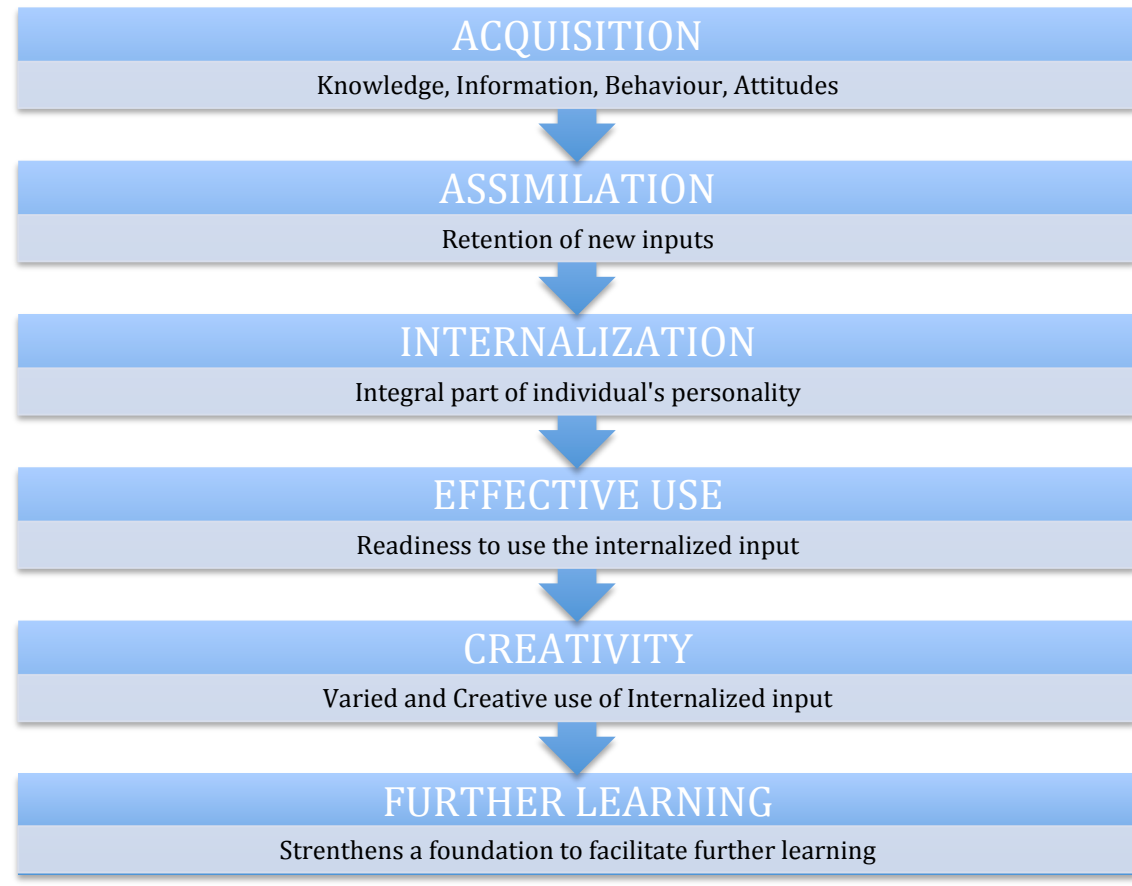


## **ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING**

Learning is an important concept in the study of Human Behavior. Learning is understood as the modification of behavior through practice, training and experience. Learning can be defined as “A process of acquiring, assimilating and internalizing inputs for their varied and effective use when required, leading to an enhanced capacity/capability for future self monitored learning.”

### **Process Of Individual Learning**



The concept of Learning, traditionally used in context of individuals is now extended to Organizations.

#### **Definitions:**

Chris Argyris (1978): “A process of detecting and correcting errors.

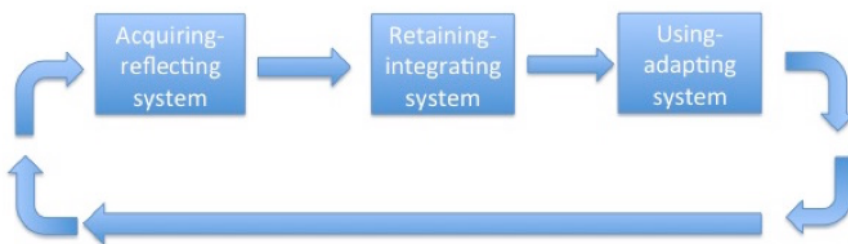
C M Fiol & M A Lyles (1985): The process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding.

A C Inkpen & M Crossan (1995): An increased shared understanding involving the organizations, its environment and the relationship between the two.

Most researchers have proposed organizational Learning as a normative function. It is basically a process by which an Organization acquires, retains and uses inputs for development resulting in an enhanced capacity for continuous self-learning and self-renewal.

## Elements of Organizational Learning

- Organizational Learning is a process-a continuous series of interlinked activities producing several changes.
- It has 3 main sub systems namely: Acquiring /Reflecting System, Retaining/Integrating System, Using /Adapting System.
- Each sub-system has a its relevant *Learning Phases*, involves certain *Learning Processes*, requires a specific *Climate* and is associated with *Values and Norms*.
- Finally Learning increases the ability of the organization to learn more on its own. Self-learning may not necessarily involve an outside stimulus or inputs. An Organization may develop its own mechanisms of examining its experiences, retaining functional processes and discontinuing dysfunctional ways of dealing with issues. This is self-learning leading to self-renewal.



Process in Organizational Learning			
Phases	Sub-Systems		
	Acquiring-Reflecting (Innovation)	Retaining-Integrating (Implementation)	Using-Adapting (Stabilization)
<i>Learning process</i>	Inflow Experimentation Exchange	Assimilation Cumulating Building	Continued Use Critiquing Adapting
<i>Organizational Climate</i>	Innovation	Encouraging rigour and discipline	Supportive-critical
<i>Values</i>	Openness Creativity  Experimentation Mutuality	Thoroughness Mutual support  Respect for traditions	Preserverence Objectivity (analysis of experiences) Critically Creative adaptation
<i>Norms</i>	Respect for Innovation Exposure to outside experts Sharing experiences informally Learning from others	Thoroughness in preparation Detailed planning Volunteering  Search for common links between the new and the old	Preserverance Quick feedback Support for implementation  No hesitation in modifying plans

## **LEARNING ORGANISATIONS**

The concept of Learning Organizations is a natural extension of Organizational Learning. D A Garwin 2008 defines the Learning Organization, as “An Organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge can remain a learning organization.”

Learning Organizations should do the following:

- Create continuous learning opportunities (individual)
- Promote enquiry and dialogue (individual)
- Encourage collaboration and team learning (team)
- Establish systems to capture and share learning (organization)
- Empower people towards a collective vision (organization)
- Connect the organization to its environment (global)
- Use leaders who model and support being at the individual , team and organizational levels.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS:

1. Holistic framework: This includes systems thinking mainly perceiving of interconnections and patterns among key variables.
2. Strategic thinking :Involves thinking of the consequences/implications of each action, preparing patterns of things to be done in a certain order and choosing the most important actions making the most impact.
3. Shared Vision: Examining and developing vision is an important function of the top management. It involves developing a vision through participation and commitment from all levels. This involves transformational leadership.
4. Empowerment: It includes creating enabling structures, and decentralizing and delegation. Empowerment also requires use of persuasive power and rewarding initiative and decisions.
5. Information flow: There is free flow of information, willingness to pass on negative information as well. Information is used for planning, monitoring and controlling.
6. Emotion maturity: Learning organization are high in emotional intelligence this includes a sense of control over a better part of one’s destiny ,optimism , self discipline, commitment and moderate risk taking.
7. Learning: A learning organization encourages dialogue and discussions and reward flexibility.
8. Synergy: Learning Organizations generate synergy through collaboration and teamwork and the basic quality for teamwork is empathy.