

Reflections from the Lead Economist, Public-Private Partnerships, from the World Bank Institute

A symposium entitled Strengthening Governance for Infrastructure Service Delivery: The Role of Public Private Partnerships, held in Manila in March 2009, presented pragmatic governance learning materials to staff from participating training institutions. The symposium's ultimate goal was to help strengthen these institutions' learning programs to better address the governance capacity-building requirements of the public sector in their respective countries. Its interactive format allowed participants from across the Asia-Pacific region to apply the principles of the Learning Spiral to assess the strategic design of the MP3IC learning materials, and determine the effectiveness of the symposium in engaging educators and academics from across the Asia Pacific region in the MP3IC design process.

The Learning Spiral was introduced at the symposium's outset. Its framework helped focus the delegates' discussion on the challenges of government training and e-learning processes, and helped them consider the role of learning materials in this context. The framework has helped guide the design of learning delivery strategies for public sector officials with its emphasis on cutting-edge pedagogy and multimedia technology to transform research findings and practice into messages that developing-country public sector professionals can use in their day-to-day problem solving.

The eight stages of the Learning Spiral provided a structured approach to develop the MP3IC global training and e-learning initiative, while also improving its strategic direction. Each stage provided a checklist of consideration points; these included the need to understand the learning requirements of the target audience. The eight stages also include reference to the need to identify effective learning access and delivery options, as well as the need to select content whose relevance is tested by target audiences. Finally, the stages include references to the steps needed to guarantee that knowledge transformation is achieved, and to make a reassessment to appropriately configure the next spin of the Learning Spiral.

The Learning Spiral concept served as a constructive platform for exploring critical pedagogy challenges and evaluating and strengthening the strategic design of the MP3IC global learning program.

Prior to the symposium, MP3IC had already begun to engage with the target audience through surveys, focus group discussions, and workshops held across the Asia-Pacific region. This allowed for pilot testing of the learning materials at different stages of development among diverse audience groups, including senior infrastructure policy makers, infrastructure program and project managers, and a broad range of technical practitioners. It also involved technical and pedagogy specialists in design and development, as well as an exhaustive quality review of all learning materials. The symposium was an important part of the consultation process, as it enabled in-depth discussion with potential partners on learning content and delivery, to explore areas of synergy and pragmatic business models for collaboration.

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