



**SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE
ACADEMY**

SEA LEARNING METHODOLOGY

LEARNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

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Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it. DAVID KOLB

Our programmes aim to help people to think, perform and behave differently. They give time and space to reflect, plan and act. They provide an opportunity to share experiences with colleagues and peers and find support, learning and insight into how you want to lead and develop.

The Academy has a specific approach to learning that is underpinned by some well-known concepts that contribute to individual, team and organisational development.

1. BACKGROUND TO ACADEMY METHODOLOGY

When the Academy was set-up, our methodology was influenced by the thinking of the Antigonish Movement, Paolo Freire and Donald Schön. We are not the first, or only, organisation to use or be influenced by these but they underpin and have shaped the ethos and approach of our learning programmes.

1.1 Antigonish Movement

The Antigonish Movement blended adult education, co-operatives, microfinance and rural community development to help small, resource-based communities around Canada's Maritimes improve their economic and social circumstances.

The key principles of the movement were

1. *The Primacy of the Individual*
The dignity and value of the individual and the development of individual capacities as the aim of social organisation
2. *Social Reform Must Come Through Education*
Social progress must come through the action of citizens, which can only come if there is an improvement in the quality of the people themselves which in turn can only come through education.
3. *Education Must Begin With the Economic*
People are most keenly interested in addressing economic needs first. Therefore suit educational effort to the most immediate interest of the individual or group.
4. *Education Must be Through Group Action*
Group action is natural as people are social beings. Not only are people commonly organised into groups, but their problems are usually group problems. Group action is also essential to success.
5. *Effective Social Reform Involves Fundamental Changes in Social And Economic Institutions*
Reform will necessitate strong measures of change that may prove unpopular in certain quarters.
6. *The Ultimate Objective of the Movement is a Full and Abundant Life For Everyone in the Community*
Economic cooperation is the first step, but only the first, towards a society that will permit every individual to develop to the utmost limit of her/his capacity.

To find out more:

- <https://coady.stfx.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Masters-of-their-own-Destiny.pdf>
- Johnson, H. G. (1944). *The Antigonish Movement: A lecture to the students of Acadia University*. Antigonish, NS: Extension Department, St. Francis Xavier University.

1.2 Paolo Freire

““ *Liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferrals of information.* **Paolo Freire**

Paolo Freire, best known for his influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy.

For Freire, the educational process is never neutral. People can be passive recipients of knowledge — whatever the content — or they can engage in a ‘problem-posing’ approach in which they become active participants. As part of this approach, it is essential that people link knowledge to action so that they actively work to change their societies at a local level and beyond.

A typical feature of Freire-type education is that people bring their own knowledge and experience into the process. Training is typically undertaken in small groups with lively interaction and can embrace not only the written word but art, music and other forms of expression.

Freire argued against the emptiness of both “thoughtless action” and “actionless thought”: that social change comes through “praxis” – the dialectical combination of action and critical reflection. Freire’s learning system was based on a new form of dialogue, rejecting the “jug and mug” idea that a learner is simply a vessel to be filled.

It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection.

To find out more:

- <https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/>
- <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/171/re-envisioning-paulo-freires-banking-concept-of-education>

1.3 Donald Schön

Donald Schön was a philosopher and professor in urban planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who developed the concept of reflective practice and contributed to the theory of organisational learning. He was also an accomplished jazz musician and his interest in improvisation and structure was mirrored in his academic writing, most notably in his exploration of professional’s ability to ‘think on their feet’.

Shön believed that people and organisations should be flexible and incorporate their life experiences and lessons learned through their life. This is also known as Organisational Learning and is based on two things. The first is single-loop learning, i.e. an organisation adjusting their operations to keep up with changing market conditions. The second is double loop learning, i.e. an organisation not just adjusting but also creating new and better ways of achieving their goals.

Through his work on Organisational Learning Shön sparked an interest in reflective practice. For Shön reflective practice is the practice by which professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge base and learn from their experience. He talked about there being two types of reflection, one during and one after an activity or event; 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action'.

Reflection in action	Reflection on action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing • Thinking on your feet • Thinking about what to do next • Acting straight away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about something that has happened • Thinking about what you would do differently next time • Taking your time

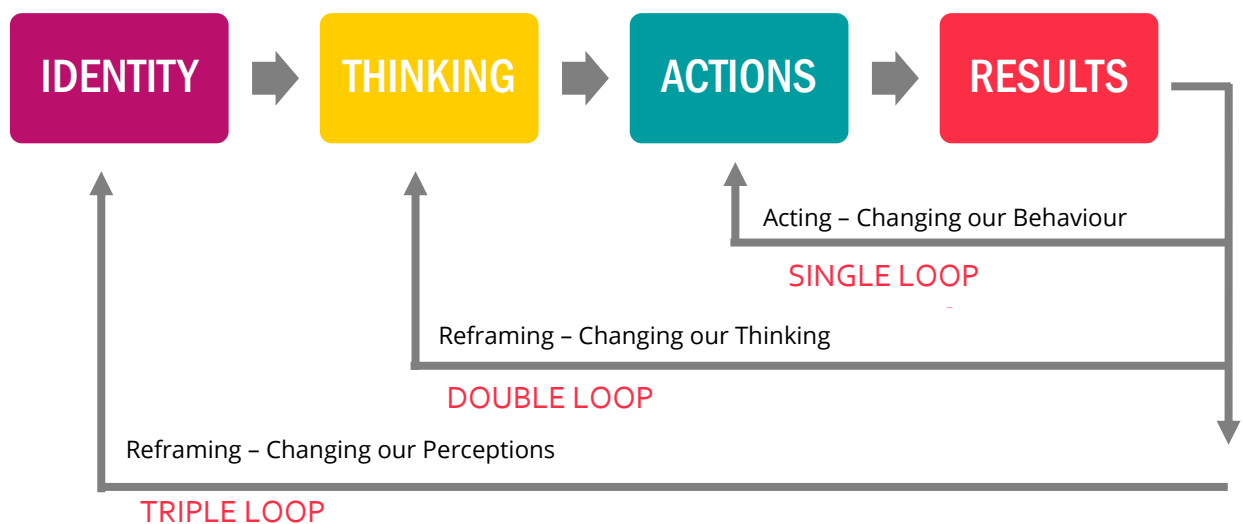
Shön's thinking has also been considered influential in debates around the idea of 'learning society'. His idea was that that with the loss of the stable state, we must become adept at learning, able to not only transform our institutions in response to changing situations but invent and develop institutions which are 'learning-systems' capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation.

To find out more:

- <https://learn.solent.ac.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=2732&chapterid=1113>
- <http://infed.org/mobi/donald-schon-learning-reflection-change/>
- <https://graysreadinggroup.wordpress.com/2012/12/18/the-reflective-practitioner-by-donald-schon/>

2. TRANSFORMATIONAL OR TRIPLE LOOP LEARNING

The Academy's methodology ultimately seeks to effect Transformational or Triple Loop Learning. Transformational learning is learning that results in a fundamental shift in our worldview, which in turn leads to profound changes in our thoughts, feelings and actions. It is a shift of perception and consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Transformational learning thus affects our understanding of ourselves, our relationships with other people and the wider world, the priorities we hold, and our sense of purpose and direction.



Much of what we label “learning” involves acquiring new information- facts, ideas, skills and techniques- and fitting these into our existing frameworks and belief systems. Referred to as **single-loop learning**, this type of learning leads to incremental improvements in our performance and enables us to deal more effectively with the challenges and problems we face by doing more of the same, but doing it better. Often this will be exactly what is needed. But sometimes problems and challenges can be dealt with only by doing something different, and then we need to invoke a more complex form of learning.

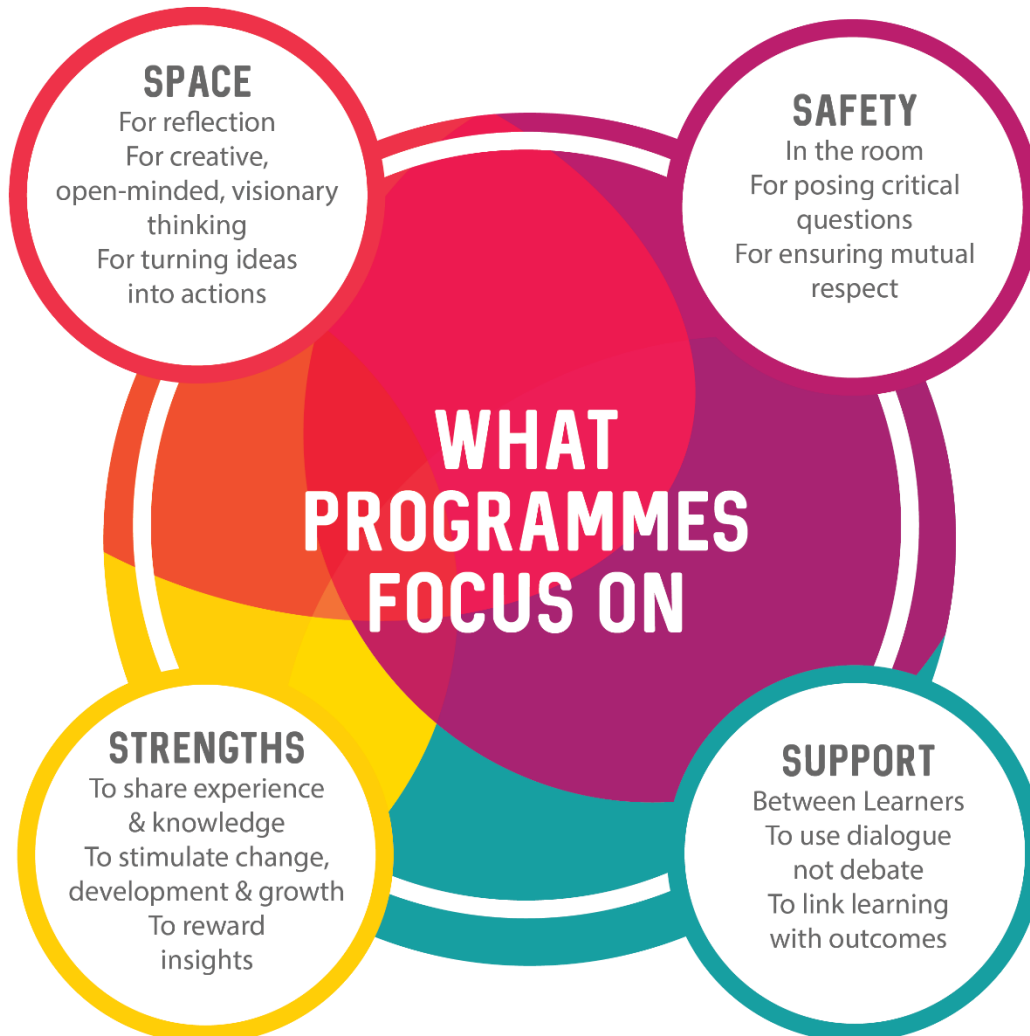
The next level of learning involves helping people reshape their thinking, actions and interactions by changing their frames of reference so that, rather than doing more of the same, they do something different. This is **double-loop learning**. It involves seeing the problem or situation from a new angle, questioning the assumptions we have made, and hence generating new possibilities, choices and actions. So, rather than the learning resulting in our having new information or greater skill in a situation, double loop learning additionally leads to a change in our thinking about the situation and the mental models and frameworks we use.

Triple-loop learning is the most complex and challenging form of learning, and leads to a change in how we see ourselves and the world we live in. It is this level that is called “transformational learning”. It involves a shift to a more inclusive worldview and is an integral part of self-actualisation. It can therefore have a profound effect on how we lead our lives, making old ways of thinking and acting obsolete, and causing far-ranging changes in lifestyle and work. It involves not just a change in our thinking, but a more profound change in how we see and experience ourselves.

The concept of transformational learning is key to the Academy's theory of change and evaluation methodology. More information on this can be found in section 5.

3. LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Through effecting transformational learning Academy programmes aim to help people think, perform and behave differently. To do this they need to provide the necessary conditions for learners to reflect plan and act. This is encapsulated in our four Learning Principles: Space, Safety, Strengths and Support.



3.1 Space

For reflection: In the workplace we often miss out on time for reflection, even though it is when the most insightful thinking can happen. It is more than the physical act of being away from the day-to-day. It is about having mental space to consider significant thoughts, issues and ideas.

For creative, open-minded, visionary thinking: Entrepreneurial leadership thrives in a culture of creative thinking. In learning environments this means discouraging the notion of the 'right answer' and instead ensuring there are diverse and imaginative contributions, ideas, activities and resources.

For turning ideas into actions: Our programmes make regular space for learning and reflection but they are designed around going back in to the workplace to repeatedly test and put into practice what has been learnt

3.2 Safety

In the room: We create a 'safe space' where learners feel able and confident to address their personal development issues without a fear of consequence or judgement. It is a critical part of helping people to focus on what they need to address with openness and honesty.

For posing critical questions: Questions are key to our approach. Asking critical questions supports and challenges a person with an issue both to find their own solutions and grow as a person – an essential part of unlocking the power of personal development.

For ensuring mutual respect: Social enterprise is a values-driven movement and this is also true of how we create learning experiences. People are expected to listen to and respect each other's contributions, to share thoughtfully, and to take into account feelings as well as thoughts.

3.3 Support

Between learners: Learning with and from peers is at the heart of our approach. Our facilitators are also peers – they understand and work in similar environments to their learner groups. The exchange of support is crucial in helping to develop greater self-awareness.

To use dialogue: Dialogue involves joining our thinking and perspectives in a shared space that evolves and develops to create much deeper understanding.

To link learning with outcomes: What people learn and experience is aimed at achieving personal growth through clarity, confidence and greater understanding. This helps them find ways to overcome challenges and move forward personally and as an organisation.

3.4 Strengths

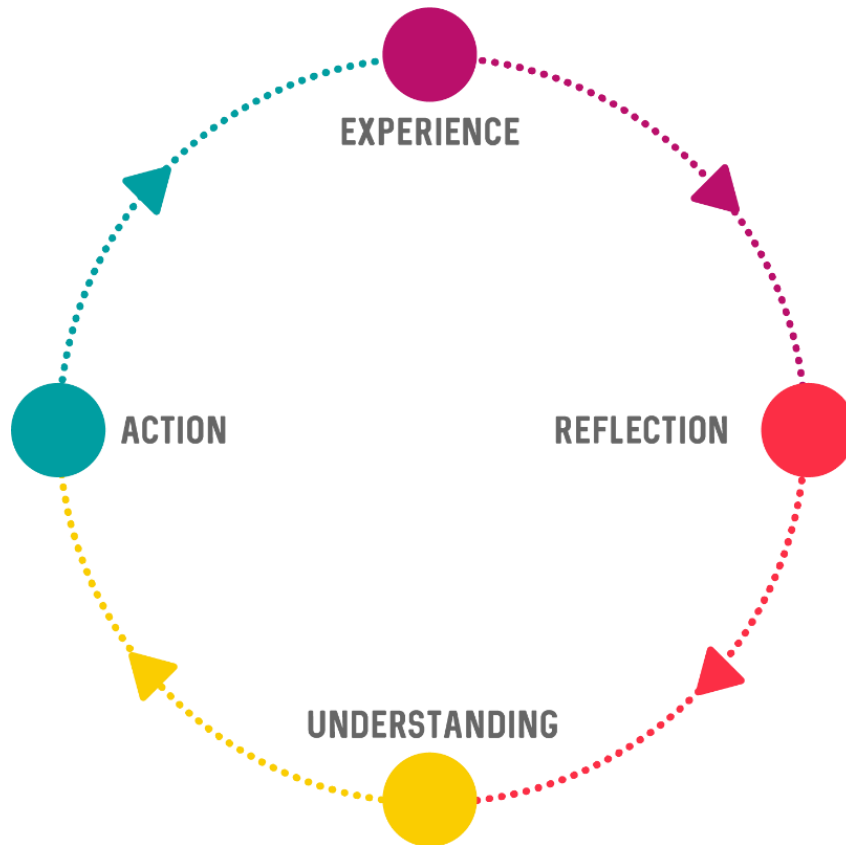
To share experience and knowledge: Everyone has useful knowledge and experience to share. Discovering what other people do and achieve, and how they operate within different environments helps learners make key discoveries about their own strengths.

To stimulate change, development and growth: Change, development and growth take place where there is confident leadership – and that comes from knowing and building on strengths, and learning from experiences.

To reward insights: Learning is usually rewarded by memorising knowledge and coming up with the 'right answers'. Our approach rewards people who put their learning to use by finding new insights and ways of working. Our assessments and qualifications honour learning which has brought about greater self-awareness, change and development.

4. LEARNING CYCLE

This idea of space, where reflection is possible and where ideas can be transformed into actions is encapsulated in the adult learning cycle. This takes learners through a cycle that engages them at different levels to embed new concepts and behaviours. The forerunner of this was David Kolb.



David Kolb published his learning cycle model in 1984 and it has been widely used to underpin experiential learning ever since. Kolb's experiential learning theory is typically represented by a four-stage learning cycle.

Kolb includes this 'cycle of learning' as a central principle of his experiential learning theory, in which 'immediate or concrete experiences' provide a basis for 'observations and reflections'. The 'observations and reflections' are absorbed and refined into 'abstract concepts' which produce new ideas for action. These ideas can then be 'actively tested', which in turn create new experiences.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Concrete Experience | (Experience) |
| 2. Reflective Observation | (Reflection) |
| 3. Abstract Conceptualization | (Understanding) |
| 4. Active Experimentation | (Action) |

Effective learning happens when a person progresses through the full cycle of all four stages.

All Academy programmes are designed based on the learning cycle.

5. SEA EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

5.1 Theory of Change

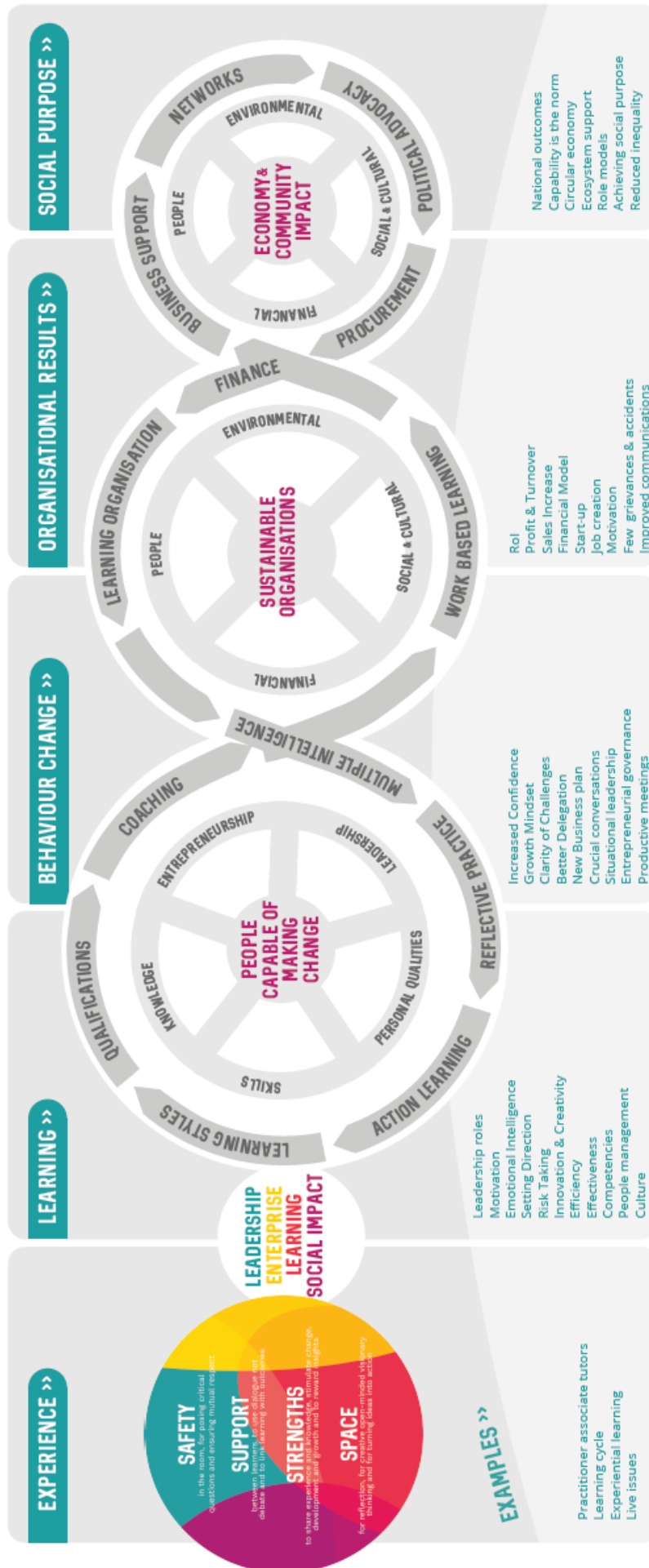
A Theory of Change is specific type of methodology which defines, and often, visually represents the long term goals of an organisation and the process by which they will be reached, demonstrating the logical and chronological links between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The SEA Theory of Change is based on 10 years' experience of delivering learning programmes to social entrepreneurs and the third sector. It is underpinned by the Kirkpatrick model for training evaluation which demonstrates the different levels of impacts that can be anticipated following attendance on a learning programme (see below for more detail on the Kirkpatrick model).

The SEA Theory of Change model demonstrates how our learning and development ethos and methodology interrelates with our evaluation methodology and provides indicative indicators of impact at the different levels.

Actual impacts at the different levels are determined and defined by both the content of the various programmes SEA delivers but also be the context and needs of each individual organisation attending them.

Our Theory of Change diagram is shown on the next page.



5.2 Kirkpatrick Model

The SEA Evaluation Methodology is underpinned by the Kirkpatrick Model, which is a useful theoretical basis for the consistent evaluation of the tangible effects our varied programmes. The Kirkpatrick evaluation model draws a focus on measuring four kinds of outcomes that can result from a highly effective learning and development programmes. This model lends itself well to monitoring the long term change that is the ultimate goal of SEA learning programmes.

These four kinds of outcomes, or four steps are:



Level 1: Reaction - is more than customer satisfaction, but enquiry into the components of the event.

Level 2: Learning - focuses on what has been learned during the event. Specific learning objectives should be linked to clear learning outcomes, including changes in knowledge

Level 3: Behaviour - specifically involves measuring the *transfer* of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from the training context to the workplace. Learning is likely to transfer only if the conditions in the work setting are favourable for transfer.

Level 4: Results - is the direct impacts on the organisation or surrounding environment. This could be measured in terms of financial outcomes or contracts awarded. It is necessary for time to elapse before evaluating Level 4 outcomes, therefore it is difficult to establish firm evidence that a learning programme was the key or only source that produced the level four outcomes.

A fifth level – **Level 5: Return on Investment (ROI)** is sometimes talked about. The Academy re-frames this for the context of social enterprise and the third sector and considers Level 5 to be about **Impact**, i.e. how the learning eventually has an impact on the wider community of beneficiaries of the organisation participating in a learning programme.