

MIDS 527
Research on Organizational Learning & Knowledge Management
Spring, 2000

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Office Hours: By appointment
Class: Thursday 2-4:40 pm
Room 350 Sears

In this seminar, we will explore various aspects of organizational learning and knowledge management. Organizational learning and knowledge management are multi-faceted phenomenon, thus requiring one to take pluralistic approaches to come closer to fully understanding this fascinating and elusive organizational phenomenon. As such, we will read several books from different disciplines on this topic to gain a broader perspective. To achieve this goal, I have selected seven books from economics, philosophy, strategic management, cognitive anthropology, socio-cognitive psychology, and information systems, and several research articles relevant to our topic for our discussion.

Readings:

- Polanyi, M. Tacit Dimension, Peter Smith Pub., 1983.
- Penrose, E. T. The theory of the growth of the firm (3rd Ed.), Oxford Univ Press, 1995
- Nelson, R. & Winter, S., Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change, Harvard University Press, 1985
- Hutchins, E. Cognition in the wild, MIT Press, 1995.
- Wenger, E. Communities of practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Davenport, T. & Prusak, L. Working knowledge, Harvard Business School Press, 1998
- Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. The Knowledge-creating Company, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995.

The ultimate goal of this seminar is to develop and formulate a program of research that every participant can get excited about and intimately involved in. Your term paper can be either an empirical one or a conceptual one. You can also work on joint papers. Talk to me for details.

Several types of papers are possible. For example:

- An empirical mini-ethnographic study of learning or knowledge management of a single team, a small work unit, or a small organization.
- A theoretical treatment of a special topic related to organizational learning and knowledge management.
- An empirical analysis and presentation of previously collected quantitative data about organizational learning and knowledge management.
- A research proposal intended for further (dissertation?) research.

Grading:

Class participation: 50%

Research paper: 50%

Tentative Schedule

1/20: Introduction, setting class meeting times, class logistics, etc.

1/27: Davenport, Working Knowledge.

Alavi, M. & Dorothy, L. 1999. Knowledge management and knowledge management systems: Conceptual foundations and an agenda for research, Working Paper, University of Maryland.

Holtshouse, D. 1998. Knowledge research issues, California Management Review, 40:3, 277-280.

Teece, D. J. 1998. Research directions for knowledge management, California Management Review, 40:3, 289-292.

Daft, R. L. & Lewin, A. Y. 1993. Where are the theories for the “new” organizational forms?: An editorial essay. Organization Science, 4:4, i-vi.

2/3: Polanyi, Tacit Dimension

Spender, J-C. 1994. Knowing, managing and learning: A dynamic managerial epistemology, Management Learning, 25:3, 387-412.

Cook, S. D. & Brown, J. S. 1999. Bridging Epistemologies: The generative dance between organizational knowledge and organizational knowing, Organization Science, 10:4, 381-400.

Pentland, B. T. 1995. Information systems and organizational learning: The social epistemology of organization knowledge systems. Accounting, Management and Information Technology, 5:1. 1-21.

2/10: Penrose, The theory of the growth of the firm, 1-101.

2/17: Spender, J-C. 1994. Organizational knowledge, collective practice and Penrose rents, International Business Review, 3: 4, pp. 353-367.

Spender, J-C. 1996. Making knowledge the basis of a dynamic theory of the firm. Strategic Management Journal, 17:, 45-62.

- Foss, N. J. 1996. Knowledge-based approaches to the theory of the firm: Some critical comments, Organization Science, 7:5, 470-476.
- Foss, N. J. 1996. More critical comments on knowledge-based theories of the firm. Organization Science, 7:5, 519-552.
- Conner, K. R. & Prhalad, C. K. 1996. A resource-based theory of the firm: Knowledge versus opportunity, Organization Science, 7:5, 477-501.
- Kogut, B. & Zander, U. 1996. What firms do? Coordination, identity, and learning. Organization Science, 7:5, 502-518.
- Kogut, B. & Zander, U. 1992. Knowledge of the firm, combinative capabilities and the replication of technology. Organization Science, 3:3, 383-397.
- 2/24: Nelson & Winter, Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change, 1-136.
- 3/2: Walsh, J. P. 1995. Managerial and organizational cognition: Notes from a trip down memory lane. Organization Science, 6:3, 280-321.
- Cheng, Y-T., & Van de Ven, A. H. 1996. Learning the innovation journey: Order out of chaos? Organization Science, 7:6, 593-614.
- Macdonald, S. 1995. Learning to change: An information perspective on learning in the organization. Organization Science, 6:5, 557-568.
- Walsh, J. P. 1991. Organizational memory. Academy of Management Review, 16:1, 57-91.
- Cohen, W. M. & Levinthal, D. A. 1990. Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. Administrative Science Quarterly, 35:, 128-152.
- Coombs, R. & Hull, R. 1998. 'Knowledge management practices' and path-dependency in innovation, Research Policy, 27:, 237-253.
- Van den Bosch, F. A. J., Volderda, H. W., & de Boer, M. 1999. Coevolution of firm absorptive capacity and knowledge environment: Organizational forms and combinative capabilities. Organization Science, 10:5, 551-568.
- 3/9: Hutchins, Cognition in the wild, 1-262.
- 3/16: Spring break
- 3/23: Research presentations
- 3/30: Hutchins, Cognition in the wild, 263-374.

- 4/6: Wenger, Communities of practice
- 4/13: Boland Jr., R. J., & Tenkasi, R. 1995. Perspective making and perspective taking in communities of knowing. Organization Science, 6:4, 350-373.
- Brown, J. S. & Duguid, P. 1991. Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. Organization Science, 2:1, 40-57.
- Moreland, R. L., Argote, L. & Krishnan, R. 1996. Socially shared cognition at work. In J. L. Nye & A. M. Brower (Eds.), What's Social About Social Cognition?: Research on Socially Shared Cognition in Small Groups. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 57-84.
- Liang, D. W., Moreland, R. & Argote, L. 1995. Group versus individual training and group performance: The mediating role of transactive memory, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21:4, 384-393.
- Levine, J. M., Resnick, L. B. & Higgins, E. T. 1993. Social foundations of cognition, Annual Review of Psychology, 44:, 585-612.
- Resnick, L. B. 1991. Shared cognition: Thinking as social practice. In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasley (Eds.), Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition. Washington, D.C.: American Psychology Association, 1-20.
- Weick, K. E. & Roberts, K. H. 1993. Collective mind in organizations: Heedful interrelating on flight decks, Administrative Science Quarterly. 38:, 357-381.
- 4/20: Nonaka & Takeuchi, The knowledge-creating company.
- 4/27: Kusunoki, K., Nonaka, I., & Nagata, A. 1998. Organizational capabilities in product development of Japanese firms: A conceptual framework and empirical findings, Organization Science, 9:6, 699-718.
- Crossan, M. M., Lane, H. W. & White, R. E. 1999. An organizational learning framework: From intuition to institution. Academy of Management Review, 24:3, 522-537.
- Weick, K. E. 1991. The nontraditional quality of organizational learning. Organization Science, 2:1, 116-124.
- Simon, H. A. 1991. Bounded rationality and organizational learning. Organization Science, 2:1, 125-134.
- Hedlund, G. 1994. A model of knowledge management and the N-form corporation. Strategic Management Journal, 15:, 73-90.