

Systems Thinking: Tools, Methods, and Skills for Organizational Effectiveness in a Complex World

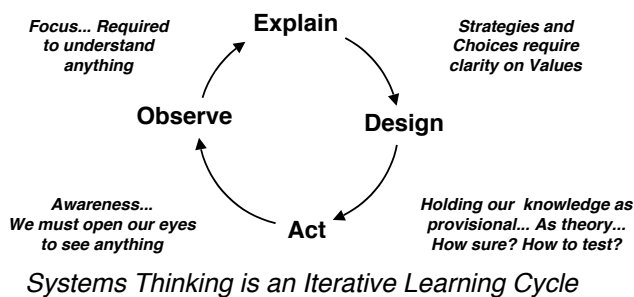
A two-day introductory course in systems thinking for leaders, consultants, and facilitators.

Cambridge, Mass — January 18–19, 2007
 San Francisco Bay area — Dec – Jan 2006/7 TBD
 By: Consultants and Facilitators in the Society for Organizational Learning with advice and support from Richard Karash, Karash Associates.

What is Systems Thinking?

Systems thinking is a practical approach for dealing with the “big picture.” In systems thinking, we focus on understanding *the whole* by examining the cause-and-effect relationships among its components.

We practice systems thinking in order to find high leverage actions, changes and interventions. The purpose is a well-functioning world in which our systems serve our purposes smoothly and naturally. Systems Thinking includes both Forrester’s attention to stocks and flows and Senge’s system archetypes. Systems Thinking can be helpful in virtually all aspects of life, on the job and off.

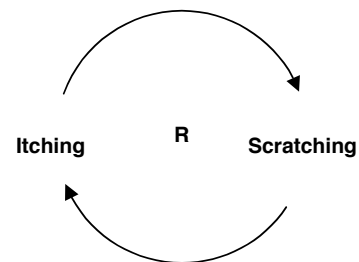


As a Participant, You Will:

1. Increase your skills for understanding the causes and dynamics of performance (both good and bad).
2. Learn the vocabulary and diagramming tools for communicating about systems.
3. Make progress on current work issues through class exercises and group projects.
4. Increase your ability to help a team understand complex problems.

Content and Approach of This Program

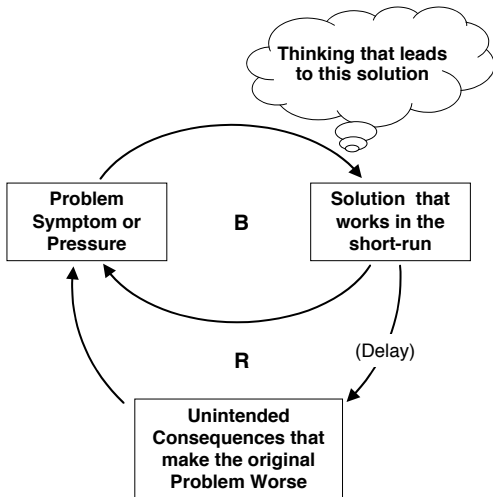
- Systems Thinking as a point of view; Practical questions to bring out this point of view; Why Systems Thinking is Senge’s “Fifth Discipline” and its relationship to the other four disciplines.
- Causal mapping and diagramming the system; Tools for understanding and for communication.
- How systems drive dynamic behavior. Feedback structures in our everyday world; The basic building blocks of dynamic behavior and how to use them.



Kids understand how our response to a simple Mosquito Bite can create a big irritation. Could our responses to simple work problems be driving similar forms of escalation?

- A Systems Thinking process for dealing with any situation... and learning in the process.
- Using systems thinking in work groups; basics of systems thinking facilitation; communicating with others about the complexities of systems.
- Rigorous, but not mathematical, not technical, and not focused on computer tools. Instead, we emphasize the key concepts and tools for use personally and in small groups. Systems Thinking in this style is being taught in Middle Schools in several locations around the world.
- The counter-intuitive dynamics of stocks and flows; a reliable approach to avoid confusion.

- The classic models of the field (Senge calls these the “System Archetypes”) and how to use them to find leverage in your system.



When a team has internalized this simple model, they are able to avoid creating Fixes that Backfire. Systems Thinking includes several such models.

- Systems thinking capability requires practice. We will use the systems thinking elements in individual and small group exercises with feedback. The course style is highly interactive, and case examples are used throughout.
- Please bring current work issues for exploration in the small group exercises.

Who should attend

- Leaders, managers, board members, consultants and facilitators
- Anyone seeking a comprehensive introduction to Systems Thinking that includes practical methods, tools, and skills
- This course is an effective entry point to the field of Organizational Learning.
- It is especially effective for a team to attend together.

Registration, More Information

- Cost: Special introductory pricing \$500 per person for this two-day program.
- **To register or for more information:**
<http://www.karash.com/stdpcourse>
- **If you would like to talk right away:**
Contact Richard Karash, 617-227-0106 or Richard@Karash.com, or any of the faculty
- There are no pre-requisites for this program.
- For more on Systems Thinking: Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline*, and Pegasus Communications <http://www.pegasuscom.com>

Your Faculty

The program will be taught by faculty drawn from our group:

- Jeff Clanon, Consultant, SoL Staff
- Micah Fierstein, Rhode Island College and Consultant
- Stephen Gianotti, Consultant, The Woodland Group
- Manuel Manga, Consultant, Center for Evolutionary Leadership
- Charles Parry, Consultant, Signet Consulting
- Peter Pruyn, Facilitator, Antrim Facilitation
- Deborah Reidy, Consultant, Reidy and Associates
- Jim Ritchie-Dunham, Consultant, Institute for Strategic Clarity
- Michael Sales, Consultant, Art of the Future
- Anika Schriefer, Consultant, Art of the Future
- Jean Tully, Consultant, Tully Consulting, formerly HP
- Michael Yacavone, Consultant, Xenium Group
- Phyllis Yigdall, National Security Agency
- Nick Zeniuk, Consultant

...with advice and support by Richard Karash, Karash Associates, well-known for teaching Systems Thinking and Organizational Learning

Our group — all experienced organizational practitioners and members of the Society for Organizational Learning (“SoL”) — are graduates of the *Systems Thinking Development Program* and participants in a *Systems Thinking Community of Practice*. Our purpose is to develop our conceptual, practical, and teaching skills in Systems Thinking. We are pleased to announce these open-enrollment courses and hope they will be valuable to you.

