

# HUMAN POSSIBILITIES— HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## 1. The Evolution of HCD

In its simplest form, conditioned behavior is viewed in terms of a *stimulus*  $\rightarrow$  *response* or  $S \rightarrow R$  sequence. There is no intervention between stimulus and response. When the stimulus is presented, the response is emitted, similar to the way a knee muscle reflexes to a tap. While there are sets of anticipatory s-r responses, there is no intelligence or intentionality mediating the sequence or relationship of stimulus and response. The conditioned responder simply reacts in an unthinking or mechanical manner. Reduced, the "*condition*"—or stimulus complex—determines the person's response. Thus, the cultural or "*conditioning*" context determines the individual's behavior. The conditioned performer is a dependent person.

**S  $\rightarrow$  R**

**S  $\rightarrow$  R Conditioning**

## I. Introduction and Overview

While conditioned responding may be appropriate under specified and unchanging conditions, it becomes increasingly inappropriate with changing conditions. The dependent person's response to "*diminished returns*" from unchanging investments is to "*work harder*." Spiraling changes in conditions condemn conditioned response training efforts to failure. Indeed, over time and with changes, conditioned responding becomes increasingly pathological. These responses simply do not relate to the stimuli to which they were conditioned. Or, put another way, the responses become "*functionally autonomous*" or "*autistic*." Fortunately, the "*working harder*" response to crises is ultimately sentenced to extinction by the punishment schedule of reinforcements: delivering increasing "*shocks*" to the human system to match increasing exertions of conditioned human effort.

## *"Working Harder"*

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## 1. The Evolution of HCD

Processing in the Data Age was based upon the sharing of conditioned responses. The Data Age defined its requirements in terms of "*participative learning*." The difference between *participative learning* and conditioned responding is the intervening human organism (O) which discriminates the stimulus (S), intervenes to mediate by selecting an appropriate response, and emits the response (R). Of course, in order to make appropriate responses, it is assumed that the organism has a repertoire of conditioned or S-R responses. In other words, the individual acquires a set of responses from which to draw. Depending upon the stimuli, the individual simply discriminates the stimuli and formulates an appropriate response. The performer's independence is found in the completeness of his or her response repertoire. The limitations are found in the fact that the repertoire is comprised entirely of conditioned responses.

**S → O → R**

**S-O-R Learning**

## I. Introduction and Overview

*"Participative learning"* serves to increase the response repertoire and enable the performer to *"work smarter."* *Working smarter* simply means that the performer collects and selects from among the available *"best practices"* for performing a **task** productively. The problem is that task requirements today are changing so rapidly that we quickly exhaust the *"known responses."* While the sharing and building of known responses may serve to extend their utility, sooner, rather than later, our escalating *"meetings"* reach the point of *"diminishing returns."* In times of rapid change we simply cannot meet enough to develop a *"consensus response."* And, the *working smarter* approach *"runs out of gas"* when completely new and innovative responses are required by the changing marketplace.

*"Working Smarter"*

## Interdependency

If it was a large step from dependency to independency, then it is a gigantic step forward to interdependency. As authorities or bosses are overwhelmed by "*information overload*," they begin to share the responsibility for total processing. They "*hand off*" the entire data base for processing. They cede responsibility for exploring experiences, understanding the goals, and acting upon the programs. Accordingly, the performers conduct all of the processing activities. In order to do so, the performers, plainly and simply, have to learn a whole new set of processing skills. Moreover, they have to learn to process interdependently.

**Interdependency—Exploring,  
Understanding, Acting**

## I. Introduction and Overview

To be sure, it is in the best interest of the performers to be interdependent. *"Human capital"* or thinking humans are now increasingly viewed as the generative *"source of effect."* In turn, information modeling is viewed as a *"synergistic partner."* These interdependent processors are driven by shared missions. They exist in highly interactive *"thinking environments."* They are required to process highly complex and curvilinear, multidimensional phenomena into useful models, systems, objectives, programs and tasks. Beyond corporate identification, they emphasize entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial initiative based upon their processing orientation. Above all else, they conduct the entire process, thinking individually before processing interpersonally and interdependently—for team, unit, organization, marketplace, community, region, nation, alliance and global purposes.

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## Information Age Conditions

Processing in the Information Age is based upon the need for the continuous generation of new and more productive responses. The Information Age defines its requirements as "*generative thinking*." The difference between participative learning and generative thinking is the difference between "*best practices*" and best processes for creating new and better responses; or, put another way, between quantitative responses and qualitative responses. In generative thinking, an active and generative human processor (P) intervenes between the stimulus (S) and the response (R). At the extreme, a skilled human processor has the potential to create responses that the stimulus materials were never conditioned to elicit.



S-P-R Thinking

## I. Introduction and Overview

Generative thinking is the process of generating responses or "*thinking better*." *Thinking better* simply means that the performer is able to generate new and more productive ways of doing things under all circumstances. A person who is *thinking better* assumes that all of our "*current operating procedures*" are inadequate and so generates "*productive operating procedures*" to create whole new ways of doing things. Even when we have generated new principles individually, we go on to process inter-dependently with our partners. This way, we can generate still more productive responses than we, as individuals, are able to generate.

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***"Thinking Better"***

Interdependency is the theme of this book. Indeed, interdependent processing and the growth it leads to defines the human capital development, or HCD, process. Interdependency is a new and demanding requirement. It asks that we set aside our reactions to dependency and our fetish for independency. It demands a commitment to co-mingle our "*processing blood*" with that of others for our mutual benefit. It requires an intimacy with information at the level of a love relationship. Above all else, it requires a suspension of our independent motives in the interest of mutual benefits. In short, it asks that we elevate our values and dedicate our systematic processing for our growing "*human family*."

## Interdependent Growth