

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR INNOVATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The public sector seems to have a culture and structure for control and improvement of ongoing activities, but lacks the culture and structures for innovation. Then capacity development among public staff can be an important method for the development of better conditions for innovation. The aim of this paper is to identify key factors in the achievement of good results when municipal and regional organisations carry out capacity development of employees with the aim of creating greater leeway for innovation in their organisation. The study behind this paper has looked at four different concrete cases, which has applied essentially different methods for capacity building about innovation issues. Data has been collected via semi-structured interviews with 39 respondents and analysed through a thematic analysis in three steps. The study shows that action learning makes it easier for employees to turn knowledge generated through action into reality. The study also shows that it seems difficult to work from a digital communication platform if the platform is not combined with physical meetings. The study shows that committed and hands-on leadership is very important and that it is important to clarify and work with the definition and understanding of what innovation is in the local context.

INTRODUCTION

The public sector needs new innovative processes and services (Albury, 2011). Juran (1964) states that all managerial activities should be directed either at a) control with boundaries within which the work can be improved, i.e., prevention of big changes, or b) breaking through into new levels of performance. It is when these two states work together that quality occurs. That is leeway for the development of ongoing processes and leeway for the development of radically new working methods and services, i.e., innovations. Leeway for both perspectives is important for the ability to reach quality and customer value in the long run. Wihlman (2014) argues that public management has higher capacity for the development of ongoing processes than for innovations. Therefore, is it important to create enabling conditions for innovation? Then capacity development among public staff can be an important method for the development of better conditions for innovation. This is something that several municipalities and public-sector organisations are aware of. Several municipalities and regional organisations in Sweden are working on capacity development in innovation. At the same time, several other municipalities and regional organisations are preparing for capacity development in innovation. For all these parties, it is important to take advantage of lessons learned from the municipalities and regional organisations that already have carried out capacity development in innovation.

This paper contributes with knowledge based on empirically gained experiences about strengths and weaknesses with different types of capacity development methods aimed at greater leeway for innovation in public organisations. The paper makes its starting point in the following research question: What are the key factors for achievement of good results when municipal and regional organisations carry out capacity development of employees with the aim of creating greater leeway for innovation in their organisation?

LITERATURE AND THEORY

In order to clarify the research question, it can be useful to define and describe certain key concepts. For example, one might define what the concept of "good result" really means in this context. One way to describe a good result is that greater leeway for innovation is created. The concept "greater leeway" is defined in this paper as high ability to act in new ways within the organisation. Act in new ways so innovative processes, products or services can be invented and implemented. The ability to act in new ways can be based on knowledge and understanding of a given topic or challenge, the ability to see solutions, commitment and willingness to participate and develop the organisation. The ability to act in new ways does not necessarily mean that one de facto act (Almers, 2009).

Another key concept for understanding the aim is "key factors", which means major factors that affect whether the education effort provides ability to act in new ways.

Even the concept of "capacity development" may need to be clarified. Capacity development can be described in different ways. For example, Billet and Hodge, (2016) argue that: "*The changing nature of work, requirements for occupational practice and ways in which work is undertaken mean that workers need to learn across their working lives in ways that build their capacities to respond to these changes and position them as productive and viable employees*" (p 10). Hence, there is a need to intentionally develop the capacities required for continued delivery of relevant and services with high quality.

Furthermore, previous research on success factors for learning at work shows that a clear success factor is action learning. That is learning by doing. Research shows that employees have an easier way of turning knowledge generated through action into reality – and that the most powerful learning often occurs in a context of taking action, and that value engagement and experience are the most effective teachers. It seems to be that learning by doing often develops a deeper and more profound knowledge and greater commitment than learning by reading, listening, planning, or thinking (DuFour, R., et al., 2016).

This is also in line with the Swedish Research Council's research on education, adult learning and learning in working life (VR, 2014). The Swedish Research Council finds that there once existed a narrow interpretation of learning as memorising information and facts, while today it is more about developing skills for development and meaning-creating activities. One example of action learning is design-led processes that have been identified as an enabling method for the development of innovation capacity in the public sector (Bason, 2010 and Bessant & Maher, 2009).

On the whole, it can be difficult to accurately determine what capacity development as a method of achieving greater leeway for innovation is. Employees' own

actions in the process makes it difficult to distinguish learning from work with actual innovation implementation activities. The dedication to and work of an innovation process may well be the best way to achieve capacity development in innovation. Therefore is the definition of capacity development in this paper: knowledge development through planned methodology for the purpose of generating high ability to act in new ways within the organisation.

As the work of capacity development may be action learning, i.e., to carry out an innovation process, it might be interesting to look at previous research on success factors for innovation processes in public administration. Previous research shows that different perspectives and descriptions of key factors follow no common structure. They are described from different angles and do partly overlap one another. However, one possible compilation and description of previous research on key factors for innovation in public administration is the following 13 factors:

- 1) A committed and hands-on leadership;
- 2) a permissive organisational culture with leaders who tolerate failure;
- 3) a shared vision among those involved in the innovation process;
- 4) paying attention to the needs and expectations of users and frontline staff;
- 5) promote formal creativity techniques;
- 6) structure to support further development of innovations, e.g., incubators, labs and innovation intermediaries;
- 7) internal as well as external networking;
- 8) overcome short-term delivery pressure;
- 9) time to try out the innovation;
- 10) leeway for experimentation with the innovation;
- 11) design-led innovation processes;
- 12) knowledge support to those who will use the innovation and
- 13) financial and human resources (Palm & Algehed, 2017).

There is also ever-increasing research on e-learning and its strengths and weaknesses. Scholars have identified various barriers for e-learning in public administration at the local level as a training method (Stoffregen et al., 2016) and have elevated the needs to develop the method. Such development includes the use of blended learning, with a plethora of documented models, cases, and examples involving the mixing of face-to-face with online learning (Kim, et al., 2008; Bonk & Graham, 2006). Blended learning is by several researchers described as a method likely to emerge as the predominant model of the future (Watson, 2008; Graham, 2013; Siemens, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to answer the research question, the study reported in this paper has been carried out through a qualitative method. Empirical data have been collected through semi-structured interviews with 39 respondents. The interviews have been conducted either face to face or via phone. The interviews were conducted between October 2016 and February 2017.

The questions used as starting points have been: What are your expectations with your participation? Can you in practice use what you learn? Do you perceive the methodology well adopted to the aim with your participation, i.e., raised knowledge for development of better conditions for innovation? What have been the enabling factors for your capacity development? What can be further developed with the methodology? Can you see that you have used gained knowledge in processes aiming at greater leeway for innovation at your work place?

The empirical data is gathered from four different initiatives working with different methods for capacity development. The selection criteria for these four different initiatives have been that the initiatives have had staff as target group, that the methods of capacity development have distinguished between the different initiatives and that it has been possible to study initiatives in the years 2016 and 2017. The initiatives studied were carried out in Lund Municipality (LM), Oxelösund Municipality (OM), Region Sörmland (RS) and Region Jämtland Härjedalen (RJH). Below are the four initiatives described.

LUND MUNICIPALITY (LM)

In 2015 and 2016, Lund has been working on competence development regarding innovation for all top managers in the municipality's management team. This led to the municipality offering a specific competence development day for the municipality's managers at all levels on the topic of innovation management. Some administrations in the municipality have subsequently continued to deepen their work on innovation management. In this, the business department of the municipality has offered competence development and support. Competence development in innovation has been carried out through a combination of internal films, via internet, workshops and mentorship. The municipality's business department has also collaborated with an external organisational consultant in these efforts. The consultant has conducted a number of seminars and workshops with parts of the municipality's staff. The external consultant has worked with methodologies such as Appreciative Enquiry, Design Methodology and Scenario Planning.

OXELÖSUND MUNICIPALITY (OM)

The municipality's management has seen that cross-border work fuels more innovative ideas. As a consequence, Oxelösund municipality invited other municipalities in the Sörmland region to a common innovation process in 2016 with the aim to develop their capacity and work on existing challenges in their respective operations. The work was conducted in 2016 in the form of workshops where different innovation groups meet, developed capacity and worked with their challenges. Nine different innovation groups (work team) with different identified development needs were included in the work. The participants (staff from

different municipalities and Region Sörmland) were trained in design methodology and met in four workshops over a nine-month period. Between the meetings, the teams carried out their own research and analysis work at home. The idea was that participants get skills and become the bearers of the methodology through practical participation – and that they also contribute to continued dissemination of the innovation development methodology within their organisations. This innovation process has a strong methodology component of user involvement and of testing and learning. The process has been managed by two project managers employed by the municipality who, prior to the capacity development initiative, underwent method training in service design processes.

REGION SÖRMLAND (RS)

The organisation "R&D Sörmland" and the Regional Association Sörmland gave the Mälardalen University, the department for innovation management, the task of implementing a training programme in innovation management for staff in the regional organisation and at some municipalities. From Mälardalen University, nine people have been involved in this training programme. Participants in the education programme have been politicians, managers, development strategists and quality managers in municipalities and in the region. The training has been conducted with three parallel tracks: the manager track, the innovation leader track and the politician track. The manager track was aiming at giving managers a deeper understanding of the relationship between the organisation's structures and innovation processes. The innovation leader track should lead to the development of the ability to plan and implement creative processes to increase employee innovation skills. The politician track should lead to an understanding of the needs and conditions for strategies and decisions related to innovations.

The training programme was conducted with ten meetings with innovation leaders, five meetings for managers from participating organisations and two meetings with politicians. The meetings have been carried out with about four weeks of intervals. Between the meetings, innovation leaders worked with different tasks related to the knowledge development process.

REGION JÄMTLAND HÄRJEDALEN (RJH)

Region Jämtland Härjedalen has the goal to reach a cultural change at the regional level by 2020. The idea is to achieve a change in the sense that they have a new approach to innovation in which the individual is focused and allowed to cooperate more broadly through open platforms and meeting places.

The ability to lead innovation processes has been found to be important. Therefore, in 2015–2017, an initiative was undertaken in cooperation between private companies and the region Jämtland Härjedalen to develop a web-based innovation management platform. The platform was running open innovation processes

where more than 80% of innovation management has taken place at the digital platform. The initiative has been implemented with a web portal providing material in innovation management. The initiative has also included capacity development through educational modules and coaching via web meetings and some consultation with physical meetings with the target group.

The target group of the initiative has mainly been small and medium-sized companies, but also public employees in the region's healthcare actors. During the project, a continuous process has been ongoing to change and adapt content of the initiative to users with different knowledge levels and needs.

The selection of the 39 respondents from the four initiatives was made through a strategic selection in order to get information from different projects responsible and participants with a spread in skills, engagement, participants who chose to jump off the capacity development initiatives and who carried out the entire effort. Furthermore, a spread of gender has been sought.

In the analysis of the empirical material, a thematic analysis inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006), Silverman (2010) and Ritchie et al. (2013) has been used. The analysis was done in three steps. In the first step, the information from the respondents was sorted out in relation to the research objective. In the second step, the relevant interview material was analysed to identify the most prominent views. Each interview was analysed separately and respondents' statements about key factors for achievement of good results were sorted and written down in a matrix. The statements from the various respondents were compared, and statements of the same type were put in a common category. When new types of statements occurred, they formed new categories and thereby the number of categories expanded.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data collected during the 39 conducted interviews contain many different answers and opinions. The collected data can be seen as the results in the study. However, all 39 interviews are not presented word by word (because nobody wants a 100-page research report). There has been a "selection of data" process related to the information the respondents gave. Through that process, the analysis of the collected data is directly intertwined with the presentation of the results. The first sub-chapter (4.1) contains a presentation of the results and analysis on a compiled level, i.e., a summary of factors mentioned in one, two, three or all four initiatives. These factors are, according to the respondents, important in order to achieve good results for the capacity development programme when municipal and regional organisations carry out capacity development with the aim of creating greater leeway for innovation.

The second sub-chapter (4.2) presents a comparison between the four initiatives. That sub-chapter presents the results and analysis of how the interviewees in the various initiatives perceive that their capacity development method has resulted in greater leeway for innovation.

The analysis (in both sub-chapters) is based on the assumption that respondents' perception of key factors for achievement of good results are actually the key factors. It is not obvious that the respondents' perception of key factors is the truth, but there is also no reason to assume that they are not. So in this report, the statements from respondents are taken to be the truth without further problematisation.

Eleven identified key factors are listed below, complemented by a number of illustrative quotes from the interviewees. The quotes exemplify the statements that form the basis for the essential factors. The quotes are shown in italics. There is no ranking between the presented factors. Thus, it is a random presentation of the eleven factors.

INSIGHT INTO THE NEED FOR INNOVATION

LM: A foundation for success with capacity development is to create an understanding of why it is important to work with the actual issue, or in this case, why it is important with leeway for innovation. If a target group does not understand *why* it is important, it is meaningless to work on *how* it should be carried out. It is also important to emphasise that innovation processes have to be carried out in cooperation with, or by employees who meet the citizens.

Respondent from LM: *Usually, you do not think you have time to work with development, you must understand why it is important.*

RJH: Organisations and companies have focus on the process of ongoing operations and little or no space for radical business development. Many of the interviewees argue that there is virtually no space for organisational development at all and no time for work processes concerning innovation.

Respondent from RJH: *It is about maturity and insight into needs.*

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT

OM: Several interviewees emphasise the importance of management support in order to allocate time for capacity development in innovation issues.

Respondent from OM: *It would be good if we got a political mission. A clear political position.*

LM: The interviewees emphasise the need for managers to support the capacity development in innovation processes. It is therefore important to work with competence development for managers in the municipality at an initial stage. Innovation management

can be a component of a regular executive education program.

Respondent from ML: *We have a management emphasising that one must dare and that it is OK to fail.*

RS: An expression often mentioned during the interviews is that one has "lack of time". One cannot work with either capacity development or innovation. The working day is full of already ongoing activities. Several of the interviewees consider it important to relieve participants in capacity development programmes from regular tasks so that participants can afford the necessary time for this capacity development. Thus, it becomes important to consider what signals the management sends and how management shows that competence development about innovation is a prioritised activity.

Respondent from RS: *You need to be relieved of regular tasks, which unfortunately is not on the agenda.*

DEVELOP THE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE CONCEPT OF INNOVATION STANDS FOR

LM: In some contexts, the notion of innovation can be perceived as fluttery or worn. At the same time, there is often a high expectation in the concept. An expectation that it will change people's lives. It may be important to be clear about what we mean by the term, or just not use the term.

Respondent from ML: *I have toned down the word 'innovation' in order to get everyone to feel involved.*

OM: The notion of innovation is difficult. The term has no thematic focus and no clear definitions. The concept opens up for different expectations and images of what an innovative work can mean. By focusing on innovations, without a thematic focus, one can feel that it is the method (to work innovatively) that controls the development need and not the contrary. The need for the method (to be innovative) can be perceived as more important than the need to develop a particular topic.

Respondent from OM: *Some have felt pressured to be forced into this and then it has been difficult. The initiative can be perceived a little strange, like having a method to be filled with something, not the opposite.*

RS: Some of the interviewees argue that the concept of innovation is a burdened word that may discourage many employees. It is therefore important to de-dramatise the term and to explain in concrete terms what it is about.

Respondent from RS: *Talking about development and "using new technology in a social context" makes it less dangerous.*

RJH: During the interviews in Jämtland and Härjedalen, the need to clarify the term 'innovation' is emphasised. The term is perceived as complicated and difficult to communicate.

Respondent from RJH: It is not possible to underestimate the importance of conducting a fundamental discussion of what innovation is.

PLAN FOR SMALL-SCALE EXPERIMENTS

LM: In the capacity development activities, one can also work with small-scale test activities. This allows participants to directly apply new knowledge in action.

Respondent from ML: *We work with some test projects on a small scale, then it works.*

CREATE TRUST

LM: When sharing ideas and learning from each other, honesty about challenges and difficulties is important. Interviewers describe that it is important to make an honest analysis about the situation in participants' organisations. A sincerity for difficulties and shortcomings is an important ingredient for a good exchange. To succeed in this, trust is required. Trust in the process and in each other.

Respondent from ML: *We did not do the trust journey. Everyone retired back home. We did not feel trust in each other and the process totally crashed.*

ENCOURAGE CURIOSITY

LM: Some of the interviewees believe that the role of a capacity developer is to encourage curiosity. This is also in line with an expressed need to encourage monitoring and business intelligence and curiosity about how other organisations solve similar problems.

Respondent from LM: *It is important to create incentives for business intelligence and interest in learning from others.*

RELATE FACT TO PARTICIPANTS' OWN REALITY

ML: The interviewees express that a success factor for effective capacity development is knowledge related to and developed from the participants' own context.

Respondent from ML: *The best thing is when you have to think outside of your own daily life. Otherwise you have to try to apply theoretical knowledge and that is normally very difficult.*

RS: At the same time, some of the interviewees experience that the capacity development initiative, to some extent, not has been able to adapt the content to the participants' everyday work reality. Several participants describe that their experience is that the course has had too much classical university education methodology. At the same time, some of the interviewees believe that the greatest strength of the course was when they were in, as they describe it: an "active learning loop". By this, they mean that they have learned a method, used it in their own organisation, reported results and received feedback from the course management. By doing so, the participant has tested, reflected and built his/her own understanding of the method. The interviewees argue

that supervision occasions, which were related to the participants' own concrete projects, have been very valuable. Several interviewees emphasise that this has been the greatest asset in capacity building activities.

Respondent from RS: *We said we want supervision. We got it and it was great! Why did they not run it like that at once so that we could talk about our own projects?*

OM: Several of the interviewees stress that the biggest challenge is to move on from developed knowledge to actual implementation of innovations. The interviewees argue that it is easier to continue the innovation development process after attending capacity development workshops and seminars where focus has been on one's own reality and the situation in the workplace.

Respondent from OM: *Most executives have the rhetoric for innovation, but one does not realise - before you really test and implement - the consequences of an innovative way of working.*

SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS FROM THE SAME DEPARTMENT

OM: It is perceived as an advantage if more participants than one, from the same department, can participate in the capacity development activities. The respondents express that it is easier to juggle ideas with each other and at the same time easier to translate acquired knowledge into everyday practice.

Respondent from OM: *It's good if you are at least two from each department participating in the capacity development programme.*

RS: The interviewees express that a strength of the method was not to be a single participant from each department. It is expressed that, by having two or more from the same department participate, it is possible for them to strengthen each other. This thereby increases the likelihood that the effort yields results in the self-run business at home.

Respondent from RS: *We are two from our group. It's very good that we are two. Then we can discuss issues with each other.*

BRING TOGETHER PARTICIPANTS WITH DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

OM: If it is possible to establish workgroups across departmental or professional boundaries, this can be a strength and increase the prerequisites for the capacity development initiative to result in greater leeway for innovation in the organisations.

Respondent from MO: *Good to have exchanges across municipal boundaries. Participants can share ideas based on different experiences.*

RS: Several interviewees mention that it is positive with participants from different organisations and administrations. This creates the opportunity to learn from each other and create a valuable exchange.

Someone believes that the capacity development initiative would have gained on having a developed opportunity for exchange of experience and that the participants could be better utilised by bringing in different experiences.

Respondent from RS: *Great that not everyone is from the same place, but mixed groups. Great!*

CLEAR INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND ANTICIPATED TIME REQUIRED

OM: Some of the interviewees initially pointed out that, in a competence development programme that runs over several months, is important to understand the whole and why it starts as it does. This is especially true when dealing with such difficult phenomena as innovation and design thinking. It is therefore considered important to inform participants early in a capacity development initiative how the whole process will look so that the participants feel confident.

At the same time, this need must be matched with the need to be adaptive and work with a flexible process. Possibly, therefore, it may be important to initially explain that it can be constructive to carry on with a certain measure of uncertainty.

Respondent from OM: *I was extremely frustrated at the beginning of the first part, I thought - what is this? I almost threw in the towel.*

RS: Several of the interviewees express that the information at the start of the capacity development initiative was unclear. The interviewees argue that it initially would have been good with a clearer presentation of the entire process. Someone expressed that the capacity development setup was messy. The experience of a messy introduction may also depend on different expectations of the participants in relation to the university's plans. The participants had expected a "creative workshop" while the university presented the initiative from other perspectives, such as the need for user and citizen involvement. This created frustration. Participants wanted to generate ideas right from the start while the university emphasised the importance of not starting idea creation without interest mapping. In addition, initially, the participants did not really understand how much time they needed to attend the education. The capacity development initiative was perceived as more extensive than the participant was prepared for.

Respondent from RS: *A lesson for us as organisers is that we should have emphasised that the work effort for the participants lies between the seminar meetings. That's where the majority of the 100 hours of commitment lie, and that the work effort is about involving users and stakeholders.*

RJH: There is a need for better explanation for the target groups that capacity development in innovation is not just about a few workshops, but it is also about working

between these workshops. To be successful, those who are going to work on innovation issues need to be able to prioritise this in relation to other tasks.

Respondent from RJH: *It is believed that a development project can be driven by some workshops. That you do not have to work between meetings. One must realise that one has to deliver between the workshop occasions. However, it is not about motivation, it is about lack of experiences from project management.*

DIGITAL PLATFORM REQUIRES HIGH LEVEL OF IT MATURITY

RJH: A platform for innovation management and capacity development without physical meetings requires a high degree of IT maturity. The target groups' previous experiences of digital collaboration and the degree of maturity for working with digital tools is an important factor for success or failure in capacity development through digital platforms.

Respondent from RJH: *A digital platform can be effective, but digital prerequisites are required. You must have some experience of working with digital room.*

FOUR DIFFERENT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT METHODS

This section describes how the respondents perceive that the capacity development efforts contribute, or do not contribute, to greater leeway for innovation in their organisation.

Several of the interviewees in Lund express that the leadership development program has contributed to insight about the need for innovation, but not knowledge about how to do it. Furthermore, the organisation's managers share that it is generally difficult to get employees to work with change processes and that clearer structures are needed for the innovative work to be done. In conclusion, the respondents express that the carried-out capacity development initiative, to a low extent, has resulted in greater leeway for innovation.

The interviewees in Oxelösund express that employees have got concrete tools for development of the organisation's capacity to be innovative. The respondents express that the user's perspective has been taken into account to a greater extent than before. It has been realised that implementation of innovations in their own organisation represents the biggest obstacle to radical change. Employees feel that job satisfaction has increased. The interviewees argue that through the design method, capacity development has been reached which can lead to greater leeway for innovation. However, the respondents express that the major challenge is to convince colleagues of the benefits of the new working methods.

In Sörmland, managers, innovation leaders and politicians in the region have gained new perspectives

and knowledge about how to work with change processes. The work has brought about new ideas and tools for working on innovation. The effects are at a knowledge level. The interviews indicate that many of the development projects in their respective organisations would have been done anyway, but now they do it with the tools they learned during the course. The moment of the capacity building that the participants themselves find the most useful are stakeholder analysis and methods for collecting data among target groups. However, it is believed that the capacity development has not reached all the way to creating greater leeway for innovation.

In the region of Jämtland Härjedalen, the result is increased insight among the target groups about the need to work systematically with innovation as well as an increased insight into the need to focus on strengths in the innovation processes. The initiative has also provided increased knowledge of difficulties and challenges in cooperation between private and public stakeholders. However, the interviews indicate that the project has had difficulty to achieve a good result through capacity development with the aim of creating greater leeway for innovation.

CONCLUSION

The research question is; what constitutes key factors for achievement of good results when municipal and regional organisations carry out capacity development of employees with the aim of creating greater leeway for innovation in their organisation?

This study shows that action learning makes it easier for employees to turn knowledge generated through action into reality. This seems to work well in design-inspired methodology. On the whole, does design-based methodology seem to be a well-functioning method of capacity development leading to good results when municipal and regional organisations carry out capacity development of employees with the aim to create greater leeway for innovation in their organisation. This result is in line with Bason (2010) and Bessant & Maher (2009) shown previously.

The study also shows that it seems difficult to work from a digital communication platform if the platform is not combined with physical meetings. The increasing research on e-learning identifies various limitations of e-learning as a training method and uncovers the need to develop the method. Such development can include the use of blended learning, with a plethora of documented models, cases, and examples involving the mixing of face-to-face with online learning (Kim, et al., 2008); Bonk & Graham, 2006). Also, action learning seems to work well in combination with digital platforms in blended learning. This is also in line with previous research, (e.g., DuFour et al., 2016). Several researchers describe blended learning as a method that is likely to emerge as the predominant model of the future (Watson, 2008; Graham, 2013; Siemens, 2014).

On the whole, a large number of important perspectives within a “committed and hands-on leadership” exist. This is in line with previous research showing that the leadership to a large extent affects the ability to create leeway for innovation in organisations (Palm and Algehed, 2017; Birken et al., 2015; Denti, 2013; Albury, 2011; Choi and Chang, 2009).

The study behind this article also identifies some possible key factors not previously described as essential for capacity development aiming at greater leeway for innovation. The data in the study behind this article indicate that there is a specific challenge for design methodology in the implementation phase of the innovation process. It also indicates that it is important to - in addition to the final beneficiaries - focus on colleagues in the own organisations.

Another challenge is to disseminate knowledge in the organisation beyond those directly involved in the design process. It seems to be common that knowledge about the design process stays among those directly involved in the capacity development process and does not become spread among other colleagues in the organisation.

Also some specification of the important leadership factor has been done in this study. Among a broad spectrum of management factors, there seems to be three factors that are more important than all the others. a) The ability to allocate time for capacity development appears to be the most commonly mentioned factor. This factor is referred to both as a “killing factor” when this time is lacking and as a success factor when time is “created” by the leadership. b) Managers need to consciously communicate why it is important to work innovatively. This “why” has to precede working on the question of “how” to create leeway for innovation. c) Managers’ participation at different levels in capacity development initiatives is an important factor. Even if managers are not the best suited to drive innovative development, they need to create support for the employees so that they have time and interest in participating in capacity development initiatives.

Another factor mentioned in a large number of interviews in all four initiatives is the need to clarify what the concept of innovation stands for. Several of the interviewees argue that it is difficult to work with innovation because it has no thematic residence. The interviewees testify that it means “different or better of something within any thematic area”.

The study also shows that it is very important to initially be clear about and communicate the coming process and how much time it is expected that the participants shall invest in the capacity development initiative. It also turns out that it is important for the capacity development target group to come with different experiences and that more than one participant from the same department is included in the development initiative at the same time.

IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Hopefully, this paper shows a number of important aspects to consider when municipalities and regional organisations plan their capacity development initiatives in innovation. By taking these aspects into account, enabling conditions can be created for capacity building and thereby a greater leeway for innovation can be achieved in municipalities and regional organisations.

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