Creative collective learning in transformation processes

Paper to ECCI-9, Lodz, 4-8 September 2005

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Abstract

Regional learning that stimulates sustainable growth is an increasingly important subject for both researchers and practitioners. Especially our understanding of creative collective learning in this context needs to be improved. What characterizes an innovatively organized and creative climate from a learning perspective? What implication does this have for management and leadership? Can one manage an open, insecure and unpredictable process?

The aim of this paper is to describe how creative collective learning takes place in innovative transformation processes and how this effects changes in the process. Our case is Lust H, a regional project with many different stakeholders who collaborate to develop health in the region. This project is rather unusual in its strategy, its personnel structure and the complexity of the content. The project is organized in an open way to support learning and change. Through new meeting places, new collaboration and communication forms, knowledge and action should emerge. The University and The Halland Region Development Council are work interactively together during this process.

The process can be viewed at different levels. On the project management level there are three people in the project team collaborating with one evaluator from the university. On the participator level there are hundreds of people from the public and business sector who meet to learn at different arenas.

Different needs, articulated by the participants, are input to the project team. The team transforms these needs to activities that are offered to the participants. During and after such an activity the evaluator collects feedback that adds new input to the process. The project team digests all information in this complex project and utilizes it to take the next step in the development process. And so on. The evaluation and communication wheel gives learning fuel to the process car.

Our method is formative evaluation, including reflection and the use of several questionnaires to the participants. Our data is analyzed using learning and innovation theories. Results are knowledge of what conditions stimulate creative collective learning in transformation processes. This can be useful to leaders and managers that plan to or work with regional development in complex situations.

1. Introduction

All transformation has to do with learning. When we talk about transformation in project processes it is a question of collective learning. In complex projects with a lot of people and organizations involved, were the goal is quite wide and open, the collective learning in the process is very important. It has to do with managing transformation.

In this paper we will describe and discuss collective learning in a complex and unique health project. The process takes place in a regional context. Regional learning that stimulates sustainable growth is an increasingly important subject for both researchers and practitioners. Especially our understanding of creative collective learning in this context needs to be improved.

What characterize an innovative organizing and a creative climate from a learning perspective? What implications does this have on management and leadership? Can you manage an open, insecure and unpredictable process? The aim of this paper is to describe how creative collective learning takes place in innovative transformation processes and what effects this has on changes in the process.

The project

Lust H, which stands for quality of life through development, co-operation and economic growth in Halland, is a project that is in progress 2003-2005. The vision is improved health and fewer people absent from work due to illness. Thus we can create opportunities for a sustainable growth in Halland. How do we fulfill this vision? The supposition is that managing the process towards the aims of the project is the key to success. The aims are:

- *Co-operation*. Sustainable, boundary crossing and new thinking forms of co-operation shall be created.
- *Communication.* The awareness of the importance of communication as a tool for development and learning shall increase. This process is to be stimulated by new forms of communication and meeting places.
- *Comprehension.* The comprehensive view of aspects, influencing health in working life and leisure-time and how these aspects interact, shall increase.
- *Development*. Knowledge about what stimulates development and learning shall increase.

Lust H brings together good forces, people who work with health aspects in working life and leisure time. We make communication and the exchange of experiences easier and we achieve this through finding different ways for the participants to meet and co-operate. Thus, lasting forms of co-operation can be established between participants representing different areas in society, such as companies, organizations, projects and public services. In this way they can give and also receive knowledge, experiences and ideas from the others. The participants are those who then pass on and incorporate this knowledge into their own organization. This makes positive development possible. Project Lust H´s method of working focuses on the process.

To become a participant, one chooses to come to a meeting place or sign up through the project team. The number of participants today is nearly 600 and represents a broad selection of work-life in the region.

The project is a joint venture and the financing organizations represent the public sector. The private sector is contributing by some key-participants´ working hours; for example members of the projects´ governing committee. The owner of the project is Halland Region Development Council.

The project team was recruited in a somewhat unusual way. An evaluator/researcher from Halmstad University College was already from the start of the project contracted for evaluation, follow-up and documentation of the process. Furthermore a communicator was recruited together with a project leader and an administrator. These three persons constitute the project team and are responsible for the operational management of the project. It is the evaluator and the project leader who have written this paper.

The process can be viewed on different levels. On the project management level there are three people in the project team collaborating with one evaluator from the university. On the participator level there are hundreds of people from the public and business sector who meet to learn at different arenas.

There are different needs articulated in the project that are input to the project team. The team transforms these needs to activities, that are offered to the participants. During and after such an activity the evaluator collects data that adds new input to the process. The evaluation and communication wheel gives learning fuel to the process car. The project team transforms all information and maneuvers this complex project to take the next step in the development process. And so on.

2. Method

Interactive research

When research is part of a practical project and the researcher is active participating in the project process together with the project team, the role of the researcher is difficult to define. The interactive researcher is at the same time an investigator of the project, a participating researcher and a part of the project team.

In interactive knowledge building, researcher and practitioner are coming from two different contexts, meeting in a third where a dialogue takes place. This third system constitutes a social room were the relation between theory and practice is handled and where knowledge is generated.

The interactive research roles are expressed in three activities:
1. The researcher and practitioner together try to reveal problems and important questions.
2. The researcher reflects continuously on observations and relates them to a more abstract understanding.

3. The researcher returns to the practitioner with interpretations and other perspectives, to stimulate a common reflection.

Interactive research is interesting in the way it contributes to a developmental and creative learning (Ellström, 1992). A problem with traditional research is that it focuses too much on mapping and too little on innovation. This makes it difficult to exceed the existing and to examine development possibilities of both practice and theory.

Formative evaluation

Project evaluations can roughly be divided into two categories – summarized and formative. Summarized is the traditional evaluation that takes place after the project has ended and that aims to control, sum up and judge the result. Formative evaluation is carried out during the running of the project and aims to support form and change the project. Formative evaluation is therefore a good way to stimulate learning and process development.

	Summarized	**Formative**
Why?	Knowledge to judge	Knowledge to change
For whom?	Project owner, financiers	Project team, participants
By who?	External	Someone close
When?	Rare, afterwards	Often, during project time
What?	Results, effects	Practice, process

Table 1: Categories of evaluation

In the Lust H project the evaluator works with formative evaluation and interactive research. This is expressed in several ways:

- Activities are evaluated through surveys to the participants at the end of each activity
- Effects of activities are evaluated through surveys to the participants 3 – 9 months after each activity.
- Observations are done by the evaluator by participating at activities.
- Documentation of this data collection constitutes a ground for regular and systematic reflections together with the project team.
- Results from all above create a deeper understanding of the project process and a rich basis for decision making and management of the project.

The two cases in this paper are based on data from surveys, observations and reflections.

3. Theory

Creative collective learning

Theories on individual learning can explain how and why learning occurs in groups, but not how a group can constitute a learning system. To do this you need theory that

look at the group as a learning system that constructs knowledge. A theory on collective learning can better explain how individuals and groups are engaged in collective action (Kilgore, 1999). Development and learning are important concepts in such a theory.

A group is a learning system that is limited by its capacity to learn and take action. Common values and shared vision, goal and strategies can lead the group to collective action. A group has unlimited development possibilities due to the members difference. They interact and influence each other and develop their point of view. A group also has an unlimited destructive potential through their inherent contradictions and conflicts. There are opinions and experiences that collide in all groups. At the same time these differences are necessary for collective learning. When the collective learning is turned into collective action, a collective competence is created in the group.

There are different learning strategy factors. In their study Norrgren & Schaller (1999) found that *innovative learning* (emphasis on open testing and refining of ideas into something tangibly useful) appeared most frequently in successful cross-functional product development projects. They also found that encouraging effective learning requires leaders who are willing to give up unilateral control and that supporting innovative learning requires a willingness to share responsibility and joint experimentation.

The following text refers to Ellström (1992, 1999). The character of the individual changes in beliefs, values and practices which are implied by the concept of learning, concerns the distinction between adaptation and innovation. Whether the changes occur within a given framework or imply a break that goes beyond the given and represent something innovative.

This can be noted as adaptive and developmental learning that can be described by the characteristics of the situation. The task to be performed, methods to be used and the results to be achieved are three important aspects of the situation. The degree of control with respect to these three aspects may be used to define four different levels of learning (table 2).

Levels of learning				
	Adaptive learning		Developmental learning	
Aspects of the work situation	Reproductive learning	Productive learning, type I	Productive learning, type II	Creative learning
Tasks	Given	Given	Given	Not given
Methods	Given	Given	Not given	Not given
Results	Given	Not given	Not given	Not given

Table 2: Levels of learning as a function of aspects of the situation (Ellström, 1992, modified)

The “lowest” level of learning is called reproductive learning and corresponds to routinized actions performed without much conscious attention and control. This level, although both sufficient and necessary in many situations, has its role primarily in the formation of competencies for handling routine problems that are frequently recurring. Productive learning is characterized by certain degrees of freedom with

respect to the evaluation of results (type I) or with respect also to the choice and use of methods (type II).

The “highest” level of learning in table 3 is called creative learning. In this type the learner not only evaluate outcomes or chose methods, but also define the task and the conditions at hand – diagnose the situation. The focus of the learner is not on doing things right but doing the right thing. To question problem definition or given objectives and traditions, to act to transform institutionalized solutions. Creative learning occurs when groups of individuals in the organization begin to reflect upon and transform established routines, structures and practices.

Adaptive and developmental learning do mutually presuppose each other. The complex work life and the need to move between routine and reflexive work, indicate that organizational learning can be equated with neither a reproductive, a productive nor creative mode of learning. It rather requires a productive balance and a pendulum movement between these basic varieties of organizational learning. How can this be done?

Innovative organization

The word ”innovation” comes from latin ”innovare” that means “to do something new”. We choose in this paper to see innovation as a process, to change a possibility to new ideas and spread them to common use. Tidd, Bessant & Pavitt describes in their book ”Managing Innovation” (1997) how managers could create and maintain an innovative organization. They present ten components:

1. Vision, leadership and the will to innovate.	Clearly articulated and shared sense of purpose. Stretching strategic intent. Strong management commitment. Tolerance for failures.
2. Appropriate structure.	Organization design that enables high levels of creativity. Organic forms, flexible communication and delegated responsibility. Every organization has to find its appropriate balance between organic and mechanic structures.
3. Key individuals.	Promoters, champions, gatekeepers and other roles, which energize or facilitate innovation.
4. Effective team working.	Appropriate combinations of people with different experiences and perspective can be a good situation to solve problems. Requires investment in team selection and building.
5. Continuing and stretching individual power.	Long term commitment to education and training to ensure high levels of competence and the skills to learn effectively. Has a strong connection to the innovation capacity of the organization. Personal development is important for individual competence and motivation to be innovative.
6. Extensive communication.	Within, between and outside the organization. Upwards, downwards and laterally. For contact and idea exchange, to avoid misunderstanding and prepare for change. Needs strategy and system.

7. High involvement in innovation.	Participation in organization-wide continuous improvement activity. An organization can achieve great advantage by involving all employees in innovative activity.
8. Customer focus.	Internal and external customer orientation. Sensitive for external signals, catch the important ones and mediate them through the organization. By creating awareness about the customers needs, the organization can create a feeling of solving problems instead of transporting them. Total quality culture.
9. Creative climate.	Positive approaches to creative ideas, supported buy a relevant rewarding system – a winner culture. Shared values, opinions and agreed norms result in behaviors. Systematic development of organization structure and communication roads. Individual rewarding systems for change rather than correct work.
10. Learning organization.	Processes, structures and cultures which help institutionalize individual learning. Through shared experiences and from analyzes of innovative processes, you can change routines and methods that give an organizational knowledge about how effective innovative work can be done. Knowledge management.

Table 3: Ten components for the innovative organization

Creativity and design

There are many researcher that argue for a creative climate. Johanessen, Olsen & Olaisen (1997) argues that process organizing can be a way to create sustainable advantages in a complex work life. Invisible assets are the only advantages that sustain over time. Action based knowledge is the base in many companies. These resources are difficult to copy because they are silent. Silent resources create silent assets that make continuous innovation possible. How can you create these resources? They mean that the answer is to find inside the organization. You need a horizontal organizing of production and a process oriented management. This have to be based on vision, multi functional teams and relationship, based on reciprocal support and trust.
The teams will function by focusing on qualitative processes.

A creative climate is characterised by shared information, open communication and a focus on human and professional development (De Salvo,1999). A climate of strong common values, were people are encouraged to think creatively. Where all ideas will be respected, treated and used for action. Where the leaders together with their personal tear down barriers and take time to stimulate creativity.

A supporting climate is positively related to the experience of participation in decision-making, teamwork and communication, due to Schadur, Kienzle & Mark (1999). They define a strong connection between an innovative climate and these characteristics: risk taking, result oriented, stimulating, action oriented, skilled and challenging.

The famous French philosopher Descartes said: 'Cogito ergo sum'. This means: 'I think, therefore I am'. de Bono (1999) believes we need to do better than that. Thinking, understanding and analyzing are not enough. There is a need for action. Having an idea is one thing. Putting it into action is another.

Traditional or judgmental thinking is, according to deBono, characterized by this process: information followed by analysis, followed by judgment to identify standard situation, followed by action. Traditional thinking habits are therefore excellent for description and judgment. Our traditional thinking is the result of the design of the human brain. The brain is designed to adapt in a stable world. It is not designed to think creatively but to set up routine patterns of perception and behavior.

If there is a need for action and operations, to explore new routes and new avenues, the brain is not designed for this, de Bono argues. We can by analysis tell what is not working well, but we do not know how to design the way forward. For the design process there is a need for creativity and lateral thinking. We need to be able, in our minds, to switch from analytical/judgmental thinking to creative/ lateral thinking at will. In operative terms: -Let's stop and think about this. Does it have to be done this way?

For a new idea to be recognized, it first has to be created as a perception – a possibility, a hypothesis or a construction - in the brain. Creative/lateral thinking includes the movement from one pattern to another. According to de Bono, movement is an active mental process. With movement, we use the idea for its movement value to go forward to a new idea: what-could-be-thinking. The design process includes finding a new reaction that better suits the situation. You design for a purpose and for value. The design process is the opposite of analysis.

4. Practice

Case 1: Exchange of experiences

The inquiries made by the evaluator shows that the participants of the Lust H project are very satisfied with the so called meeting places organized by the project team. On a scale from 0 to 10, the valuation made by the participants ends up between 7 and 8,5 for all the occasions. Frequent comments are: good structure, well organized day, time for exchange of experiences, pleasant environment, good food, time for reflection, well balanced mixture of information, discussion and exchange of experiences, etc. The members of the project team are of course happy about the fact that the participants like the design of the meeting places. We have reason to believe that this contributes to what the participants say they gain from the meeting places: knowledge, inspiration, personal contacts and ideas. The feedback from the participants has strengthened our believes, that our way of working is successful. For that reason we continue to use different methods for the stimulation of learning, development and the exchange of experiences. Then the challenge for us starts: to figure under what circumstances there would be more direct value for the participants! To make this possible, we use the results from the evaluators´ inquiries. We reflect together and look for ways to make improvements. In other words we use “what-can-

be-thinking" to design the future meeting places even more appropriate for supporting the participants in the collective learning process.

Structured time for exchange of experiences

When the project team was recruited, the Lust H project was already running and two meeting places - a whole day each - had already been held. Open Space Technology were used at both these occasions. Open Space Technology is a workshop design tool to use when situations include a diverse group of people who must deal with complex and potentially conflicting material in innovative and productive ways. It is a facilitation method in which people can identify specific issues on a given topic, self-select into discussion groups, and work with the issue with people also concerned with that issue. In this case the topic was health. Examples of issues selected were workplace health, leadership and health, long time sick-leave, exchange of experiences between the public- and private sector, health promotion, communication methods and attractive working places.

We had noticed signals from the participants expressing that two occasions with this method was enough for the moment. Therefore we used four parallel work shops as method for the next meeting place. We decided to make the meeting place half a day long. The time before and after the four work shops was planned to be used for some short information from the project team and for exchange of experiences between the participants. However almost all the participants left the meeting place after the final work shop, without using the opportunity to continue the discussions with each other.

Out from the inquiries that day came an interesting signal: some participants considered the meeting place time and time for exchanging of experiences too short. Some people asked for more structured time for exchange of experiences. We noticed that even though there was a huge possibility and need for discussions, the participants did not choose to use it.

We learned through reflection in which direction we wanted to move the learning process: towards "structured time for exchange of experiences". But we did not have a clear idea of what that actually was, or how it could be done. We only knew the opinions of the participants and these opinions where somewhat paradoxical to their behaviour.

Creative transformation process

We planned time and space for creative team-thinking. We started the transformation process: how to design the next meeting place to create more direct value for the participants? We decided to have the structured time for exchange of experiences in the middle of the day, between other activities, to make it impossible for the participants *not* to choose it. We also decided to give more structure through different methods for discussion, managed by the project team. Another important aspect was to create an "allowing" atmosphere at the meeting places, where the structure would be open enough for persons who do not prefer structure and structured enough for those who prefer structure and specific rules for interaction.

At the next meeting place we made our ideas operational. Some examples:

- registration – at the front desk
- refreshments, coffee, tea and time to "chat" to get to know each other (this was stressed by the fact that quite a few participants arrived late the last time, which caused some organizational problems)
- more interaction between lecturers and participants

We got the new results from the evaluation inquiry and started all over again: we planned time and space for creative team-thinking. We re-started the transformation process: how to design the next meeting place to create more direct value for the participants? How to create more structured time for exchange of experiences? Operational effects of this process:

- We demand from our lecturers to give the participants specific issues to discuss with the other people around the table
- Other methods for group discussions
- Lunch-walks with a given issue to discuss
- Not so many participants at each meeting place (50 instead of 80)

The transformation process occurs after each meeting place and generates a continuous movement. But even though we made all these changes, we still got some signals that made us believe that the exchange of experiences could improve. This was made clear by an extensive web based inquiry, where 60 % of the respondents (135 answers) expressed that they shared their own experiences with other participants only to a small extent.
More creative team-thinking and collective learning took place. Another re-starting of the transformation process: how to design the next meeting place to stimulate more exchange of experiences? Operational effects of this process:

- We now organize the activities in a way that forces the participants to sit next to "unknown" people. This can be made from giving each table a name and the project team selects which participants who will be placed around the same table. The name of the table will then be given to the participants when they register in the morning. This is to avoid people from the same organization sitting together the whole day. That will probably generate "more of the same" thinking, little sharing of experiences and not so much collective learning as could be possible.
- We also give an "introduction speech" to all the participants at every meeting place, including the aim of the project in general and the aim of exchanging experiences in particular.
- We now urge the participants to present themselves to each other at the tables before starting anything else.
- The project team try to encourage discussions between participants, for instance at coffee breaks and lunchtime.

But still we get signals emphasizing that the sharing of experiences could improve. We have now started to ask us the question: might there be a need for creative collective learning concerning how to actually behave when sharing experiences?

How will people react if we would give "instructions" for exchange of experiences? This will be the next step in the transformation process. At the up-coming activity we will try some changes in this direction. Through the evaluation results we will get

feedback if it works or not. The collective learning process goes on and functions as guidelines for managing this complex project.

Case 2: How to satisfy the needs expressed by the participants? A network example.

As a result of numerous team reflections about different stages in the evaluation process, we asked the financiers of the project questions about the needs of their organizations. Three important aspects triggered the questions.
1. The project team never had an expressed plan or request from the financiers, concerning the projects operational content. The task of managing the Lust H project has from the beginning been an open process.
2. We could notice a distinction between the satisfactory level of the meeting places and the expressed effects in the participants own organizations. The distinction was not a big one, but we understood through reflections using the evaluation as input, that it existed.
3. The project team had some themes from the Open Spaces to work with, but we only identified a handful of them as substantial enough to use as themes for a meeting place activity. By this stage in the process, we had already transformed these themes to operational activities. So we asked the financiers if they could identify specific needs, which might be satisfied through activities organized by the Lust H project? We got feedback in the form of wishes for certain themes. One of these themes was network. The financiers wanted Lust H to set up and organize a network for project leaders and health promoters working in the financing organizations (all from the public sector)

First we had to identify potential participants for this network. We contacted the financing organizations by telephone and e-mail. Project Lust H has contact persons in each financing organization. We understood that this identification process triggered some frustration within the financing organizations. They were not sure how to perform their internal identification process. Finally we had a list consisting of about 30 names. We invited them to a kick-off to start the network. 11 people came. Within the Lust H project team, we did a lot of creative thinking how to organize the kick-off. We did not have more specific expressed guidelines than to do just this: “organize a network”.

In the beginning we thought about including a discussion or lecture about the theoretical definition of network in the kick-off. But after talking to experienced organizers of networking activities at Halmstad University College, we dropped this idea. They recommended us to meet the participants at whatever “network-level” and be confident in managing the process on the spot. So we did.
After a short introduction there was time for presentation. All the participants presented themselves and the reason why they were there. The reasons ranged from “obtain ideas”, “I want to meet people with similar experiences to mine” to “I was ordered by my boss to come here”.

In the middle of the discussions at the kick-off, we suddenly realized that the wish for a network was not the main issue here! We conferred within the project team and decided not to continue towards the aim of creating a network. Instead we stopped and asked the participants what they wanted from the Lust H project for the future.

They wanted open meeting places, where everyone can come and go as they wish (not during the actual activity but between activities). No obligations to show up at certain days and no obligations to participate in a more formal, but still quite open, network. The meeting places should be open to participants from both the private- and the public sector. They should have certain themes and there should be opportunities for discussions, exchange of experiences and a horizontal, "allowing" structure. The role of Lust H should be to invite, organize and carry through the meeting places.
This feedback was very frustrating for the project team, because we had a clear view that this was exactly what we already were trying to do!

At the end of the kick-off, the participants used the PMI-method to evaluate the day. The PMI-method is originally one of Edward de Bonos so called thinking skills.
P = Plus The good things about an idea - why you like it
M = Minus The bad things about an idea - why you don't like it
I = Interest What you find interesting about the idea
Instead of just saying that you like an idea, or don't like it, you can use a **PMI**. When you use a **PMI** you give the good points first, then the bad points, and then the points which are neither good nor bad, but are interesting. You can use a **PMI** as a way of treating ideas, suggestions and proposals. You can ask someone else to do a **PMI** on an idea or you may be asked to do one yourself.

In this case we did not use the method in its original way. We used it as a tool for evaluation of the day. A tool for a structured way of using evaluation as input to the transformation process. The reason we sometimes uses the PMI-method for evaluation is that if you use inquiries, you also have to create all the questions for the participants to answer. But if you can not think of all the right questions to ask, you will not get the important answers. Using the PMI-method allows the participants to value whatever they feel important. In operational terms: to answer the questions what was positive, what was negative and what was interesting with this kick-off?

The project team then performed another phase of creative team-thinking. We made reflections about the PMI results, discussed and tried to identify what kind of transformation process that had taken place. We came to some conclusions: the network idea was an expressed need from the financiers, but the persons that came to the activity seemed not to want a network. They seemed to have a need for: inspiration, discussion, acknowledgement, help to handle complexity and a context. Quite a few were the only person working exclusively with health promotion tasks in their organization

We later discussed our analysis with one of the participants from the kick-off and with a member of the projects´ governing committee. They both agreed with our conclusions. Within the project team we also discussed questions like: what does the leadership look like in their organizations? Do the health promoters have work tasks with unclear aims?

In a reflection seminar together with the project evaluator we took our thoughts a bit further. In this creative collective learning process some interesting questions arose: how did the financiers do the identification process selecting participants for the network activity? What kind of strategy do the financing organizations have for using

the value, contacts, ideas, inspiration etc that the participants are “bringing home” from an activity organized by Lust H?

We came to the conclusion that there in fact is a need for networking, but the people that need this are not conscious about it. The situation in their organization hinders them to see this. If this is correct then the expressed needs can not be satisfied by the project, unless some change first will take place in their organization. If and how the project can trigger change inside organizations will be discussed further during this autumn.

The result is that the Lust H project is organizing an open meeting place, not using the Open Space Technology, but another method similar but less structured. This will take place in August 2005. All Lust H participants will be invited, not only the ones identified by the financiers.

5. Analysis

Innovative organization

We used Tidd et al (1997) ten components of the innovative organization to analyze the two cases of transformation. We noted when a situation in the process illustrated a component and ended up with this result:

	Case 1	**Case 2**	**Total**
1. Vision, leadership and the will to innovate.	3	1	**4**
2. Appropriate structure.	20	6	**26**
3. Key individuals.	0	3	**3**
4. Effective team working.	8	7	**15**
5. Continuing and stretching individual power.	0	0	**0**
6. Extensive communication.	3	7	**10**
7. High involvement in innovation.	0	0	**0**
8. Customer focus.	5	5	**10**
9. Creative climate.	4	4	**8**
10. Learning organization.	5	6	**11**

Table 4: Case analysis – quantitative

The table from Tidd et al is based on research in organizations. Our practice is from a project process outside the participants´ organizations. This can explain the low results on vision, key individuals, stretching individual power and high involvement in innovation. These components are connected to the innovation process in the organization were the change should occur.

Most frequent components in the transformation process in the cases are appropriate structure and effective team working. But also learning organization, communication, costumer focus and creative climate. They are all important components to understand the transformation process in the Lust H project. We can add more knowledge to them:

Appropriate structure.	The team must give structure to the project, without restraining the desired development processes. This is important both within the team and for the meeting places. Examples from within the team: extensive delegation of responsibilities supported by a quality management system. Examples from the meeting places: the participating organizations choose themselves whom to send to a Lust H meeting place. Everyone is welcome to follow or to leave the process. Another important aspect is to create an "allowing" atmosphere at the meeting places, where the structure is open enough for persons who do not prefer structure and structured enough for those who prefer structure and specific rules for interaction.
Effective team working.	The project team is recruited in a somewhat unusual way. Four persons with different skills, personalities and experiences: an evaluator/researcher, a communicator, a project leader and an administrator. Examples from within the team: high ability to perform lateral thinking, planned time for reflection, facilitated by the evaluator. The team often says: Let's stop and think about this. Does it have to be done this way? Example from the meeting places: the participants represent different organizations, different hierarchical roles, both the public and business sector, etc.
Extensive communication.	The fact that one of the team members is a special trained communicator, gives strength to the communication process. The team has created a method for transforming a prospect into new ideas. This method consists of the following steps: visualize the desired goal - discussion - suggestion - re-thinking - until the team has a result that is possible to communicate and put into action. The team has also created an extensive strategy and system for the internal and external communication. The examples range from scheduled internal meetings with the purpose of exchanging information to communication with participants through variable channels. Another example is a media strategy for the project. At the meeting places communi-cation is the big issue. The meeting places actually function as communication platforms, facilitating co-operation.
Customer focus.	One of the biggest issues for the team is to figure under what circumstances there would be more direct value for the participants. Important is to create possibilities for actual participation at the meeting places. The participants who come to a meeting place must have opportunities to take part in the action, not just listen. For the project team customer

	focus also includes reading between the lines and listening to what is not outspoken. The team calls it “to derivate needs”. That is needs the team understand the participants might have, but have not clearly identified. An example is case 1: after a lot of changes we still got some signals that made us believe that the exchange of experiences had to improve, if the transformation processes was to gather speed in the participants´ organizations. This was later confirmed by an extensive inquiry. To understand the needs, the project team also ask a lot of questions to all the stakeholders. We can not and shall not solve their organizational problems, but we can create good conditions for them to participate in a transformation process that can be of good help.
Creative climate.	Early in the project the team made a trademark process to determine shared values for the project on the basis of the vision. Then a quality management process took place to agree about norms and desirable behavior. Together with the aims of the project the team has a solid platform to work from. The members of the team then empower each other to take initiatives, make suggestions, to think creatively and lateral etc. Mistakes are looked upon as learning possibilities and the team members give each other positive feedback for all new ideas and “what-can-be-thinking”. The climate is “allowing” but still respectful. The team is very conscious about using different perspectives, when thinking about an idea or a design process. The team wants to create the same climate at the meeting places but still keep a very professional approach. We have reason to believe that this is actually working. From the evaluation process we know what the participants say they gain from the meeting places: knowledge, inspiration, personal contacts and ideas. On a cale from 0 to 10, the valuation made by the participants ends up between 7 and 8,5 for all occasions. A very good result. Attention is also drawn to participating organizations that innovates work health promotion.
Learning organization.	From the text above, one can understand that the whole Lust H project is constructed for creative collective learning. Processes, structures and communication are set up to help institutionalize learning at as many levels as possible: individual, collective and organizational. Open task, methods and results stimulate developmental learning. Within the team we notice how important the attitude towards personal development and learning is. At the meeting places and within the team, different learning structures are created to meet the needs of different learning styles. For this knowledge management and pedagogical skills are needed.

Table 5: Case analysis – qualitative

Creative collective learning

The cases show a high level of collective learning both in the project team and between the team and the evaluator. Our skills, backgrounds and personalities are different, but our values, vision and strategies are similar. Trough several interactions at meetings and reflection seminaries, we exchange and develop our point of view. Together we constitute a learning system were the differences are used in a dynamic cooperation and a creative climate to stimulate change and development. The collective learning is transformed to collective action all the time.

In both cases the task was widely defined, the method was not given and the goal was rather open. This gave opportunities for creative learning due to Ellström (1992, 1999). There are examples in the cases that the team used these opportunities and changed both the task a bit and improved the method. The outcomes were also a little different.

Creativity and design

It is not enough to just talk about transformation. You also have to think creative and design for change (de Bono, 1999). In the two cases there are examples of how the team had to re-think their view because of the participants´ behavior at the activity. What the team had planned to happen did not happen. They had to re-design the next activity.

6. Conclusions

Questions and answers

1. What characterize an innovative organizing and what conditions stimulates creative collective learning in transformation processes?

Answer: Appropriate structure, effective team working, communication, customer focus and creative climate.

2. What implications does this have on management and leadership? Can you manage an open, insecure and unpredictable process?

Answer: Yes! But it takes a functional team consisting of different roles, skills, personalities and experiences to manage this truly complex project.

3. How does creative collective learning take place in innovative transformation processes and what effects does this have on changes in the process?

Answer: The results from the analysis can be summarized and illustrated by this model:

Participants	Needs	Activity →	Out put	Changed activity →	Out put	Changed activity →
Evaluation	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑
Evaluator + Team	↓	↑	Reflection Creative collective learning	↑	Reflection Creative collective learning	↑
Team	Idea →	Plan	Creative thinking →	Re-design New plan	Creative thinking →	Re-design New plan

Table 6: The transformation snake

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