



Module 1 - Topic 6 presentation: Introduction to Social Learning and Reflective Practice

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Overview of Module 1: Topic 6

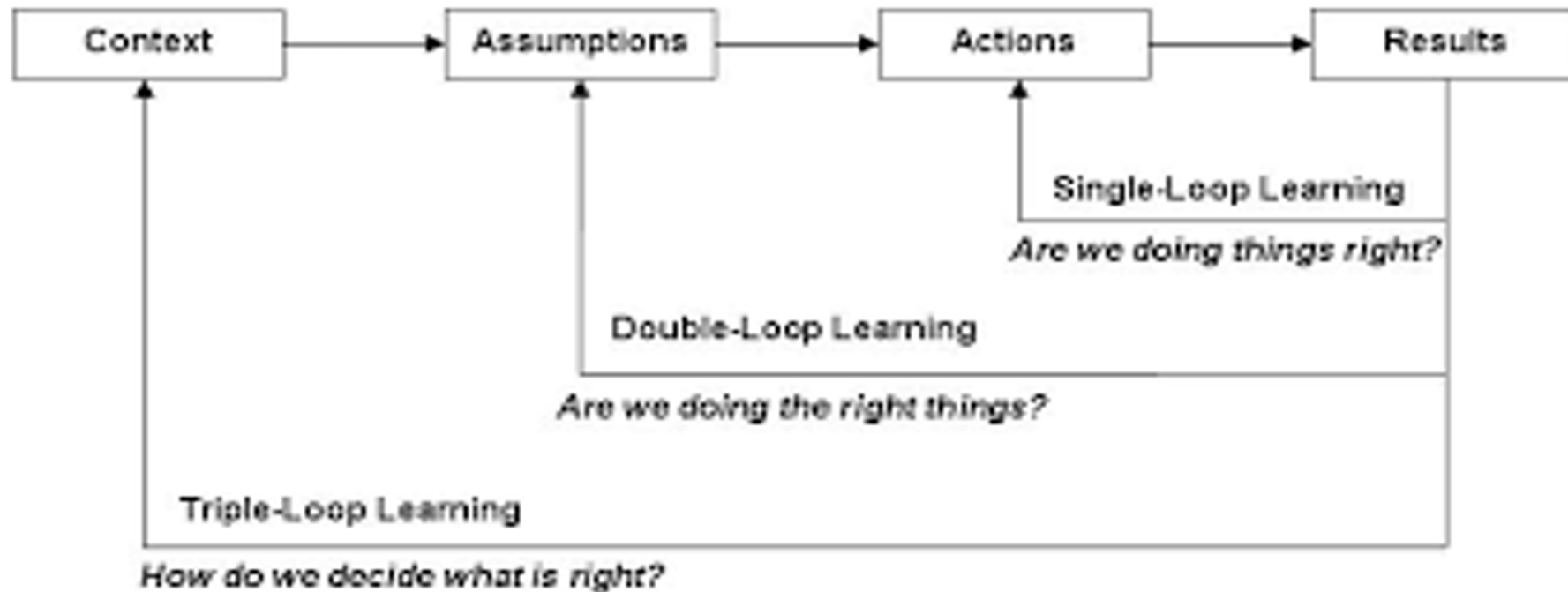
- Introduction to the concept of **learning**
 - what is learning, why learning, how does it happen?
 - Brief summary on different learning theories & processes
 - Why focus on **social learning**?
 - Principles of social learning (is social learning similar to **stakeholder engagement**)
- Introduction to the **practice of reflection** as a learning process
 - What **reflection tools** are we going to use in this course?



NB: In the next modules, participants will learn more about the **application of social learning** and **role of reflection** in professional development or work-based training.

What is Learning?

- Learning is a **process** that involves discovering, acquiring, developing etc): Facts; Concepts and constructs; Values; Practices, behaviours and habits; skills and techniques; agency, capability, capacity; learning to learn; unlearning...

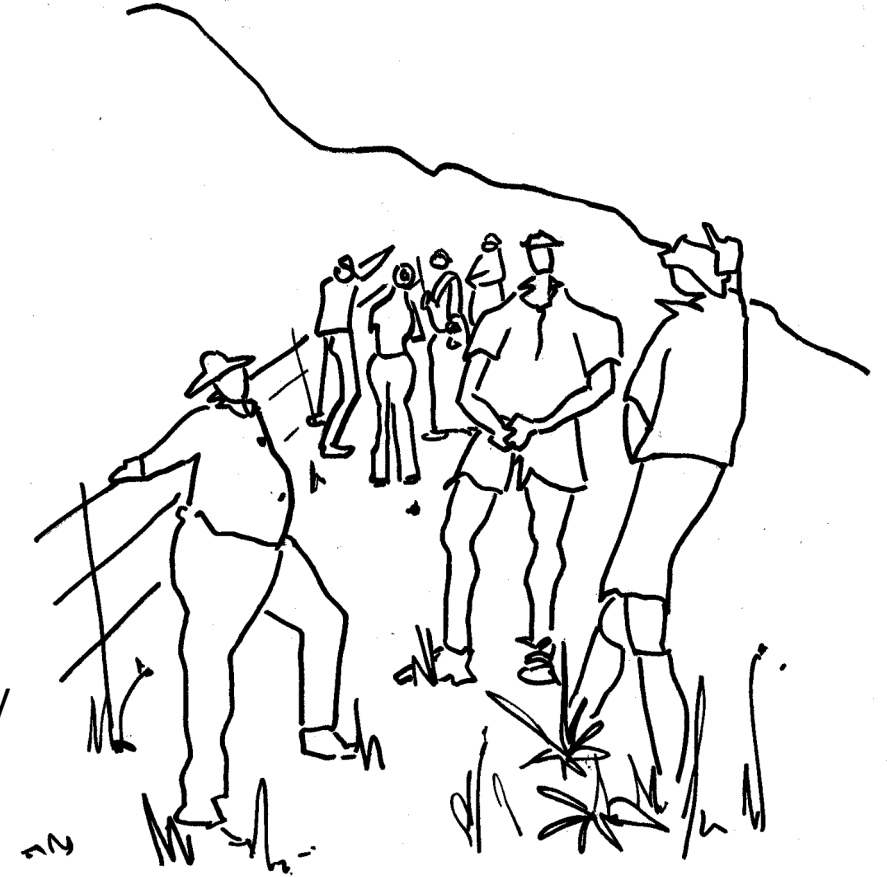


Learning is always socially and culturally 'situated'

Whether it is the learning of individuals or groups



- In formal contexts such as schools, universities and scientific research, historical traditions and new emerging ideas shape both explicit and implicit rules about 'what counts as worth knowing', who should learn, how and why.
- The same applies to learning in informal contexts, such as NRM context, work places or community structures
- In both contexts the 'rules' can be simply unexamined habits or culture
- Over time the learner's socio-cultural context literally shapes what his brain pays attention to and the meaning he makes of it (interpretation)



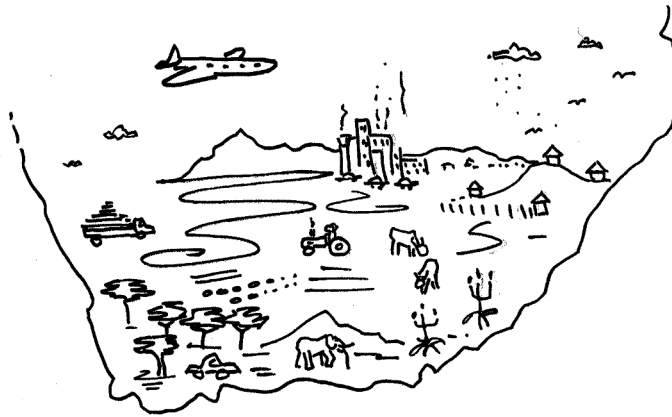
How do we learn?



Individual



Community &
organizational

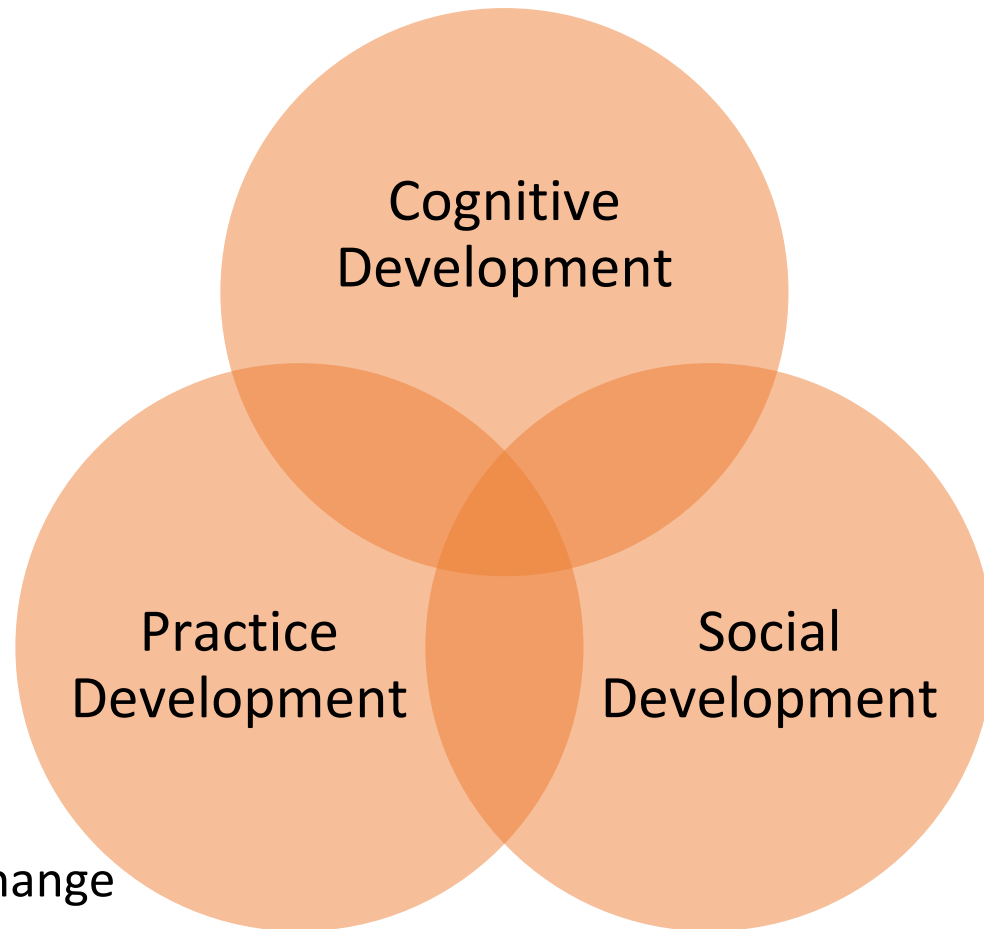


System
s

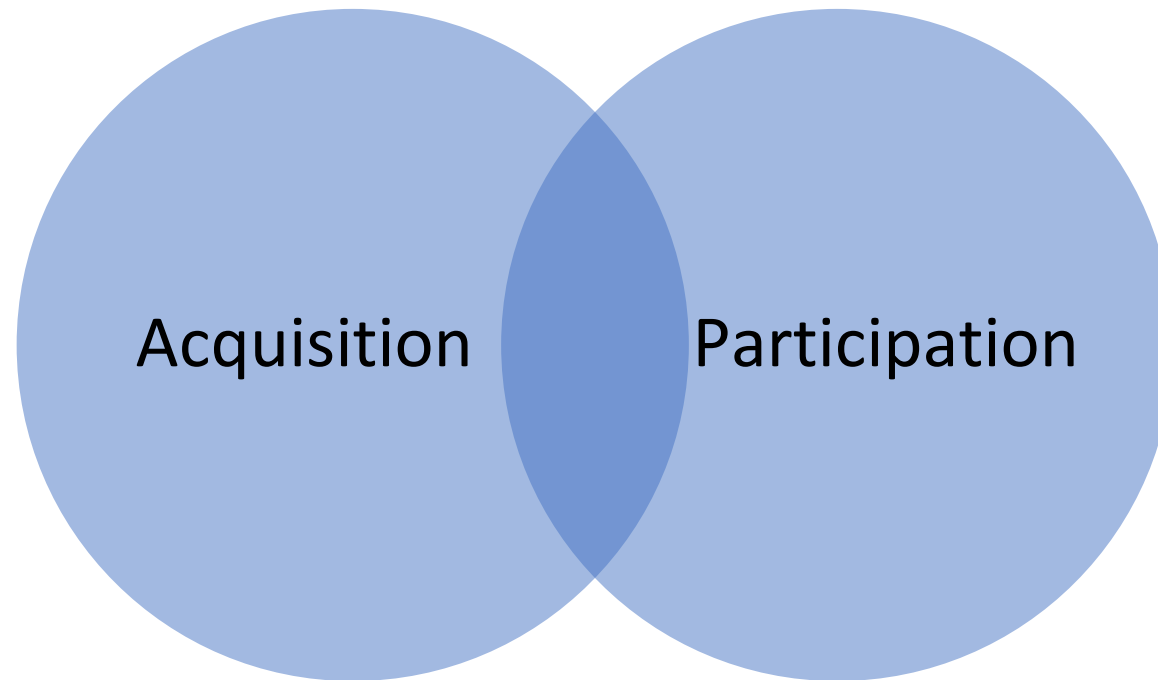


The multiple purposes of learning

- Cognitive abilities (related to understanding)
- Including learning to learn
- Skills, know-how and mastery
- Action competence and agency formation
- Human and social development
- Preservation of society (socialisation)
- Conservation of values and traditions
- New values and practices
- Emancipation from oppressive ideas
- Transformation, paradigm shifts and radical change



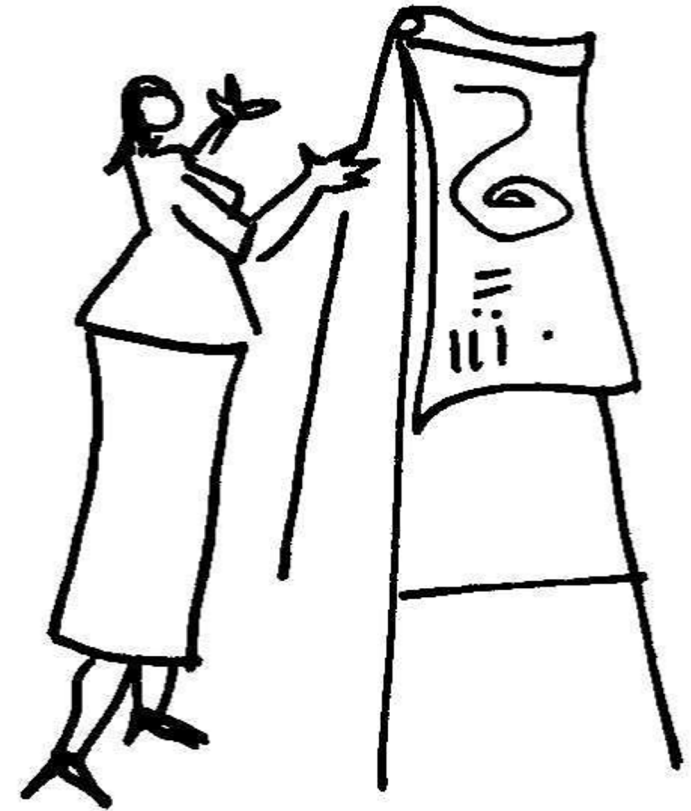
Types of learning processes



Learning through Transmission Teaching and Instruction

Transmission

- Aimed at rote learning and the 'absorption' of facts and formulas
- And intended behaviour change (e.g. Skinner, Hungerford & Volk)
- Useful when new information must be conveyed
- And for introducing ideas
- Telling not showing or doing
- Limitations for more complex tasks and learning purposes



Learning By Doing

Participation

- Experiential learning (Dewey)
- O'Donoghue (environmental education)
- Both practical skills and habits, agency formation



Learning through Concept Formation

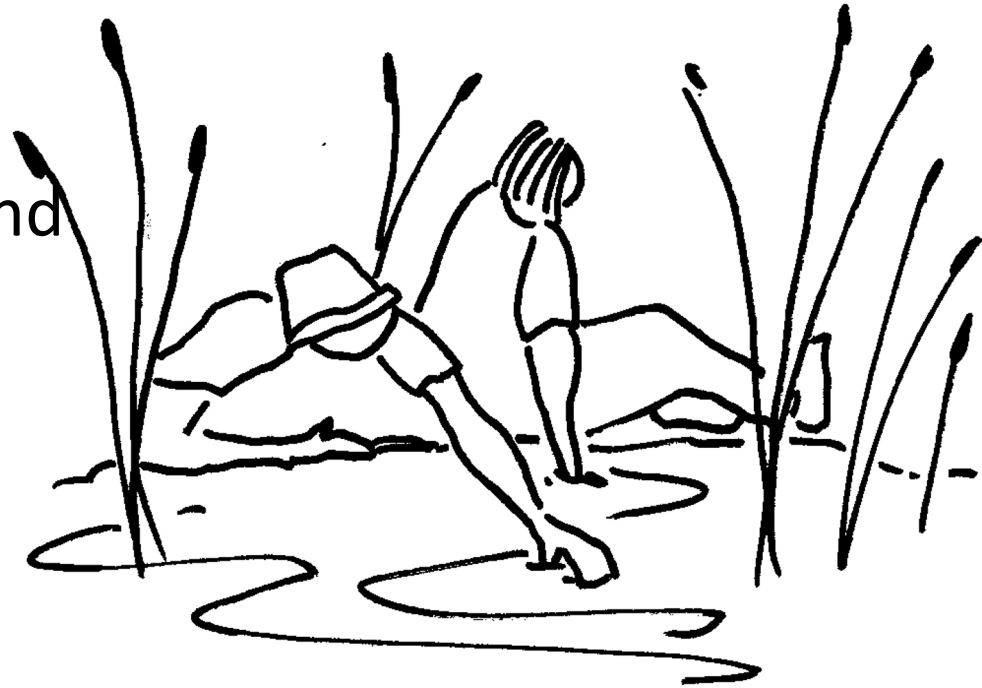
Participation

- Constructivism (Piaget, Bruner)
- Internalisation, semiotic mediation and scaffolding in the zone of proximal development (Lev Vygotsky, 1930's)



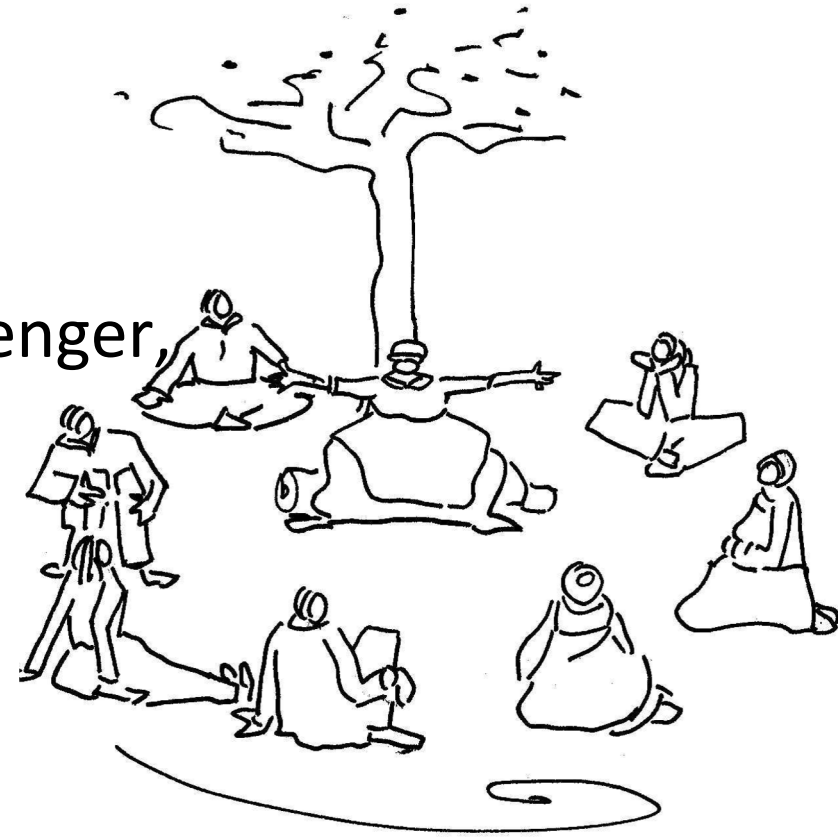
Learning through Experiences

- Learning through interacting with the environment- John Dewey
- Not just knowledge but values and dispositions
- Often in the company of (significant) others



Learning through Socialisation

- Induction into 'ways of doing'
- Modeling (Bandura, 1977)
- Enculturation
- Communities of Practices (Lave and Wenger, 1991)



Organisational learning

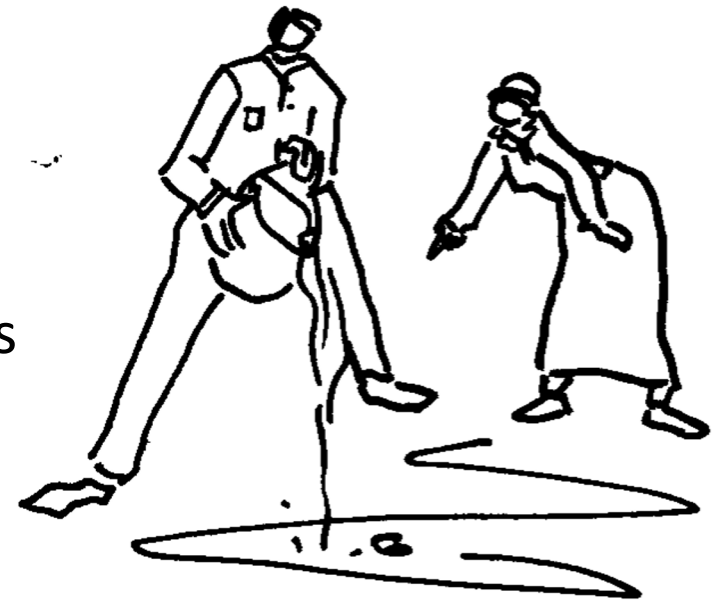
- Forms of enculturation
- Situated learning in Communities of practice (Lave & Wenger)
- Expansive learning (Engeström & Sannino)
- Systems learning (Senge)
- Scaffolding (Vygotsky)
- Single, double and triple loop learning
- Reflexivity



Learning through Conscientisation, Disruption

Participation

- Emancipatory education (Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1968)
- Critical theory (Habermas) and critical pedagogy (Apple, Giroux, McLaren, Patti Lather)
- “There is no learning without dissonance; and there is no learning with too much dissonance” (Wals, 2007)



Learning through Deliberation

- E.g. social learning discussed by (Wals 2007, Reed et al., 2010; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2012).



Why the focus on Social Learning?

- Social learning is a **process** that (1) demonstrates that a **change in understanding** (ideas, meanings, values) and practice change (organizational, institutional, social, cultural, systemic), has taken place in the **individuals** involved; (2) this change transcend beyond the **individual to collective** and becomes **situated within wider social units** (communities of practice); and (3) occur through **social interactions and processes** between actors within a social network(s).

Please refer to the core readings: Reed, *et al.*, 2010; Lotz-Sisitka, *et al.*, 2012, Wals, *et al.*, 2009

Learning Beyond the Individual

A shift in society's understanding & practices

- Society becoming reflexively aware of scientific and environmental issues and risks (Beck's *Risk Society: Towards a new modernity*, 1992)
- Expanding objects and practices in Communities (Lave and Wenger; Engeström)
- Sustainability as learning (Lotz-Sisitka, Belay and Mukute)



Features of social learning

- Learning becomes embedded in social units
- Note: All learning is relational
- Not all social learning is transformative (NOT Bandura's social learning, "people learn from each other", social modelling or copying)
- Involves reflexivity and a shift in understanding
- Involves participation (as opposed to acquisition and co-construction)
- In contexts of uncertainty
- Generative: learning what is not (yet) there (Engeström)
- Draws on diversity, pluralism, dissonance
- And creating some cohesion



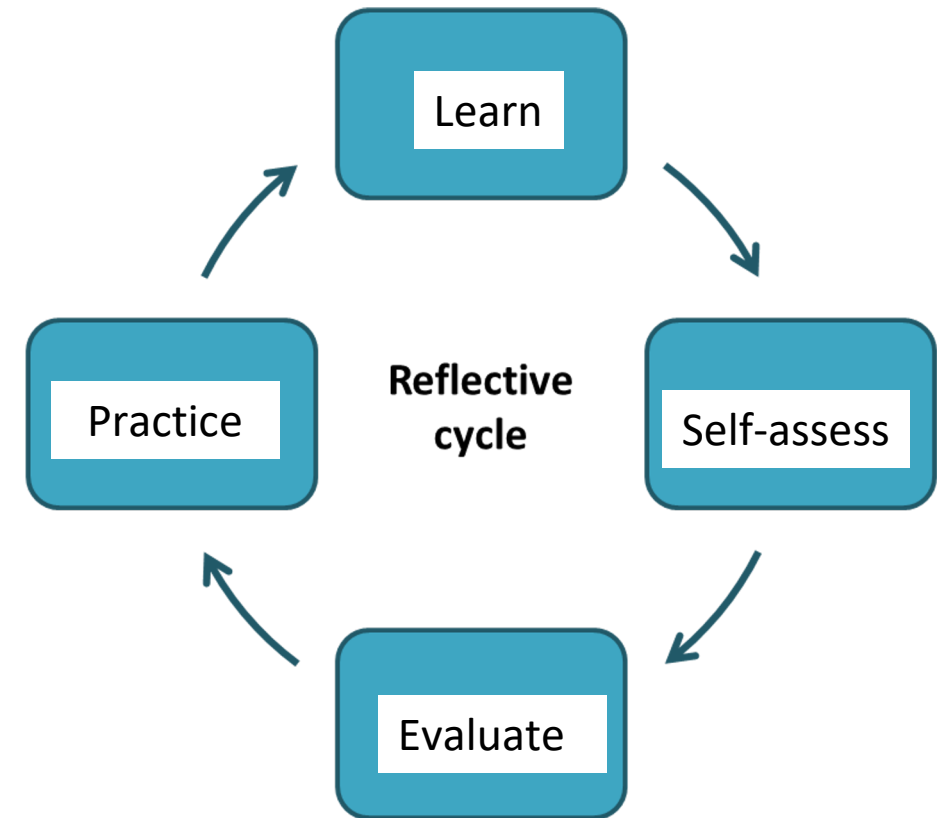
Facilitating social learning processes

- Facilitated by a group member, development practitioner or interventionist researcher
- Draw on or surface diversity, pluralism, dissonance or contradictions
- Create safe conditions for social cohesion
- Voice existing perspectives and understandings
- Understand where group members come from historically, what has shaped the current values
- Find a common concern and purpose
- Ethical reflection: what would be the right thing to do?
- Formulate plans to address concern and put it into action
- NB: Often participants need to go look for new information or do research
- Reflect on and learn from action - Action learning
- Reflexivity (inner conversations) for individual agency



Introduction to Reflection as a learning practice

“Reflection is a state of mind, an ongoing constituent of practice, not a technique, or curriculum element. Reflective Practice can enable practitioners to learn from experience about themselves, their work, and the way they relate to home and work, significant others and wider society and culture. It gives strategies to bring things out into the open, and frame appropriate and searching questions never asked before. It can provide relatively safe and confidential ways to explore and express experiences otherwise difficult to communicate” (Bolton, 2010)



Reflection process in the course

- We **encourage** participants to keep **individual journals/ notebooks** to track their own learning process- **refer to T-page example in the next slide**
- **Weekly & bi-weekly contact session** for all participants & for tutors (incl. dual-participant tutors)- **refer to ToT course principles & contact session schedule**
- **Assignments & Assessment** – Assignments will form an important part of participants' reflections, and different formats can be used including written document and short videos, etc.

Reflection and Active learning: T-page Example

Here write the title of the presentation you watch or the hand-out you are reading, and the date

- Here jot down things that stand out for you – what seems very important? Interesting? Useful? Difficult?
- This is not a summary of the presentation or reading.
- Use bullets or numbers for each short point

- Here make notes about how each point is relevant.
- Can you use it in your work? In your assignment?
- Should you discuss this with your tutor or peers?

What is significant about this, for YOU?

Design Feature: T-page is a tool to help learners engage with and reflect on course content in relation to their own work (situating it). They use the T-page while working on their own and bring their notes to 'class' so as to connect their reflections into the discussion, through reflection more deeply connecting the work of the course and their own situations

Next steps in module 2, 3 & 4

- Learn more in detail **how these social learning and stakeholder engagement principles play out in action, and how to design a reflexive learning process.**
- Facilitators will support participants with in- depth information and examples of social learning initiatives across different NRM contexts.
- In designing the social learning process (part of assignments), participants will further evaluate their own contextual profiles in a reflexive learning process, to explore emergence of potential change projects using social learning lenses. i.e. how can and should be designed, and how to adapt their existing learning processes