

Faculty of Education

Guiding tomorrow



Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University

for tomorrow



HUBS or COMMUNITIES

Linking Theory to
Practice

By
André du Plessis

THE ARGUMENTS (1 of 2)

- ▶ The idea of a HUB is actually 'borrowed' from two learning theories, namely social constructivism and connectivism.
- ▶ Learning within a hub can also be attributed to EXTENDED ACTIVITY THEORY (Du Plessis, 2010), in which MOTIVATION and LEARNING AS COMPLEXITY play a vital role.
- ▶ Concept 'HUB' or 'HUBS' is actually another synonym for NETWORKING or CONNECTING (connectivism).

THE ARGUMENTS (2 of 2)

- Based upon THEORY, a FRAMEWORK will be presented how HUBS or COMMUNITIES can 'operate' with its 'Hub Citizens' based upon:
 - ❖ Constructivism
 - ❖ Connectivism
 - ❖ Activity Theory
 - ❖ Learning as Complexity activity Theory and
 - ❖ Knowledge Creation Theory
- A proposed PLANNING FRAMEWORK will be presented by drawing from the theory
- A pictorial overview of HUBS or COMMUNITIES as an INNOVATION, will be presented
- Reasons will be provided based upon:
 - ❖ Adoption Theory
 - ❖ Perceived Attributes Theory and
 - ❖ Innovation-Decision Process Theory

WHAT IS A HUB

▶ But what is a hub?

- ❖ A Hub is like a virtual work place — where you can share information with others whether they reside in your office or in remote locations.
- ❖ It can be customized to fit your specific needs
- ❖ This definition implies connectivity.

Social Constructivism

- A brief definition:
 - ❖ Knowing and knowledge is a ...
 - ✓ negotiated, shared social experience and a construct mediated through language via meaningful dialogue in a meaningful context through social interaction (Gergen, 1995; Jaramillo, 1996; Ernest, 1995).
 - ❖ Learning is thus a socially shared experience rather than an individual experience, *mediated by language* via social discourse (McMahon, 1997)

Connectivism

- ▶ Connectivism is based upon networking principles.
 - ❖ For a network to be established, at least two nodes have to be connected or linked.
- ▶ Learning can thus be defined as:
 - ❖ the process [in communities] that occurs when people are connected [as communities or members in the community] (Siemens, 2005).

CONNECTIVISM: VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge within connectivism is not seen as static, rather knowledge or knowledge creation or acquiring is;
 - ❖ Co-creation,
 - ❖ Dissemination,
 - ❖ Communication of key ideas through networking,
 - ❖ Personalisation through the experience of internalisation,
 - ❖ Dialogue and
 - ❖ Reflection (Siemens, 2006b).

Change of the Perception about who has knowledge

- Change in thinking about who has knowledge:
 - ❖ People do not have to be highly qualified to be knowledgeable, **THUS** the term **EXPERT** has to be redefined as...
 - Someone/anyone with the necessary levels of knowledge and skills.

Complexity theory

- ▶ Complexity theory is based upon the idea that ...
 - ▶ Order emerges through the interactions of organisms, agents [or participants] (Davis & Simmt, 2003; Sinclair, 2004) in a system or in the activity.
- ▶ Conditions for a complex system to be able to learn, are (Davis & Simmt, 2003; Sinclair, 2004):
 - ❖ Internal diversity,
 - ❖ Redundancy,
 - ❖ Decentralised control,
 - ❖ Organised randomness and
 - ❖ Neighbour interactions.

Complexity Theory: Its view of knowledge

- Knowledge and learning is *determined by the collective and NOT by the individual.*

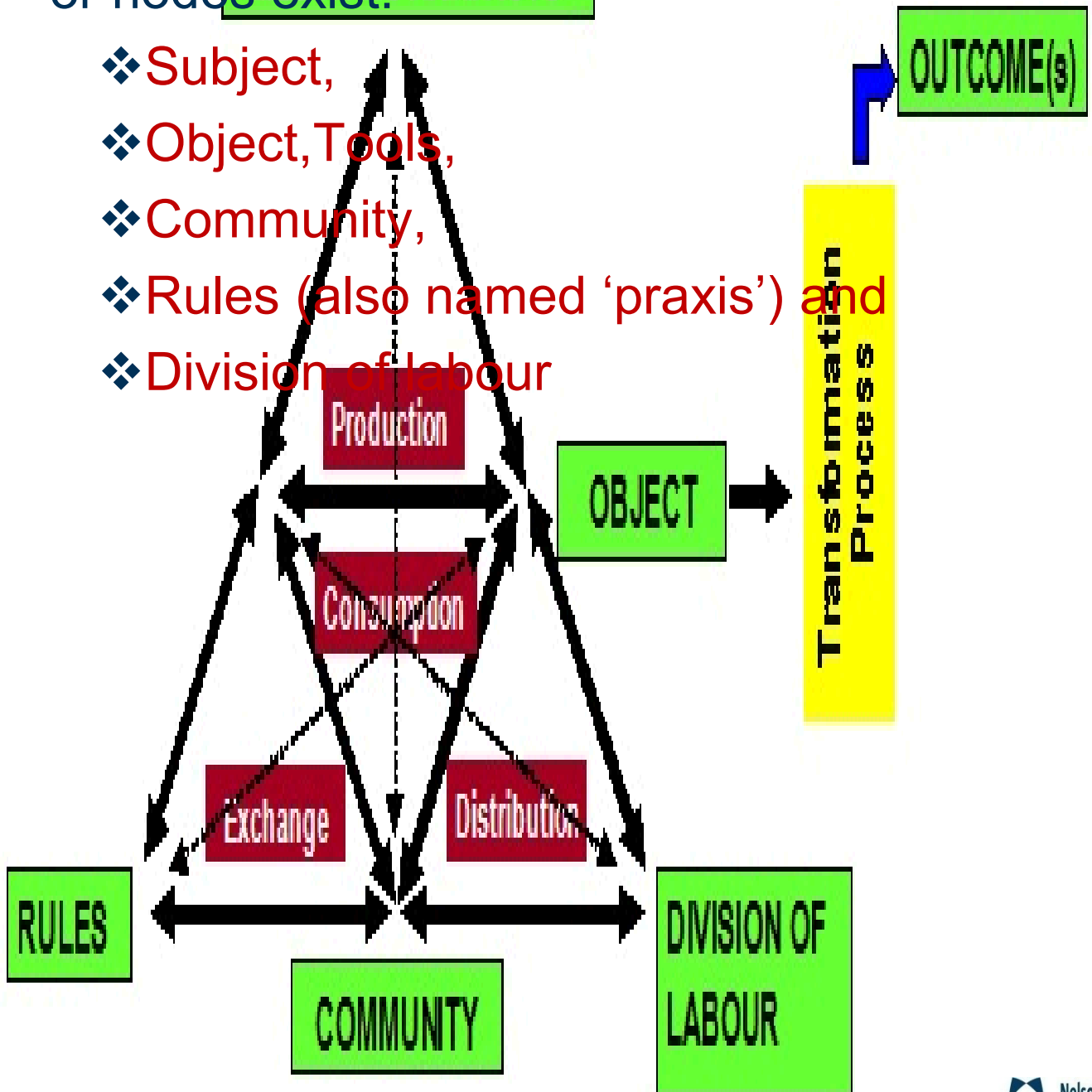
Activity Theory

- In an activity system, learning is not viewed as transmission, **BUT as transformation**
 - an evolving and complex process mediated by tools and social interaction.
 - Hence, learning happens at two planes, namely the:
 - ✓ Social level and
 - ✓ Psychological (individual) level (Lim & Hang, 2003; Lim & Chai, 2004).

Activity Theory: The Different Components or Elements or Nodes

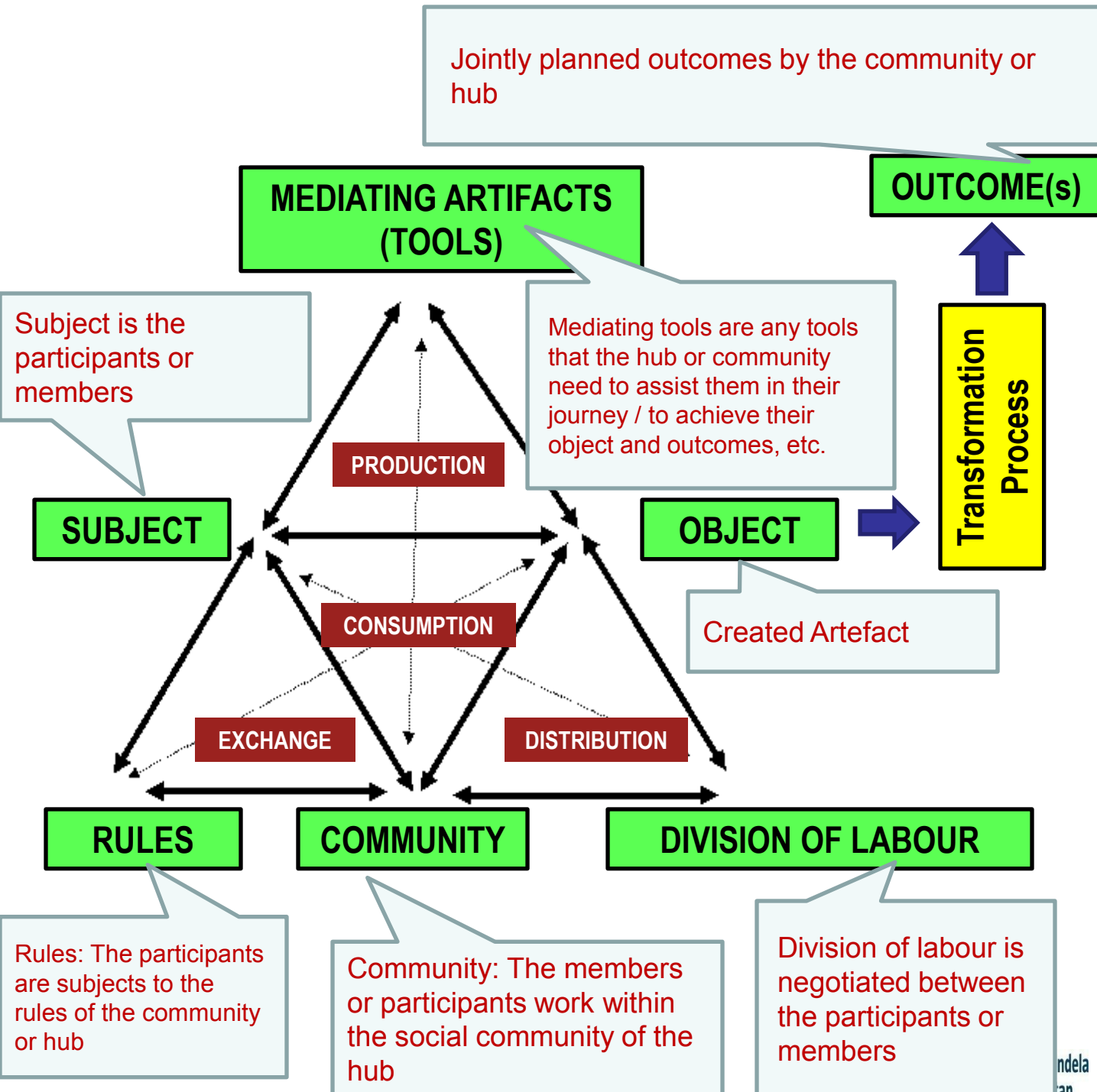
- In an activity system, the following elements or nodes exist:

- ❖ Subject,
- ❖ Object, Tools,
- ❖ Community,
- ❖ Rules (also named 'praxis') and
- ❖ Division of labour



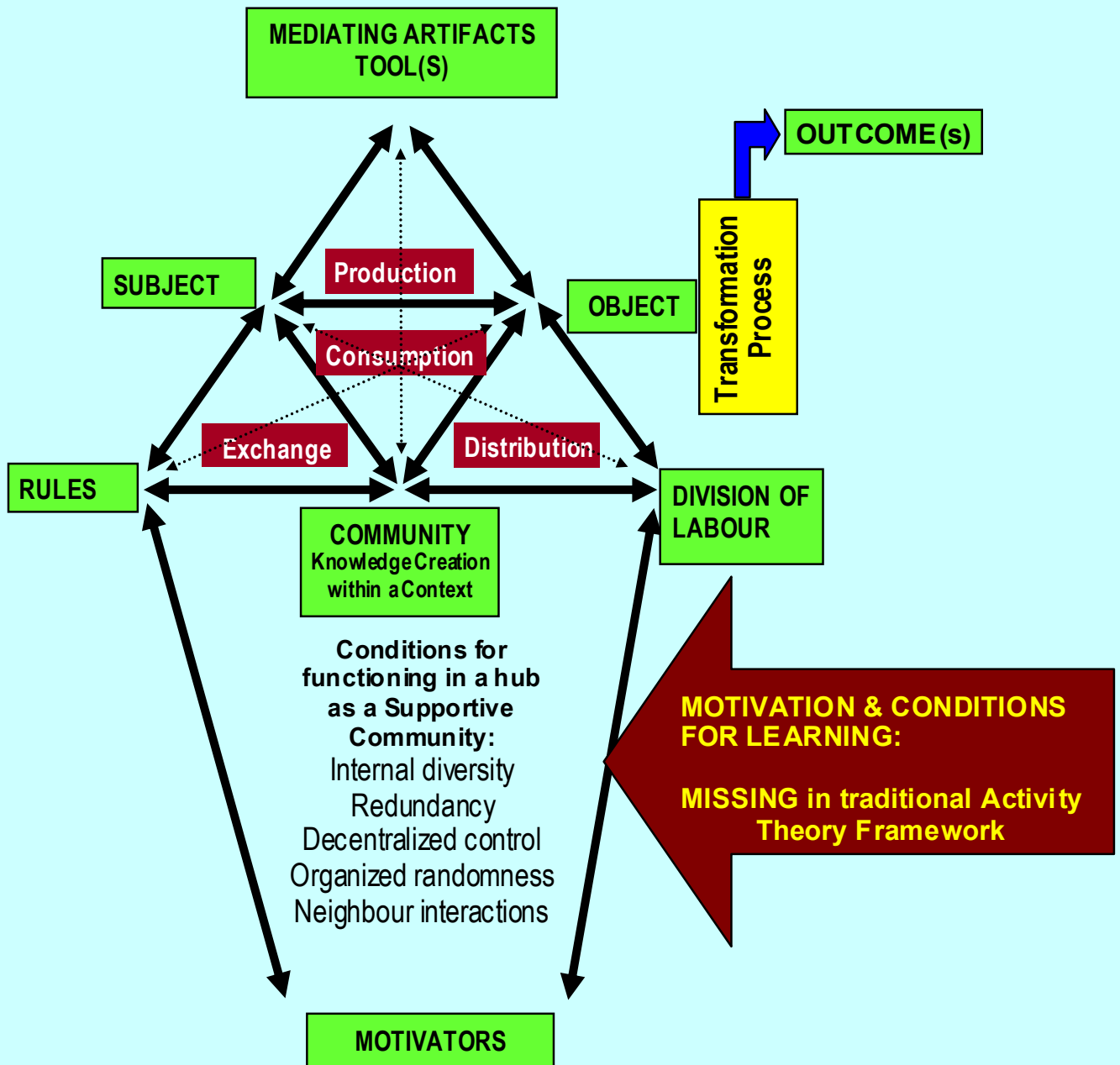
ACTIVITY THEORY TRIANGLE

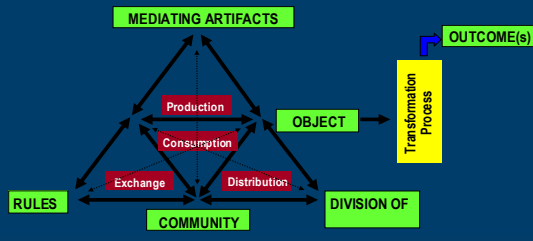
Mediated (higher) functioning are interactions between the subject (individual) and object (task) mediated by tools, at the vertex of the triangle



Unmediated (elementary) functioning occurs along the base of the triangle

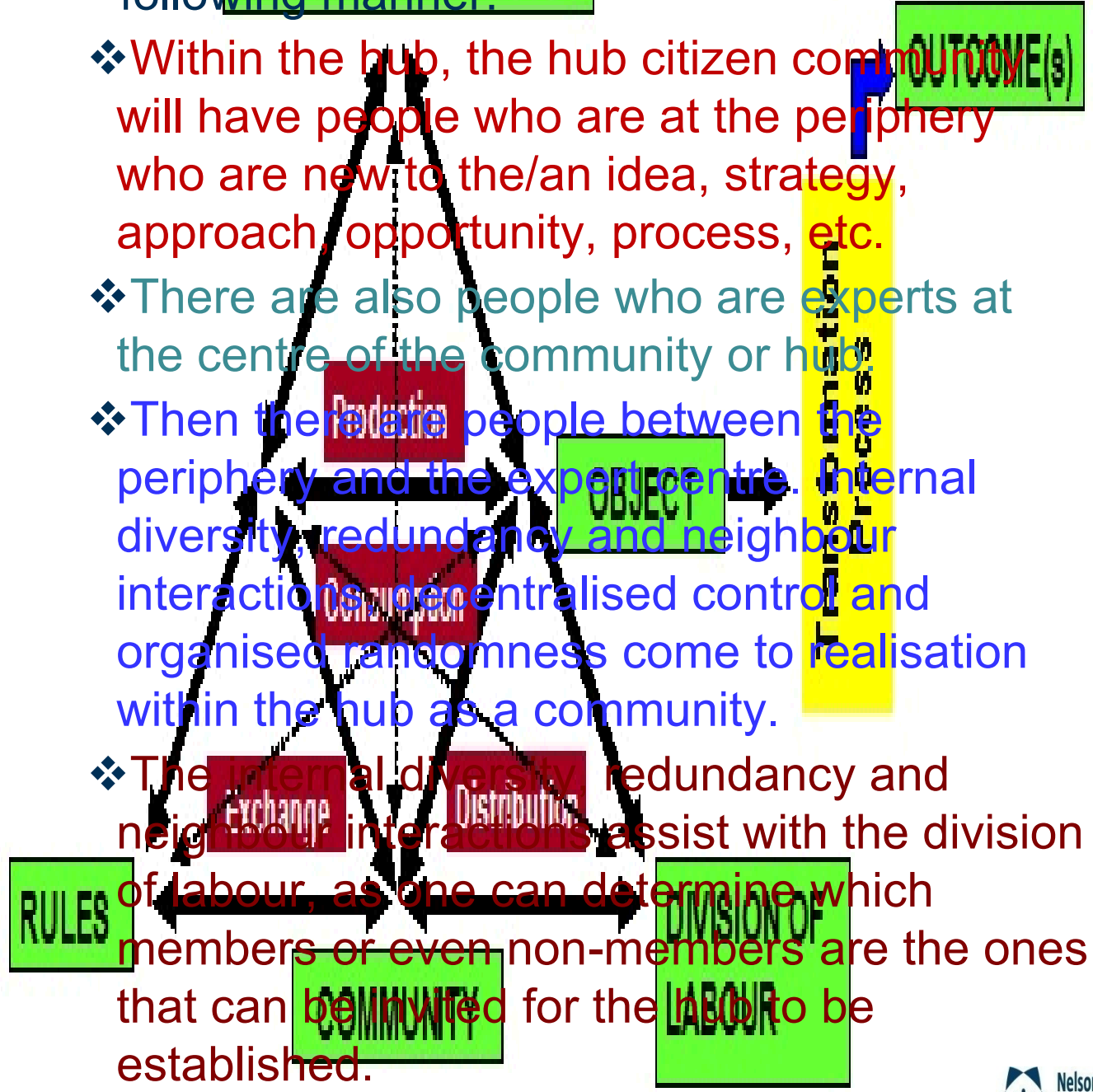
EXTENDED Activity Theory: Presentation

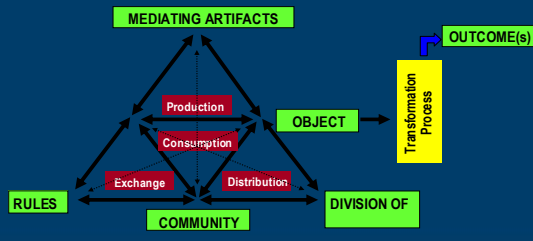




▶ These theoretical elements indicated in the previous slide can be integrated in the following manner:

- ❖ Within the hub, the hub citizen community will have people who are at the periphery who are new to the/an idea, strategy, approach, opportunity, process, etc.
- ❖ There are also people who are experts at the centre of the community or hub.
- ❖ Then there are people between the periphery and the expert centre. Internal diversity, redundancy and neighbour interactions, decentralised control and organised randomness come to realisation within the hub as a community.
- ❖ The internal diversity, redundancy and neighbour interactions assist with the division of labour, as one can determine which members or even non-members are the ones that can be invited for the hub to be established.





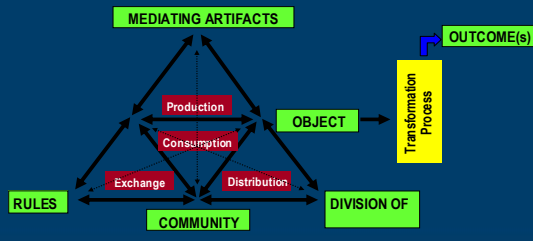
▶ The **Internal diversity, Redundancy and Neighbour interactions** influence division of labour, but as the hub evolves, **the** division of labour shifts.

▶ While **rules** have to be determined, there should be a ...

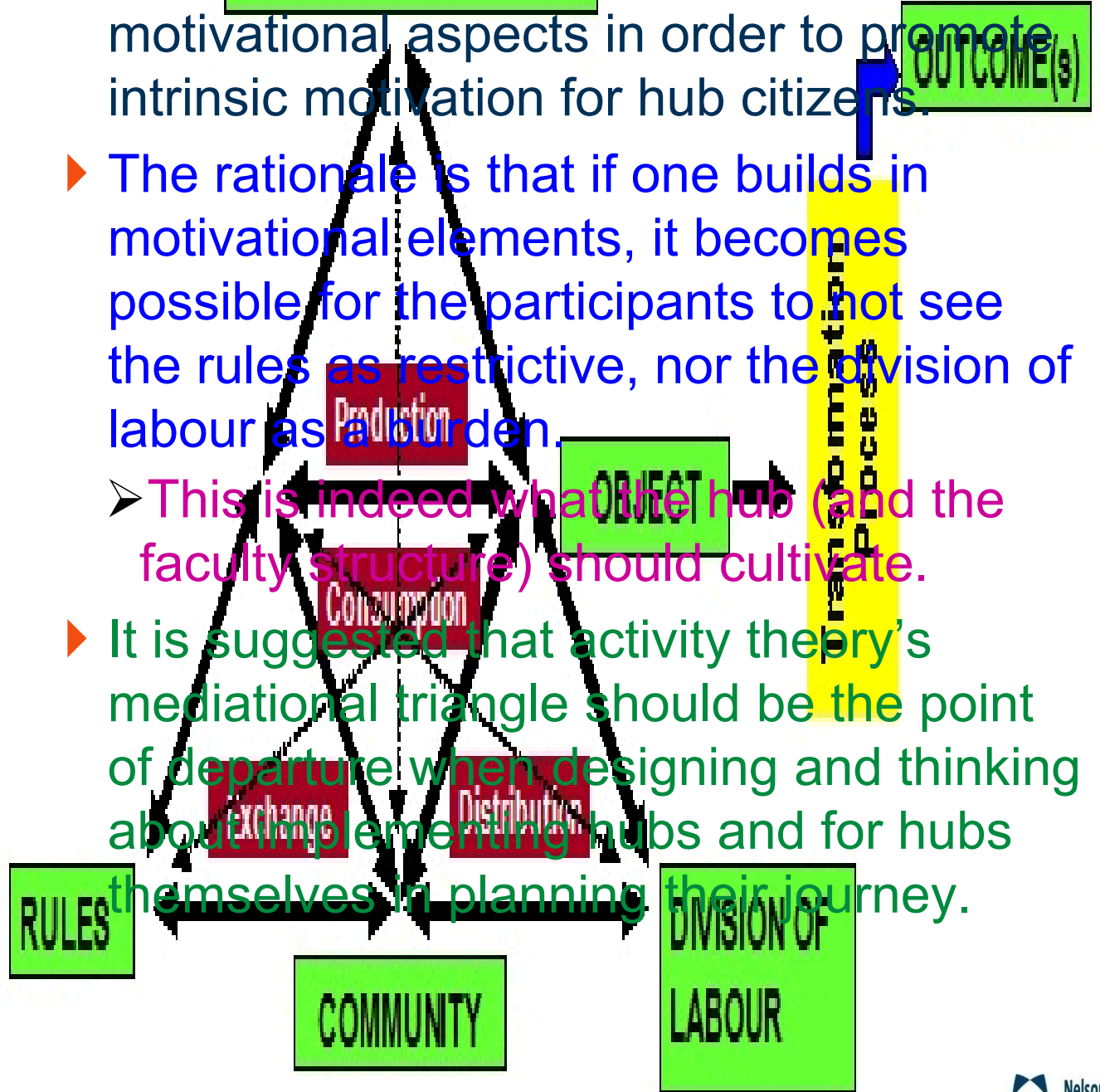
❖ Certain amount of organised randomness which allows the participants freedom to explore and choose different ways to achieve the desired outcomes, but within certain boundaries (enabling constraints).

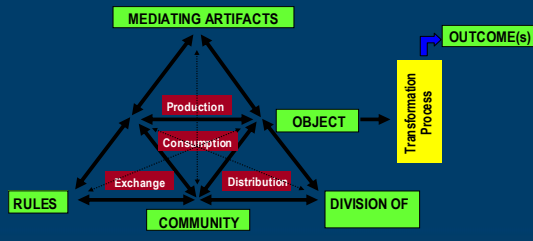
▶ Decentralised control facilitates natural division of labour and implies that

❖ When different tasks are planned, heed must be taken that the community, NOT the individual, is the focus as it is through shared understandings that learning emerges.



- ▶ In addition, the rules and division of labour should be informed by motivational aspects in order to promote intrinsic motivation for hub citizens.
- ▶ The rationale is that if one builds in motivational elements, it becomes possible for the participants to not see the rules as restrictive, nor the division of labour as a burden.
 - This is indeed what the hub (and the faculty structure) should cultivate.
- ▶ It is suggested that activity theory's mediational triangle should be the point of departure when designing and thinking about implementing hubs and for hubs themselves in planning their journey.



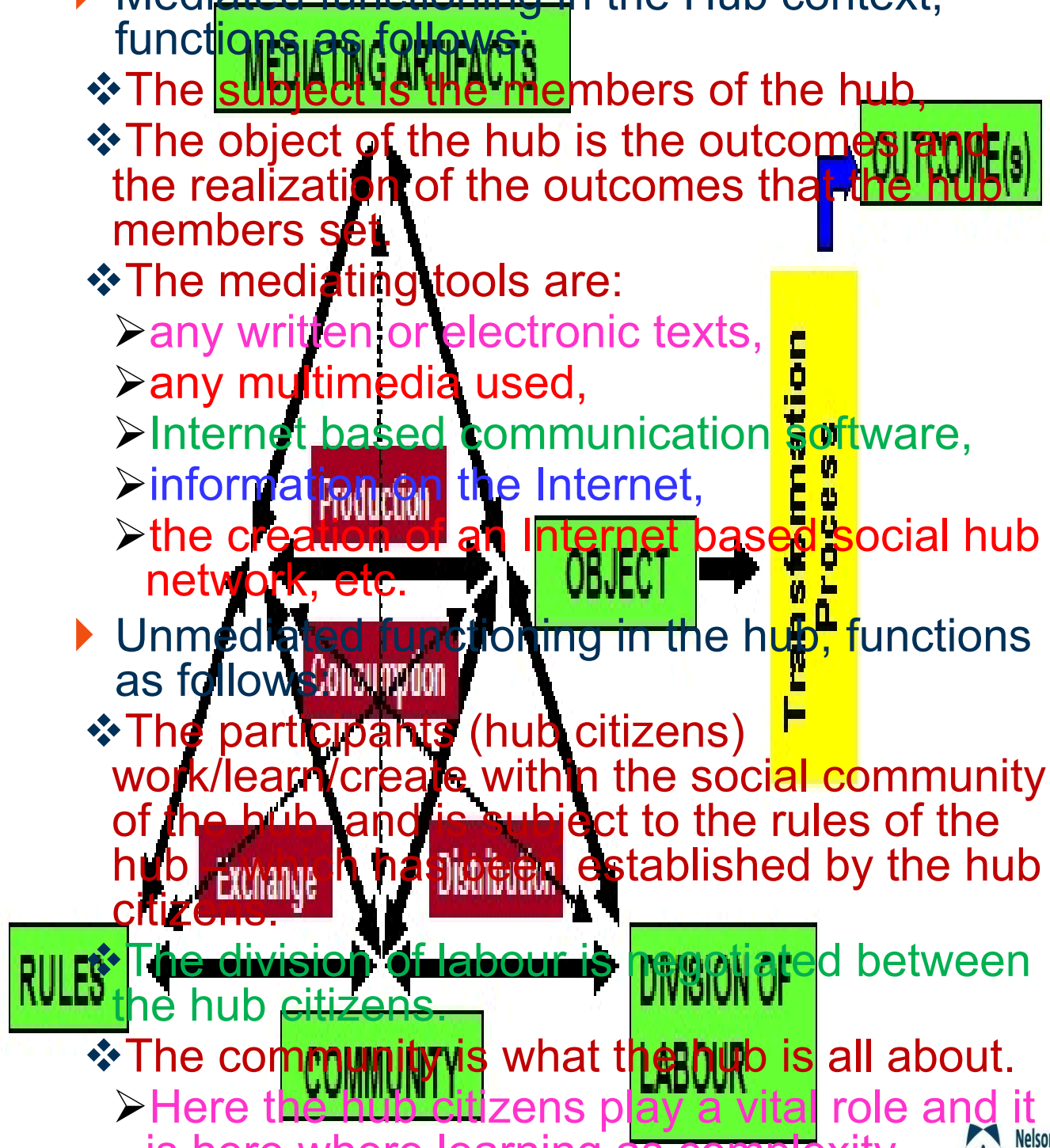


▶ Mediated functioning in the Hub context, functions as follows:

- ❖ The subject is the members of the hub,
- ❖ The object of the hub is the outcomes and the realization of the outcomes that the hub members set,
- ❖ The mediating tools are:
 - any written or electronic texts,
 - any multimedia used,
 - Internet based communication software,
 - information on the Internet,
 - the creation of an Internet based social hub network, etc.

▶ Unmediated functioning in the hub, functions as follows:

- ❖ The participants (hub citizens) work/learn/create within the social community of the hub, and is subject to the rules of the hub which has been established by the hub citizens.
- ❖ The division of labour is negotiated between the hub citizens.
- ❖ The community is what the hub is all about.
 - Here the hub citizens play a vital role and it is here where learning as complexity emerges.



CONTRADICTIONS AND HUBS

(1 of 3)

- As a result of individuals or groups coming from different contexts, this often causes contradictions between members or hub citizens.
- The hub citizens' (or participants') viewpoints, beliefs, voices, layers and historicity are in many instances different from the new strategy or 'points of pursue' and therefore create tension and contradictions.

CONTRADICTIONS AND HUBS

(2 of 3)

- However, it is important to note that tensions and contradictions are not seen in a negative light within a hub, rather these tensions/contradictions help with creativity and with what to and how to focus on.
 - ❖ Thus, tensions/contradictions fulfil a positive role or as Hardman (2005) puts it, contradictions assist with the change process or the re-shaping of ideas, objects and outcomes.
 - ❖ Within a hub, there will be tensions on various levels, however, what is important is the manner or way that the hub citizens deal with the tensions/contradictions.
 - ❖ Often these tensions are a result of the uncharted waters that the hub will be exploring/travelling on.
 - ❖ Tensions emerge when hub citizens has to fit together their own deep-rooted ideas with that of the other hub citizens' ideas.

CONTRADICTIONS AND HUBS

(3 of 3)

- It is therefore important to uncover contradictions, as these contradictions could inform ...
 - ❖ new paths to be explored,
 - ❖ how to explore it,
 - ❖ when,
 - ❖ in which different ways as before, etc.

THE FOCUS OF HUBS

- **PRODUCTION,**
- **CONSUMPTION,**
- **DISTRIBUTION AND**
- **EXCHANGE**

Development for HUBS: HOW? WHAT PROCESS?

- Pictorial presentation to follow ...

CRAR³FS²

Care Relate Assess Reflect Read Re-Plan Feedback Share Support

ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS DURING THE PHASES & STAGES BY THE PROJECT FACILITATOR & BY THE PARTICIPANTS

RELAXED ATMOSPHERE
VISITATIONS

CONTAIN ANXIETY
PACE

ONGOING SUPPORT
MODEL / COACH / MENTOR

CRAR³FS²

Relate Assess Reflect Read Re-plan Feedback Share Support

ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS DURING THE PHASES & STAGES BY THE PROJECT FACILITATOR

Care:	Show that you care
-------	--------------------

Re-Plan:	Plan by taking the needs into
----------	-------------------------------

Relate:	Build relationships throughout
---------	--------------------------------

Feedback:	Empower participants by providing the members with feedback on the progress of developments and their needs.
-----------	--

Assess:	Identify the positive and negative aspects that have occurred during implementation & after implementation
---------	--

Share:	Create opportunities to share experiences with one another during development sessions and with
--------	---

Reflect:	E.g. Journal writing or blogging provides a window / space for the members to comment about the learning process (useful for sharing)
----------	---

Support:	Establish internal support among hub members
	Create staff development sessions for hub members within own hub & for hubs collectively
	Arrange support sessions where members can share experiences and support one another (within hub & among hubs)
	Recognize excellence

Read:	Reading the reflection empower the 'leaders' and members to plan with a view to address mentioned issues
-------	--

Decide upon the PHASES of development (and/or growth) for each hub individually

MOTIVATE ONGOING TRAINING ONGOING SUPPORT

KEEP DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PARTICIPANTS IN MIND

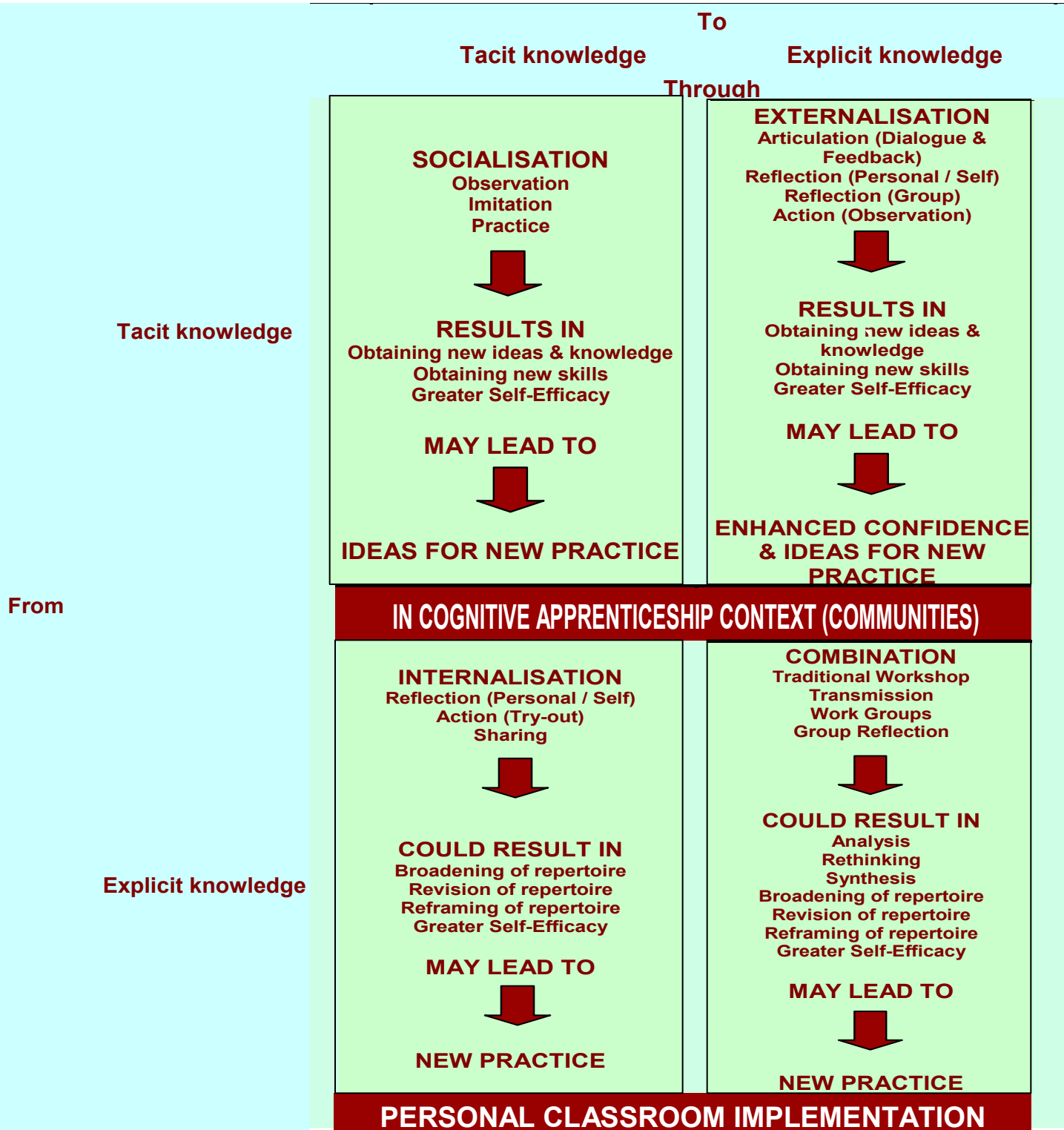
DEVELOP COMPETENCE TRAINING HANDS-ON & PRACTICAL

LISTEN PATIENCE APPROACHABLE
CLEAR EXPLANATIONS FEEDBACK PEOPLE SKILLS

COMMUNITY COOPERATE & COMPROMISE ASSISTANCE
CONSIDER GROUPING: HOW? COPLANNING

HUBS as Knowledge Creation

(adapted from Nonaka, 1994)



PLANNING PROCESS FROM ACTIVITY THEORY PERSPECTIVE

- To follow on next slide

CRAR³FS²

Care Relate Assess Reflect Read Re-Plan Feedback Share Support

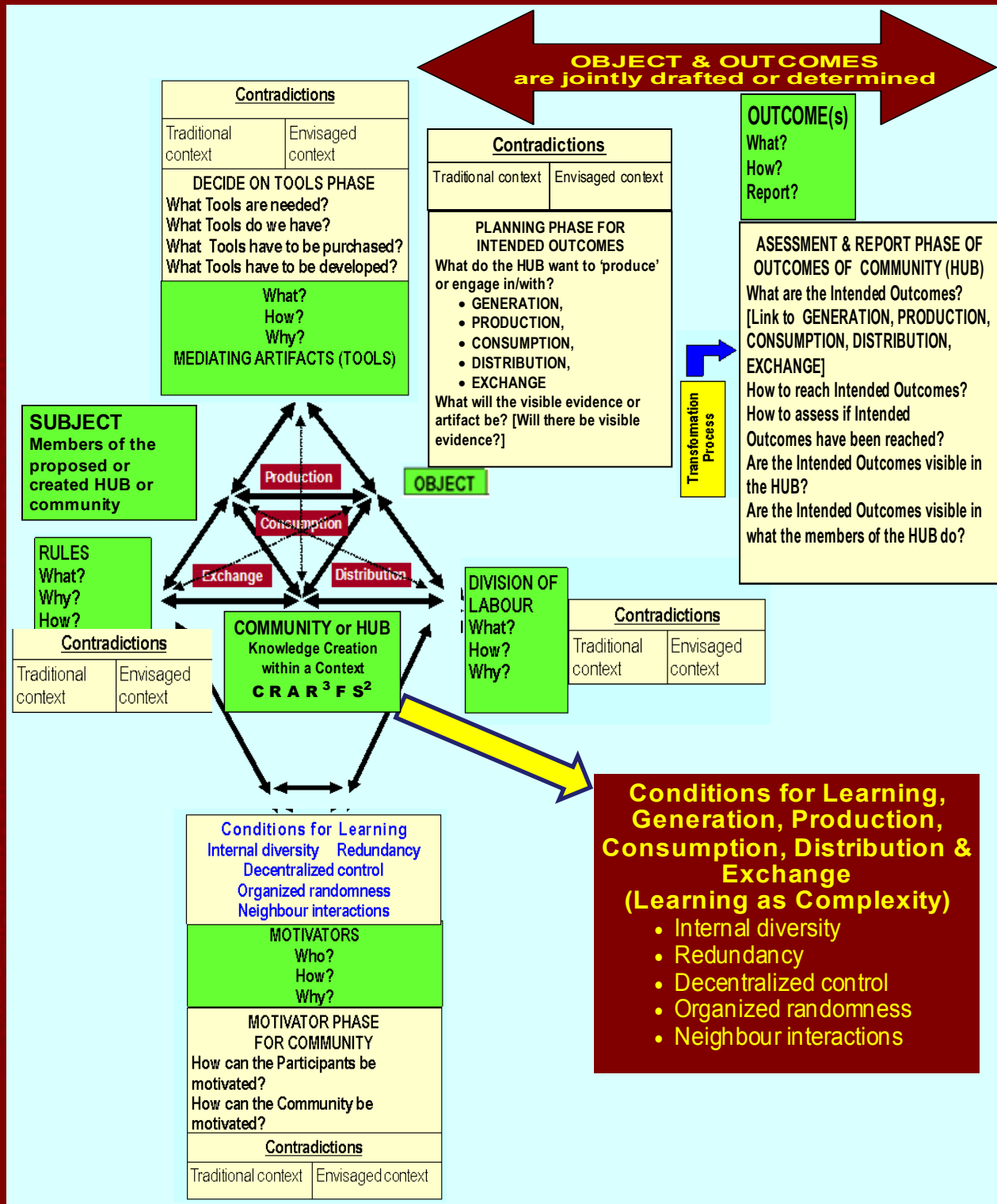
ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS DURING THE PHASES & STAGES BY THE PROJECT FACILITATOR & BY THE PARTICIPANTS

RELAXED ATMOSPHERE VISITATIONS

CONTAIN ANXIETY PACE ONGOING SUPPORT MODEL / COACH / MENTOR

LISTEN PATIENCE APPROACHABLE FEEDBACK PEOPLE SKILLS CLEAR EXPLANATIONS

COMMUNITY COOPERATE & COMPROMISE ASSISTANCE CONSIDER GROUPING: HOW? COPLANNING



MOTIVATE ONGOING TRAINING ONGOING SUPPORT

KEEP DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PARTICIPANTS IN MIND

DEVELOP COMPETENCE TRAINING HANDS-ON & PRACTICAL

HUBS as an INNOVATION

- As Hubs can be seen as something new, *it can therefore be labeled as an innovation*.
- A pictorial presentation follow on the next slid

THE DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

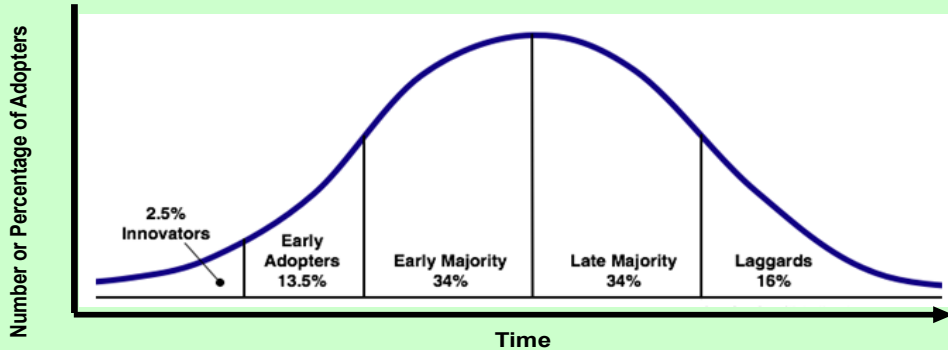
Diffusion: process:
Filters through as a result of societal and group influences [social process]

Adoption process:
Refers specifically to the individual person

Four key elements that form an integral part in the diffusion of innovation process:

- The innovation,
- Communication channels
- Time and
- Social system

ADOPTER CATEGORIES AND THE RATE OF ADOPTION

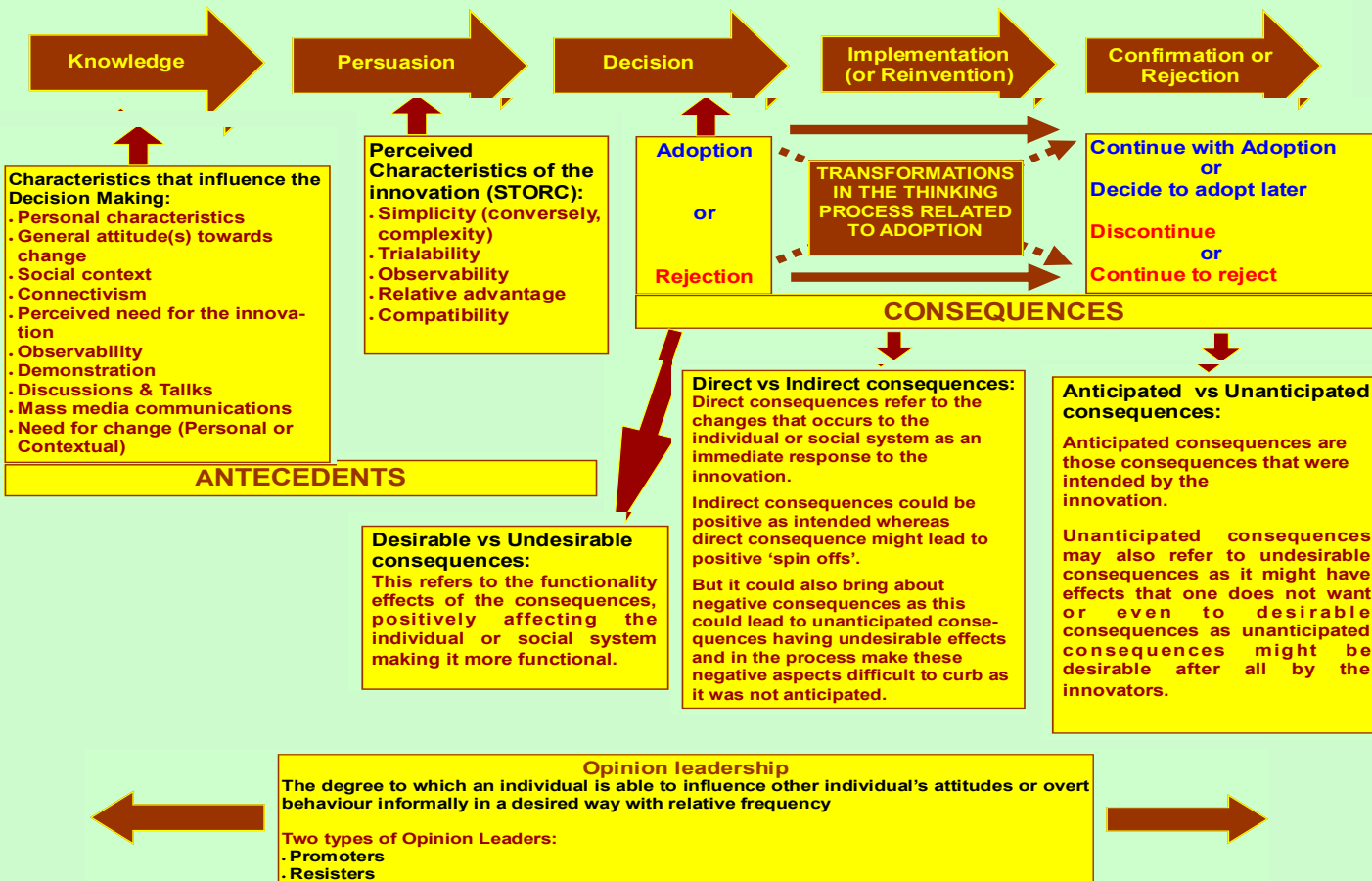


THE STEPS OF THE INNOVATION DECISION PROCESS

is influenced by communication channels, such as ...

MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SOURCES
OBSERVABILITY DISCUSSIONS TALKS

THE STEPS OF THE INNOVATION DECISION PROCESS



Conclusion (1 of 2)

- ▶ Hubs have therefore a social and community dimension through active participation in a community.
- ▶ The community has to be connected to one another and to other possible outside contributors.
- ▶ Furthermore, the Hub as community functions as an Activity System, embedded by Learning as Complexity.
- ▶ Contradictions are important.
- ▶ The role of a hub is production, consumption, distribution and exchange of ideas, information, objects/artefacts, etc.
- ▶ Lastly, hubs are an innovative concept AND 'living organism' that evolves constantly.
- ▶ It cannot be a closed system, as closed systems run-off and die.

Conclusion (2 of 2)

- ▶ It seems that hubs do not always have to have face-to-face meetings, but that Web 2.0 innovations, such as freely available Hub Creation Software, could hold the key.
- ▶ The positive aspect about electronic hubs, is that:
 - ❖ It is easy to access AND
 - ❖ Everyone who wants to join, can be allowed to do so, even people from outside the faculty or from outside the university.
 - ❖ Furthermore, all that has been discussed, can be to the disposal of all members to see.
 - Members can post interesting titbits, articles, etc.
 - Again, it remains there, so it is not like an email that you delete.
 - One can blog, participate and create forums for discussion, etc.
- EXAMPLES of ONLINE NETWORKING (NEXT TWO SLIDES)

SOCIAL ELEARN COMMUNITY or HUB (1 of 2)

Walter Sisulu & Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universities

E-Learn Initiative Support Group: ICT, Software, Teaching & Learning

Home Page

Invite

News and Files

Members

What is available?

Forum

Events

Blogs

Notes

Chat

Manage



Welcome to Walter Sisulu & Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universities, Andre du Plessis!
Here are a few things you can do right now...



Invite
Members



Customize
Appearance



Add
Content

Notes



OFFICE 2010 BETA PROBLEMS?

Office 2010 BETA has been released last year. If anyone has been using it, any problems? I have noticed that WORD 2010 Beta sometimes closes suddenly. Anyone had similar experiences or any other? Please inform us.
Created by Andre du Plessis Feb 10, 2010 at 10:10am. Last updated by Andre du Plessis Feb 10.

Walter Sisulu University E-Learning Presentations

You can find the E-Learning Presentations at the Walter Sisulu University's website at www.wsu.ac.za
Scroll down the main page to get to the presentations. Click on the blue hyperlink and follow the instructions from your browser that follow.

Created by Andre du Plessis Nov 9, 2009 at 12:59pm. Last updated by Andre du Plessis Nov. 9, 2009.

Which Browser is best for you?

So you want an alternative to your existing browser? Here is a list of

Forum



SO WHY ARE MEMBERS NOT CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL NETWORKS?

I have wondered why people join a forum, but do not contribute to it? Maybe the forum does not support or deliver the 'stuff' that they would like to see. Maybe it is boring. Well, tell us and we'll...
Started by Andre du Plessis Feb 10.



How can one use 'e-tools' (such as Blackboard) to enhance communication between the office (Coordinators) and students especially student leaders ... (Read below) 15 Replies

How can one use 'e-tools' (such as Blackboard) to enhance communication between the office (Coordinators) and students especially student leaders such as Peer Assisted Learning Leaders (PALLs) in Pe...
Tagged: Blackboard
Started by Andre du Plessis. Last reply by Mirta Garcia Jardon Dec. 6, 2009.

+ Start Discussion

View All

Blog Posts



Looking for FREWARE Burning CD/DVD Software?

A FREWARE CD/DVD Burning software package can be downloaded at <http://www.koyotesoft.com/indexEn.html> or at www.filehippo.com

PLEASE NOTE: We do not accept liability should there go something wrong when you use freeware.

Posted by me on February 9, 2010 at 3:41pm



So you are looking for FREE software?

Many people are looking for free software. However, one need to be very careful from which sites you download. Below are a view sites that seems to be safe. www.filehippo.com and www.cnet.com
Posted by me on February 9, 2010 at 3:28pm

Andre du Plessis

Sign Out

Inbox

Alerts

Friends - Invite

Settings

Quick Add...

Ads by Google

[Distance Learning Courses](#)

UK University Qualifications Browse and Apply Online Today
www.rdi.co.uk/Distance_Lea

[Distance Education Online](#)

Earn an Accredited Online Degree Today via Distance Learning.
www.UniversalDegrees.com

[NEBOSH courses](#)

Study from home, take exams in SA Exams in JHB, Durban and Cape Town
www.Phonohsc.co.uk/nebc

[University of Atlanta UAE](#)

Nationally Accredited Degrees Online Degrees - Flexible schedules

Replies to This Discussion



Reply by Edwin Donald Frauenstein on November 19, 2009 at 12:18pm

x

Send Message

Its a difficult question. here at WSU we use email to communicate and its a disaster. People read the email yet they do not respond. I do not see how Blackboard could enhance communication if email does not work. Take this thread for instance. hardly anyone has responded to this lol

Reply to This



Reply by Andre du Plessis on November 19, 2009 at 12:30pm

x

Absolutely correct Edwin!! People want opportunities to voice their ideas, but do not necessarily use it if made available. Reasons for this could be various. Pity however. Lets see if we can get this discussion going people!

Reply to This



Reply by Rumbidzai Ncube on November 19, 2009 at 3:21pm

x

Send Message

Hi there

While Edwin is right to say people do not respond to e-mails, one has to keep in mind where people are coming from. Most people at WSU come from a culture of communication through notices, memos, telephone calls and announcements during meetings. E-mail and any ITC mode of communication is relatively new to most people- younger generation (students) included. People have not responded to this thread not because they do not want to but perhaps this is a new thing to most and perhaps it will only appeal to people with an interest in e-learning, like Edwin.

To get back to the question, firstly, we need to get our PALLs to buy in to Blackboard- so PAL Coordinators should include that in their training workshops for 2010. Rather than getting PALLs to communicate with Office staff, get them to communicate with their students. Show the PALLs and students the value of Discussion forums as a platform for sharing ideas and getting help. Office coordinators can continue with email and telephone calls

Reply to This



Reply by Andre du Plessis on November 19, 2009 at 3:31pm

x

Great! Now the discussion is starting. Come on Rumbidzai, invite your friends/colleagues to participate. Let you be one of the leaders and change makers!! I have confidence that you are up to it!! Keep it up!

Reply to This



Reply by Edwin Donald Frauenstein on November 24, 2009 at 5:57pm

x

Send Message

Ya I agree but I think it goes deeper than that to why people dont reply 2 emails especially in CLTD having so many activities. For PAL, I think that they dont have to necessarily use Blackboard for discussion forums but rather any e-learning tool including Facebook. For this all to work we need improved access to PC's and DEFINITLY a better internet connection

Reply to This



Reply by Edwin Donald Frauenstein on November 24, 2009 at 6:00pm

x

Send Message

END