Lecture 8- Soft Systems Methodology

Andre Samuel  andre.Samuel@sam.edu.tt  http://samuellearning.org/som.html
Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)
SSM

Main Stages of SSM

- Express the Problem Situation
- Develop Solution
- Conceptual Model
- Rich Picture/Mind Map
- Tools

SSM

Reaching Insights to illuminate unclear problems

Problems cannot be expressed explicitly

Usually unstructured Problems

Varying views of the Problem

Action to Improve Problem Situation
Rich Picture
Rich Picture

Purpose
- To capture various viewpoints i.e. perceptions of the problem
- To give a rich appreciation of the problem

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

Drawing a Rich Picture
- Purpose
- Elements
  - Includes
  - There are no rules or guidelines
  - Shows relationships and connections
  - Can use symbols to represent Elements
  - Minimize use of words

Informal aspects
- Staff
- Conflicts/Issues
- Customer
- Suppliers
- Competitors

Formal aspects
- Process
- Situation
Example Rich Picture for Management and Financial Accounting Area

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**

- Brainstorming
- Thinking through Problems
- Summarizing Information
- Presenting Solutions