customer.

*Member 3:* Yeah, or how can Club give single firms impetus for getting access to larger entities? Because it's the single firms that make the business... The Club cannot... unless it's going to found a business company in some business village, that's another story. But certainly it doesn't sound like smart way... but rather in this way... It will be organized through single firms, but we kind of lack... It seems that somebody wants to expand the traditional subcontracting...

(Meeting discussion of an inter-firm network in 1990s, modified excerpt)



# **Synchronizing development of learning network and d. of workplace**

*Developer 1:* How do these network-shops support the development work in practice? Our group saw as important [support] the introduction to Developmental Work Research. It has not been clarified enough to be usable in our development projects.

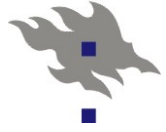
*Developer 2:* How to integrate the homework from the network-shop, own development tasks and the issues discussed in the local tutoring? Considering that everybody are at different phases of development, temporally.

*Local tutor:* Yes, local tutoring gives tasks and here in network-shop tasks are given. So how do these communicate with each other.

*Developer 2:* So, sort of synchronizing.

*Developer 3:* In synchrony.

(Discussion of a learning network, 2007, modified excerpt)



# Searching for network agency in globalizing work

"We need to make ourselves indispensable; shouldn't give them all knowledge."

"When we get them to learn, we are not needed anymore. Unless we learn something new that we can pass on to them."

"Globalization requires new people to take care of these links and communication. New models of activity are searched, which need to be created."

"There must be our people teaching them the work practices, how we do these jobs. [Teaching] is different kind of work from what [our foremen/forwomen] used to do locally."

"We don't need coordinator here in headquarters, but we need coordinators out in the world who inform the link [between headquarters and design offices]."

(Group interview, design team at an engineering company, 2008, modified excerpt)



# Learning networks as collaborative interventions for knowledge creation

- Gathers together actors who share a developmental interest
- Includes different and mutually complementing capability and expertise
- Interaction is long-standing and aims at boundary-crossing and innovativeness
- Participants may be from firms and other organizations but also from research, consultancy, labor market representatives and regional developers
- Interventions for learning and creating learning situations is a deliberate purpose, not just a by-product of the main activity and spontaneous exchange of experiences



## Learning dynamics of a learning network

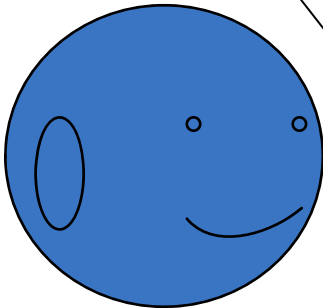
- Dynamics is based on the combination of community and difference of ideas, and on the tensions involved
- The objects of learning are drawn from the participants' activity environments
- Sophisticated methods and tools are needed: network forums, work practices and conceptual models to work on the objects of learning
- Practices and tools are local innovations by the networks; they maintain collaboration and help deal with and solve tensions
- Participants should be ready to share their knowledge
- No free riders
- No permanent master and novice roles



**Example**  
**Partnership learning group**  
**- as collaborative intervention for**  
**knowledge creation**

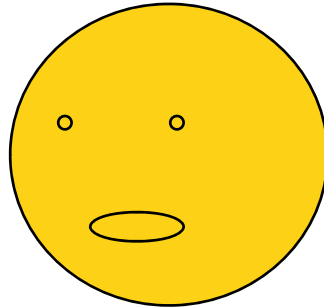


Analyze your development in relation to the project material and phases: What was challenging? How has your thinking changed? Do you see turning points? How do you see your development as an in-house developer from now on?



**ASKER**

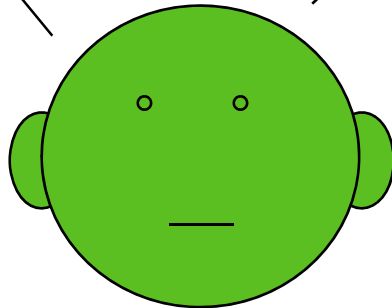
Guides learning group and encourages "ME" to talk



**ME**

**AS IN-HOUSE DEVELOPER**

reflects her/his learning path



**OBSERVER**

Observes and supports the dialogue







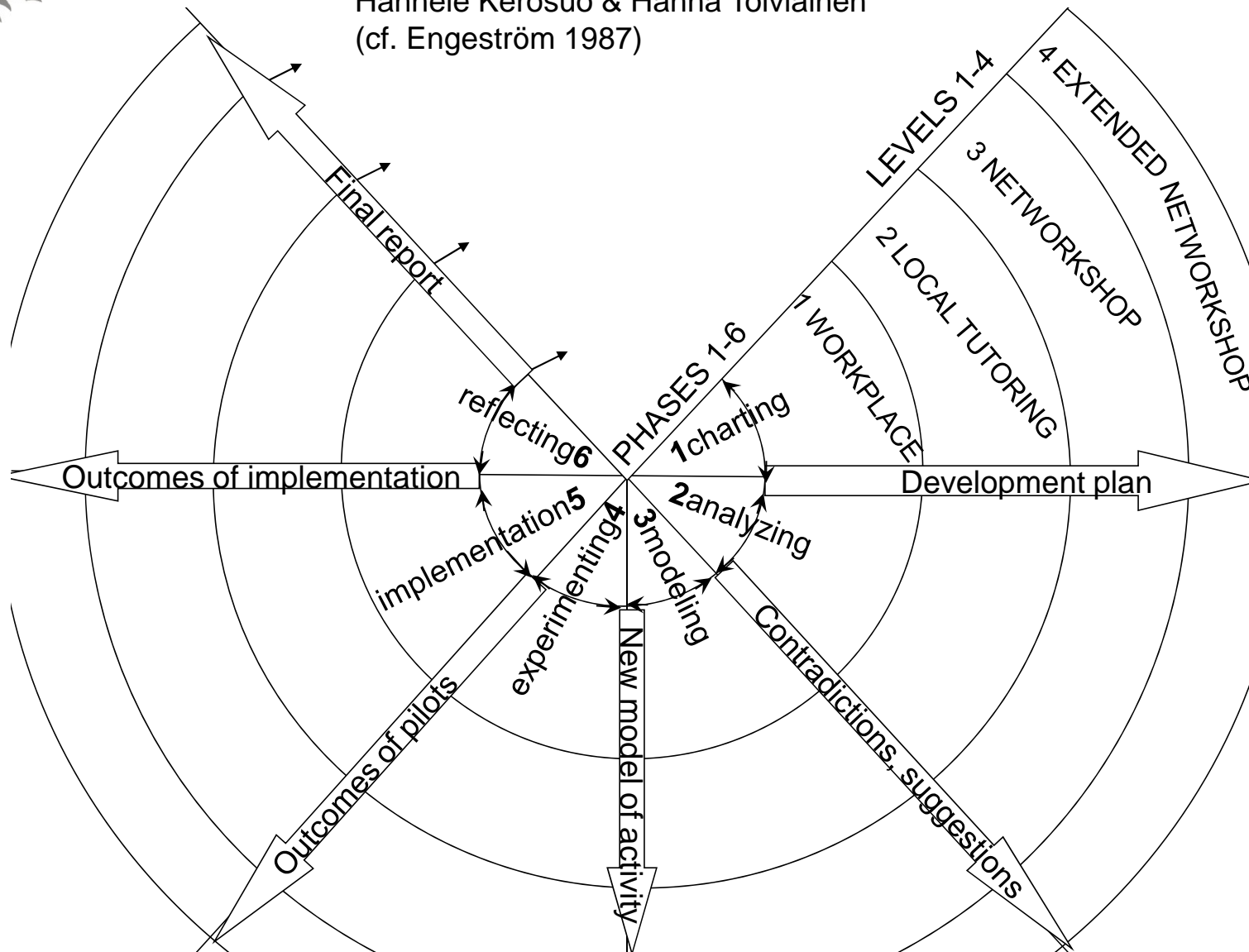
# Working in learning group

- Dialogue lasts 30 minutes; three rounds together 90 min
- Each group member acts in each role in turn
- Roles:
  - *ME AS IN-HOUSE DEVELOPER* reflects her/his development supported by the project material accumulated during the learning network
  - *ASKER* listens to “ME”, poses questions and helps the reflection
  - *OBSERVER* listens to the dialogue, may give feedback at some points – and takes care of audio recording and time!
- Outcome: Each one documents his/her learning path
  - On the spot e.g. poster, that is presented to the whole group, or
  - Homework, each one listens to his/her own dialogue, structures it according to given guidelines, which will be discussed in another learning group meeting



# Development Radar

Hannele Kerosuo & Hanna Toiviainen  
(cf. Engeström 1987)



(Toiviainen, Kerosuo, Syrjälä, 2009)



# CRADLE

- Center for Research on Activity, Development, and Learning (CRADLE)
- Former Center of Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research
- <http://www.helsinki.fi/cradle/> - for example:
  - Human activity in heterogeneous networks that break organizational, institutional, cultural, and national boundaries by means of various epistemic instruments
  - New forms of work and organization of activity within a globalizing world; human potentials of guiding the development of their activities within global organizations
- Hanna Toiviainen: <http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/htoiviai/>



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