SoftSkills
FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Context Awareness for Knowledge Transfer Teaching Toolkit

Additional Print Out Materials (Not in this document)

- Worksheet – Iceberg Model for KT
- Worksheet - Stakeholder Table for KT
- Context Awareness Module - Slides

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Context Awareness for Knowledge Transfer Syllabus

Duration: Approx. 3 - 4 hours

This course explores the ability to perceive, understand, and appropriately respond to the specific conditions in which knowledge transfer takes place. Starting from the universal structure of the KT ecosystem components, interactions and collaboration models, the module focuses on the identification and analysis of the different context layers (cultural, institutional, technical, economic) and recognition of the key factors that can influence a successful KT process, i.e. stakeholders' needs, local regulations, organizational dynamics, broader societal or market trends. Context awareness includes time management and the ability to prioritize and anticipate possible scenarios. A context-aware KT professional can better adapt communication and negotiation styles based on the audience, align technical solutions with local or sector-specific constraints, navigate complexity, and anticipate potential challenges.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

General objective

Giving KT professionals a broader outlook on the key components of the KT context and enhancing their ability to mediate between research and the market, integrating cultural, regulatory, and organizational variables, including understanding the human factor in the KT ecosystem.

Specific ILOs

- **ILO-1:** Describing the key components and actors of the knowledge transfer ecosystem and explaining how they interact across academic, industrial, governmental, and societal contexts.
- **ILO-2:** Analyzing contextual factors — such as cultural norms, regulatory frameworks, technological maturity — using tools like PESTEL analysis to evaluate their impact on KT processes and technology adoption.
- **ILO-3:** Apply stakeholder mapping techniques (e.g., stakeholder tables) to identify interests, power dynamics, and potential areas of alignment or conflict in KT collaborations.
- **ILO-4:** Use systems thinking and the iceberg model to interpret visible KT challenges in light of underlying structures, patterns, and mental models, and to develop more context-sensitive strategies for knowledge transfer.

Methods & Materials

Teaching Method(s)

- Group work & discussions
- Frontal Lecture

Required Learning Materials (during-course)

- Course slides
- Stakeholder table template for KT processes
- The Iceberg Model Worksheet

Additional Learning Materials (post-course)

- Miller, K., McAdam, R., Moffett, S., Alexander, A., & Puthusserry, P. (2016). Knowledge transfer in university quadruple helix ecosystems: an absorptive capacity perspective. *R&D Management*, *46*(2), 383-399.
- Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, *5*(2), 128-146.

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Lesson Plan

20 min	**Introduction & Icebreaker** - Trainer introduces the session objectives and participants play an icebreaker game. In groups of 2-3 participants, they select a question to ask each other from an earlier provided list.	Group discussion
30 min	**Make a drawing** – Each participant is asked to make a drawing that describes a knowledge transfer process. Each drawing is shared with the rest of the group. A guided discussion follows: • Does the process follow a line, cycle, or something else? • Which actors and relationships are mentioned? • We can all have different perspectives and ideas about KT process	Group discussion
30 min	**Theory on KT Ecosystem** – Introducing the universal structure of the KT ecosystem components and how they relate with each other. • Stakeholder map Identification and analysis of the different context layers (cultural, institutional, technical, economic) that influence the KT processes, PESTEL analysis	Mini-lecture & Q&A
15 min	**Break**	-
30 min	**Theory on Systems Thinking** • What is systems thinking? ○ An optional activity: (learn more here) • Definitions and key principles • Linear vs. systemic thinking • Why systems thinking matters in knowledge transfer	Mini lecture

	• Iceberg Model: Events → Patterns → Structures → Mental Models	
50 min	**Iceberg Model in Practice** – Applying the Iceberg Model for a specific KT situation. Participants can use a generic or specific case of tech/knowledge transfer. • 5 min. Explaining the exercise • 10 min. Find a specific KT problem/situation from your daily work to focus on • 20 min. Use Iceberg Model to analyze the problem in all levels • 15 min. Presenting the icebergs & discussions	Group work
15 min	**(Optional) Action Planning & Closing** - Participants create action plans to apply context awareness skills in real-life situations.	Personal reflection