



**NEBRASKA  
WALKABLE  
COMMUNITIES**



**HOW LIFELONG  
LEARNING IS TIED TO  
PURPOSE**



**INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE  
Dublin, Ireland**



**INDIVIDUAL  
LEARNING IN THE  
WORKPLACE**

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# ISODC

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## JULY 2018 NEWSLETTER



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## Letter from the Editor by Rebecca Minor

*Welcome to our June 2018 issue of the ISODC newsletter.*

Happy Summer Everyone! Since we last talked in the previous newsletter, I have experienced a couple of changes of my own. My family has relocated from Woodbridge, Virginia to Monterey, California.

In addition, I have gone from being one of two ISODC newsletter co-editors, to simply myself! I am looking for a partner to co-edit the ISODC newsletter with me.



Please [email me](#) if you are interested.

I want to take a moment to extend a special thank you to Theo Stiegler, Steve Cady, Kim Barker, Ron Newton, and Jeremy Grandstaff, along with assistance of many more. Thank you for all of the hard work that went into creating a successful May 2018 ISODC Information Exchange in Perrysburg, Ohio! Please be sure to check out Ron Newton's 'Reflection of the ISODC/NEXUS Information Exchange Conference May 16-19, 2018'. This piece highlights the activities that took place throughout the course of the event and gives special mention to the Open Space activities on Friday morning's agenda and to the Cady's for their hospitality, in opening up their home for the Friday evening social gathering.

It is my hope that this finds everyone having a brilliant summer and swimming with excitement to find out what's new in the realm of ISODC! So, let's dive right in and see what waves of wisdom have made their way into this June 2018 edition!

Also, in this issue,

We are eager to share a letter from our ISODC President, Mr. Roland E. Livingston, Ed.D. In this letter to our esteemed members, he comments on how well the planning committee did in putting together and hosting a wonderful 2018 Information Exchange, held in May at Bowling Green University. Additionally, the future of ISODC's expansion into other countries is discussed as Mr. Livingston heads to China to help launch ISODC-China.

In the article entitled "Individual learning in the workplace" Charles J. Tawk, explores three major characteristics, which successful organizations possess and the impact of organizational structure, on individual learning. Additionally, in this enjoyable piece, the notion that individual learning's best practices vary from one workplace to another is explored.

Also, in this issue, S&G Endeavors reflects on their success in creating more walkable cities in Nebraska. The process of empowering the Steering Committee to collaborate and create both its own vision, and complementary action strategies, at its first and following meetings is discussed. Likewise, the resulting cooperative atmosphere is described as having allowed for the addition of beneficial stakeholders, whom have come to take part in the project. This is noted as being accomplished via the participants trusting each other and the process and being open to bringing in new diverse members to the group effort.

We are happy to share with you 'How Lifelong Learning is Tied to Purpose' written by Kimo Kippen. This article highlights three companies approaches to motivating their employees to be committed lifelong learners. The three companies: Study.com, JetBlue and McDonalds various approaches of using learning and purpose to drive impact inside their organization are distinguished as providing employees with greater job satisfaction and feeling more engaged with the company they work for.

Lastly, we are pleased to provide our readers with an article by Thomas Kleiner named "The Medium is the Message: Making Sense in the Use of Information Communication Technologies According to McLuhan". Here, the writings of Marshal McLuhan are examined and his efforts to inform us of the implications electronic media may have on our collective minds, is highlighted. Furthermore, the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) and the need to understand complex human interactions in group settings is discussed. This inspiring piece examines ICT's in relation to helping us distinguish how and why, interpersonal communications and individual variances, may disturb and effect group subtleties in their usage of ICTs.

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

The International Society for Organization Development and Change presents "Leadership in Times of Turbulent Change". This conference will be held in Dublin, Ireland. The dates are as follows: 11th September to 16th September 2018. For more information go to: [www.ISODC.org](http://www.ISODC.org) or send questions about the event to: [info@ISODC.org](mailto:info@ISODC.org)

A workshop named "Culture, Change, and Leadership" will be held on the 18th of September 2018 from 3PM - 6PM at the Royal St George Yacht Club, Dublin, Ireland. The fee is \$175 per person. For registration details and for more information please visit: <https://isodc.org/>

**As a reminder:**

We have some exciting webinars coming up...

On September 13 at 3 PM ET a webinar with Ed and Peter Schein will be held, focused on their new book *Humble Leadership and the Power of Relationships, Openness, and Trust*. To register, please go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/edit?eid=47099090648>

The next webinar will be on November 15 at noon ET with Matt Minahan. More details to come, but please mark your calendar and return to the ISODC website for updated information regarding this webinar. Our goal with the webinars is to further solidify our mission of being a leading international, collaborative movement promoting and effecting positive growth at the Individual, Team, Organization, and Societal Level.

We always welcome hearing from you regarding the work you are doing both for newsletter articles and for the Organization Development Journal ([www.isodc.org](http://www.isodc.org) in the members' only section). If you would like to submit an article for review to be published in an upcoming edition of the ISODC Newsletter or simply ask questions about the process, contact myself Rebecca Minor at [cebzo@hotmail.com](mailto:cebzo@hotmail.com). I hope to hear from you after reading this issue!

If you would like to become even more immersed with The International Society for Organization Development and Change (ISODC), please feel free to join both our [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Remember- If you would like to provide useful suggestions or comments regarding upcoming Information Exchange opportunities or ISODC virtual roundtable discussions/webinars, feel free to contact me via email, I will be sure to pass your thoughts along to our board members. Our aim is to provide group interactions that are both interesting and valuable to all of our members wherever they are across the globe, so we look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas. Additionally, please share what ISODC is doing with friends and work colleagues! Likewise, be sure to invite them to join our wonderfully diverse worldwide community of members by going to [www.isodc.org](http://www.isodc.org)!

Cheers and have a lovely Summer!

***Rebecca Minor, Editor***

## Letter from the President

Greetings to You All:

The Summer solstice is upon us, and change is in the air. So many exciting ISODC happenings to report on.

By now I hope that you all have heard about the wonderful 2018 Information Exchange in May at Bowling Green University. The planning program committee did a very commendable job at putting together an exciting array of presentations and workshops.



The event was well attended and appreciated by all. One of the highlights was a lunch time visit from Barbara Bunker who is well regarded as a top practitioner in large systems change. I am delighted to report that planning has already begun on the 2019 Information Exchange.

Be sure to hold the dates of May 15 – 18, 2019 and plan to join us in the area of Denver, CO.

As I write this, I am preparing to join our colleagues in Beijing China for the ISODC-China 1st Global Summit Conference. Yongming Tang, our International Director in China and his team have planned this event to launch ISODC-China as an affiliate of ISODC. Joanne Preston and Ken Wall will be with me to represent the Board of ISODC. This event could be the beginning of ISODC's expansion to other countries. We might expect to see efforts undertaken in South Africa and India in the months to come.

Let me remind you to make sure to get your passport in order and plan to join us in Dublin in September for the ISODC International Conference. Again, the program committee has put together a spectacular event, including pre-conference workshops and an opportunity for post-conference tours.

Additional information on this event is on the ISODC website.

I am also thrilled to announce that Cleary University has won approval for a Master of Science in Culture, Change, and Leadership Program that was developed by Jerry Glover, Kim Barker, and me. This Program is designed for those interested in learning about organizational culture, and how cultural change can be developed, implemented and evaluated. While this is not an ISODC Program, it does give ISODC increased visibility in the higher education arena.

Please be sure to check the ISODC website for announcements of two spectacular upcoming webinars. The first is with Ed Schein, September 13, and later in the year with Matt Minahan.

As in past newsletters, I continue to encourage you to suggest ideas for something you wish that ISODC would take on and offer to its members and to the field of ODC. All you need to do is to let us know what your particular passion is that can serve ISODC and we will consider it. It's as easy as sending a message to me at: [info@isodc.org](mailto:info@isodc.org) to let us know how you believe you can make a difference.

Welcome to Summer.....

**Roland**

# Reflection of the ISODC / NEXUS Information Exchange Conference, May 2018

by Ron Newton

This year's event was held at the Bowling Green State University (BGSU @Levis Commons) and the Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg, Ohio.

## Wednesday, May 16.

There was a pre-conference workshop held by ISODC at the BGSU campus on Managing, Measuring and Changing Organizational Culture. Jerry Glover provided cultural opportunities to consider based on a simulated relocation to Mars.

Registration and reception was held that evening at the adjacent Hilton Garden Inn.





## Thursday, May 17.

- Steve Cady and Roland Livingston jointly welcomed everyone to the 2018 Information Exchange and provided a conference overview of Organization Development activities.
- Ellen Feldman Ornato and Jenny Drescher (founding partners of [www.theboldercompany.com](http://www.theboldercompany.com)) engaged all attendees and demonstrated how immersive applied improvisation programs change behaviors. They energized and motivated the conference forward.
- Steve Cady presented a mind-bending look at the future of work, workers, and working. From crypto currencies, to artificial intelligence, robotics, and avatars, Steve revealed world changing activities based on the speed of innovation moving faster than ever that will change our current perceptions of “work”. It was a bit wicked too!  
Concurrent afternoon sessions included:
  - Global Collaboration for Positive Change by Al Blixt and Paul Tolchinsky.
  - Mediation Based Approach on a Large Scale by Rick and RJ Fenwick.
  - Culture Change and Leadership using Simulations by Jerry Glover.
  - Focus on Stability and Change by Jake Jacobs and Margaret Seidler.

## Friday, May 18.

Morning started with concurrent Open Space activities.

Grow, (to undergo natural development, come into existence and develop)

- Barbara Bunker, professor in psychology at the University at Buffalo (<http://bunker.socialpsychology.org/>) attended the conference and shared her respected past to present view on Organizational Development needs forward. She expressed the point of making intentional differences and received several impromptu accolades that had “popped-up” from peers at the conference during a question and answer session.

- Concurrent Friday sessions followed:
- Radical Transformation with OD&C Methods by Christine Geith & Terry Meisenbach.
- Publishing for Mass Consumption (ISODC Webinar) by Jeanne Maes and Kim Barker. This was an interactive session via Zoom (conducted at BGSU) that grew and shared information based on real-time attendee participation. Further discussion on understanding that “branding” reinforces who we are and reflects our visions/goals.
- Collaborative Arts by Chris Simon. Theo Stiegler introduced the session with a group Om to mindfully start the afternoon activities and beyond. Chris Simon engaged us on the use of Collaborative Arts ([www.nexus4change.com/collaborativearts](http://www.nexus4change.com/collaborativearts)) that followed with Playback Theatre activities ([www.playbackcentre.org](http://www.playbackcentre.org)).
- Transformation Summits by Keith Banner and Kelly Schuck. Friday afternoon final session.  
An interactive web / ZOOM conference by Keith McCandless on Big Change Made Simple with BGSU leadership support from Steve Cady. This last session was a very spirited session that engaged the participation and energy of everyone. <https://tinyurl.com/virtualfishbowl> (<http://www.liberatingstructures.com/ls-menu/>)

Friday evening was spent at Steve and Jackie Cady’s home. There was live music playing, several sing- a-longs and grilled goodies and beverages for all. A spectacular evening at the Cady’s. Thanks Steve!

Saturday post conference activities were held at the Hilton Garden Inn. Ron Newton

- 15% Solutions and Troika Consulting were two of the menu items from the Liberating Structures menu that the entire group participated in. It was truly an electrifying and energetic experience!

## Nebraska Walkable Communities Project Background and Overview - by S&G Endeavors by Jeremy Grandstaff

To our fellow colleagues at ISODC; it was so amazing for John Spalding to catch up with each of you at the recent ISODC exchange in Ohio. John has been raving to me about the collaborative effort between ISODC and NEXUS4change; specifically highlighting how the conference hosted a dynamic schedule and great group of presenters, speakers, and good conversations about what is possible when we work together collaboratively.

Speaking of working together, John had the pleasure of presenting the below article to a group of you at the conference, highlighting the first of four stories that outline our work with the Nebraska Walkable Communities (#WalkNE) Initiative. The #WalkNE Initiative, sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and funded by the CDC, has convinced 14+ communities throughout Nebraska (both large and small) to create collaborative, community-driven action plans to increase physical activity, biking, walking, and overall community health. The article tells the first of four stories, explaining how the state-wide steering committee has guided the project, bringing it to a stronger, diverse initiative from the very beginning.

This project is one that highlights the core difference that S&G makes by blending collaborative methods to strengthen our client work; and, we are so grateful to share it with you.

Be sure to visit [www.SGEndeavors.com](http://www.SGEndeavors.com) to connect directly with John or I. You can also tune into our monthly broadcasts called S&G Connections where our clients tell their own stories and the process speaks for itself. As always, we welcome your feedback or questions and hope to catch many of you at the next exchange.

**Jeremy Grandstaff, Facilitation Consultant MOD**  
S&G Endeavors

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## How Lifelong Learning is Tied to Purpose

### By Kimo Kippen

Organizational needs are evolving rapidly in today's workplace, which means workers need to adapt and, most importantly, learn. Companies need to encourage their employees to be lifelong learners, but how do you motivate and engage workers to drive real impact? The answer? Purpose.

Purpose is what really drives a person on an individual level. Employees want to learn for their own success and development, so it's important to make that connection between an individual's purpose and your organization's purpose. Ensuring that your employees' and organization's purpose is aligned will not only drive your workforce to seek learning opportunities to improve their skillsets, but will also increase overall employee retention.

Here's how three companies are using learning and purpose to drive impact inside their organization:

### Study.com's Working Scholars

Online education company Study.com has made learning its core mission. Not only does the company promote learning through its product, but it has made learning a core facet of its culture. Study.com provides lifelong learning on its site for all employees and their families and created the Working Scholars program to benefit the community. Through this program, residents of select Bay Area cities have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at no cost. Employees feel connected to the overall mission and this specific program, driving them to make an impact at work.

### JetBlue Scholars

JetBlue Scholars provides JetBlue Airways' crew members the opportunity to earn a low-cost bachelor's degree. The program, which partners with multiple online course providers and higher education institutions, is specifically designed to fit crew member's busy schedules. With JetBlue Scholars, JetBlue showed its crew members how committed they are to helping them succeed. Hundreds of crew members are enrolled in JetBlue Scholars and 96% of them report they feel more committed to staying at JetBlue. 85% of enrollees also report they feel more engaged in their job.

### McDonald's Archways to Opportunity

McDonald's designed their Archways to Opportunity program to help their employees wherever they are in their educational journey. Their program helps employees improve English skills, earn a high school diploma or work toward a college degree. Since launch, Archways to Opportunity has increased access to education for over 20 thousand people. McDonald's commitment to their employees' futures with the wide variety of education options available helps the company attract and retain talent.

Kimo Kippen is an Advisory Board Member of Study.com and President of Aloha Learning Advisors. An aspiring “Citizen of the World,” Kimo is an accomplished, visionary thought leader and sought-out international keynote speaker committed to making a difference in the world by inspiring business and civic leaders, as well as employees, to think outside the box and actualize what is truly possible. In his past role as Chief Learning Officer at Hilton, he transformed the learning and development culture, improving the company’s guest scores, brand loyalty and global market foothold. Prior to 2010 Kimo held various roles at Marriott International Inc., including leadership of the Learning Center of Excellence for all of Marriott International’s operated and franchised properties worldwide.



# The Medium is the Message: Making Sense in the Use of Information Communication Technologies According to McLuhan

## by Thomas Kleiner

In 1964, Marshal McLuhan published “Mass Media: The Extension of Man.” In this book, as well as with his other writings, he warns that electronic media may be changing the way we communicate, think, behave, and even how we make sense of our physical material world. He coined the term, “The medium is the message” referring to mass communications as both print and electronic media. Electronic media he referred to then was TV and radio but could include the telephone, telegrams, teletype, and other devices transmitted with mid-20th century information communications technology. McLuhan saw positive and negative aspects of electronic media as both an upward and a downward spiral in the “final phase of the extensions of man...” which depended on what he called the “technological emulation of consciousness” as a creative process of knowing (ontology) that would be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society through our senses and our nerves electronically shared by an interconnected electronic global media.

## The Electronic Medium is the Message

The futurist he was, McLuhan described it accurately. He envisioned what we know as Information Communication Technology or “ICTs” on a global scale over sixty years ago. Technological complexity has progressed into gadgets and tools we use every day in our devices and on the Internet. Smart phones developed in the past ten years have many more times the computing and telecommunications speed and capability than the most advanced information and communications systems the United States used when NASA landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon, while Michael Collins orbited above them in July 1969. Today (social) media includes texting, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and a myriad of other social mediums transmitted electronically. Many more are evolving and entering the global village (another McLuhan phrase) in high data/low context venues in truly advanced fashion. For example, when we refer to the devices we can quickly think of our smart phones, tablets, and laptops.

Yet with all of this 21st century technological capability and sophistication, what has it ‘wrought’ to the workplace in this generation and where are we going in the next ten years? Who really knows? But a review of Marshal McLuhan’s predictive concerns on the growth and impact of electronic media on the human mind as an

original thinker is a refreshing experience. Generally speaking, the OD scholar/practitioners may be interested in McLuhan's futuristic concerns rooted in the technological human interface and apply them to organizational settings from the human factors/technological determinism connection. However, let's start by defining Information and Communication Technology (ICT) then ask how ICTs may contribute to our understanding of the individual working in an organization go about their work as they attempt to contribute to their organizational mission with a McLuhanian flavor. Perhaps our interest in OD may include how digital tools within the ICT infrastructure facilitate learning and share knowledge in our global villages. In this sense, our understanding of this trending technology may extend beyond the corporate environment to the larger global societal organizational communities found in multinational corporations and transnational corporations in a world that is electronically connected as a sensing, thinking being on a global scale.

## What is Information Communication Technology?

Information and Communication Technology or "ICT" covers a broad range of computer-based systems. ICTs are the infrastructure supporting digital tools from which devices, applications, media, and related software and hardware allow people in organizations to receive, distribute, process, and store; as well as retrieve and analyze information as a form of communication. ICT is defined as 'any technology used to support information gathering, processing, distribution and use. The meteoric rise of ICTs during the past generation offer organizations new and evolving forms of electronic tools enhancing their ability to communicate information (knowledge) in complex and dynamic sociotechnical systems.

Use Through ICTs vs Use Around. Researchers are now seeing the need to investigate communication processes operating around ICTs as opposed to the traditional examination of organization's use through ICTs. In this context, electronic media in transactions and information processing, including wired and wireless communication, are interconnected through intranets, the Internet, and wireless networks. ICTs are the infrastructures in which devices transmit, broadcast, and send and information. Information and data are processed through the ICT and not generated there. But when knowledge, concepts, meaning, cognition, or perhaps feelings and emotions are in play, then use around means focusing on human factors or a person's use of ICTs around the technologies where tasks, process, and perhaps outcomes are experienced by the person. The relationships between task, information, and individual performance provide insights on how individuals discern practices, form their perceptions, and process information within their group experiences in learning how to best accomplish their tasks using information provided in large part from the digital ICT infrastructure. For our interests as OD professionals, the individual's use through ICT tools in organizational work processes may occur

within sociotechnical systems or human networks and not from the traditional use through technological determinant perspective. This brings us to another OD concern that is reflected in the literature as a potential gap if we are interested in employees' work around ICTs.

## ICTs in Work Processes: Distortion in Human/Machine Communication

Comparing direct human interaction and electronic communication in context of ICTs in organizational work processes provides fertile research ground. For example, do ICTs inhibit or enhance work processes as individuals increasingly rely on their digital devices and intranets? Moreover, do these digital tools facilitate the meaning of work (task identity) as one goes about getting the job done? If such a relationship exists, then how does this contribute to learning at the workplace and promote knowledge, or disrupt or prevent learning and knowledge? Recall communications through ICTs may be neglecting human communicational activities around ICTs. Communication processes around ICTs are typically characterized as critical to a healthy organization functioning in decision making, change, culture, networks, and knowledge management. Again what is the difference between working through versus around ICTs? Working through ICTs and their associated digital tools and devices is the tradition view we tend to have when looking at technology – it's the engineering aspect, the venue in which project managers thrive with Gant charts, logic models, and other operations research analytics. These are important features to have when examining technology, but they tend to ignore the important component of the process: the human factors element. This is where ICT use around, or perhaps another way to say, working in a technical environment where the technology is subordinate to the thinking, feeling, sensing human component – the human factors contributing to learning and knowledge by being around the ICT infrastructure and benefitting from the speed and capacity for machines to process data through the system. But the value proposition is the human person adding to the process with their originality of intellect working around the technology. From a behavior science perspective in OD we would prefer to dialog working around technology. But what do we know about the effects of prolonged interactivity on the person working long term in the ICT environment? Are we spawning a work zombie of sorts?

*Social Mass Culture.* McLuhan foresaw many of the electronic media trends we are experiencing today over sixty years ago when television was surpassing radio as the dominant medium. He seemed to peer into the future by warning us that electronic media has the potential to change mankind if we are not aware of its insidious influences. He takes a longer view than most of us would and was not talking specifically about the chemicals and endorphins acting on our brains when we



engaged in the satisfying effects of electronic gaming software. His perspective of the human factors mind/machine interaction covered three thousand years to Western culture of the early 1960s. Then he characterized human and technological development as an explosion of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, culminating with an imploding of Western society, claiming that, “During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space... Today, after more than a century of electric technology (circa 1960), we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.” Meanwhile back at the workplace, unplanned consequences of ICT use at the workplace is addressed by Galluch, Grover, & Thatcher. They have identified potential gaps in the ICT/work process literature lacking research on workplace interruptions caused by ICT use suggesting that more research is needed on “technostress” in the information systems (IS) field.

*Abolishing Time and Space.* If you’ve ever observed someone engrossed in smartphone texting, perhaps you’d recognize that individual’s disabled state of consciousness in a virtual world adrift from their material environment – as they walk eyes wide shut into closed commuter train doors; or when clasping our smart tablets as walking zombies stumbling from the curb on a busy street in the middle of traffic when the signal light clearly indicates “Don’t Walk.” This is what he predicted as one indicator of rapid cultural decline in the final phase of the extensions of man, by a “technological immolation of consciousness.” This is not about mindless zoning out but examples of higher order cognitive processing on these devices albeit devoid of important cues (not all) of their immediate situation. However, he is not claiming that all media neither good or bad, nor should it be avoided. His exhortations are meant to inform us of the implications electronic media may have on our collective minds, an impact that is immediate and lasting on a global scale lacking in other forms of media and socioeconomic ages.

## The Medium may be the Message But Sensemaking is A Process of Knowing

Technologists help us understand trends and future innovative developments – from the engineering world. But what do we know about the human development aspect? Yes, ICTs in our current information economy it is a force occurring both “at once and ubiquitous,” yet continually evolving through to the next generation of digital devices and software supported by ICT platforms. In OD we probably have an informed idea of the role ICTs have in driving the perpetual technological revolution. But what do we know about it in shaping individual’s understanding of their work processes, or how it may shape their perceptions or behaviors on the job? How do we know what it is we seek to know, why our need to understand such dynamics?

Sensemaking may help us understand this phenomenon by exploring this as creative process of knowing (ontology) that is collectively and corporately extended to the work group, organization; and where McLuhan would have us go, “to the whole of human society... much as we have already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media.” This, he said over sixty years ago! McLuhan taught that different types of media involved various levels of participation a person experiences when, as he says, is “consuming” a medium. When talking about hot or cold media he refers to context and content as either being high or low. Participation in movies were "hot," in that only one sense (perception) is involved that is clearly define with little left to the imagination (low context/high content). For movies, little effort is needed to perceived details. On the other hand, TV is considered “cool.” He thought TV required more effort on the part of the viewer to determine meaning much like comics, “which due to their minimal presentation of visual detail require a high degree of effort to fill in details that the cartoonist may have intended to portray.” ; thus high context/low content. Why movies are thought to be "hot?" It is because “intensifying one single sense "high definition", demanding a viewer's attention, and a comic book to be "cool" and "low definition", requiring much more conscious participation by the reader to extract value. He believed greater participation by the recipient was key in a cool medium as in a lecture being cool vs reading a book. Hot media he posited provided “complete involvement without considerable stimulus.” He stated that, “Print occupies visual space, uses visual senses, but can immerse its reader. Hot media favors analytical precision, quantitative analysis and sequential ordering, as they are usually sequential, linear and logical. They emphasize one sense (for example, of sight or sound) over the others. For this reason, hot media also include radio, as well as film, the lecture and photography.”. His concept saw hot and cool existing on a continuum as measured on a scale rather than as dichotomous terms.

## A Space and Time Odyssey

We are fortunate to be living and working at time in history. Understanding how ICTs may contribute to our understanding of tasks and shape perceptions of work processes is an abductive reasoning exercise as we create and share knowledge. According to Cheung-Judge, OD is poised to examine the ICT/human interface. “OD, more than any field, has the knowledge, tools, and practice platform to support organizations to continue their evolutionary journey.” Alvesson & Sandberg suggest “box-breaking” research is apropos using different tactics and methodologies as an overall strategy to refine and contribute to existing research literature. Their approach would look “outwards for new ideas, theories or methods that can be used to change... significant ways in three possible versions: box changing, box jumping and box transcending.” As an abductive approach, they see box changing an end of a continuum located on the border of boxed-in and box-breaking research. Box

changing is the primary point of reference is a specific (research discipline) to identify crucial problems resulting in substantial rethinking of the existing literature. This is an exploratory view in a sense, by addressing how emerging electronic media. Digital media in this 21st century must impact human cognition, sensing, and feelings. But how? Going beyond the technology to exploring its impact from a human factors perspective is a plausible approach. Our view of the world, based on personal perceptions can be dramatically influenced by how well, or how poorly we are able to make sense phenomena and relate it with others whether it be virtual or in the physical material world. It's both. If our reality begins and ends at our thumbs with our smart phones, tablets, and laptops - or any other device of this nature, then how are we conditioning our brains to respond and react to different non-natural stimuli? What are the long-term effects on cognition ? We understand it can ruin our eyesight if we strain our eyes, our physical health may decline if we sit for long periods in sedentary positions thumbing away. But perhaps the more striking change is how it may disrupt our thinking in a sort of evolutionary progress on a physiological level. Moreover, from a cultural, sociological level, what are the effects in an organization (society too) when its participation efforts in asymmetrical distributed work teams are void of human contact – other than via an electronic device?

## Organization Development and Change: Spiraling Onward and Upward

With the advent of 21st century digital media structures, profound but disruptive change is evident in how we make sense of organizational work-life. McLuhan helps us think about our ability to think, reason, and communicate may be creating gaps in the communication process, especially if our cognition is changing in fundamental ways – whether impaired or enhanced, ICTs may represent a disruptive force in change processes. Understanding complex human interactions in group settings using tools found in the ICT infrastructure helps us discern how and why interpersonal communications and individual differences may disrupt and influence group dynamics in their use of ICTs. It may promote our understanding of organizational change and how ITCs may bridge perceptual, global, and temporal boundaries as an integrative change model. At the individual level, it may relate to what Brooks' research on personal social media usage tells us about the effects of organizational process efficiencies on the perceived well-being of organizational members. As an important component to the ICT/work process calculus, his research is compelling as it discovers human interaction associated with ICTs in several work environments across difference sectors. Making sense in this new arena has consequences for managers, leaders, and decision-makers in their choices of how to use ICTs around work processes. The medium may be the message, but the mind processes the message, and the time may be right for designing innovative organizational research methods to

help us explain current phenomena and discern probable trends and patterns in the immediate future.

Thomas “TK” Kleiner lives and works in the Greater Washington DC Metropolitan as a business consultant and adjunct professor working on OD and strategic management processes. His doctoral dissertation at Cabrini University is on the interactive effects of information communication technologies and sensemaking in organizations. A senior OD consultant with E3 Management Consulting, TK partners with major corporations, international nongovernmental organizations; as well as government agencies within the Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and the Treasury. As an adjunct professor with Webster University, he teaches international political economy, research methods, organizational behavior, and organization development; and is winner of the 2017 Faculty Development Award. Mr. Kleiner also teaches an undergraduate survey course in international political economy for the University of Alberta, cosponsored by the Smithsonian Institution’s Office of Fellowships and Internships. He earned a dual B.A. in Psychology and Communications from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock, Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) from George Mason University, and M.A. in Human Resource Development (HRDV) from Webster University. He is a member of the Delta Mu Delta honors society.

During his career, Mr. Kleiner was directly involved in establishing several newly chartered federal organizations, one of which implemented the historic Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty signed by Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev; and later, with the Treasury Department where he assessed various mission and functional assets strategically aligned to a new agency within the Department. He later established the Economic Research Section, leading multicultural international teams researching international economic trends culminating in multinational ministerial communiqués, policies, and international agreements, one of which led to the Summit of the Americas, endorsed by the Organization of American States. TK’s work has taken him to Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Honduras, Mexico, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and other countries in Eastern Europe; as well as throughout the U.S. working with research analysts from Australia, Great Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, and trade representatives from Vietnam and China. TK’s future interests are in promoting sustainable economic development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and plans to work in Vietnam and Ethiopia as a committed professional demonstrating core OD values.

## ISODC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2018

### **LEADERSHIP IN TURBULENT CHANGE**

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 17 - 21**

**Royal St George Yacht Club, Dublin, Ireland**



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# Webinar with Ed and Peter Schein: September 13, 2018 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM EDT



Join us as we discuss with bestselling author and father of organizational culture studies, Edgar Schein and Peter Schein as they trail-blaze with a creative perspective on leadership that encourages openness and trust as a form of strength.

The more traditional forms of leadership, based on static, or even, transactional hierarchies, is growing increasingly outdated and ineffective. Without the ability to communicate with their peers, leaders become alienated from their followers and productivity and quality are sacrificed. The authors Edgar Schein and Peter Schein recognize this reality and call for a reimagined form of leadership that coincides with emerging trends of relationship building, complex group work, and diverse workforces. Gaining a deeper understanding of the constantly evolving complexities of interpersonal, group and even intergroup relationships requires shifting our focus towards the process of group dynamics and collaboration.

Please join us for this ISODC webinar and conversation about the humble leadership paradigm and the importance of studying how things are done through collaboration and humility. The Scheins will show us how human connection in the workplace is an opportunity for growth and success.

Reading the book before the webinar is recommended. Humble Leadership can be pre-ordered or purchased at the following link:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/series/HHS/the-humble-leadership-series>

Read about the Schein's work in the Organizational Culture and Leadership Institute at <http://www.scheincli.org/>

The webinar will be open to the first 100 people who log into it. All who register will be sent the link within 24 hours of the webinar for viewing. The webinar link will be sent to all registrants on the morning of the webinar. Questions? Email us at [info@isodc.org](mailto:info@isodc.org).

# Individual learning in the workplace

## by Charles J. Tawk

A successful organization has three major characteristics: individuals contributing to its success, practices influencing the individuals' learning, and a structure regulating the learning process. Learning offers many benefits for both the individual and the organisation, however learning needs a proper and tidy platter to hold it (a structure) and an obliging waiter to serve it (practices). Unfortunately, not all organisations have structures and practices that are conducive to learning. In fact, some organisational structures and practices can freeze, shrink and even destroy individual learning. There are countless examples of organisational structures and especially practices which have snuffed their employees' desire to learn.

This article will address the impact of organisational structure and practices on individual learning. It will not tackle learning in its general context, but it will focus on the learning that occurs in the workplace.

The organisational workplace is where individuals spend most of their waking time and where they are exposed to a continuous flow of information, knowledge and inputs. It is through specific and intentional practices that organisations can influence, facilitate, speed-up and transform this variety of inputs into a learning experience. These practices can take the form of training, communities of practice, delegation, assessments, knowledge management, and other practices which will, in the end, create a win-win sharing learning circle.

In this article we will explore the two factors that have the most impact on individual learning in organizations, and they are the organizational structure and organizational practices.

### Organisational structure supporting individual learning

To be effective, individual learning activities in the workplace require information, of course, but also the proper synchronization of this information. Good synchronization will achieve a flow of information capable of delivering exactly what an individual wants to learn, precisely at the time and place where it is needed. The organisation's structure is the mechanism used to achieve such synchronization because it coordinates individual activities across all levels of the hierarchy through approved internal communication lines, defined responsibilities, and clear internal policies, processes and procedures. In fact, the whole organisation can be considered a synchronizing body, and learning and the flow of information are two activities that need synchronizing through

the appropriate structure.

Information can be defined as ‘facts about a situation, person, event, etc.’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2015). There are three objectives an organization structure should aim for in order to promote learning in the workplace. First the information should be able to flow from the frontlines to the managerial levels and vice versa. Second, there should be mechanisms to collect and record this information in order to gain learning and use it for decision making or to improve the outlook of individuals. And third, the flow of information should be open, allowing everyone to understand the way things work. An organisational structure that can achieve these objectives is a key component in the development of individual learning.

## Organisational practices that enhance individual learning

The second factor that affects learning in organisations is organizational practices. Each organisation develops its own pattern of learning practices which should provide individuals with the learning necessary to get their job done in an efficient manner. Organisational practices can even go a step further and transform individual learning into shared learning by encouraging co-participation and collaboration among individuals working in the same organization. Some of the best practices to develop learning and encourage collaboration are:

- **Problem solving:** Problem solving involves generating hypotheses, gathering data to test these hypotheses and using statistical tools to organise data in order to draw conclusions. Problem solving requires people participation in each and every step. It is individuals who will generate hypotheses, gather data, test hypotheses, use statistical tools to organise data and draw conclusions. Eventually, by working through these practical steps the individuals involved will learn, grow and benefit.
- **Experimenting:** Once a solution to a problem is found, or any piece of new learning is acquired, it has to be tested. Small experiments can produce incremental gains of knowledge. Experimenting includes many learning elements such as examining, monitoring and spotting defects. Mastering these will definitely have a positive effect on individual learning.
- **Past experiences:** Every organisation should review past successes as well as failures in order to learn from them. The organization should also make sure to record the lessons learned from these reviews in a form accessible to all. In addition, experienced individuals should be given the opportunity to transfer previous experiences and practices to other employees.
- **Learning from others:** Organisations should always look outside their own boundaries and into the external environment to gain new perspectives. Best practices are often found in other companies. Learning from others will lead to the improvement of organisational current practices and foster individual learning and the sharing of information.



- Transferring knowledge: One way of transferring knowledge is through job rotation. When an individual is moved to a new department or division, knowledge transfer occurs between that individual and the new department. Each one learns from the other.
- Other best practices: Other ways of facilitating individual learning in organizations are through management commitment, training and development, rewards, knowledge management and communities of practice.

Individual learning's best practices vary from one workplace to another. These practices do not occur by chance; they represent a long path of continuous improvement that can reach a customized secret formula that creates a clear understanding of individual and organizational learning requirements.

Maximizing individual learning is critical to an organisation's success since this learning includes acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and competencies needed to perform the job. Knowledgeable and skilled Individuals are difficult to find and difficult for competitors to imitate, giving their organisations a clear competitive edge. In the fast changing world of today, organisations realize that continuous learning is vital to success and many initiatives are being developed to facilitate such learning.

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I held several positions in the areas of human resources, management and law. I am an active member in professional and international organizations such as the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), The Red Cross organization and the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP).