

**Selected Problems: Organizational Learning & Innovation (38:533:612:01)**  
**Spring, 2013**

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Class Meets: Wednesday, 4:30-7:10, 004 Janice Levin Building

**Overview**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to contemporary ideas and evolving concepts related to the theory, practice and strategic importance of individual, group, and organizational learning and their relationship to innovation. On completion of this course students will be able to:

- Better understand organizations as learning systems
- Appreciate the various contemporary learning models and theories at the individual, group and organizational levels.
- Apply systems thinking to describe, analyze and compare learning processes at all levels in the organization
- Define and assess an organization's learning capabilities and their relationship to organizational strategy and success.
- Investigate the collective nature of learning in organizations as social entities
- Describe how organizational learning and innovation are connected

This course takes a macro view of learning in an organizational context. The focus of the course is on the processes through which the organization as a system learns, rather than the more typical focus on the learning of individuals within an organization. Inherent in the idea of organizational learning is the assumption that an organization, as a system, is capable of processing and retaining information, as well as changing on the basis of the information it has retained. Accordingly, the course focuses on the processes that allow the organization to take in, use, develop, and retain knowledge; or conversely the barriers that prevent the organization from doing so.

In a time of less organizational change (technological, societal, and economic) it was possible for an organization to develop a strategy for functioning, and assuming the strategy was initially effective, maintain that strategy for several decades. Today, however, organizations must change constantly in order to survive for even one decade. But change in and of itself is not sufficient, the change must be based on appropriate data, gathered externally from the environment and internally from lessons learned. Both are a part of organizational learning and both are critical to effective organizations.

This is a class that focuses on the acquisition, development, interpretation, retention, transfer and action implications of knowledge. In keeping with the theme, we'll be learning, building, interpreting, and sharing knowledge together. My goal is not to teach you everything I know about organizational learning. My goal is to work with you to create a setting in which we can learn from the course material, from one another, and from interactive and experiential dynamics. Accordingly, your views, insights, and experiences are essential. By sharing your views, insights, and experiences, you help us all learn. I would like to see us become a learning organization. So please feel free to speak up, share your thoughts, and help us make this a dynamic and interesting experience.

I've attempted to create a framework within which we can create an exciting and interactive learning experience. Please think about the implications of organizational learning for the course. How can we make the class a "organizational learning lab"? How can we apply the lessons of organizational learning to the classroom? I am open to and eager for your input on this topic and all other aspects of the class. As

individuals and as a class, we want to catch our mistakes, learn from them, correct them, and move on. I look forward to an exciting class!

### **Required Materials**

Readings are available on Sakai

Additional readings & cases will be distributed as assigned.

### **Grading and Course Requirements**

The course is a combination of class discussions, supplementary readings, facilitated exercises, and a project combined with an oral presentation.

#### Grading:

Thought papers	10%
Class discussion & participation	10%
Co-facilitation	20%
Exam	25%
Group presentation	10%
Group project	25%

Final grades are assigned according to the following scale based on the weighted performance of the above dimensions:

- (90-100%) = A
- (86-89.9%) = B+
- (80-85.9%) = B
- (76-79.9%) = C+
- (70-75.9%) = C
- (0-69.9%) = F

#### Participation

Includes:

Attendance.

The quality of your comments and contributions to class discussions.

The quality of your co-facilitation.

The extent to which you help make the class environment stimulating, productive, and positive.

#### Co-Facilitation

We are creating this course together because active learning is one of the most powerful tools for understanding complex concepts. Thus, you will be asked to co-facilitate one of the topics in the course. Co-facilitation involves careful reading of assigned materials, selection of additional outside materials that are connected to the topic of discussion (e.g., videos, examples, cases, articles, exercises, etc.), and preparation of discussion ideas or questions for the class. You are expected to identify at least one current (e.g., 2012-2013) article that is relevant to the topic at hand at least ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE. You can eliminate one of the assigned articles to add the new one.

## **Group Research Project**

The group research project is not the same as the co-facilitation experience. For the group project you will work in groups of 3 or 4 members to conduct an in-depth qualitative field study examining one organization's formal and informal organizational learning practices. You have two options for pursuing this project:

(A) You can identify an organization that has a tremendous amount of information available in public news and periodicals about the organization.

OR

(B) You can identify an organization to which you have access. In this case you would interview a cross-section of employees (not just management) to better understand the organizational learning structures and processes inherent in the organization.

In either case, you must provide the following information in your report:

- (1) Description and background of the organization
- (2) Analysis of goals and strategies pursued by organization.
- (3) Description of methods and sources of data collection.
- (4) Relevance of organizational learning to the competitive advantage of the organization and identification and description of specific current practices related to organizational learning.
- (5) Analysis of the effective and ineffective aspects of the specific practices identified in point 4.
- (6) Development of an action plan for implementing/creating changes in the current organizational learning system.
- (7) Identification of barriers and roadblocks to the plan developed in point 6. Describe how you will address these issues.
- (8) Identification and creation of metrics that could be used to track the learning identified in the project and to determine the return on investment yielded by implementing your action plan.

In your report, you will provide a description and evaluation of the ways in which organizational members create, acquire, interpret, retain, and/or transfer knowledge. What organizational learning practices are particularly effective within the organization? What could the organization do to better manage learning processes? What aspects of the organization's culture facilitate organizational learning? What aspects of the organization's culture impede organizational learning? As a class, we'll talk about how to maximize the learning that results from these projects.

*Most importantly, be sure to apply concepts from course readings and developed during class discussion to your projects.*

### **Group research project due dates:**

2/6: By this date, all teams must be formed and potential study sites identified. Each team must turn in a report listing the members of the project team along with a description of potential study sites/organizations. Why do you want to study one of these organizations? How can you gain entry into the organization? What are important next steps to move the project forward?

2/20: By this date, teams must have gained entry into their study sites. Each team must turn in a report describing their study site which addresses points 1 & 2 of the report. Please write this section as closely as possible to your intended final draft so you do not have to rework it. Also, parts of point 3 can be addressed as well. Things to think about as you work on your report: How did you gain entry to the site? What will be the focus of your research? Whom will you interview? What other sources of information are available? Can you conduct observations as well as interviews? What are important next steps to move the project forward?

3/27: By this date, teams must have collected all – or virtually – all of their data. Each team must turn in a report completing points 1 through 5 of the project. This is still a draft but the first half of the report should be nearly complete. Please outline the sources and nature of data collected (e.g., number of interviews, positions of the interviewees, other sources of information) and highlight key themes emerging in the data (e.g., examples of organizational learning practice, facilitators and inhibitors of effective organizational learning, etc.). What are important next steps to finish the project?

4/10: Class time to finalize projects and prepare for presentations.

5/1 & 5/8: Groups present their key findings to the class.

5/8: Groups turn in their final reports. Late reports will be penalized. Reports should be 25-50 pages double-spaced, not including references, tables, or appendices.

### **Thought Papers**

You will be asked to write 3 thought papers over the course of the semester. You can select the topic and timing. A thought paper is an individually written, short paper (approximately 2 pages, double-spaced) in which you describe and reflect on your thoughts about and reactions to *either*:

- The readings (What did you find particularly intriguing or powerful in a given reading? What ideas don't you buy? What relationship do you see between the assigned reading and previous readings in this or other courses?)
- Other class materials (What impressed you most about a case discussion or a visitor? What in the case discussion or in the visitors' comments made you re-examine your views of the case, or of organizations where you have worked? What was most intriguing or noteworthy about a lecture, a discussion, a video, or a class exercise?)
- The organization you are studying (What's going particularly well in your research? What's going poorly? What's particularly interesting about the organization? What has surprised you?)
- Some news item or article that addresses topics covered in the class.
- Your research team (How well is your team performing as a knowledge generating and sharing team? What strengths and weaknesses do you see? What can you do, if anything, to enhance team effectiveness?)

Do be personal. Do use the word "I." Don't just describe what a reading said. Tell me your thoughts, interpretations, and lingering questions. Please don't be incessantly critical. There are no right or wrong answers so I will not be grading critically.

You will submit thought papers through Sakai using "Assignments". You may turn in only one thought paper at the end of each class. (It would defeat the purpose for you to write all of the papers on the last day.)

## **Academic Integrity**

All work in the course is expected to be your own. I urge you to familiarize yourself with Rutgers' policies on academic integrity, as they will be adhered to in this course. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarizing, etc.) will not be tolerated. Any material taken or adapted from another's published or unpublished work must be given clear credit via a citation that includes the web link, if applicable. Please see [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI\\_Policy\\_9\\_01\\_2011.pdf](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf) for information about the Policy on Academic Integrity. Please see <http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section10/10.2.11-current.pdf> for information about the Code of Student Conduct. You will be asked to submit an affirmation of academic integrity with your presentation materials and your final paper. Please read, check off, and sign the form when submitting your paper and presentation.

## **Policy on Audio or Visual Recordings**

The recording and transmission of classroom lectures and discussions by students is prohibited without written permission from the class instructor and all students in the class as well as guest speakers have been informed that audio/video recording may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. You cannot share any part of any recording without express written permission by all parties potentially affected by the recording.

Recordings, course materials, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

### **Exception:**

It is not a violation of this policy for a student determined by the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center ("LNEC") to be entitled to educational accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study. Such recordings of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The restrictions on third party web and commercial distribution apply in such cases.

### **Destruction of Approved Recordings:**

Students must destroy recordings at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class unless they receive the instructor's written permission to retain them or are entitled to retain them as an LNEC-authorized accommodation.

If you have any problem completing coursework, please let me know immediately. Informing me of potential situations that will interfere with your best performance in class BEFORE they become problems will make it possible to minimize their impact on your learning of the material and ultimate course performance.

We will be using Sakai for access to articles, cases, etc.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAKAI

1. Go to: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>
2. Login using your Rutgers netid and password
3. Click on the TAB “2012 Sp Org Learning & Innov”
4. If you do not see the TAB “2012 Sp Org Learning & Innov”, contact me at [gully@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:gully@rci.rutgers.edu) as you may not be on the roster.
5. Click on Resources to download the files for the course.

Date	Topic	Readings	Co-Facilitators
1/23	Introduction / Overview		
1/30	Organizational Learning	Chadwick & Raver, in press 2012 De Holan et al., 2004 Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008 Gully & Phillips, 2005 Marshall, Smith, & Buxton, 2009	
2/6	Leadership and Strategy  <b>Due for Research Project:</b>	Amabile & Khaire, 2008 Day & Shoemaker, 2008 Farson & Keyes, 2002 Chesbrough & Appleyard, 2007 Senge, 1990 <b>1 page – project team membership, site identified</b>	
2/13	Culture and Context	Adler et al., 2011 Argyris, 1994 Levy, 2008 O’Toole & Bennis, 2009 Porath & Pearson, 2013 Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999	
2/20	Failure, Risk, and Learning  <b>Due for Research Project:</b>	Davenport, 2009 Edmondson, 2011 Gino & Pisan, 2011 McGrath, 2011 Shoemaker & Gunther, 2006 <b>1-2 page report describing study site</b>	
2/27	Tacit/Explicit Knowledge Management	Hansen et al. 1999 Leonard & Sensiper, 1998 Leonard & Swap, 2004 Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009 Soo et al., 2002 Zack, 1999	
3/6	Information Technology	Ayres, 2007 Carr, 2003 Fahey & Prusak, 1998 Marchand & Peppard, 2013 McAfee & Brynjolfsson, 2008 Thaler & Tucker, 2013	

3/13	Communities of Practice	Brown & Duguid, 1991 Gilley & Kerno, Jr. 2010 Less & Storck, 2001 McDermott & Archibald, 2010 Wenger & Snyder, 2000	
3/20	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Happy Spring Break!</b>	
3/27	Team Learning  <b>Due for Research Project:</b>	Amabile et al., 2002 Cummings & Pletcher, 2011 Griffin, 1997 Malhotra, Majchrzak, & Rosen, 2007 Mankins et al., 2013 <b>5-7 page report describing data collected and themes</b>	
4/3	Innovation	Dyer et al., 2009 Hamel, 2006 Kao, 2009 Reeves & Deimler, 2011	
4/10	Project Work Session	None Assigned	
4/17	Multi-firm Ties & Globalization	Eisenhardt & Galunic, 2000 Forstenlechner, 2005 Mankin & Cohen, 2006 Tsang, 2008 Williamson & De Meyer, 2012 Wilson & Doz, 2012	
4/24	Metrics & Financial Value	Hansen et al., 2013 Hayes & Abernathy, 1980 Hempel, 2006 Kaplan & Norton, 1996 and/or Kaplan & Norton, 1992 McKinsey, 2008 Phillips & Phillips, 2009	
5/1	<b>Presentations</b>		
5/8	<b>Presentations Due for Research Project:</b>	<b>Final Project Due</b>	
5/15	<b>Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	

## Readings

### Organizational Learning

Chadwick, I C., & Raver J. L. (2012, in press). Motivating organizations to learn: Goal orientation and its influence on organizational learning. *Journal of Management*.

de Holan, P. M., Phillips, N., & Lawrence, T. B. (2004). Managing organizational forgetting. *Sloan Management Review*, 45(2), 45-51.

Garvin, D. A., Edmondson, A. C., & Gino, F. (2008, March). Is yours a learning organization? *Harvard Business Review*, 86(3), 109-116.

Gully, S.M., & Phillips, J.M. (2005). A multilevel application of learning and performance orientations to individual, group, and organizational outcomes. In J. Martocchio (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (Vol. 24, pp. 1-52). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press/Elsevier Science.

Marshall, J., Smith, S., & Buxton, S. (2009, Summer). Learning organizations and organizational learning: What have we learned? *Management Services*, 53(2), 36-44.

### Leadership & Strategy

Amabile, T. M., & Khaire, M. (2008, October). Creativity and the role of the leader. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(10), 100-109.

Day, G. S., & Shoemaker, P. J. H. (2008, Spring). Are you a 'vigilant leader'? *Sloan Management Review*, 49(3), 43-51.

Farson, R. & Keyes, R. (2002). The failure-tolerant leader. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(8), 64-71.

Chesbrough, H. W., & Appleyard, M. M. (2007, Fall). Open innovation and strategy. *California Management Review*, 50(1), 57-76.

Senge, P. M. (1990). The leader's new work: Building learning organizations. *Sloan Management Review*, 32(1), 7-23.

### Optional:

Ancona, D., Malone, T. W., Orlikowski, W. J., & Senge, P. M. (2007, February). In praise of the incomplete leader. *Harvard Business Review*, 85, 92-100.

Goleman, D. (1998). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*, 76(6), 93-102.

Von Krogh, G., & Cusumano, M. A. (2001). Three strategies for managing fast growth. *Sloan Management Review*, 42(2), 53-61.

### Culture and Context

Adler, P, Heckscher, C., & Prusak, L. (2011). Building a collaborative enterprise. *Harvard Business Review*, 95-101.

Argyris, C. (1994). Good communication that blocks learning. *Harvard Business Review*, 72(4), 77-85.

Levy, D. M. (2008, Fall). Wanted: Time to think. *Sloan Management Review*, 50(1), 21-24.

O'Toole, J. , & Bennis, W. (2009, June). What's needed next: A culture of candor. *Harvard Business Review*, 87(6), 54-61.

Porath, C., & Pearson, C. (2013, January-February). The price of incivility. *Harvard Business Review*, 115-121.

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (1999). The smart-talk trap. *Harvard Business Review*, 77(3), 134-142.

### Failure, Risk-taking, & Learning

Davenport, T. H. (2009, February). How to design smart business experiments. *Harvard Business Review*, 87(2), 68-76.

Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Strategies for learning from failure. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(4), 48-55.

Gino, F., & Pisano, G. P. (2011). Why leaders don't learn from success. Harvard Business Review, 89(4), 68-74.

McGrath, R. G. (2011). Failing by design. Harvard Business Review, 89(4), 76-83.

Shoemaker, P. J. H., & Gunther, R. E. (2006, June). The wisdom of deliberate mistakes. Harvard Business Review, 84, 108-115.

### **Tacit/Explicit Knowledge Management**

Hansen et al. (1999). What's your strategy for managing knowledge? Harvard Business Review, 77(2), 106-116.

Leonard, D., & Sensiper, S. (1998). The role of tacit knowledge in group innovation. California Management Review, 40, 112-132.

Leonard, D., & Swap, W. (2004). Deep smarts. Harvard Business Review, 82(9), 88-97.

Nonaka, I., & von Krogh, G. (2009). Tacit knowledge and knowledge conversion: Controversy and advancement in organizational knowledge creation theory. Organization Science, 20, 635-652

Soo, C., Devinney, T., Midgley, D., & Deering, A. (2002). Knowledge management: Philosophy, processes, and pitfalls. California Management Review, 44(4), 129-150.

Zack, M. H. (1999). Managing codified knowledge. Sloan Management Review, 40(4), 45-58.

### **Information Technology & Knowledge Management**

Ayres, I. (2007). Super crunchers: Why thinking-by-numbers is the new way to be smart (Chapter 1). Bantam.

Carr, N. G. (2003). IT doesn't matter. Harvard Business Review, 81(5), 41-49.

Fahey, L., & Prusak, L. (1998). The eleven deadliest sins of knowledge management. California Management Review, 40, 265-276.

Marchand, D. A., & Peppard, J. (2013). Why IT fumbles analytics. Harvard Business Review, 104-112.

McAfee, A., & Brynjolfsson, E. (2008, July-August). Investing in IT that makes a competitive difference. Harvard Business Review, 86(7/8), 98-107.

Thaler, R. H., & Tucker, W. (2013, January-February). Smarter information, smarter consumers. Harvard Business Review, 45-54.

### **Communities of Practice**

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. Organization Science, 2, 40-57.

Gilley, A., & Kerno, Jr., S. J. (2010). Groups, teams, and communities of practice: A comparison. Advances in Developing Human Resources, 12, 46-60.

Lesser, E. L., & Storck, J. (2001). Communities of practice and organizational performance. IBM Systems Journal, 40(4), 831-841.

McDermott, R., & Archibald, D. (2010, March). Harnessing your staff's informal networks. Harvard Business Review, 88(3), 82-89.

Wenger, E. C., & Snyder, W. M. (2000). Communities of practice: The organizational frontier. Harvard Business Review, 78(1), 139-145.

### **Team Learning**

Amabile, T. M., Hadley, C. N., & Kramer, S. J. (2002). Creativity under the gun. Harvard Business Review, 80(8), 52-61.

Cummings, J., & Pletcher, C. (2011, Spring). Why project networks beat project teams. MIT Sloan Management Review, 52(3), 75-80.

Griffin, E. M. (1997). Groupthink of Irving Janus. A first look at communication theory (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ch. 18). NY: McGraw-Hill.

Malhotra, A., Majchrzak, A., & Rosen, B. (2007). Leading virtual teams. Academy of Management Perspectives, 21(1), 60-70.

Mankins, M., Bird, A., & Root, J. (2013, January-February). Making star teams out of star players. Harvard Business Review, 74-78.

### **Innovation**

Dyer, J. H., Gregersen, H. B., & Christensen, C. M. (2009, December). The innovator's DNA. Harvard Business Review, 87(12), 61-67.

Hamel, G. (February, 2006). The why, what, and how of management innovation. Harvard Business Review, 84, 72-84.

Kao, J. (March, 2009). Tapping the world's innovation hot spots. Harvard Business Review, 87(3), 109-114.

Reeves, M., & Deimler, M. (2011, July-August). Adaptability: The new competitive advantage. Harvard Business Review, 135-141.

### **Multi-Firm Ties & Globalization**

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Galunic, D. C. (2000). Coevolving: At last, a way to make synergies work. Harvard Business Review, 78(1), 91-101.

Forstenlechner, I. (2005). The impact of national culture on KM metrics. Knowledge Management Review, 8(3), 10.

Mankin, D., & Cohen, S. G. (2006, Spring). Business without boundaries: Collaborations across organizations. Journal of Organizational Excellence, 63-78.

Tsang, E. W. K. (2008). Transferring knowledge to acquisition joint ventures: An organizational unlearning perspective. Management Learning, 39, 5-20.

Williamson, P. J., & De Meyer, A. (2012, fall). Ecosystem advantage: How to successfully harness the power of partners. California Management Review, 55(1), 24-46.

Wilson, K. & Doz, Y. L. (2012, October). 10 rules for managing global innovation. Harvard Business Review, 85-90.

### **Metrics & Financial Value**

Hansen, M. T., Ibarra, H., & Peyer, U. (2013, January-February). The best-performing CEOs in the world. Harvard Business Review, 81-95.

Hayes, R. H., & Abernathy, W. J. (1980). Managing our way to economic decline. Harvard Business Review, 58(4), 67-77.

Hempel, J. (2006, September 25). Metrics madness. Businessweek.

Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1996). Using the balanced scorecard as a strategic management system. Harvard Business Review, 74(1), 75-85.

Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1992). The balanced scorecard--measures that drive performance. Harvard Business Review, 70(1), 71-79.

McKinsey Quarterly. (2008). McKinsey Global Survey Results: Assessing innovation metrics.

Phillips, J. J., & Phillips, P. P. (2009). Measuring what matters: How CEOs view learning success. T+D, 63(8), 44-49.