



Vicarious Team Learning

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Vicarious Team Learning, Defined

“the process by which teams learn from the task experiences of others outside the team itself”

Involves multiple...

–Sources

- Members of past teams, other internal experts, external experts, post mortem reports, etc.

–Kinds of knowledge

- Information v. know-how, technical v. process, ‘know-who’

Bottom-line: how to get the job done in absence of critical task experience inside the team!



Preliminary Findings

(43 drug development teams in 8 firms)

- *Vicarious team learning* is a real and distinct team level process
- *Vicarious team learning* is positively associated with performance
- Management can proactively help teams to learn vicariously by putting in place *enablers*

⇒ This study is targeted to identify enablers in LAI context!



Examples...

“The team before us had developed this check-list of criteria to use when evaluating the proprietary position of a molecule. It was great. We used a copy of that list”

*Team Member
Alpha*



Examples...

“We were given the instrumentation used by another team, and a guy from that team even took time to show us how to use the equipment. But still it took quite a while before we had learned how to operate it. This is something of an art.”

*Team Member
Alpha*



Examples...

“We scientists took expertise from what another team had done and from our lawyers and mixed it all together to come up with something that was better, and better for us”

*Team Member
Alpha*



Examples...

“It would make an enormous difference if we could go outside for experience. We would if we could.”

*Team Member
Beta*



Next...

- **Extend findings in the LAI context**
 - Why? Potential performance improvements!
- **Data**
 - Product development teams or equivalent
- **Requirements**
 - 1 short briefing with team leader or equivalent (20 min)
 - 3 short questionnaires per team (10 min each)
 - Number of teams: 50
- **Output**
 - Plenary workshop, mid-March, 2004
 - Benchmark reports