Lecture 8- Soft Systems Methodology

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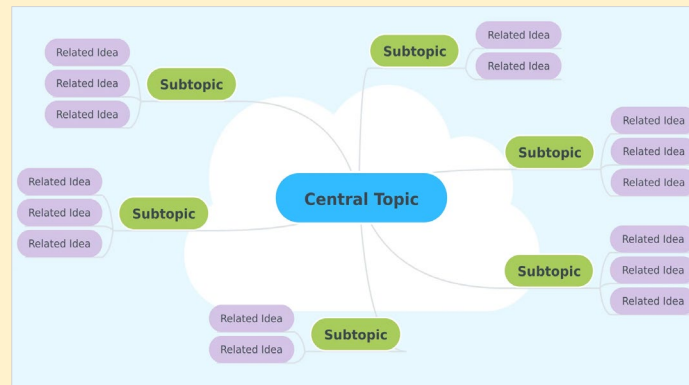
Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)

SSM

Reaching Insights to illuminate unclear problems
- Problems cannot be expressed explicitly
- Usually unstructured Problems
- Varying views of the Problem
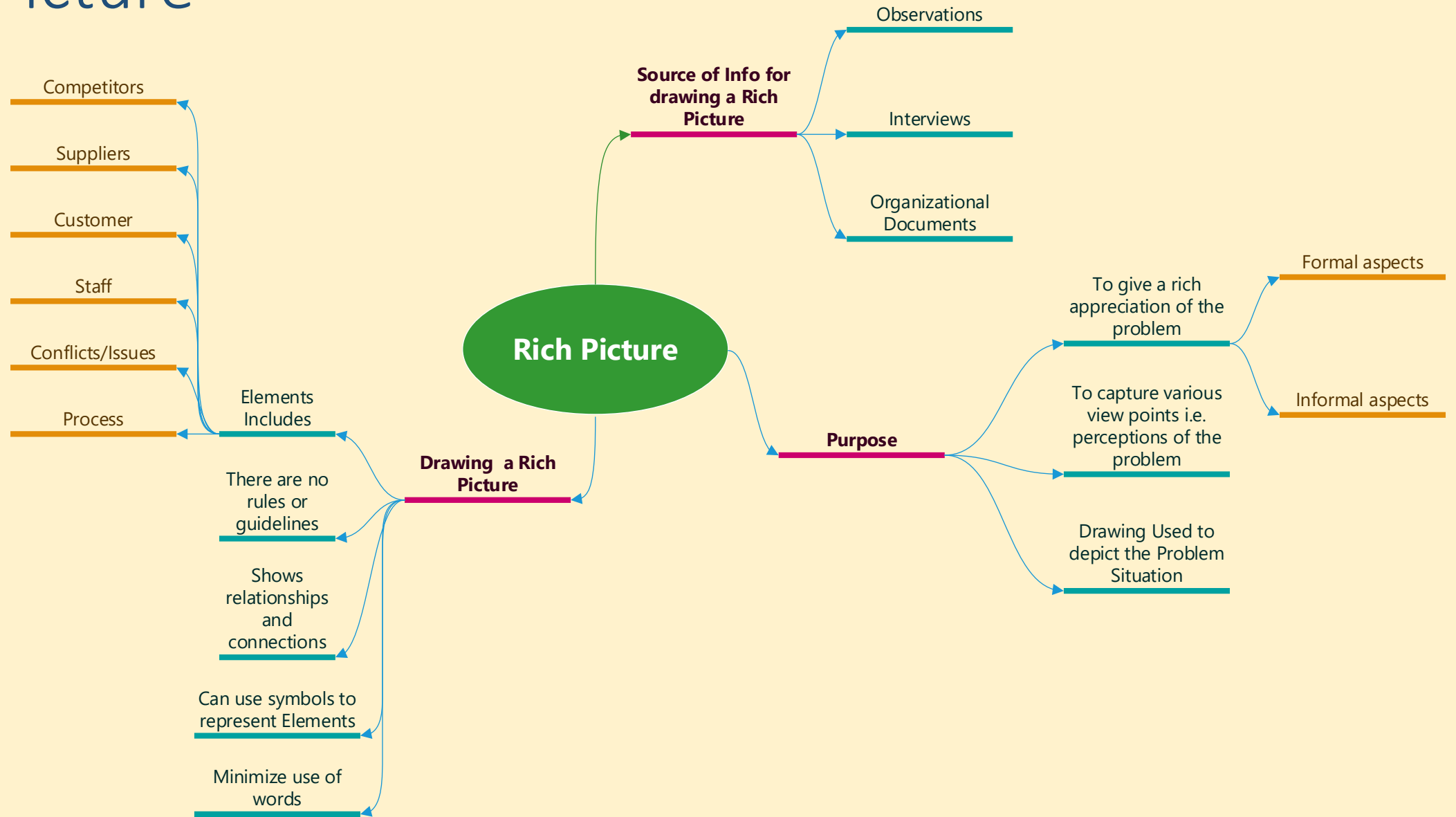
Tools
- Conceptual Model
- Rich Picture/Mind Map

Main Stages of SSM
- Action to Improve Problem Situation
- Develop Solution
- Express the Problem Situation
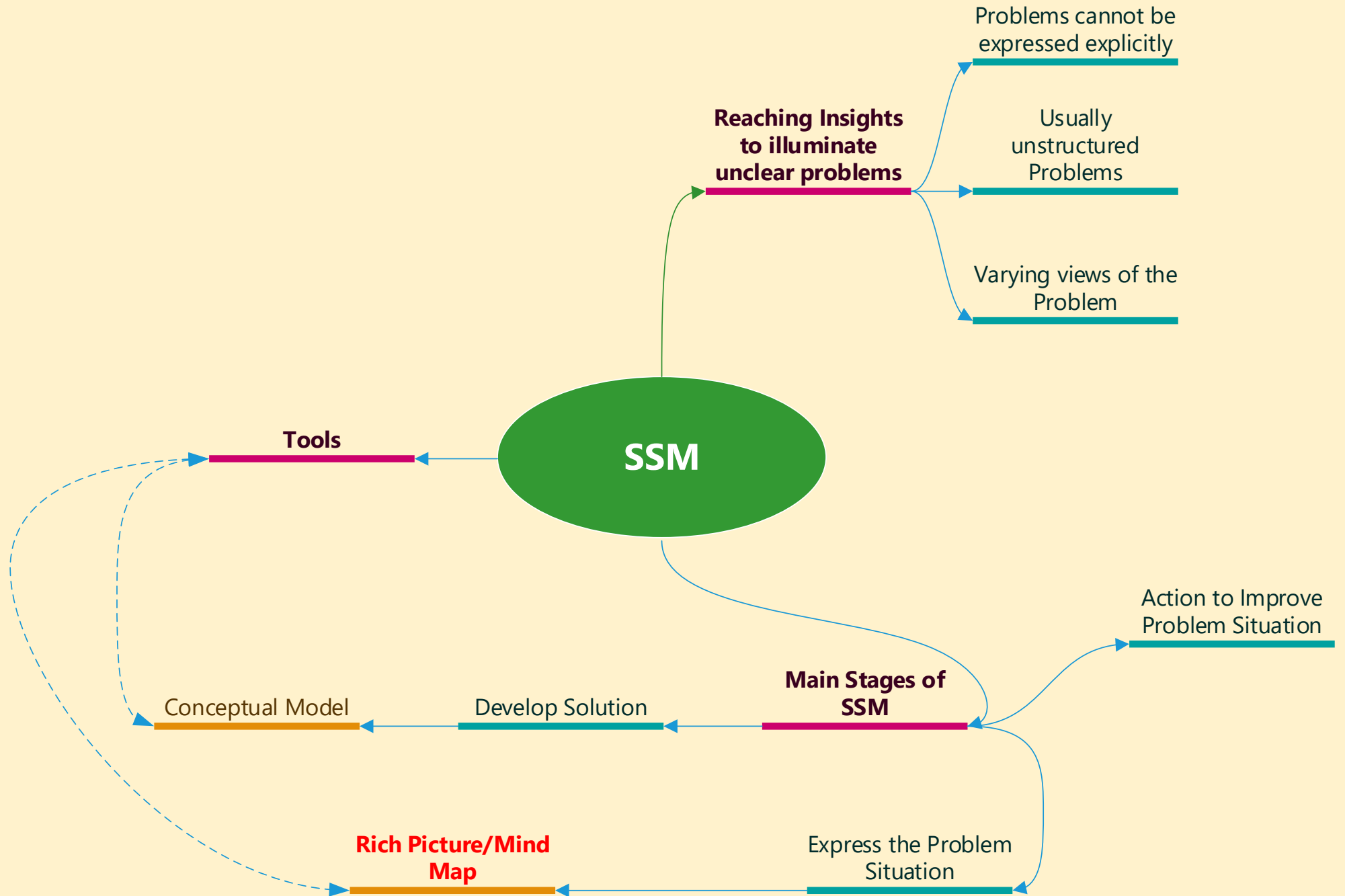
Rich Picture

Rich Picture

Source of Info for drawing a Rich Picture
- Observations
- Interviews
- Organizational Documents

Rich Picture

Drawing a Rich Picture
- Elements Includes
  - Competitors
  - Suppliers
  - Customer
  - Staff
  - Conflicts/Issues
  - Process
- There are no rules or guidelines
- Shows relationships and connections
- Can use symbols to represent Elements
- Minimize use of words

Purpose
- To give a rich appreciation of the problem
  - Formal aspects
  - Informal aspects
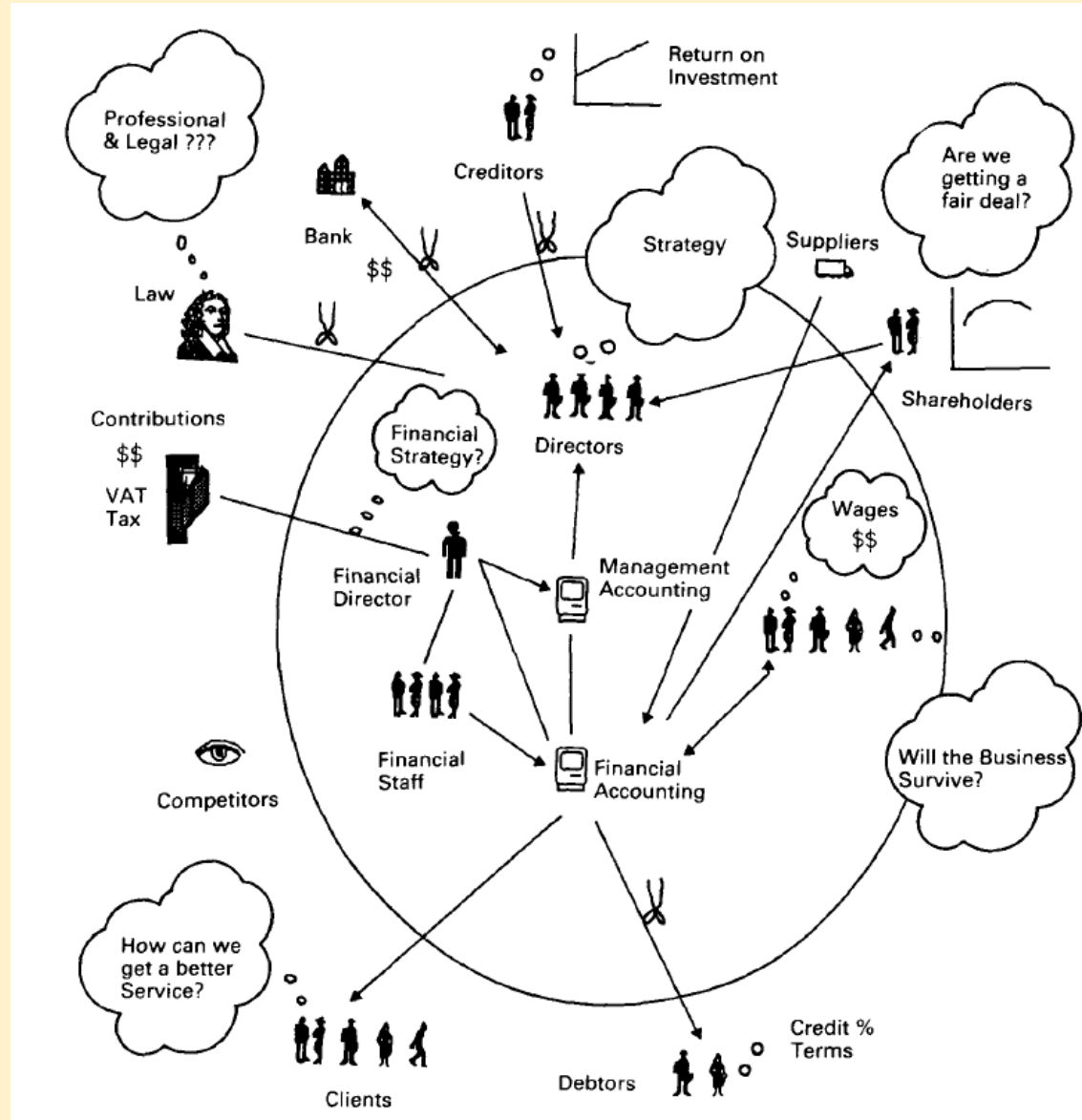- To capture various view points i.e. perceptions of the problem
- Drawing Used to depict the Problem Situation

Example Rich Picture for Management and Financial Accounting Area

Avison, D.E., Golder, P.A. & Shah, H.U. 1992, "Towards an SSM toolkit: rich picture diagramming", European Journal of Information Systems, vol. 1, no. 6, pp. 397-408.

Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping

How to Draw it

Step 1- Draw a Circle in centre of page with Main Topic

Step 2- Draw lines out from the centre circle to outline sub-topics e.g. issues, solutions

Step 3- Dive Deeper into sub-topic to uncover next level of information e.g. reasons for Issues

Step 4- Add Associated links between sub-topics

Step 5- Repeat to uncover the next level if necessary

Used For

Summarizing Information

Presenting Solutions

Thinking through Problems

Brainstorming