



SOL-UK

Society for Organisational Learning News Bulletin: May–June 2008

As a member of the SOL community, at SOL-UK, we would like to further the understanding of what it takes to build and develop organisations that can adapt and can be responsive to the demands and responsibilities of being part of our societies. We want to further our learning, collective and individual, of how to develop approaches, ideas, processes... that will help organisations to achieve that goal.

At SOL-UK, we would like to develop a community that exchanges those ideas, brings new knowledge and learns to become better agents for change in the organisations that we represent.

In the past two months, we have been busy organising more events so that all our members can engage in sharing and developing their learning.

SoL-UK Strategy: Defining a better future for SOL

We are in the process of confirming our future role and what we could do to serve our purpose better, in innovative ways. Arie de Geus and Tony Hodgson have already interviewed some of you to understand more about your interests and aspirations for our fractal. The process will continue in the next two months and we will dutifully come back to you later in the year.

It is important for us. We want to respect the SOL's principle of operating democratically, non-hierarchically and we want you all to be engaged in the process so we can build a better fractal.

Programme of SoL-UK events: June ~ July

Here is an update on the events that we have organised for before the summer. As well as some ideas about what we have in plan for Autumn.

We hope that you'll enjoy these events and that we will see you soon.

- **Co-creation Lab**
How to create conditions for ordinary people to create extraordinary results?
- **Presencing Study Group**
Learning through practice: The U Theory
- **List of potential future events**

Co-creation Lab

How to create conditions for ordinary people to create extraordinary results?

Thursday 26 June, 6pm-8.30pm

@ the LearningHouse

As individuals, communities and organisations, we need to be more imaginative than ever to solve the tough challenges we face. More than that, we need to know how to turn great ideas, products and ventures into reality without compromising the wellbeing of our social and environmental systems.

In this workshop we will explore and experiment how to actualize ideas into reality and what are the structures and conditions needed to empower and inspire people to produce great results.

As the framework, we will combine methodologies such as action learning, presencing and the world café, drawing on our learning from work at TeamAcademy (Finland), and LearningHouse (UK).

The workshop is facilitated by Timo Karjalainen and Eliza Hochman from LearningHouse.

LearningHouse

LearningHouse is a centre for learning and enterprise development. We facilitate participative learning processes to inspire great results in organisations and communities. The LearningHouse centre is an inspiring working, learning and meeting venue in Islington, London.

Directions and map:

The Learning House Ltd | Unit 3, New North House | 202/208 New North Road | N1 7BJ London

www.learninghouse.biz/contact.htm

This event is free to SOL-UK Members. As a special introductory offer there will be a fee of £7.50 for other SoL Members and £10.00 for non-SoL members. Please register with annward@sol-uk.org by 10th June 2008.

Presencing Study Group 2
Learning through practice: the U-Theory
Thursday 17 July, 6pm to 8.30pm
@ the LearningHouse

The term 'Presencing' was first used by Peter Senge et al in the book "Presence". Otto Sharmer as since published another book called Theory U to explore in detail the approach.

What we want to do in this series is to provide a space for our members to practice the U-process and exchange their experience of it.

For those not familiar (yet) with the process, we will help you to understand the basics of it and, more importantly, help you with some exercises to have a better feeling for the various individual and group states that are experienced with it. We will share our experience of when and how we might have used it in our organisation and our work. And we will also attempt to develop our abilities to use the process in our group.

Our objective is to develop a strong community of practice around Presencing. No previous knowledge is required. Bring your ideas, your willingness to work with others and to share your opinions.

The evening will be lightly facilitated by Didier Clement. Didier is an experienced management consultant and coach. He works with large organisations to help them solve complex business challenges and is particularly interested in developing ways to help organisations manage themselves better. Didier has used Presencing approaches in various ways to great effect.

This event is free to SOL-UK Members. As a special introductory offer there will be a fee of £7.50 for other SoL Members and £10.00 for non-SoL members. Please register with annward@sol-uk.org by 3rd July 2008.

Further SOL-UK Events:

Here are some of the ideas that we are developing so far. And we are always happy to receive suggestions and propositions from our members.

Decision Making Series: Lessons from philosophy

Over the century, philosophy has attempted to provide answers to the fundamental challenges that humanity was facing. What did they have to say about decision taking and organisation? About the role of language? Free will? The nature of knowledge and society?

We believe that their perspective would be invaluable in our research on the decision taking process in organisation.

Decision Making Series: Memory, Attention and Decision Making

We have already investigated the findings of neurosciences about decision making but much more is available for us to discover. We would like to revisit the topic, bring new speakers and ideas for our debate.

Learning in complex organisations: Uncovering the secret of successful practice (Sharon Varney)

One of our members would like to share her research on learning in complex organisations. Her findings will challenge the dominant views on learning and highlights the practical application of complexity theory in today's organisations. Her findings reveal the secrets of successful practice, offering insights into what enables and inhibits learning and a model for HR development professionals to use to create the conditions for transformational learning.

Inclusion / Exclusion in Decision Making

Explore in depth the concept of inclusion and exclusion in Decision Making

Computer Models as Learning Processes

How can new computer models and approaches help organisation to learn? What are the uses of simulation; agent based modelling and other approaches for the purpose of learning?

Review of Scenario Planning

20 years ago, scenario planning played a major role in Shell to help them go successfully through the oil crisis of the time. Since then, the approach has been adopted and refined in various places. What is now the state of the art in term of scenario planning? Has it been successful? And how can it help us in today's environment?

Trust & Openness (Pam Hurley)

We usually think of organisations as operating through power. Trust has become a buzz word in organisations but like CSR, it is often used to promote an image of political correctness. But what happens if we start to think of *it* as the motor of the successful organisation?

Pam Hurley, formerly of Shell Planning now works with major corporate clients and has developed some effective ways of identifying the important

characteristics of trust and how to use them to improve performance. Pam is also an Associate Member of the James Martin Institute for Science & Civilization, Oxford.

Myth & Scenario (Graham Galer)

Graham Galer worked in Shell Planning for many years and knows the benefits of effective scenario planning. More recently he has begun to consider how great scenarios have transformed into influential political and organisational myths of historic importance that help us make meaning in our businesses, institutions and societies.

If you use scenario planning in your personal and business strategies, this evening session will deepen and stimulate your understanding of the long-term importance of scenarios to our world.

Generation Y (Sally Bibb)

What makes the Millennial generation, Generation Y, tick? Do you know how Generation Y-friendly your organisation is, and does it matter?

If you are having trouble attracting, engaging or retaining Generation Y and if your managers are struggling to understand the younger workforce, Sally Bibb will open your eyes to their talents as well as their needs. She will also discuss ways in which boomers can learn to learn from this new, IT savvy generation.

Spirituality Masterclass (Josie Gregory)

In conjunction with Surrey University, a joint event with the foundation for spirituality in the work place.

Lessons of leadership for the new millennium (Tony Droar)

About grounding Decision Making. Also around Paradigm & metaphor. Tony is a SoL UK member

Emerging Economies, Culture and Approaches

Learning more about the new emerging countries. China, India, the Stans

Inter-organisational Learning

Looking at how in the client /contractor relationship, learning can happen. Learning on how to avoid legal dispute

Theories of learning

Getting familiar with various theories of learning. Piaget. Lev Vygotsky...

Can business save the world (Nigel Topping)

To explore the latest thinking about the role of business in the world and the possible sources of its transformation from the cause to the cure of many social and environmental problems.

Thought leaders from academia, business, government and NGOs will present diverse views of how capitalism can evolve to use its power and creativity to restore our damaged environment and heal social inequity, whilst maintaining its fiduciary responsibility to shareowners.

Participants will have ample time to discuss the ideas presented and will participate in a strategy café, exploring the implications of these ideas with fellow participants"

Your Voice, Your Presence, Your Ideas ... from across the world

If you are a full SoL-UK member and would like to attend, suggest a topic or even organise a SOL-UK event, please get in touch by emailing Ann Ward: annward@soluk.org.

We would also like to hear from members of other SoL groups who may be visiting the UK during 2008-2009. You are welcome to attend our events and to suggest ways of interacting with your groups. We keep our members informed of European Coordinators' meetings but we would like to hear directly from individuals or groups, as your ideas and feedback will help to grow friendships and collaborations.

Last Word: joining SoL UK

If you are not a full SoL-UK member but we have sent this bulletin to you, it is because we think you may be interested in some of our activities and might like to consider becoming one!

SOL-UK provides a powerful meeting place for organisations to share challenges, insights and experiences about organisational learning and fundamental institutional change. You will meet experts, practitioners and facilitators in formal and informal settings.

SOL-UK provides a space for its members to network and to learn from each other and research projects often develop out of seed projects generated within SOL-UK.

Most events are held in great venues in London and the Home Counties, but we occasionally organise events in other parts of the country. SOL-UK organises a programme of learning opportunities each year: workshops; masterclasses; research conferences; networking opportunities and research programmes.

To remind you, here are some of the areas SOL-UK typically addresses:

- Human interactions, systems and behaviours
- Decision-making
- Change
- Strategy
- Leadership
- Sustainability
- Global, regional and local interactivity
- Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary
- Communication and Language

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Ann Ward (annward@sol-uk.org) and we will get someone to contact you to discuss your needs. Whether you are a practitioner, consultant or academic, student; part of an SME, Public Sector or corporate organisation, we will have an appropriate package for you. www.sol-uk.org