

Workplace learning: Need for new competences?

Nordic-inspired theories and formats for learning and competence development in the workplace

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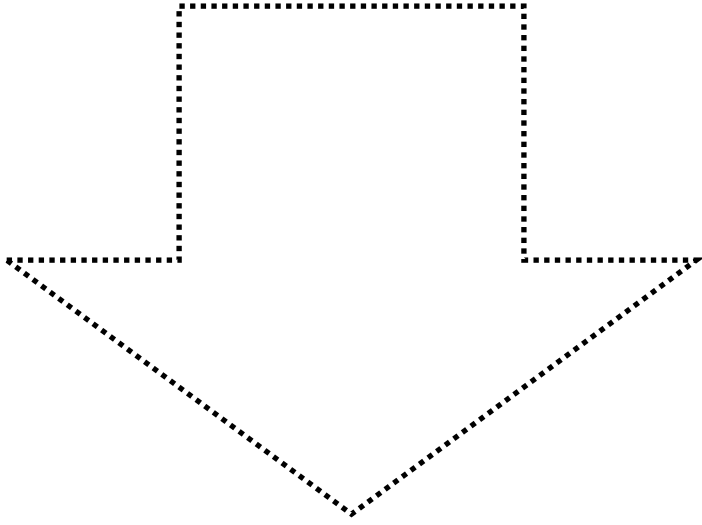
How can Nordic-inspired learning models enhance workplace success and employee competence development in today's fast-changing world?



Line of inquiries

- The changing nature and organization of work and learning theory: Nordic learning principles and model suggestions
- Nordic collaborative formats for learning at work: Case illustrations
- Furthering our inquiry via Q&A + conference workshops

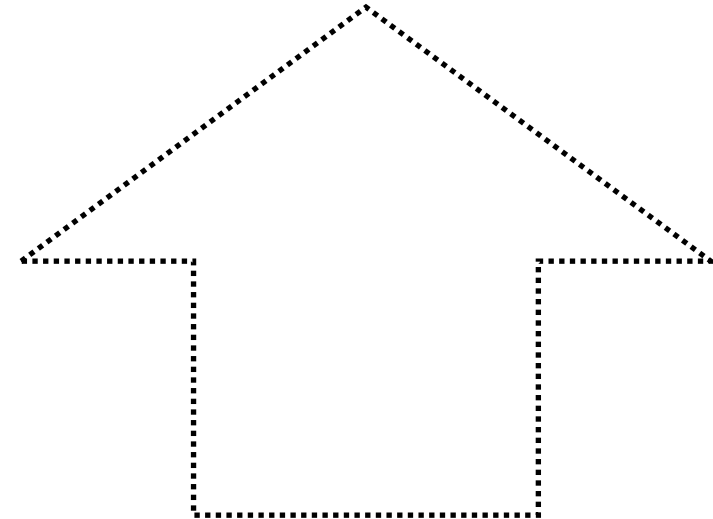




- Changing organization of work
- Antecedents of new work methods and structures

SKILLS AND COMPETENCES → TASK SOLUTION → PRODUCTIVITY, INNOVATION AND WELL-BEING

- Development of knowledge of workplace learning
- New learning models and practices



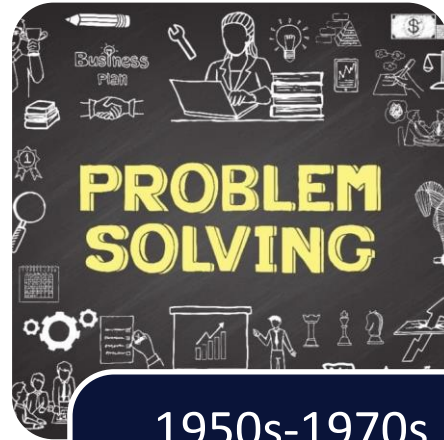


1900s-1940s

Basic skills

Efficiency

Measuring
learning progress

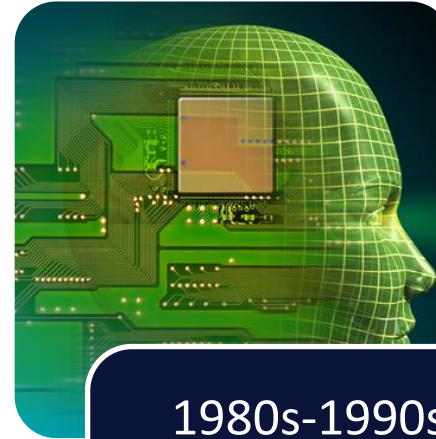


1950s-1970s

Intro to soft skills

Early distance
learning

Theory-driven
learning
programs



1980s-1990s

Shift to learner-
centric approach

Meta-analyses

Organizational
culture



2000s-2010s

Rise of online
learning

Collaborative
learning

Participatory
designs

→ NEW SKILLS AND EXPERTISE: Internal and external changes in the workplace transacts with new needs for skills and competences + adapt to new venues for skill delivery in a rapidly changing economy.

→ NEW TOOLS TO THINK AND ACT WITH: From individualistic and narrow learning transfer models to collaborative and participant-driven learning models and designs.

→ NEW LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Need to expand and balance the interest of diverse participants.



High investment levels and activity in lifelong learning (formal, non-formal, and informal)
(Esping-Andersen, 1990)

High levels of trust, including social trust as part of the social capital concept, for example, between employees and managers
(Calmfors, 2014)

Low power distance, flat organizational structure, balanced work relationships, and a low degree of uncertainty avoidance.
(Hofstede, 1980)

Work organization is “learning-oriented,” based on new patterns of cooperation among enterprises, unions, and policymakers. High levels of autonomy, with the worker acting as an active and creative participant
(Gustavsen, 2012)

A Nordic inspired workplace learning model - principles

Critical thinking and reflection, participant-driven and practice-based.
(NVL handbook, Lahdenperä & Marquard, 2019 og Ellström, 2014)

The Nordic context fosters collaborative learning and adaptability, with open dialogue and employee participation. Organizations encourage experimentation and include employees in decision-making (Brandt & Sprogøe, 2022)

Focus on both STI and DUI modes and management of learning and innovation
(Jensen, Johnson, Lorenz & Lundvall, 2007)



2020s → Nordic inspired workplace learning model?

Shared ownership and responsibility in learning

Interconnected learning and work ecosystem: implementing microlearning and flexible, team-based learning in workplace settings.

Enhancing workplace learning ability: Fostering collective learning through experimentation, dialogue, and employee-employer involvement.

New evaluation formats: Shifting to long-term evaluations that measure the application and effectiveness of new skills and competencies; outcome more than productivity improvements, for instance well-being, sustainability, etc.

Allowing Time and Space for Consolidation: Ensuring time for new competences to be tested and applied effectively in close interaction with practice.





Copenhagen 2. juli 2011
https://youtu.be/t7-CERo-_qM





Photo from www.danskbeton.dk

RABALDERPARKEN, ROSKILDE, DK



AARHUS UNIVERSITY

WORKPLACE LEARNING: NEED FOR NEW COMPETENCES?

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Wicked problems

(Rittel & Webber, 1973)

- Part of larger systems
 - No 'right' solution
 - Any solution creates new problems
 - Problem framing & solutions are intertwined
-
- Affected actors are separated:
 - Cross-professional knowledge
 - Conflicting interests and values

INNOVATION OF THE INNOVATION CONCEPT

Tech-driven	Market-driven	Socially driven	Mission driven
<i>50-70'ties</i> Consumption	<i>80-00'ties</i> Experience	<i>20'ties</i> Transformation	<i>2015 -</i> Sustainability
Production	Marketing/Branding	Business & models of collaboration	Business & models of collaboration
Products Hardware	Emotions Service	Processes Network	Policy models Sustainable markets
Users/consumers (Passive)	Active users/citizens	Co-creators	Co-creators
Tech innovation	User driven innovation	Employee driven innovation Open innovation Social innovation	Mission oriented innovation Social innovation

WHAT DOES THIS CALL FOR IN TERMS OF LEARNING?

1. Professional expertise is needed to handle wicked problems
2. A need to recognize various forms of expertise
3. Build the capacity to combine, share and challenge knowledge
4. Calls for the introduction of bottom-up (participatory) tactics and interdisciplinary collaboration (Thomsen & Whyte, 2012)
5. puts emphasis on people's ability to contribute to a community (Mulgan, 2012)
6. an increased interest in the innovation potential of everyday practices (Høyrup, 2010, Wegener, 2016, Fuller et al. 2019, Aakjær, 2018)



A person with long hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, is seated at a table. The table is covered with various documents, sticky notes, and a pen. The person is looking down at the documents. The background is a wooden floor. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

HELSINKI 2014

NVL's initial work on learning circles

We defined **co-creation** as

“an approach to collaboration and innovation, which seeks to bring together people with diverse backgrounds in co-creation of sustainable and meaningful solutions for new learning experiences or environments for learning.” (Aakjær 2014)

WHAT CHARACTERISES CIRCLE TRADITIONS?

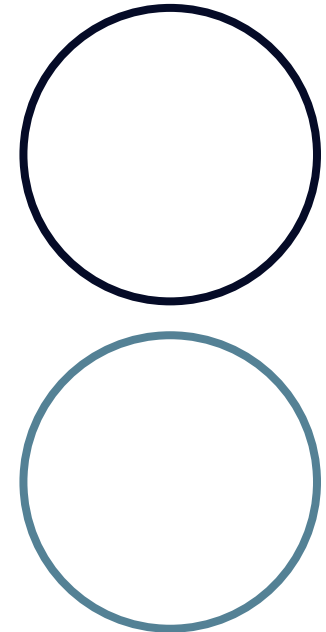
Aakjaer & Wegener (2023): Theorizing learning circles. Journal of Education and Work.

- **Study circles:** formal and non-formal education (Bjerkaker, 2014; Lahdenperä, 2014, Larsson & Nordvall, 2010).
 - Not necessarily an aim to change practice or theory.
- **Research circles:** competence development, change work, co-producing knowledge between academia and society (Chandler & Torbert, 2003, Lahdenperä, 2014).
 - Aims to create new knowledge and skills to change theory and practice.
- **Learning circles:** formal and non-formal education & competence development (Hiebert 1996, Lahdenperä & Marquard, 2019).
 - Aims to innovate or improve practice.



EXAMPLE: TWO NORDIC LEARNING CIRCLES 2021

- Two circles with 8-10 participants from all Nordic countries
- Cross-professional & cross-organisational
- Working on 2 themes:
 - 1) adult learning
 - 2) marginalized people
- 2 facilitators were responsible for activities and format
- 8-10 online meetings in each circle
- 4 meetings across the two circles



WHAT IS LEARNED?

EXAMPLE FROM THE TWO NORDIC CIRCLES

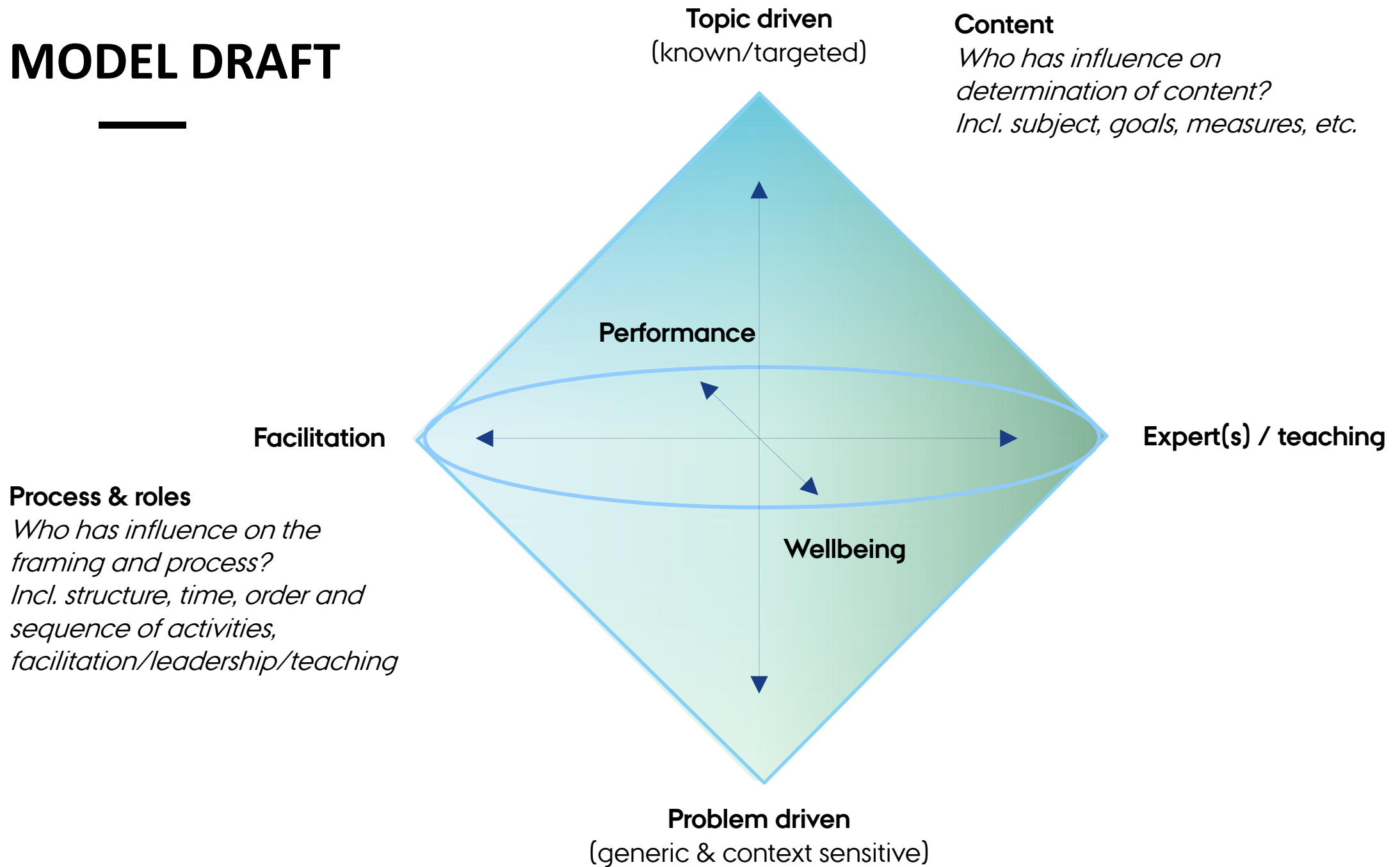
“In the learning circle we have worked with co-creation. We visualize a lot, for example on Padlet. And I have taken that with me to my workplace: Getting colleagues, and the clients and participants we work with, to want to join in – it’s the same thing. That I, as the boss, should not come and tell them which method they should use or how it should be used. [...]

We have talked about reflection logs, and we have now put [reflection] into the document we work with for follow-up, which works well. We discuss quite a lot what our challenge should be, how we look at it, and how we should work on it.”
(Circle participant in interview).

- **New tools for collaboration**
- **Repositioning of roles**
- **Strengthening reflection practices**
- **Re-considering the purpose**



MODEL DRAFT



Thank you

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