

# ACTION LEARNING ONLINE: THE NEXT GENERATION

By Dr. Deborah Waddill  
Restek Consulting, LLC

# AGENDA

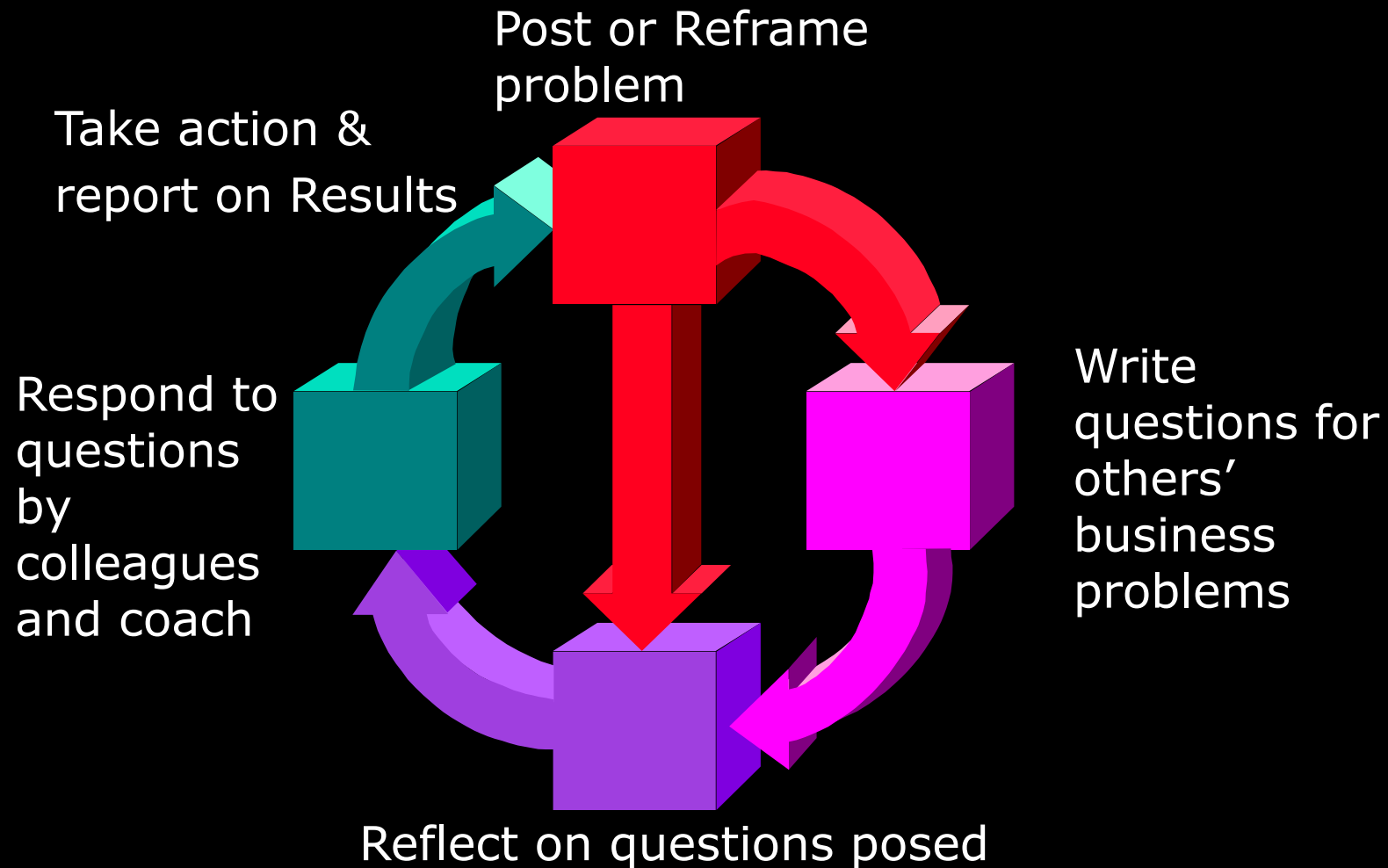
## Personal Journey

- Dissertation: Action e-Learning (AEL)
  - Adult learning theories and Action Learning
  - AEL Dissertation
- Consulting: Practice-based Action e-Learning
  - AEL in Practice: Embedded in a leadership course
  - AEL adapted for management/leadership development
  - AEL and Problem-based Learning
  - AEL in Second Life
- Lessons Learned
- Next Generation

# WHY ACTION LEARNING ONLINE?

- Why not?
  - Extends the reach of this powerful tool.
  - Enhances some aspects of the action learning process.
  - Can be used as a blended or hybrid approach.
  - Cost effective.

# Action E-Learning Dissertation (2004)



# ACTION E-LEARNING INITIAL GROUND RULES: “NETIQUETTE”

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1. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online as you would in a healthy face-to-face encounter; treat people with respect.
2. Regard other people's time as you would your own by keeping discussion board entries short. Try to condense comments to two to three paragraphs. No one has the time to read a missive!
3. Share your expert knowledge when appropriate or when asked by others. Never do an information dump on someone.
4. Make yourself look good online by avoiding typing words using all capital letters (caps); online, caps are the equivalent of screaming. Use appropriate greetings and closings. Address others using their titles, unless told otherwise.

# NETIQUETTE, CONT'D.

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5. Prevent “flame wars” ... online battles... from happening. Avoid using derogatory names, negative comments, sexual innuendo, or “crass” terms.
6. Respect other people's privacy and your own by not referring to proper names or titles within an organization in the discussions. This avoids defamation and other possible legal implications.
7. Maintain confidentiality — what is said/typed in the discussion board, stays in the discussion board. That means no forwarding messages, or parts of messages, communicated in the discussion board.
8. Use your name in a signature line on every entry. In so doing, you take responsibility for what you have written.

Spinks, N., B. Wells, M. Mesche. (1999). "Netiquette: A behavioral guide to electronic business communication." Corporate Communications: An International Journal **4**(3): 145.

# OTHER ACTION E-LEARNING GUIDANCE...

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- Use “**Note:**” as a signpost in the Subject line to interject coaching questions.
- Caution: In online sessions, ideas are more visible and there is an electronic “paper-trail”; give thought to your entries.
- Encourage groups to create their own norms within their groups/sets. For example, set members can all agree on a time of day and a day of the week when all first entries will be made.

# AEL IN PRACTICE: EMBEDDED IN LEADERSHIP COURSEWARE (2007-PRESENT)

The image shows a screenshot of a Blackboard discussion board interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: [https://blackboard.gwu.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/message?action=list\\_messages&forum\\_id=\\_398615\\_1&nav=discussion\\_board\\_entry&conf\\_id=\\_306399\\_1&coi](https://blackboard.gwu.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/message?action=list_messages&forum_id=_398615_1&nav=discussion_board_entry&conf_id=_306399_1&coi). The page title is "Thread: Dixon - Planning and Vision...".

On the left side, there is a navigation menu with various course management tools, including "Announcements", "Syllabus", "Weekly Sessions", "Assignments", "Discussion Board", "Faculty Information", "Send Email", "Resources", "Tech Help", "My Grades", "Group Discussion Board", "Collaborate", and "Scheduled Collaborate".

The main content area shows a discussion thread with several posts. Overlaid on this interface is a circular diagram with five colored boxes (red, teal, purple, pink, and light blue) connected by arrows, representing a process cycle. The boxes contain the following text:

- Post or Reframe problem** (Red box at the top)
- Write questions for others' business problems** (Pink box on the right)
- Reflect on questions posed** (Light blue box at the bottom)
- Respond to questions by colleagues and coach** (Purple box on the left)
- Take action & report on Results** (Teal box at the top-left)

The diagram illustrates a continuous cycle of problem-solving and reflection within the discussion board environment.



# AEL AND PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING<sup>9</sup>

## Management Development Public Sector (2006)

- Timeframe = Two weeks.
- Audience= Public Sector Managers
- Venue=Conducted totally online in Blackboard LMS
- Problem-based
  - Participants brought a problem dealing with performance management and took action on the problem
  - Used the AEL questioning cycle in an asynchronous small group forum.
  - Relied on resources including a book on the topic, video demonstrating proper interpersonal interaction, and audio file scenarios implementing management interpersonal techniques.
- Action =
  - Public Sector used “Try it” requirement to use the strategies in the workplace and report back on results.

## Leadership Development APTA (2011-Present)

- Timeframe = Two weeks.
- Audience= APTA, University Deans or aspiring Deans/Directors
- Venue=Conducted totally online in IPSOS Blue LMS.
- Problem-based
  - Participants brought a need to create a strategy for department creation or enhancement and took action developing a strategy.
  - Used modified AEL in an asynchronous small group forum.
  - Used audio/text interviews and peer-reviewed articles as well as The e-HR Advantage as supplemental texts. Completed the program with a groupware interview session.
- Action =
  - APTA developed strategies for creation of new or improved APTA departments within a university and began implementation.
  - Won Alpha Eta Award for “promotion and recognition of scholarship, leadership, and contributions to the health professions”.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## GENERAL

- It is difficult to move between face-to-face (F2F) version of Action Learning and Action Learning Online; those who have experienced F2F find the online version too slow.
- Works well with multiple problems/issues with each individual presenting their own.
- Guidelines must emphasize how to engage one another in the asynchronous setting.
- Shift to social constructivist learning theory allowing participants to create their own solutions with less coach interventions.
- Academia allows for a more complicated approach that business does not.
- Condense the sessions to one hour and at most twice per day rather than drawing it out over weeks.
- Ensure that the time commitment offline is reasonable for those working full-time.
- Reliance on sharing resources such as peer-reviewed literature is very effective.

# LESSONS LEARNED, CONT'D

## COACH/FACILITATOR ROLE

- Adjust coach role to facilitator who:
  - “Guide by the side”
  - Provides ground rules beforehand in writing,
  - Explains the logic and method for questioning,
  - Describes the learning theory,
  - Re-enforces netiquette,
  - Models questioning,
  - Debriefs with questions,
  - Captures any resources, and
  - Enables documenting reflections and commitments to action.

# LESSONS LEARNED, CONTINUED<sup>12</sup>

## TECHNOLOGY

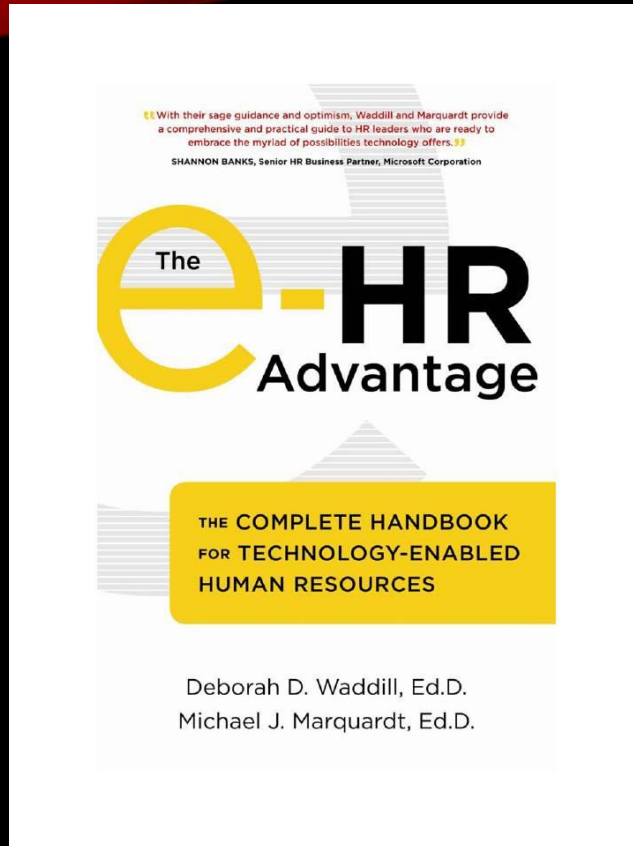
- Do research on technologies available to the users and ones with which they are familiar, use only those and use them frequently.
- Use a combination of technologies that are available to participants.
- Warm up group by using polling technology -- if available -- that relies upon questioning.
- Use methods to encourage taking action ("Try It") and holding members accountable for actions taken.
- Rely upon groupware for verbal, synchronous set interactions around the problem.

# LESSONS LEARNED, CONTINUED<sup>13</sup>

## PROCESS

- Limit each session to 45 minutes to an hour; you can offer a serial approach to the sessions.
- Enable presenting of multiple issues/problems through fluid interaction.
- Implement facilitation interventions/questions toward the end of the session; too complicated to interject during the session.
- Capture resources provided during and after the session by using technology.
- Save/Record the session to provide an excellent resource (Learning Object) and basis for future sessions.
- Position the saved resource and include as part of a knowledge management system; this is a powerful offering for those in business settings.
- Learning = Q + R + A(ction)

# ACTION LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



See chapters 15-17 for explanation of the relevance of Knowledge Management.

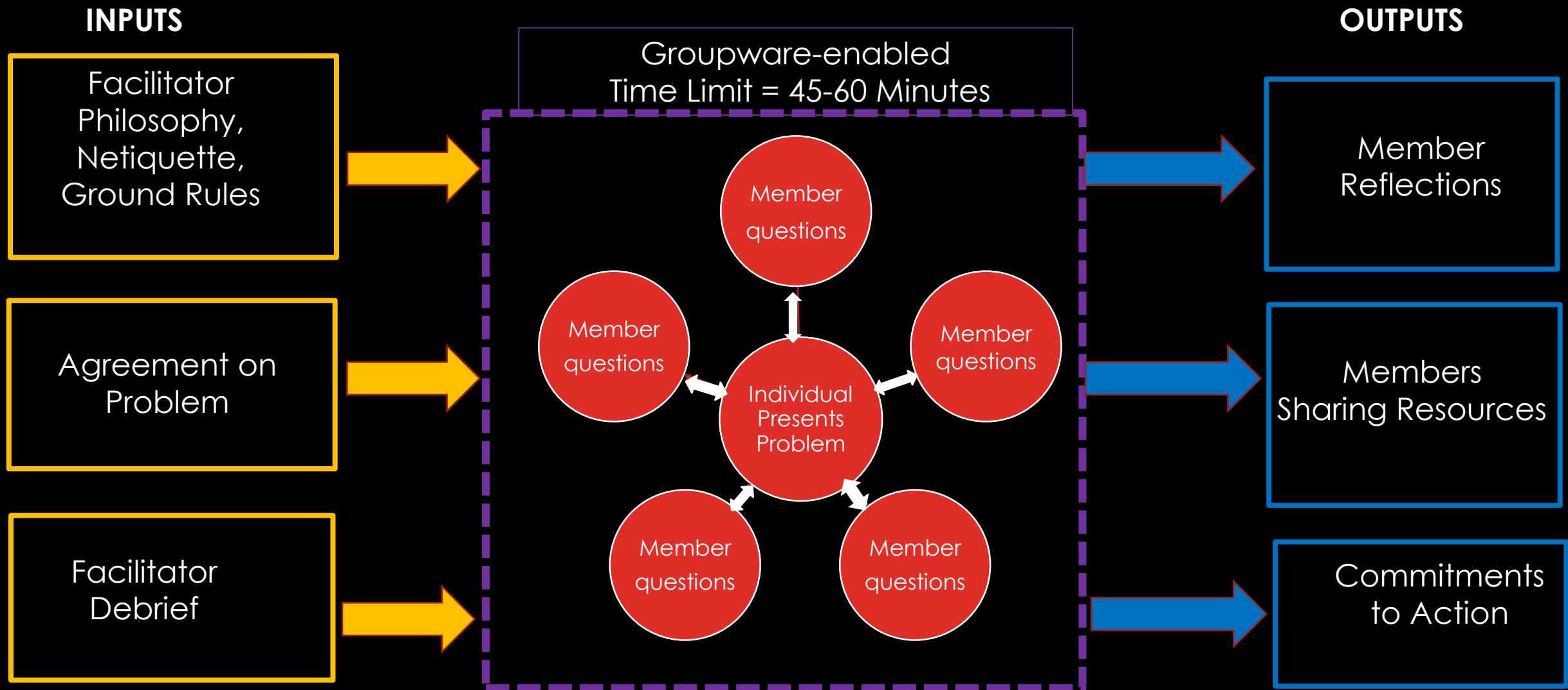
Waddill, D. and M. Marquardt (2011). ***The e-HR Advantage: The Complete Handbook for Technology-Enabled Human Resources***. Boston, MA, Nicholas Brealey Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-90483-834-0

# NEXT GENERATION: GROUPWARE



# DRAFT--WADDILL MODEL FOR SYNCHRONOUS ACTION LEARNING ONLINE

**Note:** Mitigate disruptive impact of technologies with alternatives.





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