

The Problem Structuring Methods Special Interest Group is pleased to announce the following event

Best Problem Structuring in Practice: Sharing lessons from analysts, consultants and researchers

Ian Mitchell, Rob Angell and Colin Eden

27th November 2013, 4.00-6.00 pm

at

De Montfort University
Room 3.04 Hugh Aston Building

There is a growing awareness amongst the OR profession that the range of techniques utilised by the Soft OR and Problem Structuring Methods community in general can be pivotal in ensuring commitment to the development and implementation of strategies and plans. These techniques have been successfully employed in a whole range of organisational settings including: multi-national corporations, national chains, SME's, community associations, nationally and locally government-funded projects.

You are invited to the latest event organised by the Problem Structuring Methods Special Interest Group. We have invited three experienced users of problem structuring approaches to share lessons of best practice.

Talk 1: **Systems-based Problem Structuring from the Analyst's Perspective: Establishing the basis for discussion of a basis for decision**

Speaker: **Ian Mitchell** has worked in Operational Research (OR) since 1988. In 1993 whilst an independent OR consultant Ian found Problem Structuring Methods based on Systems Thinking were essential to support a study for the European Space Agency. As of 1994 he managed the Battle Group War Game, leading infantry studies. Ian moved to Porton Down in 1998 managing force protection studies until 2000 when he was seconded as an OR specialist in Whitehall, where restructuring problems as systems led to a new resilient basis for decisions in capability management. Ian joined the OR Unit at the Department for Business Innovation and Skills in 2010 applying Problem Structuring Methods to a broad range of policy areas.

Talk 2: **A Practitioner's Perspective: Working with multi-party processes to help decision making.**

Speaker: **Rob Angell** has been the lead facilitator and process consultant for a range of clients to deliberately involve stakeholders in formulating environmental decisions or resolving conflicts, strategy development and visioning. Examples include identification of marine conservation zones, precautionary measures for electromagnetic radiation, policy & strategy development on waste management and decommissioning approaches for nuclear power stations. He has run several sessions as part of longer term processes to help set horizons in business strategies and community visions. He has also designed and run European wide e-consultations for WWF and run training courses for the public, private and community sectors on participation in decision making, facilitation skills and the design and management of stakeholder processes.

Talk 3: **An Action Researcher's Perspective: Negotiating a problem structure**

Speaker: **Colin Eden** started his working life as an Operational Researcher in the engineering industry following his PhD, subsequently becoming Operational Research Manager. This was followed by a period as a Management Consultant specialising in small business problems. He then moved to academia and is currently Professor of Management Science and Strategic Management, Vice Dean at Strathclyde Business School. Colin is internationally known for his work in the areas of Problem Structuring Methods, Research Methodology, Project Management and Strategic Management. He has published over 180

articles in general management, management science, and project management journals. He has published 10 books, including: Visible Thinking: Unlocking Causal Mapping for practical business results, 2004, Wiley (with F. Ackermann, J Bryson and C. Finn), and Making Strategy: Mapping out strategic success, 2010, Wiley (with F Ackermann). His published work in PSM started with Messing About in Problems published in 1983 with David Sims and Sue Jones which introduced cognitive mapping as a way of capturing the views of managers about a problem situation. He continues to work in public and private organisations using causal mapping techniques as a part of work on strategic problems.

We hope you'll agree this is an excellent set of speakers. Hearing their experiences will help you make the connection between some of the problem structuring approaches presented in the literature and your area of application. You will also be able to seek support from the many practitioners who will be present.

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Venue: Room 3.04 Hugh Aston Building, De Montfort University (Building 18 on Campus map follow directions link)

Directions: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/how-to-find-us/august-2013-dmuaccess-map.pdf>

Refreshments will be provided.

The event is open to all members of the OR Society, as well as the general public.

In order to reserve your place please reply to Ashley Carreras acarreras@dmu.ac.uk.no later than 31st October

After the event, there will be a short meeting of the SIG committee. The meeting is open to OR practitioners and academics who wish to contribute ideas for organising future SIG events, or provide support to SIG activities by joining the committee.