



MENTAL MODELS

CORE LEARNING CAPABILITIES

CORE DISCIPLINES FOR BUILDING THE LEARNING CAPACITIES
FOR TRULY EFFECTIVE TEAMS

DESCRIPTION AND CORE PRINCIPLES:

Systems Thinking (Dealing with complexity)

Recognizing basic system phenomena everywhere is key - limits to success, shifting the burden to the intervener, accidental adversaries. Effective teams see systems, independent of organizational boundaries.

In Practice - Focus on internalising perspectives and skills which allows you to better understand and manage systemic interconnections that produce complex organisational dynamics.

Reflective Conversation (Collaborating across boundaries with ease)

Getting the whole system in the room is the foundation of respecting the different interests and perspectives of the representatives from all stakeholders. This makes it possible to build their social networks and realize breakthrough innovations.

In Practice - Focus on expanding the team's capacity to be more reflective in its thinking and to become more generative when thinking and talking, so as to enhance the quality of collective thinking.

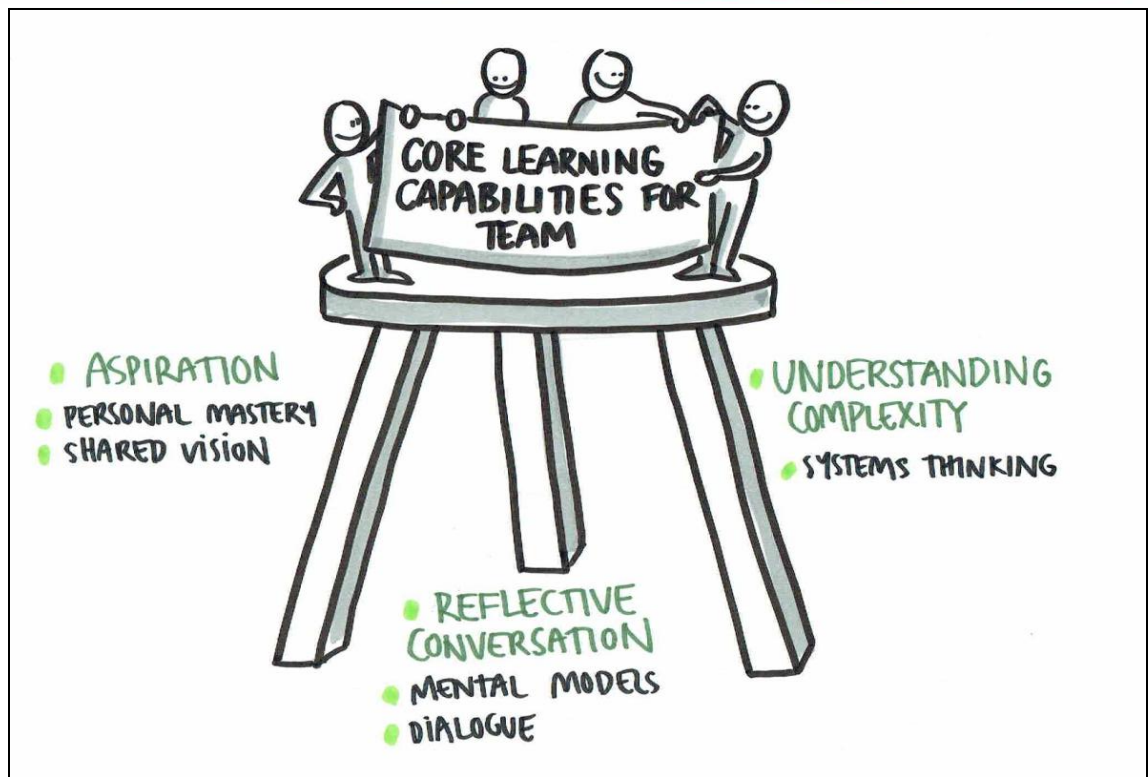
Aspiration (Moving from problem solving to creating)

Fear and anxiety can definitely motivate action, but rarely does it encourage our best contributions or sustained effort. Learning teams are always prototyping and experimenting. They are also oriented toward possibility, evoking inspiration and creativity throughout the system.

In Practice - Focus on the creative as opposed to the reactive, developing a clear sense of purpose and vision at both the individual and organisational level.

"Leadership is not about position or formal authority but the capacity of human communities to shape futures that people truly desire."

- Peter Senge



Each of these capabilities are all necessary to become what Senge calls a Learning Organisation. As the three-legged stool suggests, if any capability is missing, the team will fail. The Five Disciplines for building up the three core capabilities are:

Personal mastery: The individual's ability to articulate and create the results he desires in his life

Building a shared vision: The team's ability to articulate and create the results they want in their organisation

Mental models: The individuals' and team's ability to know, reflect on, question and clarify the assumptions and beliefs they hold about relevant issues, and to understand the impact of these beliefs on their responses, actions and results

Team learning/Dialogue: The team's ability to learn how to learn and work together in synergy

Systems thinking: The capacity of the team to understand the inter-relationships between the different variables in the system. This skill integrates the other variables together.