

Alchemical Learning – A Model for Designing ‘Participatory Learning’

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Abstract

With the significant increase in budgeted revenue for executive development at organisational level, there is a proliferation of local and international executive education offerings. All of these promise to deliver to a range of learning objectives and outcomes. We would, however, question the extent to which we are seeing high impact learning initiatives that will not only translate into meaningful intrapersonal, interpersonal and cognitive change but would, in turn result in significant shifts in behaviour, and in the quality of thinking in the organizational context.

This paper interrogates the architecture of participatory learning, focusing on the design of the learning process. In this paper we contend that, without serious attention to the careful design and facilitation of a learning experience, impact will be limited and short lived. Many service provider offerings espouse notions of 'participatory' learning and the rejection of 'content driven' transmission' of learning in favour of facilitated learning. Conversely, in our view, learner 'participation' is often viewed as an add-on: Q&A sessions at the end of a process, a fragmented moment in reflective journaling, or unfiltered 'group feedback'.

Through the use of an innovative model which we entitle 'Alchemical Learning', we explore alternative ways in which to engage learners meaningfully in the praxis and practices of learning. The Alchemical Learning Model explores four levels of outcome illustrating a way of conceptualising participation which can add more substance and depth to the process of learning and organisational enrichment. Providing this conceptualisation of participation through the introduction of the Alchemical Learning model, we attempt to demonstrate the use of participation as the primary mobiliser for learner engagement and meaning-making.

Keywords: Participatory learning, organisational enrichment, executive education, process facilitation, programme design

In this paper the notion of 'participatory learning' is interrogated in the arena of executive education. We argue that the term 'participatory' is currently in danger of losing its semantic stretch because of over use. As a result we explore the architecture of participatory adult learning.

In our interrogation of what it takes to engage learners more meaningfully in the praxis of and practice of learning we explore a learning model which we have entitled 'Alchemical Learning'. In the process we explore four levels of outcome in the design of learning programmes and illustrate a participative way which, we suggest, could add more substance and depth to the process of learning and organisational enrichment.

In the arena of executive education, a formal site at many business schools for engaging companies in organisational learning, customised organisational knowledge creation is a substantial revenue stream. The difference, however, between executive education and other learning sites is that programme design in executive education is, to a large extent, based on what human resource professionals or business unit heads consider important for their staff to learn.

What adds complexity to the terrain within which we work is the understanding that "Management Development is an ambiguous concept, attracting multiple and often conflicting definitions and conveying different things to different people" (Luoma, 2006: 104). Indeed, there is even "doubt about its aims, methods and effectiveness" (Burgoyne and Reynolds, 1997:7). There is no objective agreement about the role or impact of management development in this changing environment and even less unified belief about the pedagogical approaches that should inform this role.

A compounding observation is that for the delegates attending, formalised qualifications have already to a large extent, been achieved. As this space of learning is inherently tied to organisational requirements, the responsibility and approach of the learning facilitator needs to be different. In a recent paper by Baxter Magolder (2007), much work around successfully engaging learning at an undergraduate level has been documented. However, once qualifications, both undergraduate and post-graduate, have been achieved the issues and stakes are different. The drive is more towards making significant impact back into the organisation.

In this shift towards organisational requirements, the prime question is 'How does one design learning interventions in an arena where the risks for learners are potentially career-altering? How does one address the unfortunate tendency, in this imperative, for learners to keep under the radar, and not rock the boat? Coupled with the private fear of exposing oneself as a learner who 'does not know' and is in danger of being accused of squandering her/his company's investment in training and development?

One of the key questions which these questions raise is *how to engage with the learner*, given this reputational risk. Closely related to this is the learning truism that 'no one size fits all' in terms of different sensory stimuli – the visual, aural, written, and in relation to very different points of entry and different disengagements, at different times, from the learning process.

Perhaps a way to illustrate this is through an experience that we ourselves had at a recent learning seminar. At any one point, there were adult learners writing notes, making squiggles, staring into space and in three cases that we counted, asleep. How does one address this kind of engagement, and disengagement in one learning space with adults who, in fact, are at different points of learning readiness?

Perhaps, unremarkably, it has become *de rigeur* to speak of learning as participatory. Indeed service providers frequently espouse notions of 'participatory' learning and the rejection of 'content driven transmission' of learning in favour of facilitated learning. This is what organisations expect learning to entail and universities are quick to promise delivery on this expectation.

Unfortunately terms which are overused like 'leadership', 'innovation', 'creativity', 'strategy' and, in this case, 'participation', quickly lose their semantic stretch. These words have lost their ability to meaningfully describe what can be delivered and to signify what is possible, because of their over-use. In this instance, a generic understanding of 'participation' is often assumed. But what is *delivered* varies, and frequently does not yield the anticipated organisational results.

The need for meaningful engagement of learners is supported by Belcourt and Sachs (1999) who indicate that 70% of training material delivered through traditional methodologies is never used on the job. Thus the imperative to grapple with methodologies which are not transmission-based and driven only by content is also supported by research findings. Indeed, current research at IMD in Switzerland highlights the importance of combining context, expertise and experience in developing an effective learning engagement (Strebel & Keys, 2005). Consequently, the need for learner participation in the learning experience in order to meaningfully impact is not in question.

What appears to be in question is how to reinvigorate a *praxis* of participation that delivers on its promise? Current practices associated with participatory learning such as Q&A sessions at the end of a process, group work tasks, moments of reflective journaling or often laborious, unfiltered 'group feedback' are insufficient if they are set up as the primary vehicle for engaging the learner. Whilst these practises can be extremely useful and do add value to the learning process, they need to be located differently, in our understanding of a more radical view of participation.

To this specific end, it is suggested that participation not be viewed as something to be bolted onto the delivery of content but the very lens through which learning emerges. Within this paradigm, participation is not simply the engagement of delegate response to the formal input. Nor is it just the construction of group work tasks to translate and apply content into delegates' contexts.

In terms of our current engagement around learning, we envisage participation extending beyond the moments of active engagement of the delegate in response to the content and experience of the formal learning programme. The traditional learning binary supports Paulo Freire's notion of the "banking concept of education" (1972:46) in which learners are empty vessels waiting to be filled, and implies that participation is the 'stirring of the contents' once they have been 'poured into' the delegate.

In the process of what we term 'alchemical learning' we advocate, instead, moving beyond the binaries of the framework which sets the learner up as either participating and learning, or simply as a passive recipient of the process.

This participative model attempts to transform the delegate by drawing on a learner's entire experience, both in its intra and interpersonal dimensions. It acknowledges that engagement is not only active participation in a discussion, asking a question, contributing to a group exercise. Our participative model highlights the need to be equally inclusive of the moments of passivity: the times of withdrawal, disengagement or disruption of the process. Indeed, in the Alchemical Learning model, times of perceived disengagement and passivity are welcomed, and, paradoxically, put to use.

The recognition, understanding and skilful engagement of this perceived passivity is required in order to deliver the overall learning impact. For it is important to interrogate the disconnection. Switching off, or the perceived disengagement, may well be the attempt by the delegate to navigate the implications of "disconfirming data" (Schein, 1997:2) for their current structure of meaning-making. As a facilitator, it is critical to understand this as a potentially important site for embedding learning, as opposed to viewing it as a 'dead space' where no learning occurs. In the Alchemical Learning model, disconnection is thus an important part of the meaning-making experience and it is the responsibility of the facilitator to work with the disengagement.

What this reconfiguration offers is both the collapse of a time honoured dichotomy between active learning and passive disengagement and the opportunity for learning to be widened, to include not only the respected formal learning spaces but also the informal interactions which surround them.

Every aspect of the delegate's experience of the learning programme from the interactions within the classroom to the tea breaks, from the moments of active involvement to the moments of silent withdrawal, need to be viewed as participation. Every interaction or lack thereof, every action taken or not taken within the learning experience is a choice, often unconscious, on the part of the learner, determining the shape and nature of his learning process. These collectively combine to create the unique flavour and timbre of the group experience, and the individual-within-the-group-experience.

By understanding that learning occurs in a multiplicity of terrains, a plethora of spaces, including, in some cases more powerfully, sites other than the classroom, we also start to address the notion of 'spillage' in our model. We theorise that what spills out of the boundaries of the formal learning agenda becomes fertile ground for learning. It invites learners to shift from the "excessive focus on what we do know" and are required to know which carries with it the tendency "to learn the precise, not the general" (Taleb, 2007: xxi). The core intention of our model is to raise individuals and the group to consciousness the possibilities of learning outside of formalised boundaries. Leveraging this specific insight would, we believe, impact on a delegate to learn both personally and professionally.

The development of the Alchemical Learning model has been the result of an attempt to conceptualise and articulate an approach to the design of learning interventions which supports a more nuanced understanding of participation and its relationship to knowledge co-creation.

To illustrate this process practically we will take you through our Alchemical Learning Model. Firstly, we have chosen the word Alchemical, the adjective of Alchemy, to describe the learning process that happens in this model. The etymology of the word 'alchemy' derives from the old French *alkemie* and the Arabic *al-kimia* which describes what is termed "the art of transformation" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchemy#History>). Thus Alchemical Learning is Transformative Learning, our understanding of which we have represented in Figure 1.

Alchemical Learning is designed to address *four levels of outcome* which graduate progressively from existing knowledge to the emergent knowledge which would finally be co-created. Directly linked to these four levels of outcome are the *gradations of participation*. The participatory strand is the primary mechanism for shifting learners along the continuum from knowledge acquisition to knowledge co-creation.

In order to illustrate the four levels of outcome, it is necessary to describe the properties of each phase.

The first of these are the *explicit outcomes*. These are the tangible skills, insights and bodies of knowledge that the organisation has defined as the desired outputs of the programme. These are crucial, and ultimately, the success of the learning intervention will be determined by the extent to which these outputs are realised.

The attainment of these outcomes will not, however, be effectively achieved through an exclusive focus on this level of outcome. Achieving the explicit outcomes will be largely enabled through attention to, and engagement with layers of outcomes which lie beneath the level of the explicit focus. These have been identified in the model as the implicit, embedded and emergent outcomes.

Implicit outcomes refer to the skills, insights and mastery of processes that are necessary to effectively engage with the explicit outcomes but that do not form the tangible focus of the learning session/programme or activity. An example of this might be an explicit focus on the identification of key trends driving change within a particular industry. The implicit outcomes

would speak to the ability to source, extract, evaluate and synthesise relevant information in order to arrive at the said identification of key drivers. In our learning interventions, we unpack the outcomes that are implicit within the explicit outputs and design the learning process to develop competency in these.

The powerful leverage in the Alchemical Learning model, however, resides at the level of the *embedded outcomes*. These speak to the intricate crafting of the learning experience (process) so as to reflect, invoke and engage the content through lived experience. If the learning process is constructed with well considered embedded outcomes in mind, this becomes the means by which the explicit and implicit outcomes are realised, and from which the emergent arises.

The *emergent outcomes* are the unanticipated outcomes which surface at individual, collective and organisational levels in response to the learning experience. There is unpredictability at this level of outcome which needs to be actively nurtured and engaged as it is within the emergent that the learning becomes dynamic, and transformative. It is here that the alchemy of the learning process is located. When working with embedded outcomes, no two experiences will be the same irrespective of whether an identical process is implemented. The unique intrapersonal engagement of individuals with the experience, cohere into a collective dynamic that will be equally unique.

In the light of these emergent outcomes, the argument exists for breaking down the dichotomy between engagement and disengagement, participation and non-participation. These binary oppositions maintain the status quo of what is expected within the learning experience and dictates that which must be minimised or dismissed. By collapsing the distinctions, the totality of the learners' individual and collective experience becomes fertile ground for learning. The model is premised upon the need to design learning interventions with these multiple levels of outcome in mind; but is also grounded in the understanding that the process needs to engage both the individual and collective dimensions of the experience.

The conception of knowledge building in the Alchemical Learning model is informed by Baxter Magolda's (1999) epistemological continuum which progresses from the perception of knowledge as absolute to knowledge as contextually constructed. Borrowing on the notions of acquisition and production formulated by Immanuel Kant (1781) in the construal of knowledge progression, the mode of acquisition has been assigned to the level of explicit outcome and that of productivity to the level of implicit outcome, both key stages in the journey to the co-creation of knowledge.

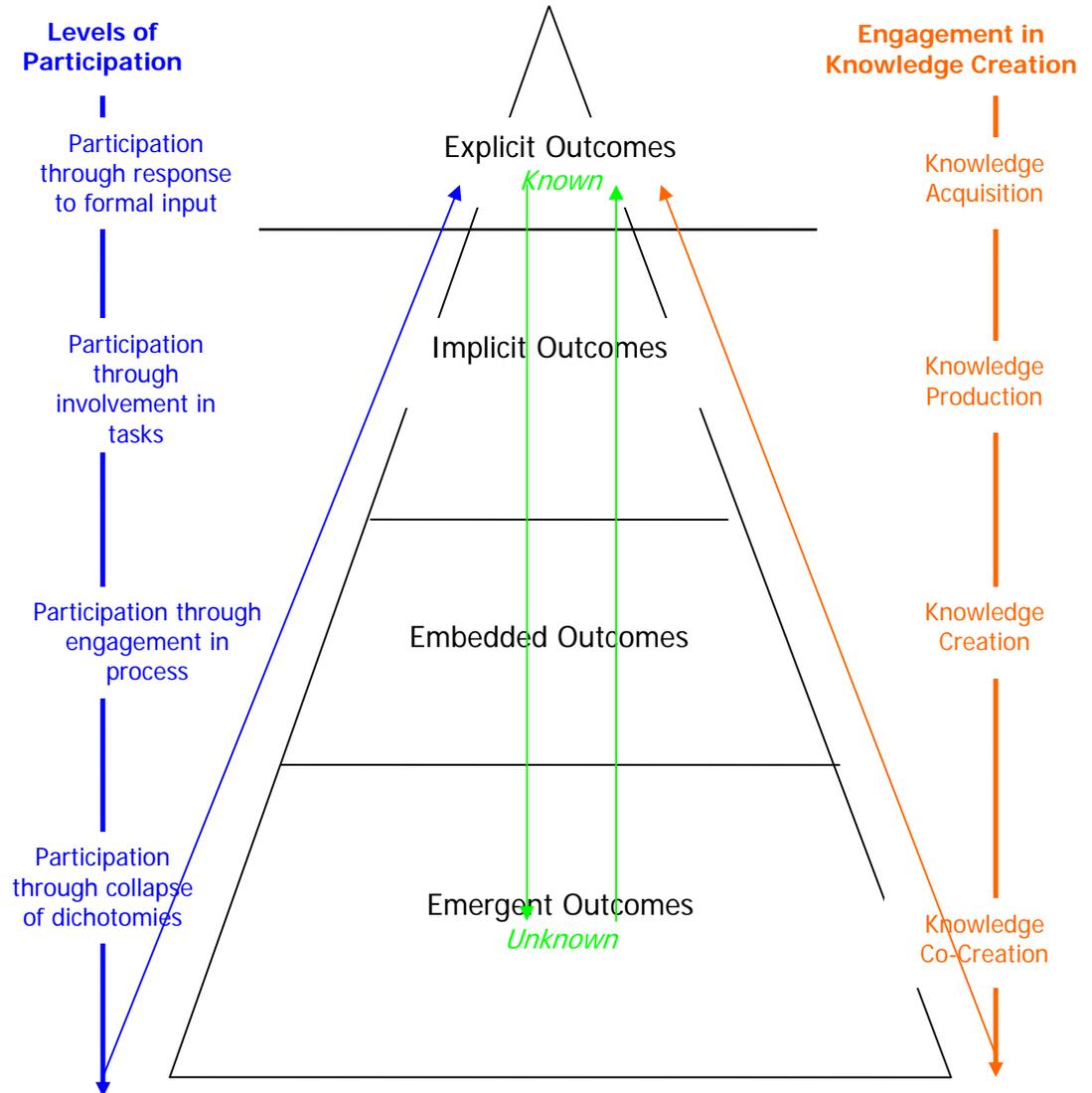
At the level of the embedded outcome knowledge is created and at the level of the emergent outcome knowledge is co-created with the learner. Co-creation of knowledge relates to the holistic engagement of the learner. Co-created knowledge impacts again on the desire to acquire knowledge and in some instances alters the explicit outcomes which are desired. Take the example of an organisation running a customised intervention which focuses on the uptake of financial acumen. What the process may well expose is the need for employees to access information for financial reporting. Here the knowledge which has been co-created changes the explicit outcome and drives a very different kind of engagement for the organisation. Thus the learning has happened at multiple levels from the individual's personal insights to the organisational process.

An important dynamic in the Alchemical model relates to the way in which participation mobilises the construction of knowledge. In organisations, knowledge is tacitly constructed through practice. A key value of a learning intervention lies in its capacity to replicate this experience within the learning space in ways that make the knowledge creation process explicit. This empowers the delegate ultimately to become able to consciously develop, articulate, test and adapt relevant knowledge within the workplace, and as Edgar Schein states "[t]here is nothing so practical as a good theory" (1997:1).

Whilst one recognises the degrees of participation at the levels of the acquisition and production of knowledge, it is at the level of the embedded outcomes that participation

becomes the critical catalyst for the movement towards the co-creation of knowledge. For it is here where the learner is engaged cognitively, emotionally and practically. Through immersion in the learning process, and by a collapsing of distinctions between the learning environment and the real world, the learners play an active part in co-creating knowledge. Mintzberg argues that “ the [learning] solution depends on the people, not just the pedagogy” (2004:43). In our view, it is this intersection of appropriate pedagogies with the real world, “lived experience” (2004:43) of the learners that will best ensure the delivery of learning impact back into the learners’ workplace environments.

THE ALCHEMICAL LEARNING MODEL [figure 1]



To alchemise the leverage of this intersection into learning, the programme needs to be conceptualised within a process orientated approach. This translates into a focus on the creation of a crafted experience through which delegates are able to access, engage and realise the implicit and explicit outcomes. Consequently, the discussion of our pedagogical practices will focus on selected aspects of methods for shaping and navigating this experience. To this end, we will be concentrating on the construction of containers for learning; the critical process paradox of creating sufficient comfort to enable dissonance; deepening individual and collective consciousness through ongoing debriefing and the use of dialogue; and engaging the emergent outcomes in service of the learning.

Before we begin to unpack each of these aspects of our pedagogical practice, it is critical to note that the concepts and methods which will be elaborated are part of a holistic process. They cannot be understood as isolated elements, in spite of the fact that the nature of this written discussion requires that they be broken down into discreet components for ease of explanation and clarity.

Our starting point for any learning intervention is conscious attention to creating the learning container. A container can be understood as an invisible architecture determining the blueprint of our engagement and interactions. Unconscious rules of what is and isn't permissible, and what is or isn't safe are embedded in the fabric of this architecture. These unspoken rules become the determining factors of what is allowed and hence what is possible within certain contexts. Given our understanding of participation as the entirety of the delegate's experience, and our recognition of the need to "[tap] the collective consciousness in the classroom to stimulate an atmosphere of shared learning" (Mintzberg, 2004:211) in order to move delegates towards the co-creation of knowledge, it becomes critical that we consciously create the conditions that will enable this. This is the work of container building.

The learning container provides the cognitive, emotional and practical parameters of the intervention. If well constructed, it establishes the tone and emotional quality of the process, as well as the rapport amongst delegates and between the facilitator(s) and the group. This creates an environment in which delegates are able to express themselves and their experience authentically and to engage with the experience of others, including the times of frustration, distance, disengagement and disagreement. The primary objective of container building, therefore, is to "create conditions under which a rich field of interaction is more likely to appear" (Isaacs, 1999: 242) through which shared, transformative learning is enabled. The nature of these conditions needs to be unpacked more fully in order for the significance of the container to be fully understood.

The first of these is the importance of the container in creating conditions for overcoming what Edgar Schein refers to as "learning anxiety" (1997:2) in his work on the application of Kurt Lewin's change model in the classroom. We concur with Schein's view that "that *all* forms of learning and change start with some form of dissatisfaction or frustration generated by data that disconfirm our expectations or hopes" (1997:2). Dissonance is an essential catalyst for learning.

But as Schein notes, in order for dissonance to translate into learning, "we must accept the disconfirming data as valid and relevant...[and] what typically prevents us from doing so, what causes us to react defensively, is ... a kind of anxiety which we can call learning anxiety " (1997: 2). Learning anxiety is a response to the perceived risks of accepting the disconfirming data. These risks can pertain to perceptions of our competence, our understanding of the world and even our own identity. There may also be fear of others' perceptions should we concede that our current ways of seeing and acting are flawed or limited. Hence the critical challenge of learning process is to enable the delegates to overcome anxiety for the assimilation of disconfirming data into a more complex way of making meaning.

The learning environment and ethos must allow delegates to feel safe enough to tolerate dissonance. The container is both the vehicle through which this safety is generated, and

the means by which some elements of dissonance can be introduced. It is the matrix within which the tension between the comfort and discomfort is maintained at an appropriate level.

To give some indication of how this may translate in practice, we will unpack one aspect of container building that reflects many of the concepts we have discussed. Reflections by a delegate on the INSETA Leadership Advancement Programme 2005 will be used to contextualise a learner experience of the container.

Our first step in building an appropriate container begins with the configuration of the practical space. We utilise flat, open venues for programmes so that we can rearrange the space as needed. Programmes begin with the arrangement of chairs in a circle, and the positioning of tables around the periphery of the room. This is often an initial point of dissonance for delegates as previous learning experiences are likely to have led them to expect to be seated in a lecture theatre, or at least behind a table.

The discomfort associated with reconfiguring the physical space is frequently evident in the patterns of behaviour exhibited by delegates when they first enter the venue. They invariably gravitate to the tables and demonstrate some reluctance to the invitation to take a seat in the circle. Jokes about group therapy and/or AA meetings are often made by delegates to minimise their anxiety by dismissing the validity of this arrangement as the basis for a learning experience. The discomfort with the arrangement of the room is however a critical doorway into learning. A keystone for delegates to disinvest from a previously constructed framework of meaning-making has been termed 'unexpectedness' (Heath and Heath, 2007). Surprise is an important part of opening up alternate making of meaning.

The challenge is to ameliorate the anxiety sufficiently for delegates to feel at ease within the new configuration. To this end, once within the circle, we employ a range of techniques to dispel the tension, with the intention of creating ease to tolerate dis-ease. As described by our LAP delegate, "I once sat in a circle with a group of total strangers. The circle had a strange effect on me; it made me feel both exposed and safe at the same time" (Schultz, S: 2006).

We ameliorate the tension by employing physical exercises or games where people connect and laugh together. Our experience has consistently confirmed that the body is an important channel for accessing emotions and surfacing unconscious responses. The use of physical work often provides a channel for accessing and integrating these facets. These activities should not, however, humiliate or single anyone out. They should be low intensity in terms of discomfort and facilitate laughter in the group. The group must reflect on the experience in order to understand the connection to learning. There should never be a sense in which the physical work is gratuitous.

The exercise culminates in paired conversations exploring their aspirations and concerns around the learning programme. Subsequent to this reflection, 'the round' is introduced as a key feature of the facilitated process. Here each delegate responds to an invitation question, but is free to pass should they not wish to offer their input into the circle. We use rounds frequently both to open and close sessions, as well as to engage delegates in collective reflection on key issues.

Beyond the surprise and dissonance created by the circle, its absence of hierarchy creates an environment in which no version of reality is privileged over another. The programme director participates alongside delegates. Here each person's input is of value in the co-evolution of understanding of knowledge. For one delegate, "Whenever one of those within [the circle] spoke the rest were intensely listening to every single word of the speaker, both spoken and unspoken...within the circle it's every part were [sic] exactly the same, no single part was more, or less important than the rest...While busy building new circles in which I can participate I sometimes still feel the power of that special circle" (Schultz, S: 2006).

With the learning container established, consideration must be given to introducing 'expert input' and engaging delegates in deepening individual and collective reflection. Expert input is key but how it is introduced into the learning environment will determine the extent to which delegates are able to extract meaning from it, integrate this into their own narratives at higher levels of cognitive complexity, and apply within their own contexts. The critical challenge is well framed by Mintzberg who articulates the need to stimulate learning at the interface of well presented concepts with deeply lived experience (2004:210).

To date, much of our approach has been to utilise subject specialists by building the process around their knowledge input. This has translated into the design of the process before and after the content delivery to prepare delegates for maximum engagement and to assist with debriefing thereafter. Our experience is indicating that there are serious limitations to the impact that this kind of approach can deliver. Our current thinking is the partnering of a subject specialist with a process specialist. In this partnership, the programme director will design and facilitate a process to support the delivery of key theory so that the delegates can bring their own experience to bear on the subject matter at hand.

Exploring multiple perspectives in response to subject input is a means by which the ownership of the meaning of the learning can be transferred to the group and by which delegates become co-creators of the knowledge generated in the process. To this end, there are two key practices which we believe are central – the use of effective debriefing and dialogue.

As stressed by academics and practitioners at IMD “[t]he key [to learning]...is in the debrief” (Strebel & Keys, 2005:196). The critical question is how to approach debriefing in a way that is most effective? In *How to Make Ideas Stick* (Heath and Heath, 2007), one of the issues under investigation is how to cohere the experience of learning so that it is lasting. Heath and Heath (2007) contend that there are six key principles to be utilised: simplicity, credibility, relevance, emotion, a narrative aspect and engaging the unexpected. We utilise these principles as the scaffolding from which to build our debriefing. We use debriefing opportunities to explore the credibility and relevance of the learning in relation to the delegate's own context, invite emotional responses to the material, connect the material with the delegates' own narratives and introduce questions which open up unanticipated connections and territories.

These reflective processes are embedded within a dialogue-based approach to group discussion. Dialogue, as referred to by Peter Senge (1994), is a methodology that aims to facilitate deep understanding and conversation between people. Dialogue has been described as “a mode of exchange among human beings in which there is a true turning to one another, and a full appreciation of another not as an object in a social function, but as a genuine human being” (Senge et al, 1994:359). The dialogue process involves the development of the capacity for deep listening and genuine inquiry into the views and experiences of others. It also includes developing the skill to advocate one's own position clearly.

In dialogue, it is important that all individual contributions are acknowledged and seen to add to the knowledge and meaning created in the collective. This also reinforces the importance of acknowledging multiple and possibly divergent perspectives. This occurs first on an intra-personal level and then on an interpersonal level. If successfully managed, new meaning and knowledge will emerge. Thus meaning is negotiated and fluid as opposed to fixed and predetermined. Individual knowledge and meaning will also be expanded when explored within a collective context and chosen from “multiple possibilities” (Baxter Magolda et al, 2007: 6).

It is here that we see the emergent outcomes arising from the learning experience. It is not possible or desirable to predict what these will be, but it is critical that the facilitator be finely tuned into what may be emerging from the learning, and should be secure enough to engage with it. The key role of a facilitator, in this respect, is to be able to recognise the emergent and to assist delegates in assimilating it into the process of meaning making and

eventual co-creation. The danger to guard against is the desire to provide answers instead of merely listening to questions (Taleb, 2007).

There are two levels at which we are seeking to address the emergent outcomes in our programme designs. The first is at the micro level which occurs within the parameters of the learning experience as described above, and the second is at the level of the macro design of the learning intervention. In developing the Massmart Executive Leadership Programme (2007), we applied a 'grounded theory' approach to the design. Here, there are components of the programme framework that are pre-determined (defined as fixed), and there are components which are to be designed in response to the emergent needs of the delegates once the programme is underway (defined as fluid).

With respect to the fluid elements of the learning process, we will allocate a number of days to this aspect of the design, but will not predetermine how these days will be configured. This will only be decided once aspects of the fixed design have been implemented, and the emergent outcomes have become manifest. In this way, "the participants help define the learning agenda" (Mintzberg, 2004: 211).

We have expanded upon Mintzberg's notion of "white time" (2004: 295) in our conceptualisation of the fluid components of programme design. He describes 'white time' as the practice of leaving blank spaces within the timetable in order to be able to return to the "interesting things [that] inevitably arise in management programs" (2004: 295). Whilst he refers to the use of white time within a constructed timetable, we apply this to the macro design of the programme as well.

Thus, in the discussion of pedagogical practises associated with the Alchemical model, we have clarified firstly, how the construction of containers creates the conditions for learning by enabling the critical paradox of comfort and dissonance; secondly, how deepening individual and collective consciousness, through continual debriefing and dialogue, enables the assimilation of learning; and finally, how we engage the emergent outcomes in co-creating learning.

In this paper an attempt has been made to reinvigorate the notion of participation for customised executive education learning interventions. We have provided an alternative conceptualisation of participation through the introduction of the Alchemical Learning model. Focusing on the four levels of outcome, we have demonstrated the use of participation as the primary mobiliser for learner engagement and co-creation of meaning. Finally, we have described selected aspects of our learning methodology that realise our model of participation and enable the embedding and enriching of organisational learning.

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