

The Theory and Practice of Making Adaptive Change

Don't adapt to change: change to being adaptive

A Practical One Week Course with Dr Merrelyn Emery

Course overview

Organisations operating in turbulent, highly unpredictable environments all too often are running from one new fashion to the next in order to adapt to fast changing, ever increasing competition. Organisations should have greater control of their destinies and can achieve this by using the highly acclaimed Search Conference (SC) and Participative Design Workshop (PDW) methodologies developed by Professors Fred and Merrelyn Emery.

You will learn about the design and management of these two basic and complementary methods for continuous adaptation. SC (for planning) answers questions like: 'Where do we want to be in the year X?' PDW (for organisational redesign) addresses: 'How do we organise ourselves to get there?' Both methods are derived from Open Systems Theory, which relates people and their organisations to their environment. Understanding these relationships is essential if change is to be successfully implemented.

This practical Course is designed for those with a responsibility for making and understanding change. It provides a framework within which other methods and tools for change can be evaluated and integrated. Course participants experience these methods, and also practice using them by bringing their own real-life examples to practice on.

The Search Conference for ecological strategy development

All organisations and communities today need periodically to take stock of themselves in their changing environment and plan more adaptive directions and futures. Whether that be repositioning in a marketplace, planning a partnership with suppliers, dealing with climate change or planning education systems, the Search Conference (SC) is applicable.

The Participative Design Workshop for organisational (re)design

Organisations are transforming from rigid hierarchies to systems where change and adaptability are natural and inherent. The Participative Design (PD) Workshop is an effective and efficient method of making the change to multi-skilled, self-managing groups responsible for and committed to meeting agreed outcomes such as productivity, quality and responsiveness. The course provides the theory as well as the practice so that participants are able to understand why the methods include particular components and can see how to use them flexibly.

Course Outcomes

1. The knowledge and skills to begin designing and managing Search Conferences and Participative Design Workshops
2. Understanding the practical theory of participative methods and being able to create designs for unique circumstances
3. The practical knowledge to discriminate between effective and ineffective proposals for change