

Integrative Action: An Action Research Approach



Rauno Pirinen

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Finland








UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Finland

INTRODUCTION TO LAUREA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

- One of the largest Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland (more than 8000 students)
- Centre of excellence **in the regional development** in 2003 - 2004 and 2006 - 2007
- Centre of excellence in education in 2005 - 2006 and 2008 - 2009
- Innovative in
 - learning methods - applications, culture of learning 
 - learning environments (incl. the use of information technology)
 - regional development
 - using the networks (companies, specialised experts, international partners etc.)
- 16 Bachelor's Programmes (5 in English and 11 in Finnish)
- 6 Master's Programmes in Finnish and 2 in English

Three tasks according the law

Practical relevance of constructive problem (2001 - 2008):



- There are three tasks for Universities of Applied Sciences according the law:



- education
- research and development
- regional development

Practical relevance of constructive problem (2001 - 2009)

Learning by Developing (LbD)



Construction and problem solution (2001 – 2009)

A new culture of learning:

- LbD systematically seeks answers to problems that require new knowledge to be solved.
- The core of the LbD model is formed by object-oriented work, which means that learning focuses on genuine development of the world of work.

- **CONTENT**
- **Introduction to Research and Methods**
- **Theoretical background**
- **Models and implementation**
- **Experimental evaluation and conclusions**

Action Research (Regional development perspective)

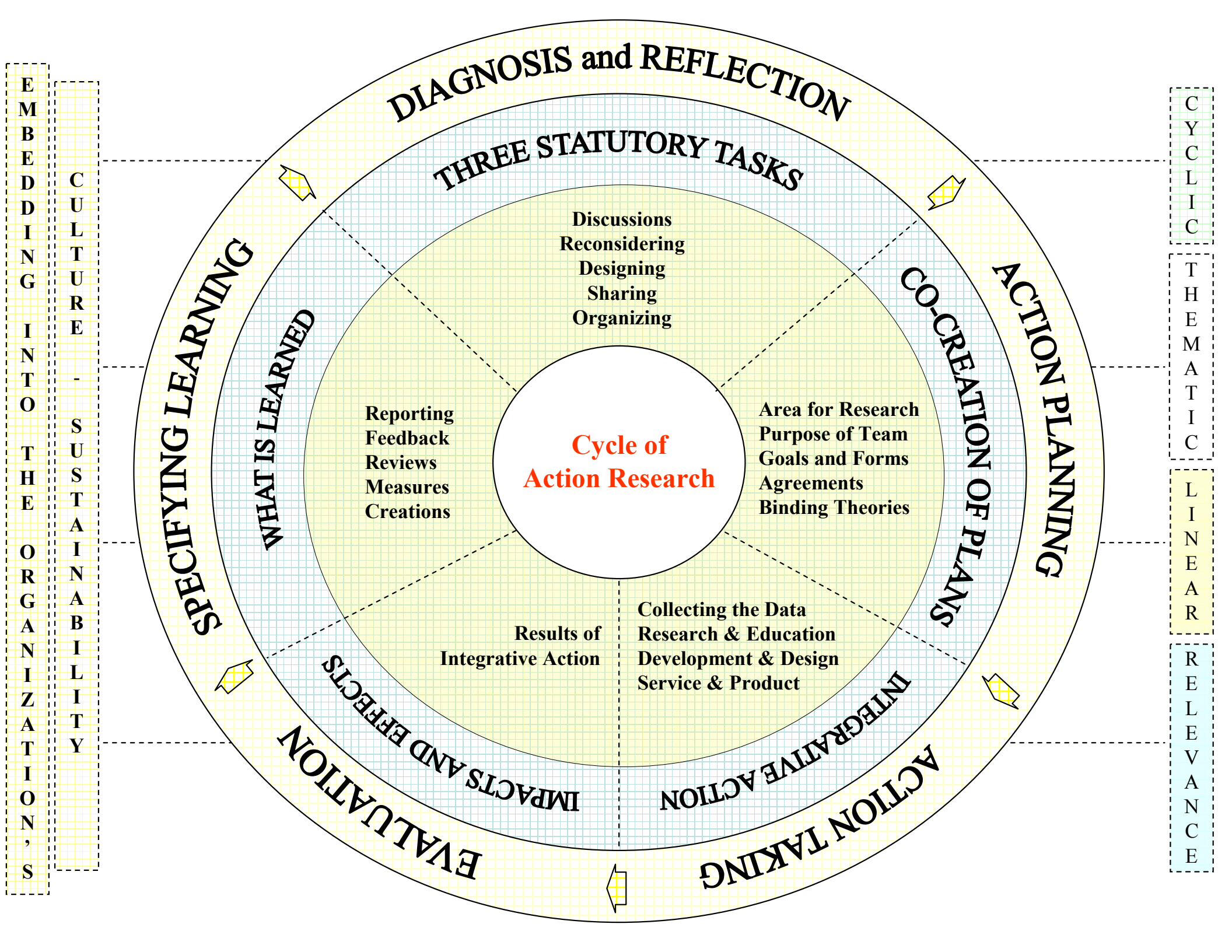
Intervention 1:

Intervention 2:

The overall research question to be investigated in this ongoing dissertation study is: How can these three statutory tasks be integrated for the study of a university of applied sciences? Specifically in this study: **What are the results and influences of integrative regional development action** from the perspective of the FINHEEC evaluations, conducted from 2001 to 2008 at Laurea University of Applied Sciences?

May 2001 to June 2003

June 2003 to June 2006



Overview of Action Research (AR) Processes

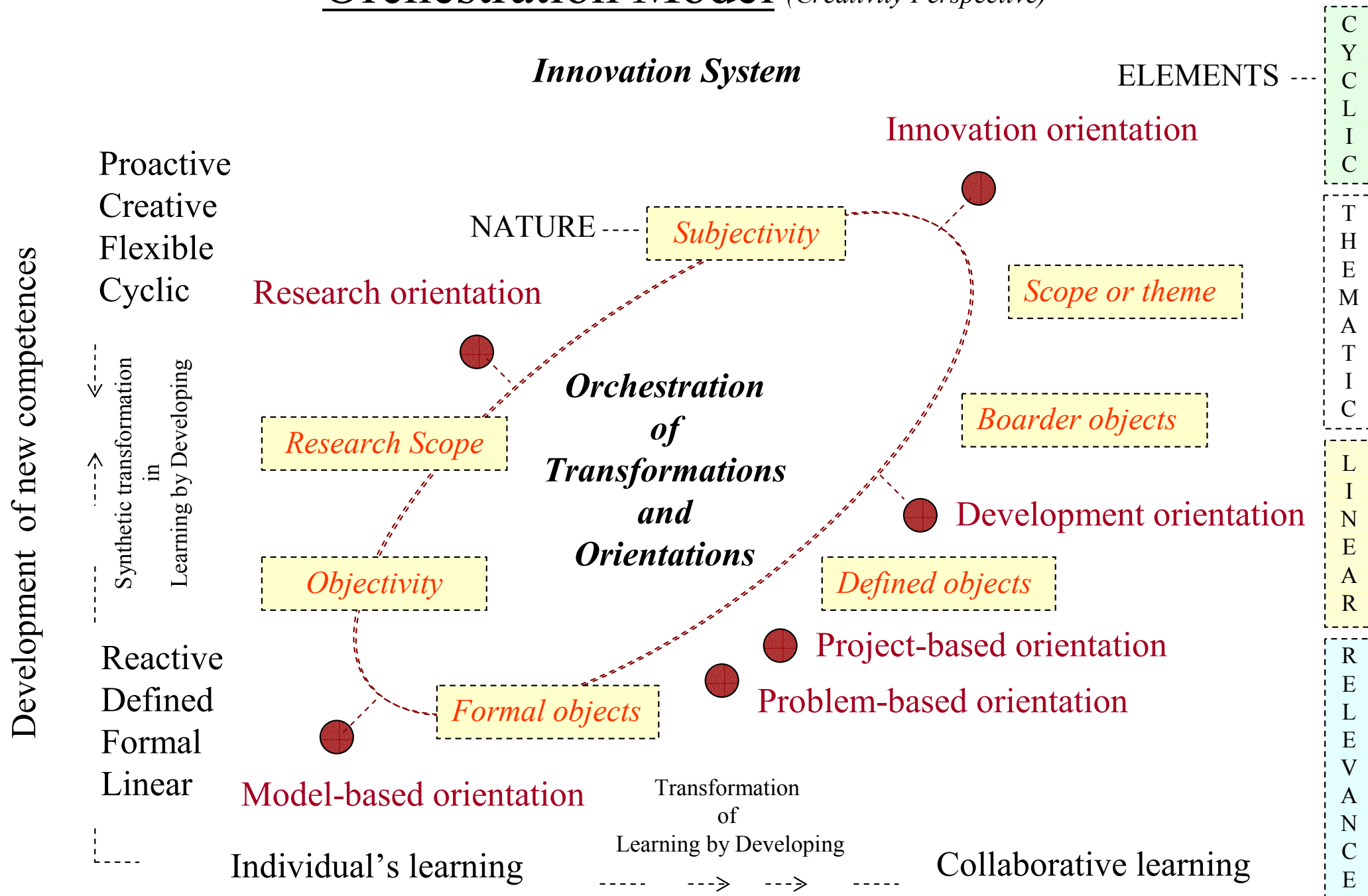
		Susman and Evered 1978	Checkland and Holwell 1998	McKay and Marshall 2001	Sustainable Action Research in Integrative Action 2001-2009
	Initiating	Establish the client-system infrastructure	1. Enter problem situation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identity: problem and research theme 2. Reconnaissance: problem context and research literature 3. Plan and design: problem solving and research questions 	<p>Sustainable implementation of three statutory tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education 2. Research and development 3. Regional development
	Iterating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosing 2. Action planning 3. Action taking 4. Evaluating 5. Specifying learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Establish roles 3. Declare framework and methodology 4. Take part in change process 5. Rethink 2-4 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Action steps 5. Implement 6. Monitor: problem-solving and research 7. Evaluate in terms of problem alleviation and research questions 8. Amend plan based on 7. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosis and reflection 2. Action planning: co-creation of plans 3. Action taking 4. Evaluation 5. Specifying learning
	Closing		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Exit 7. Reflect on experience and recording learning in relation to framework, methodology and problem situation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Exit, if: problems alleviated and research question resolved 	Embedding into the organization's culture: sustainably and continuously, returning to initiation, no closure
Integrative Action and Sustainable Action Research 2001-2009					

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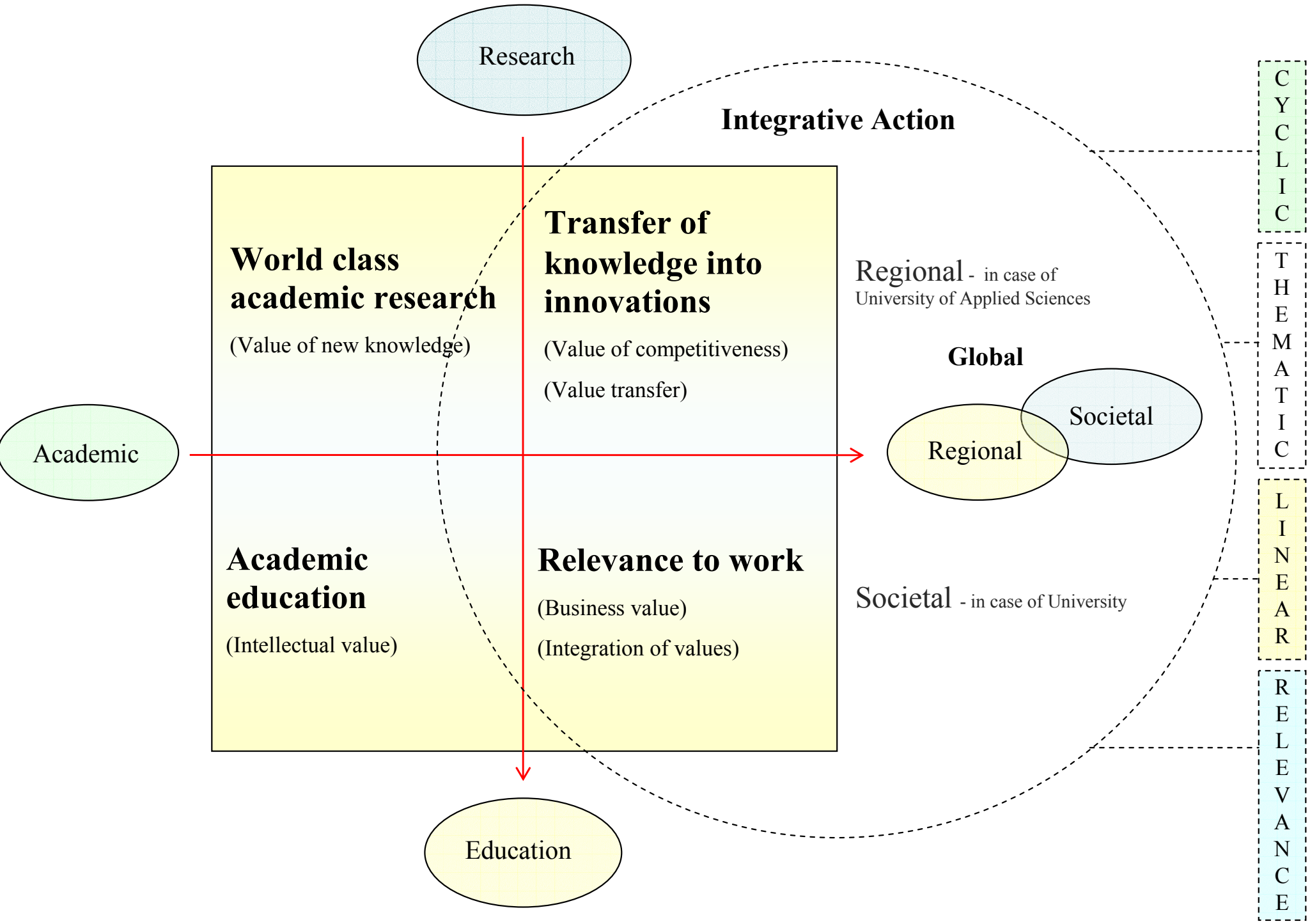
Learning in the Integrative Action (three perspectives implemented)

Knowledge Acquisition (1)	Participation (2)	Knowledge creation (3)
knowledge transferring	knowledge sharing	new knowledge creation
process of learning within individual's mind	social activities and practices as bases for learning	new knowledge objects and activities are collaboratively created
constructivism based on	socio-constructivism based on	freedom of methods and support for creativity
process-based	progressive	creative
co-instructive	co-operative	co-constructive
reactive	active	proactive
Element of Processing Nature	Element of Knowledge Sharing Community	Element of Knowledge and Innovation Community

Orchestration Model *(Creativity Perspective)*



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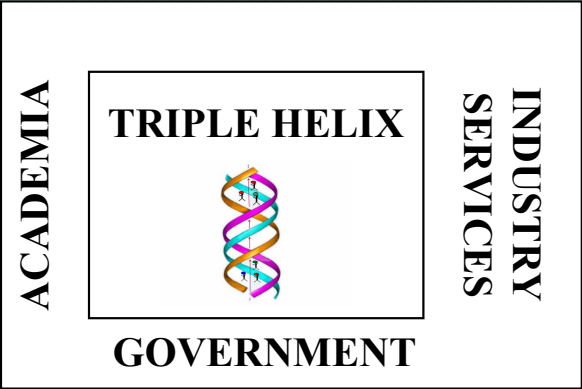


RELEVANCE

LINEAR

THEMATIC

CYCLIC



INNOVATION FUNDINGS

INNOVATION SYSTEM

SUSTAINABILITY

WELFARE and SAFETY

QUALITY

RESEARCH

PROGRAMMES

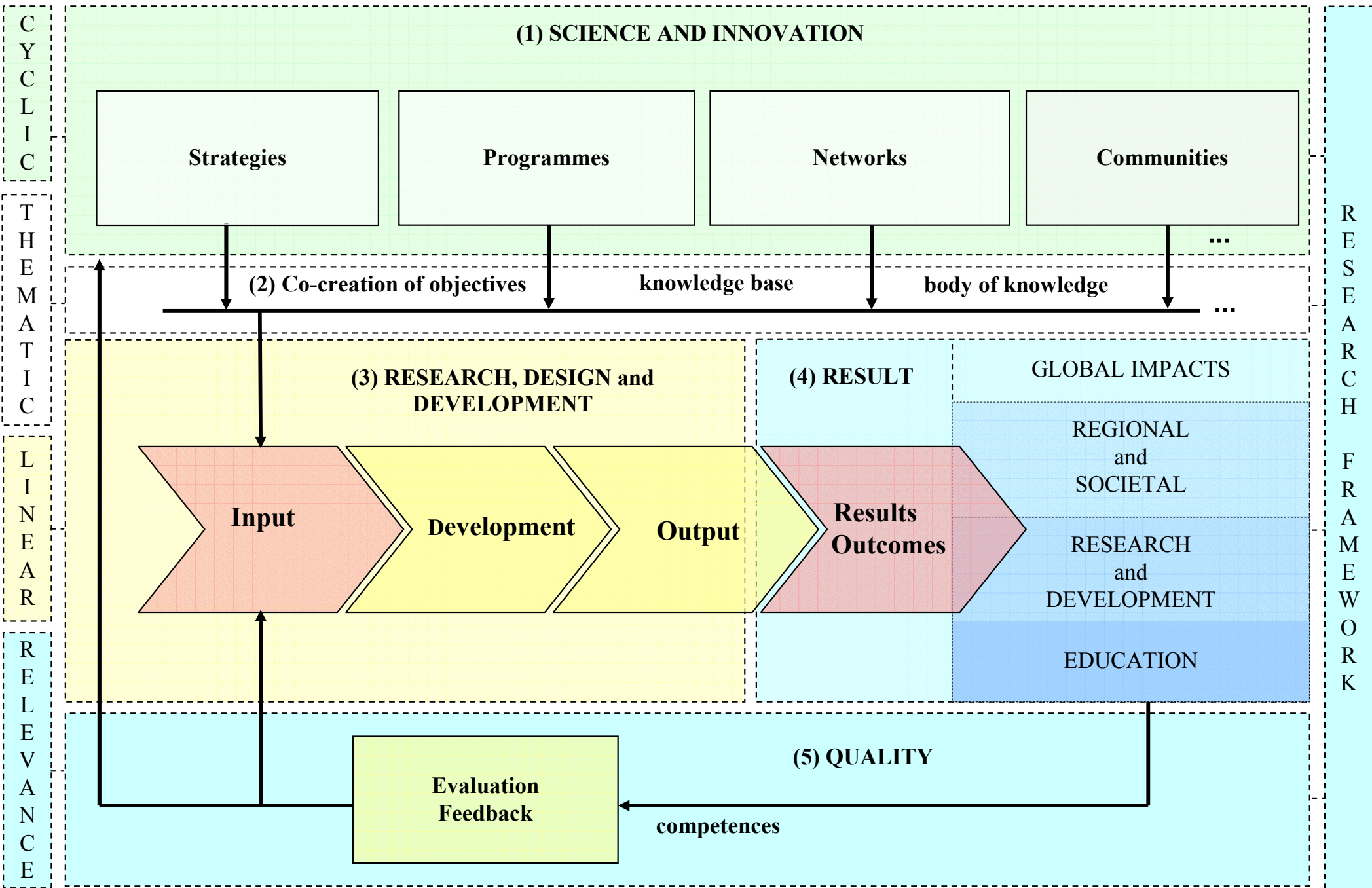
INNOVATION

R&D

COOPERATION

BUSINESS

QUALITY



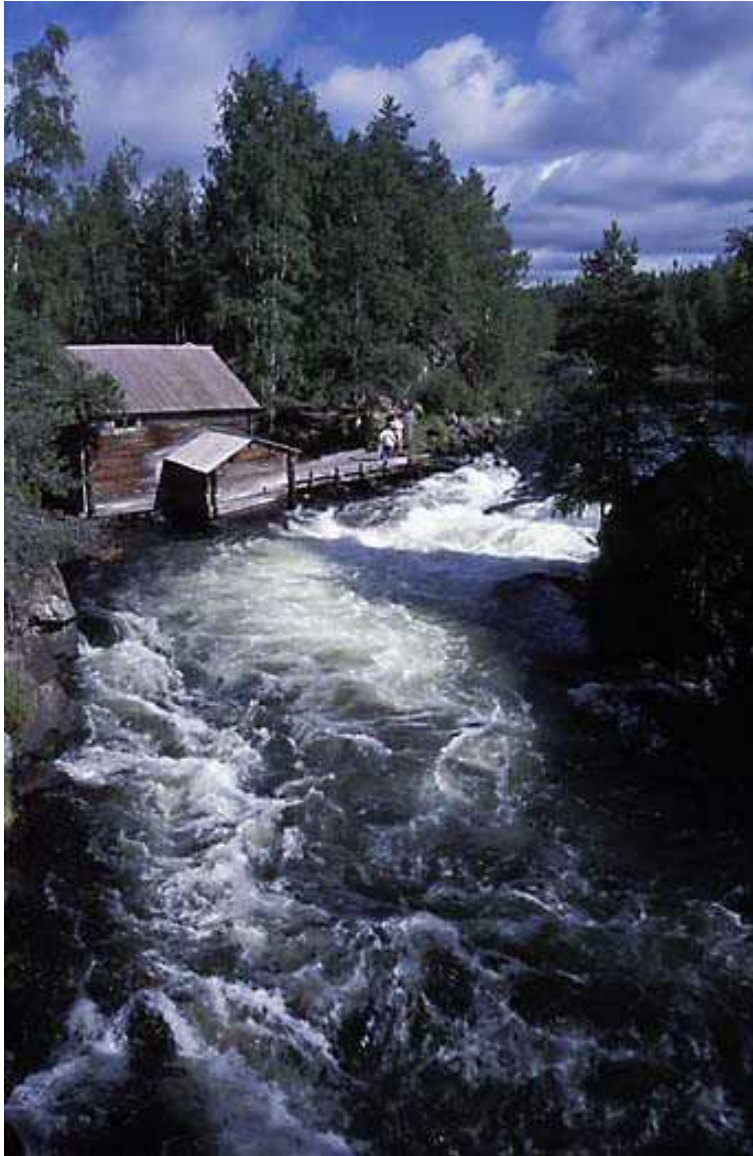
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Theoretical functionality of solution



- The evaluation team set up by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (2005 and 2008) considered Laurea's pedagogical learning model, Learning by Developing, to represent high-quality **innovation efforts**.
- LbD met all the quality criteria **set by the council either well or excellently**.

Theoretical functionality of solution



- The evaluation team continues; The operating model is clear and transparent. As such it can **be adopted** favourably by other Universities of Applied Sciences.
- The structure of the LbD model is also easy to adapt and renew in the case of changes, which mean that it can develop from the inside on the one hand, and **produce innovations** on the other hand.

Action Research (Regional development perspective)

Intervention 1: Specifying Learning

May and June 2003: Started in May 2001.

Cooperation with enterprises and universities, based on [7], became more effective and Laurea gained a role as a prime mover in regional development. **The management supported innovation and creativity, and the bottom-up model increased the motivation of the participants.** Complementary cooperation and responsibility in the development of regional programs led to a regional decision-making position. The prime mover actions and work were recognized in the evaluation. An integrative approach to the fulfillment of the three tasks was identified and students were placed at the center of the three tasks in everyday operations. **Research and development focused on regional development.** The actions of management were clearly possible to evaluate, and this was done extensively and from different perspectives. The implementation of the integrative action model and the three tasks was challenging for Laurea's everyday work, because **it implied a paradigm shift in education** from traditional methods to ones based on knowledge creation through research, development and learning.

Intervention 2: Specifying Learning

June 2006 to December 2008: Started June 2003.

The specifying learning strategy in this period, based on [8], included the principle of regional development, which indicated that the targets of **the strategy were balanced with those of the other regional development actors** in the metropolitan region. The targets of the strategy were co-created with other actors and the future perspective was taken into account. The **key targets** were cluster development, effective innovation action, and internationalization in regional development. Plenty of evidence of the implementation of regional development work appeared at the everyday operational level, and regional development efforts enriched learning. The creation of new regional projects was based on strategy, and action in **the projects was produced in line with strategy.** Globalization was connected to regional development in a balanced way. **New methods, models and social innovations** were produced in and for the region. The bottom-up leadership model seemed to work well and personnel were motivated. The student-centric model was emphasized at Laurea in autumn 2008; documented in [9, 15, 16, 17].

Learning by Developing (LbD): a new model for action

- Based on development projects
- Development-based or innovation-based starting point
- Development project as a learning environment
- Allows for innovations in the form of products, services, operating models or working cultures
- Focuses on development of working life and regional development

