

Leadership Training in the Systemic Constructionist Approach
Interview Study of Humap Ltd. Customers

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<p>The thesis was carried out for a commission company Humap Ltd., which is a consulting company with thirteen years of experience in the field. Humap Ltd. uses systemic constructionism as its framework in leadership trainings.</p> <p>The objective of the study was to research Humap Ltd.'s theoretical framework, systemic constructionism, and see the what the frameworks approach is to leadership. I wanted to find out if systemic constructionism as an approach is compatible to the hopes and wishes of Human Resource Managers and Development Managers in organizations that are customers of Humap Ltd. The thesis is an important reality background regarding Humap Ltd. if their thoughts about the future needs are valuable to their business and I was able to formulate recommendations for them based on the results.</p> <p>The method applied in the empirical part of the research was qualitative. Three Human Resources Managers and one Development Manager were interviewed face to face; one Development Director was interviewed via telephone. The process of the compilation was originated in the beginning of January 2012 and finalized by the beginning of May 2012. All of the interviews conducted took part between February 7th and March 5th.</p> <p>As the findings indicated that in fact systemic constructionism is a compatible framework to have in leadership trainings. There were several wishes that rose in the interview that go hand in hand with the systemic constructionist approach. Shortly it may be said that Human Resource Managers and Development Managers hope for whole system thinking, well-being at work, early support and giving competencies for a leader to act as a coach to the employee to be emphasized in future leadership trainings.</p>	
<p>Keywords Leadership, Systemic thinking, Social constructionism, Humap Ltd.</p>	

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1. Introduction

In the introduction I will introduce the commission company and about their way of networking. I will tell the objectives of the study and the main research problems along with the sub questions. I will also mention a few definitions that will be beneficial for the reader to know.

1.1 Introduction of the commission company

I will be conducting my thesis for a consulting company called Humap Ltd.. Humap Ltd. was established in 1999 in Jyväskylä. Humap Ltd.'s business consists of training and consulting business that focuses on leadership, change, collaboration and learning. Humap Ltd. also has Humap Software, which designs virtual collaboration and collaboration software development. Humap Ltd. is located in Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Turku, Amsterdam and London. Humap personnel own Humap Ltd. 100% and there are 25 people working full-time at Humap Ltd. (Humap 2012a.)

Systemic approach and theory on leadership guides Humap Ltd.'s interest to explore organizations on three levels: what kinds of principles are guiding our actions, what kinds of structures are supporting the actions and what kinds of practices are developing the actions and how everyday leadership is developing the actions. (Humap 2012b.)

Humap Ltd. wants to emphasize participatory, insightful and dialogical leadership of relationships and communication situations instead of things and individuals. (Ibid.)

In the trainings that Humap Ltd. provides, there are three pillars of leadership: knowledge, support, and skill and will. Knowledge increases the understanding of an organization's values, goals, strategy and procedures. Support means collegial support, as well as the networking of managers and leaders exchanging ideas. Finally, skill and will means the attitude, roles, skills and conditions of professional

leadership, self knowledge, evaluation of one's work, communication and collaboration competence and ways of provoking strategic thinking. (Ibid.)

Humap Ltd. has recognized that a leader's power to control and authority enabled giving guidelines and telling directions is not enough to lead a productional world. This is why Humap Ltd. wants to emphasize leadership of groups and communication networks. (Ibid.)

1.2 Humap Ltd. Networking

Humap Ltd. follows leadership trends around the world and uses networking as a method to stay on-top of the newest trends. Humap Ltd. has living relationships with the persons that have developed theories on systemic thinking and social constructionism and the persons that use systemic constructionism as a framework. Jukka-Pekka Heikkilä, the development leader from Humap Ltd., is responsible for taking the framework further. (Kojo, H. 25 Mar 2012)

Humap Ltd. is in networking with Taos Institute, which is a non-profit educational organization that is concerned with the social processes essential for the construction of reason, knowledge and human value (Taos Institute 2012). Kenneth Gergen, the "father of systemic theories and social constructionism" from Taos Institute holds seminars where he trains and coaches others and Humapians often take part in these seminars. Humap Ltd. also has networking with Harlene Anderson and John Shotter, whom are from the Taos Institute as well. (Kojo H. 25 Mar 2012; Taos Institute 2012)

Humap Ltd. is also in cooperation with Dr. Glenda Eoyang, the founding Executive Director of Human Systems Dynamics Institute (HSD), that offers trainings and Humapians will attend the seminars this fall (HSD 2012). Humapians are also constantly learning more by studying and by reading books about social dynamics, systemic thinking and social constructionism (Kojo, H. 25 Mar 2012).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to find how and why systemic constructionism is a good approach to use in leadership trainings and what Human Resource Managers or Development Managers want from leadership trainings and to show the importance of leadership trainings in a workplace.

Humap Ltd. will gain more knowledge about their marketing strategies, for example how they can more efficiently tell about their different approach. My thesis would be important reality background regarding if their thoughts about the future needs are useful, beneficial and valuable to their business.

Based on the qualitative interview research results I will interpret what Human Resource Managers and Development Managers really want and need from leadership trainings and what would be most beneficial to them and help Humap Ltd. provide the services that are most wanted and needed.

1.4 Research problem

My research question is: What Human Resource Managers and Development Managers expect and hope from future leadership trainings?

In my study I will show what good leadership is from a systemic constructionist point of view and emphasize the importance of good leadership in a workplace. Based on the main research question, I will formulate conclusions as to what future leadership trainings should consist of to meet the wishes of Human Resource Managers and Development Managers and to specify any trends that rise from the interviews.

The sub questions in my study are:

What is good leadership from a systemic constructionist point of view?

What Human Resource Managers and Development Managers expect to get from these trainings?

Based on this: what could be the future trends of leadership trainings?

1.5 Definition of concepts

There are a few concepts that are defined to clarify them to the reader.

1.5.1 Systemic thinking

Systemic thinking emphasizes the importance of developing tools that allow practitioners observe and work with the connectedness of people, patterns of interaction, meaning making and context. (Barge 2012, 5.)

1.5.2 Social constructionism

Particularly in leadership study this means that leadership is fluid and dynamic, and shifts in language can create fresh understandings for leadership as well as new patterns for social arrangements. (Ibid., 2.)

1.5.3 d/Discourse

Alvesson and Kärreman have separated discourse with a small 'd' and Discourse with a capital 'D'. Discourse with the capital 'D' means a set of linguistic resources to the social actor, because they derive from culturally standardized systems of thought (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 228.). Discourse with the small 'd' is used when talking about the actual use of language. (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000, 1125-1149.)

1.5.4 Humapians

In the text I sometimes refer to Humap Ltd. employees as Humapians, which is what they call themselves.

2 Systemic constructionism and leadership

In the following part I will be telling about the history of systemic leadership and showing what leadership is from a systemic constructionist approach.

2.1 Introduction

The study of leadership has grown immensely over the last few decades with the development of communicative, discursive and relational approaches to leadership (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 242.). In our dynamic, conversational world relying on fixed set of techniques, styles or scripts is unlikely to produce the kind of situated communication that leadership actors need to generate to fit within the evolving context. Therefore, leadership actors need to cultivate the wisdom to improve their action as they go on with others in conversation. (Ibid., 245.) Humap Ltd. has recognized that a leader's power to control and authority enabled giving guidelines and telling directions is not enough to lead a productional world. This is why Humap Ltd. wants to emphasize leadership of groups and communication networks. (Humap 2012b.)

Social constructions of leadership are local as the unique configuration of people, time, and place may move individuals to construct leadership in particular ways but not others. Moreover, our social constructions of leadership are also fluid and dynamic as shifts in language create fresh understandings for leadership as well as new patterns for social arrangements. (Barge 2012, 2.)

2.2 History and background of systemic constructionist leadership

A systemic constructionist approach is a particular approach within the family of social constructionist leadership perspectives that is based on systemic thinking and social constructionism (Ibid., 5.). Systemic thinking emerges from a European tradition of therapy and consultancy that emphasizes the importance of developing tools that allow practitioners, such as organizational consultants, to observe and

work with the connectedness of people, patterns of interaction, meaning making, and context (Ibid.). Systemic thinking can be traced back to Bateson's ecological perspective toward human systems (Bateson 1972, 251-264.). He argued that understanding a human system requires us to focus on the patterns that connect the reciprocal or mutually causal patterns of communication among people (Ibid.). From this perspective, we cannot reduce our explanations of human behavior to simple linear-cause effect explanations where we attribute someone's behavior to psychological mechanisms such as personal traits, motives, or drives (Barge 2012, 5-6.). Instead it is important to create systemic descriptions of joint human activity, which provides us the means to explain how any individual's behavior is the product of the interactional system jointly created by people (Ibid., 6.).

Bateson's original explanation of human systems was grounded in cybernetic theory and emphasized the importance of feedback loops and how feedback created and sustained certain patterns of interactions within human systems. Contemporary systemic approaches have built on the contribution of second-order cybernetics focusing on the way that meaning making occurs within human systems. (Ibid.)

The shift from the feedback to meaning making has led systemic approaches to incorporate social constructionism into their frameworks (Ibid.). While several different approaches to social constructionism exist, most share an allegiance to three key assumptions: (1) our sense of who we are, or our identity, as well as other social arrangements such as relationships, organizations, and cultures are both reflected in and shaped by our language used; (2) our explanations of social phenomena are grounded in the interaction patterns and social practices of persons; and (3) our knowledge and understanding of social phenomena are historically and culturally bound. The result is that social constructionism moves us to explore how individuals draw on historical and cultural knowledge to co-create particular patterns of coordination and meaning making with other people in conversation by using linguistic material such as words, metaphors, stories, and narratives as well as

nonlinguistic forms of representation such as communication and the way space and time are managed during interaction. (Burr 2003, 649-671.)

When connecting systemic thinking and social constructionism it becomes important for leadership theory and practice to generate systemic insight (Barge 2012, 7.). This means leadership scholars become concerned with creating interpretations and analyses that: (a) focus on the patterns of connections comprising human systems rather than on their individual elements; (b) treat aspects of human system as “made” versus “found”; (c) view relationships as contextually embedded within other relationships as opposed to being decontextualized, and (d) recognize how the joint interplay of all participants within a particular human system works to co-create leadership. Systemic constructionism focuses our attention on articulating leadership theories and analyses that help us describe and explain the coordination of meaning and action within human systems and how language invites, creates, and sustains particular patterns of coordination and discourage others. (Pearce, Villar & McAdam 1992, 75-87.)

2.3 Systemic thinking and social constructionism

Barge’s and Fairhurst’s development of a systemic constructionist approach is guided by three interrelated questions: (1) how is leadership performed? (2) what counts as leadership? (3) what are the consequences of particular leadership constructions? (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 230-231.)

Campbell suggests that systemic thinking represents a particular perspective toward describing and explaining lived patterns of behavior: “systemic thinking is a way to make sense of the relatedness of everything around us. In its broadest application, it is the way of thinking that gives practitioners the tools to observe the connectedness of people, things, and ideas: everything connects to everything else.” (Campbell 2000, 7.)

Systemic thinking is grounded in Bateson's work that explores the patterns of communication that constitute human systems. Bateson argues that to predict behavior a systemic approach must pay attention to the reciprocal or mutual causality among persons, where the behavior of any individual is the product of the interaction among persons, rather than reduce descriptions of people's behavior to linear-causal models that emphasize psychological phenomena such as personality traits, belief structures or motives. (Bateson 1972, 251-264; Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 231.) Bateson argues that human beings exist in a world of interlocking sequences of action, or circuits of interaction, which over time become guided by relational rules. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 231.)

The concept of circuitry brings attention to the importance of feedback within human systems. Bateson argues that it is feedback that creates and sustains patterns of interaction within human systems and that an individual's identity and experience is informed by his or her place in the pattern (Bateson 1972, 251-264.). To understand how a human system operates and changes over time, it is important to focus on the pattern that connects members of human system through their reciprocal feedback to each other and to fully recognize the difference that makes a difference; how introducing new bits of information into a system can create new connections and patterns. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 231.)

More recent systemic approaches have embraced second-order cybernetics, which has shifted the focus from feedback processes to meaning making. The focus on human systems as sites for meaning making highlight the need for social constructionist ideas and concepts that explore how persons in conversation co-create social arrangements, such as identities and relationships through language. Social constructionism is concerned with how the use of language and the structuring of conversations create meaning and subjectivity. Burr identifies key commitments that inform social constructionism: (1) language is a form of social action that creates identities, relationships, organizations, and cultures; (2) explanations of social phenomena are to be developed within the interactions and

social practices of persons; and (3) forms of knowledge are historically and culturally bound. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 231.)

Since leaders mainly work with ‘words and the interactional surround’ (Hoffman 1990, 5-8.), situating social constructionism within a systemic frame creates a focus on how discourse creates meaning within human systems. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 231-232.) The term ‘systemic constructionist’ is used to describe the theoretical orientation in order to draw attention to each of these important theoretical influences (Ibid., 232.). Campbell suggests that systemic thinking has traditionally been concerned with observing patterns of interaction within a system and asking ‘what is happening’, whereas social constructionism has focused on the explanation of action, ‘why it is happening’, how persons use language to account for their social worlds. The term ‘social constructionism’ focuses our attention to the coordination of meaning and action within human systems and how language invites, creates, and sustains particular patterns of coordination and discourages others. (Campbell 2000, 1419-1442.)

A systemic constructionist approach to leadership answers the three questions mentioned earlier. A systemic constructionist approach would address the first question ‘how is leadership being performed’, by focusing attention on the little ‘d’ discourse and examining the sociality or patterns of coordination created by the string of jointly produced utterances by leadership actors. A systemic constructionist approach to leadership would suggest that an appropriate answer to the second question ‘what counts as leadership?’, would be ‘it depends’, recognizing that people’s conceptualizations of leadership are variable and contingent on the big ‘D’ Discourses they invoke through their talk. What counts as leadership is highly contextualized and dynamic; it can only be unpacked by exploring how leadership actors negotiate a working definition of leadership utilizing the meaning potentials Discourse provides. A systemic constructionist approach would respond to the third question ‘what are the consequences of particular leadership constructions?’, by examining the social constructions of the system , meaning the reflexive

relationships among leadership d/Disourses and the effects they produce, the subjectivities they create, and their ability to progress tasks through their connectivity. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 232.)

2.4 Leadership from a systemic constructionist approach

From a systemic constructionist perspective it is difficult to say what counts as leadership, because the meaning of any social practice is viewed as co-created, contextual, and contestable (Barge 2012, 7.). What counts as leadership depends on the resources that people draw on in the conversational moment to perform utterances, how they construct leadership in their talk, and whether they share a common understanding regarding the situation. (Ibid., 7-8.)

Determining what counts as leadership is even more difficult when it is considered that situations are dynamic. While leadership actors act from context, they also act into context which means new contexts may be created through their talk that legitimate different understandings of leadership. (Ibid., 8.)

Setting context, or creating a frame for conversation, becomes important because it creates the space for play, inviting certain forms of conversations but not others. This highlights the importance of creating a discursive context for leaders and others to play on as they progress their task. Barge argues that setting context involves meeting three important criteria: (1) it is important to set contexts that invite the co-creation or joint activity of individuals in the meaning making process; (2) settings contexts should enable co-creation by introducing a “difference that connects”, that moves things forward by connecting with participants’ rules for meaning and action while simultaneously introducing a difference; and (3) conversational frameworks should establish a safe space for conversation. As a result, setting context involves the activity of designing a conversational architecture that inspires and guides interaction. (Ibid., 47.) From a systemic constructionist perspective, it becomes important for leaders to develop skills at setting context,

which includes the ability to design meeting formats that enable co-creation (Ibid., 48).

Leadership, from a systemic constructionist point of view, may be viewed as “a co-created, performative, contextual, and attributional process where the ideas articulated in talk or action are recognized by others as progressing tasks that are important to them” (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 232). This concept focuses on several important features and processes associated with leadership:

1. Leadership occurs in the joint action between and among people and cannot be understood in terms of the behaviors or utterances of a single individual.
2. Leadership is performative and is shown and constructed through the overt conversational behavior of participants.
3. Leadership is contextual as our understanding of what counts as leadership or a leader depends on the unique combination of people, task, context, time, and place.
4. Leadership as well as the idea that someone acts as a leader is an attribution process engaged in by self and others.
5. Leadership involves meaning making and creating contexts such that ideas expressed in talk or action connect with people’s interests and stakes in the unfolding conversation.
6. Leadership is always performed in relation to tasks and involves creating patterns of meaning making and action that move them forward. (Barge 2012, 9-10.)

Though this is not a universal definition of what counts as leadership for every situation it is a concept of leadership that focuses attention on the crucial features and processes that help construct the understanding of leadership within local conversations. (Ibid., 10.)

J. Kevin Barge and Gail T. Fairhurst argue that when using a constructionist framework leadership theory and research needs to give attention to the three important discursive practices: sensemaking, positioning, and play. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 227.) Communication is an important aspect, since this is where leadership is recognized as a lived and experienced social activity in which persons

in conversation, action, meaning, and context are dynamically interrelated. (Ibid., 228.)

2.5 Language, discourse and communication

It is important to distinguish the difference between discourse and communication, even though they exist in an inextricably close relationship. Barge and Fairhurst argue that organizational actors operate in communication and through discourse. They also believe that leadership actors co-create their subjectivities – personal and professional identities, relationships, communities and cultures – in communication through linguistic and embodied performances. Communicative action can modify and elaborate existing connections among actors, action, meaning, and context to create new ones. This means that lived moments within the communicative process are inevitably distinct and novel given the unique intersection of time, topic, people, and place. Therefore, new possibilities for meaning-making and action emerge as each utterance introduces new elements that may be picked up as threads for future development. (Ibid., 228.)

Language and communication meet through discourse, because discourse is 'language that is used for some communicative purpose' (Ellis 1992, 84.). Discourse is always realized in text that is organized interactively, linguistically and cognitively (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 229.). Alvesson and Kärreman have separated discourse with a small 'd' and Discourse with a capital 'D'. The term Discourse supplies a set of linguistic resources to the social actor, because they derive from culturally standardized systems of thought – constellations of talk, ideas, logics, and assumptions that constitute objects and subjects in particular ways (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 228.). However, discourse is used when talking about the actual use of language (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000, 1125-49.).

2.6 Discursive practice

Leaders operating within a systemic constructionist framework need to develop ways of working that facilitate patterns of meaning making that enable forward movement tasks by engaging the dynamics of the unfolding conversation and the linguistic and nonlinguistic material that constitutes those conversations (Barge 2012, 20.). There are some criteria, which discursive practices need to meet. First, the discursive practice has to develop people's ability to be sensitive to the aims and purposes of self and others. If working systematically involves engaging all parts of a human system, then discursive practices must develop a sense of awareness or way to engage with the complexity of conversation. Second, discursive practices must be grounded in the doing. This means that a discursive practice must have some kind of action referent, one must be able to point to some concrete activity or action that a leader performs. (Ibid.) Third, discursive practice must be teachable so that individuals can learn how to perform the practice (Ibid., 20-21.). Fourth, the discursive practice needs to be able to be used by individuals in their internal and external conversations. Internal conversation refers to the conversations people have in their own head about what is going on in the situation while external conversations are what overtly transpires between people as they talk. Fifth, discursive practices need to enable leaders to develop a sense of anticipation for, presence in, and reflection about the conversation. (Ibid., 21.)

2.7 Developing discursive practices

One issue in systemic constructionism and leadership is how to develop discursive practices that support learning and the ongoing elaboration of meaning making and action potentials, when taking positions where you argue for your viewpoint or adopt an expert position. There are at least three discursive practices that leaders may develop to help them work with taking positions that facilitate the co-creation of meaning and action. (Ibid., 34.)

2.8 Invitational practices

The notion of invitation carries with it the ideas that we need to invite people into our way of thinking, which acknowledges that our perspective is partial and may be enriched by others contributing their views. Discursive moves, such as using “we” language then transitioning into “you” language, create the space for other conversational participants to play with the argument and position of the other and offer the possibility of creating something new (Ibid., 34-35.).

2.8.1 Collaborative practices

Leaders can work with developing discursive practices, which encourage collaborative argument. Much of the work on dialogical approaches to leadership tend to characterize argument and debate as bad, portraying it as an adversarial process where individuals fight to death over their positions (Ibid.). Argumentation and debate theory has always been accompanied by a more dialogical thread where arguments are viewed as a cooperative, collaborative process where arguers are partners in a problem-solving process (Mallin & Anderson 2000, 120-133). When leaders attempt to position themselves in ways that constructively juxtapose advocacy with inquiry, then a space for co-creation among people is fashioned as various perspectives are acknowledged and valued (Barge 2012, 35). Leaders may develop their ability to work with dialogical forms of argumentation such as tag-team arguments where people work collectively to generate the argument (Meyers 1997, 183-201.).

2.8.2 Framing practices

Leaders need to develop framing skills. Framing refers to creating a context for people to make sense of and interpret events, situations, and people in particular ways. In the context of having to take a position and perhaps act in ways that create an expert position, which could minimize the contribution of others to meaning

making, leaders need to develop the ability to frame their activity in ways that keep the meaning making process fluid and dynamic. Framing practices may be used to create the space for leaders to make arguments and create expert positions in ways that keep the co-creation of meaning making alive such as that people feel they are “done with” versus “done to”. (Barge 2012, 36.)

2.8.3 Changing positions

Changing positions involves articulating a set of discursive practices that allow leaders to consciously or pre-consciously make choices about how to act from within the flow of conversation. The practices associated with changing positions involve articulating a metaposition that explains how leaders might go about improving their ability to discern situations and make wise judgments. (Ibid., 37.)

A position is similar to a role in a way that is associated with the particular felt permissions, obligations, and prohibitions for how to make sense of situations and how to act, but is much more fluid and dynamic as social acts continually (re)position individuals during conversations. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 239.)

2.9 Creating systemic constructionist analyses of leadership

A systemic constructionist account of leadership requires practical theorists to follow on three discursive practices: (1) sensemaking, (2) positioning, and (3) play. By exploring how individuals and systems make sense of their experience and position each other through the use of language, the co-created and situated flavor of leadership can be captured. By exploring how leadership actors and those they work with play with meaning in different ways and invent new possibilities for action, it can be explored how tasks progress. (Ibid., 236.)

2.9.1 Sensemaking

A systemic constructionist practical theory emphasizes the ways in which leadership d/Discourse creates resources for individuals and larger collectivities to make sense

of the systems they participate in and how this connects to their ability to organize activity and progress tasks. This suggests that the analyses of leadership should focus on the discursive practices individuals and collectivities use to perform sensemaking. (Ibid., 236-237.)

2.9.2 Individual sensemaking

Rather than identify traits and other personality variables that influence sensemaking, a systemic constructionist analyses focuses on how individuals make sense of situations through the internal conversations they have with themselves and the external conversations they have with others. Systemic story making can help make sense of internal and external conversations. Four key assumptions inform systemic story making:

1. The way leaders make sense of and engage others in human system depends on the type of systemic story they create.
2. Change is more likely to occur when leaders enter the unique grammars of the other members in a human system.
3. Developing a rich diverse set of systemic stories makes it more likely for managers to engage, elaborate, and change the story of others by working within their grammar.
4. High-quality systemic stories: (a) provide a specific accounting of the details of the situation, (b) respect and appreciate the behavior of the participants in the story, (c) enable action, and (d) introduce difference within organizational life to create change. (Ibid., 237.)

Systemic stories give attention to the unique details of a situation from the perspectives of different members within a human system in a respectful and appreciative way that enable action. (Ibid., 238.)

2.9.3 Systemic story making

Systemic story making represents a particular kind of story telling that values the alternative meanings which can be generated by divergent stories about a situation and attempts to integrate them into a unified story that respects the various

positions (Barge 2012, 27.). It gives attention to the unique details of a situation from the various perspectives of the members involved, and moves the leader to articulate possible connections among communication, context, and meaning while keeping a sense of curiosity about the situation. (Barge 2007, 10-14; Lang & McAdam 1995, 71-103.) Systemic stories value the perspectives of multiple participants in the system and try to connect them in a way that respects their differences, but enables action. (Barge 2012, 28.)

The process of systemic story making involves two key activities: (1) exploring multiple stories, and (2) creating stories of fit. The former is facilitated by punctuating and multiplying stories. The latter is facilitated by creating systemic stories that provide a specific accounting of the details of the situation, respect and appreciate the behaviors of the participants in the story, and enables managerial action. (Ibid.)

2.9.4 Positioning

Positioning directs our attention to the way people use language to create social arrangements. Harré and van Lagenhove suggest that ‘positioning can be understood as the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determine as social acts and within which the members of conversation have specific locations. (Harre & vanLagenhove 1999, 16) Positions are moral, specifying what people can and cannot do, and they generate a set of understandings regarding the rights and duties of persons as they make sense of situations and act. Positioning theory allows one to focus on the dance of positions, how leaders position others through their talk as well as how leaders are positioned by others. (Barge 2012, 29.)

There are at least three discursive practices that leaders may develop to help them position themselves and others: (1) making positions, (2) taking positions, and (3) changing positions. (Ibid., 30.)

2.9.5 Making positions

The practice of making positions is aimed at heightening leaders' awareness of the reflexive interplay among messages, utterances, and speech acts within conversation and the social arrangements they create. (Ibid., 31.)

2.9.6 Taking positions

Leaders often need to take a position in the conversation by making arguments, challenging people's behaviors, correcting mistakes, issuing commands or otherwise taking an expert position where they assert direction and control over people's activity. From a systemic constructionist perspective, the issue is not whether leaders should or should not forcefully articulate their position, assert control in a conversation, or adopt an expert position. Leaders should perform these acts in ways that continue to allow meaning making to emerge versus freezing the process of meaning making and to facilitate the coordination of the various expertise that each conversational participant brings to the interaction. (Ibid. 33-34.)

2.9.7 Changing positions

The kinds of decisions leaders make can alter or change the positions that they prefer and invite others into. Changing positions involves articulating a set of discursive practices that allows leaders to consciously or pre-consciously make choices about how to act from within the flow of conversation. (Ibid., 37.)

2.9.8 Play

Keeping some play in the system means creating and maintaining a sense of discursive openness in human systems (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 241.). From a communication perspective, this requires that the meaning making process engaged by leaders and followers retain a sense of evolutionary openness (Ibid.). Discursive openness can be achieved by deferring meaning making versus fixing meaning of

symbolic action (Ibid.). If leadership actors participate in a world where meaning is continually changing and deferred, how do leadership actors create some stability in the processes of meaning making and organizing in order to perform tasks and produce required good and services? (Ibid.) The notion of play refers to the process of trying out alternative forms of meaning making and action to see what it creates within the system. (Barge 2012, 42.)

The leadership challenge is to create a sense of bounded openness in the meaning making process whereby our meanings and actions are simultaneously constrained by what has occurred previously while encouraging new possibilities for meaning making and action to emerge (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 241-242.) The robustness of the meaning making process is enhanced by introducing a productive difference in the conversation that simultaneously affirms what has previously occurred before and initiates the potential for new meaning making (Gergen et al 2004, 36-60).

2.10 Value commitments

A systemic constructionist approach makes several value commitments regarding the importance of communication, connection, uniqueness, emergence, and affirmation. The quality of leadership theory and practice can be judged by the degree to which it: (1) takes into account the way language creates situations, events, and people, (2) adopts a systemic unit of analysis, (3) captures the unique qualities of situations, events, and people, (4) fosters a sense of emergence and development, and (5) affirms what is good in the situation. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 233.)

The value commitments provide a sense of orientation to individuals desiring to create lead positions in human systems and enable them to develop a sense of coherency in their practice. While the performance of leadership is highly dynamic and fluid, the values that inform leadership practices are relatively stable. (Barge 2012, 19.) Values provide leadership actors the ability to assess the quality of their practices as it unfolds within emerging conversations and to make judgments about

the degree to which their actions are virtuous, that is the degree to which they live out their values in practice. (Ibid., 20.)

2.10.1 Communication

At the heart of a systemic constructionist practical theory of leadership is the notion that persons co-create their subjectivity in the form of personal and professional identities, relationships, and cultures through linguistic performance (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 233). Grint observes that “reality” is constructed through language and, in turn, since language is a social phenomenon, the account of reality which prevails is often both a temporary and a collective phenomenon (Grint 2005, 1471.).

The value commitment of communication is lived out in practice when leadership actors treat aspects of human system as ‘made’ rather than ‘found’ and when researches focus on the co-construction of identities and subjectivities within leadership. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 234.)

2.10.2 Connection

A systemic constructionist practical theory of leadership values descriptions and accounts of leadership that focus on patterns of connections that constitute human systems versus individual elements. It gives attention to the dynamic connections among persons, communication, action, meaning, and context within human systems. A systemic constructionist approach attempts to grasp the living unity of the unfolding chain of utterances within the larger socio-historical context in order to understand how the different pieces of a system fit together mutually define one another. For persons creating leader positions, this means that they are more than just readers of situations engaging in an analytical activity where they logically determine their subsequent action and impose it on others. Rather, they co-author situations with others through what may be characterized as an inventive activity where their actions modify and elaborate existing connections among persons, communication, action, meaning, and context and create new ones. This emphasizes

the importance of developing reflexive abilities within conversation that allow leadership actors to create and develop their position within an unfolding linguistic landscape. (Ibid.)

2.10.3 Uniqueness

A systemic constructionist practical theory of leadership values the highly contextualized flavor of leadership by treating conversational moments as distinct and novel given the unique intersection of time, place, people, and topic (Ibid.).

Bakhtin contends that every conversational moment is a ‘once occurrent event of Being’, which means that the distinctive intersection of time, place, people, and topic creates an event that has never before existed (Bakhtin 1993, 5-13).

Understanding the ‘eventness’ of the moment means paying attention to the unique contingencies of the situation (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 234.).

2.10.4 Emergence

Every communicative action performs gestures toward the future, opening up some and closing off other possibilities for the evolution of meaning making and action.

A systemic constructionist leadership theory views emergence as continuous and ongoing within conversation as each utterance introduces new elements and plants seeds for further development of key ideas. The value commitment towards emergence entails both developing and analyzing discursive openness and closure practices within leadership communication. (Ibid., 235.)

2.10.5 Affirmation

The affirmative value of systemic constructionist leadership emphasizes respecting other peoples’ positions and interests, focusing on the life generating elements of organizational experience, and connecting them from within the flow of conversation in ways that keep the meaning making process alive. The notion of affirmative noticing means that leaders work at developing their capacity for

spotting what is working well in the organization or situation, or what a person is doing well. (Barge 2012, 43.)

Leadership progresses tasks by articulating ideas in an intelligible fashion, which are recognized by others as important and useful (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 235.). To act skillfully within conversation, it is important to connect with the other persons' moral orders and grammars – the values people find important and their rules for meaning and action – that provide them orientation during conversation (Holman 2000, 957-980). When individuals affirm some element within others' d/Discourse, they feel that their lived experience is validated and confirmed (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 235.). Barge and Oliver suggest that affirmation, or appreciation, 'requires connecting with what others value in the moment and coordinating aims and purposes in ways that enhance organizational life' (Barge & Oliver 2003, 130.). The ethical and moral obligation for leadership actors, therefore, is to develop affirmative forms of relating and connecting that help connect people in meaningful ways allowing them to move forward with purpose. In practice this means that leadership actors must make wise choices regarding which elements of the d/Discourse within the ongoing conversation to affirm and upon which to focus. (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 235.)

Gergen contends that 'the meaning-making process is rendered robust by virtue of distinctive voices' (Gergen 2004 et al, 47.). This means that the robustness of the meaning making process is enhanced by introducing a productive difference in conversations that affirm what has previously occurred before and initiates a potential for new meaning making (Barge & Fairhurst 2008, 236.). If too little difference is introduced, the utterances do not add any important difference in the conversation as they simply duplicate what has been uttered previously. On the other hand, if the difference is too large and does not connect, persons may feel their contribution has been negated and become defensive. Utterances that negate or curtail what has preceded are destructive. (Ibid.)

Persons who aspire to create and sustain leadership positions need to develop their ability to work with the unique grammars and moral orders of systems that constitute what 'counts as' leadership within a system at particular time and space. Leadership actors are encouraged to acknowledge their role in creating the situation that they are engaging in and to recognize that situations are dynamic, as the way they respond to others introduces new material into the situation and changes it. (Ibid., 245.)

3 Systemic practices in practice

Humap Ltd. uses systemic constructionism as a framework in many of their trainings. Humap Ltd. has several methods and tools that they use within this framework, which will be presented next.

3.1 Humap Methods

Humap Ltd. uses facilitative and participatory methods. It means that different hidden points are made visible where they can then be studied together. From this studying together new ways to go forward can be found. (Kojo, H. 25 Mar 2012)

Humap Ltd. believes that even one conversation can have an effect on 100 percent of effectiveness for several days, either positive or negative. Relationships are built, renewed and changes in interaction and how these interactions are built in work communities has become an important competitive advantage for organizations. Humap Ltd. believes that the value of knowledge work is created in dialogue in which shared meanings, thinking together about the future and energy are built. (Humap 2012c.)

3.2 Tools

Humap Ltd. uses several tools in their trainings that use systemic constructionism as a framework.

3.2.1 361 assessment

Humap Ltd. has developed a tool Humap 361™ that provides a person (manager, director, key figure) feedback on their relationships with others in the organization. Compared to the traditional 360 feedback, the 361™ puts more emphasis on the individual. Kenneth Gergen, the President of Taos Institute, thinks that “Humap 361™ is the first reliable management tool based on social-constructive and

systemic approach that I have seen.” Humap 361™ consists of an on-line questionnaire and the associated coaching contribute to the sustainable development of relations, cooperation and performance. Humap 361™ is a collective feedback that emphasizes the relationships between people, instead of focusing on individual behavior only. Humap 361™ gives a boost to the development of collaboration and communication. (Humap 2012d.)

Some questions that Humap 361™ answers:

- How can we strengthen the relations between our people?
- How can we transform to an innovative culture?
- How do we enable people to work in different units on various tasks?
- How can we improve collaboration and communication?
- How can we create effective leadership in situations without managers?
- How can we enrich our leadership / coaching program? (Humap 2012e.)

Using Humap 361™ produces several great results. Participants are more aware of the importance of good cooperation and receive tips aimed at improving cooperation. They also learn to recognize their behavior and their impact on colleagues and gain insight on how they can contribute to collective learning. (Humap 2012d.)

3.2.2 Spindel

Spindel was developed in the University of Turku within several years of research. Spindel helps to see the structure of the whole network and identify the key persons of the company. It also makes visible if there are gaps in the knowledge exchange of a company. Spindel has been built for the development of organizations. (Spindel 2012a.)

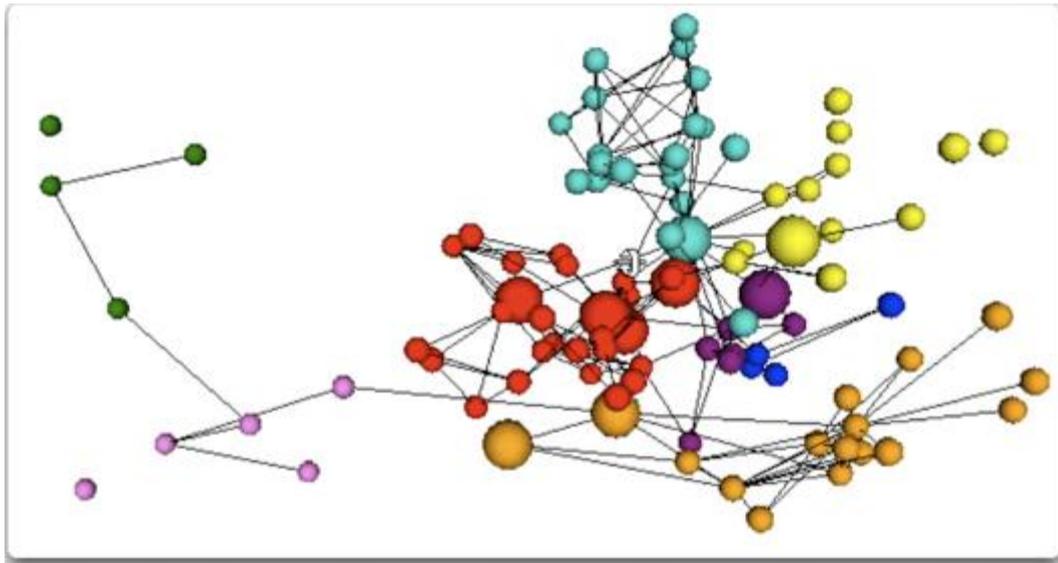


Figure 1. A visual representation of a global and dispersed enterprise showing almost 100 people on leadership level from eight countries. (Humap 2012f.)

Looking at the visualizations organizations one can, for example:

- See who are the important people for knowledge mediation
- Valuate communication structures before and after a change in the organization
- Look for future actors
- Look at key persons' positions within the company
- Visualize different relationships and boundaries of different groups
- See the relationships and boundaries of different kinds of groups
- Look at the centralization and tightness of the company
- View how people use different media and how it varies among different users (Spindel 2012b.)

Spindel is a great tool to show the relationships and structures of people of an organization. Systemic constructionism believes that the relationships inside an organization are important.

3.2.3 Dialogue Team

In top performance teams the way they have meetings is highly connected to how productive they are. Dialogue Team measures the quality of the teams and the groups' interaction. Successful groups and teams are able to build a dialogical culture that enable top performance. This is based on the results of 25 years of research by Marcial F. Losada that indicates that the interactions in meetings of top performance teams affect the return later on. (Humap 2012g.) Dr. Losada is the founder and executive director of Meta Learning, a consulting organization that specializes in developing high performance teams (Losada Social Psychology 2012).

Team Performance	Inquiry/ Advocacy	Positive/ Negative	Other/ Self
High Performance	1/1	6/1	1/1
Medium Performance	2/3	2/1	2/3
Low Performance	1/20	1/3	1/30
Example team	1/2	5/1	1/5

Figure 2. Shows the different dimensions of team performance. (Dialogue Team 2012)

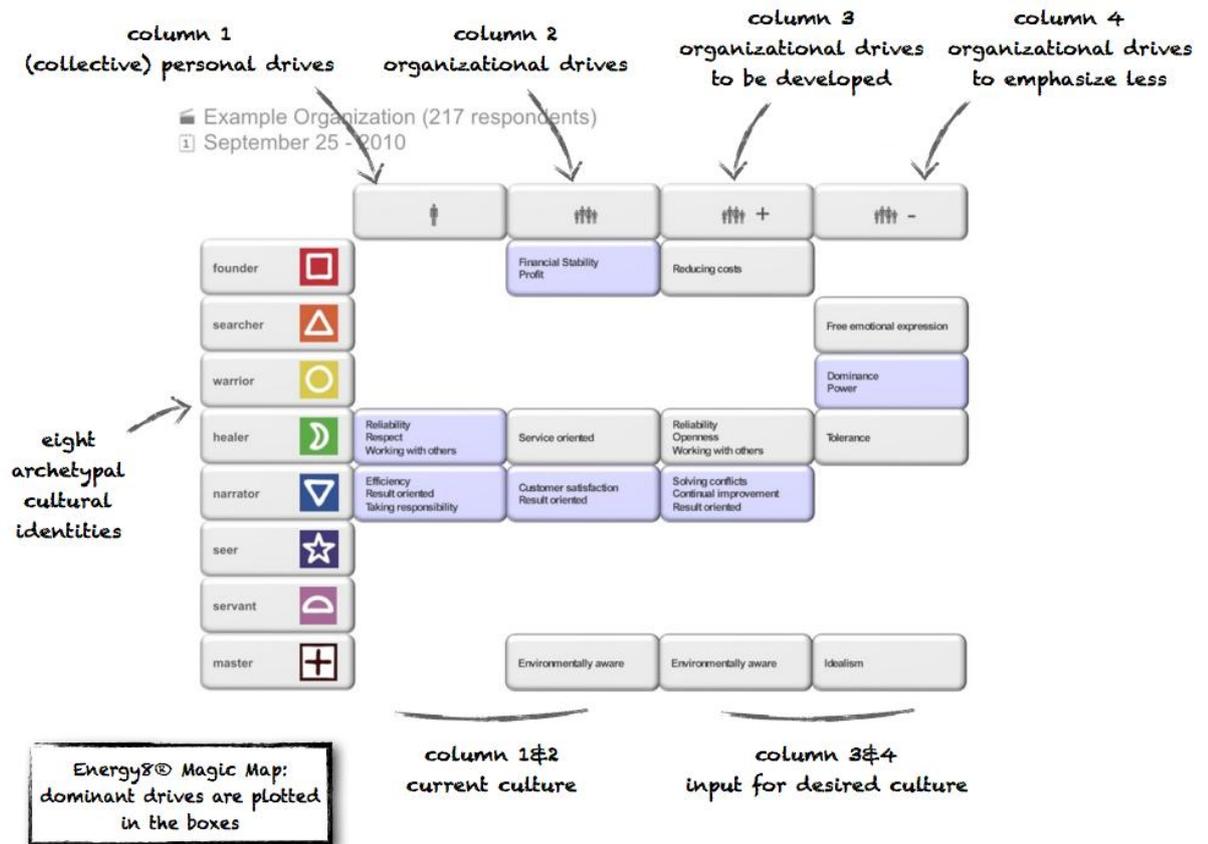
As seen in Figure 2., in a high performance team there is an equal amount of open questions as well as own opinions. There is a lot more positive comments in the discussion compare to negative comments. The discussion is directed towards things related to the organization or team and things outside the organization. In an average team there are more own opinions that open questions. There are slightly more positive comments compared to negative comments. The discussion is directed more towards the organization or team. In a low performance team the discussion has more negative than positive speeches. The discussion is basically stating yourown opinions and there are only a few open questions. The discussion is invariably directed towards the internal affairs of the organization or team. (Dialogue Team Workbook 2012, 6.)

Top-performance teams spend a lot of time to build a mutual understanding than low-performance teams. Low-performance teams spend a lot of time on reporting and informing in meetings, but often leave out the explanation what the information in practice means. High-performance team's discussion may at first look even chaotic and expert speech turns shine in absence. (Dialogue Team Workbook 2012, 6.)

Dialogue Team helps the team become aware of how the conversations they have in their meetings affect the productivity by taping the meetings and analyzing the material (Humap 2012g). There are three main benefits from the Dialogue Team tool: (1) it improves team communication and profitability, (2) helps the team have more affective and energizing meetings, and (3) develops relationships between team members. (Dialogue Team 2012)

3.2.4 Energy 8

Energy8 is a tool which helps recognize the drivers that energize and inspire individuals and groups. Energy 8 also helps to picture the connection between personal motivations and organizational drivers. It brings the deep thinking and procedural models into awareness and guides to have a developmental dialogue. (Humap 2012h.)



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Figure 3. Example of Energy8 (Energy8 2012a.)

Figure 3. above shows an Energy8 report with its typical matrix of eight archetypal identities (vertical) and four main questions from the web-survey (horizontal). Participants' drivers are plotted inside the matrix, giving rich context such as alignments, conflicts and hidden patterns. A conversation based on the Energy8 report will be a memorable and sometimes even life-changing experience. Set out like a game board, the report is a colorful representation of an organization's DNA. It's like a mirror in which an organization can see their shared meaning, organizational behavior and cultural patterns. It's a great conversation-starter, sparking deep discussions about what the organization is and how it can transform. (Energy8 2012a.)

The benefits of using Energy8: (1) it provides a validated map of the unconscious foundation of an organization as a starting point for a strategic or cultural

transformation, (2) it uncovers the unique code of a team, department or organization, (3) it creates collective understanding and willingness to change since all employees can participate, and (4) employees work together on a concrete plan. (Energy8 2012b.) Dialogue and having a shared meaning is very important from the perspective of systemic constructionism.

4 Research methods

I will present the research methods used in this study to conduct the gathered information and I will also present the interviewees and their organizations.

4.1 Data collection

In my research I used secondary data, the theoretical part, to form some of the questions for the interview. I received my theoretical sources from Humap Ltd. In my research the data gathered from the qualitative interviews is primary data. I will use qualitative data for the empirical part which I have received from the interviews I have conducted. I chose the qualitative method instead of quantitative, because the information retrieved from interviewees cannot be measured by numbers or statistics. Also the information I wanted to find out in my study is non-quantitative in nature and the sample would not be large enough to analyze statistically.

I interviewed five people, whom were each from different organizations. I asked Humap Ltd. to provide me with potential persons and their contact information. I emailed the potential interviewees with information about my thesis and interview questions and a few days later I called them to ask if they were interested to participate in the interview. I sent the interview questions in both English and Finnish. All participants chose to do the interview in Finnish.

The interviews were all planned to do face-to-face, but due to a scheduling problem one of the interviewees cancelled and the interview was done over the telephone. The interviewees were given a choice to participate in either English or Finnish. All of the interviews were conducted in Finnish and were recorded by a recording machine. After the interviews I wrote down everything that was said and translated the text from Finnish to English. Apart from one interview conducted via telephone, conducting the interviews face to face would have as few of changing variable as possible due to the similar setting.

4.2 Researched customers of Humap Ltd.

I had five persons that took part in the interview, each from a different organization. The organization descriptions are vague, because the issues discussed in the interview are confidential and therefore there is a need to be discrete. The information on the table below was received from the interviews and from the websites of each organization. The participants are existing customers of Humap Ltd.

Organization	Organization A	Organization B	Organization C	Organization D	Organization E
Position of interviewee	Development Manager	Development Manager	Human Resources Director	Human Resources Manager	Human Resources Manager
Number of employees	86,000	3,500	450	2300-2400	1400
Number of leaders	Impossible to say	350	50	190	200
Industry	Public sector	Education	Technical industry	Advocacy and service	ICT services
Other information	Has several different departments	Finnish University	Leading company in its industry	National advocacy and service association	One of the leading companies in its industry

Table 1. Information of respondents and organization

Of the five people that I interviewed three were Human Resource Managers and two were Development Managers. I wanted to interview Human Resource Managers or Development Managers, because they have arranged and are responsible for leadership trainings and therefore have the knowledge and expectations on future leadership trainings.

By interviewing five people, I will be able to form some conclusions, but will keep in mind that it represents the thoughts of only those persons interviewed, not all Human Resource Managers or Development Managers in Finland. These five persons will be a representative group sample from the target group.

The organizations were selected to have variety, so I interviewed two public organizations, two private organizations and one third sector organization.

4.3 Interview

The interview was a semi-structured interview, where I had all the same questions for all participants. If an interviewee said something interesting and I wanted to learn more about what they meant I asked more questions regarding that matter. See Attachment 1 to see the interview questions.

The qualitative interview included three parts: (1) background information of the organizations, (2) future expectations for leadership trainings, and (3) Humap Ltd.'s part. The qualitative interview questions rose from the theory of systemic thinking and social constructionism, which is the framework Humap Ltd. uses, and research questions. The questionnaire also had a part where I asked about Humap Ltd. and their trainings. The interviews were conducted between February 7th and March 5th.

The interview questions were not solely based on theory, because my objective was to find out how much Humap Ltd.'s theoretical framework has relevance to what Human Resource Managers and Development Managers hope from future leadership trainings. Having too detailed questions to begin with may lead the discussion too much and affect the validity and reliability in a negative manner.

4.4 Qualitative data analysis methods

Before conducting the interviews, I decided the method as to how I would then analyse the information gathered from the interviews. The method I decided to use

to analyse the information from the interviews is called template analysis, though it is also known by terms such as ‘codebook analysis’ or ‘thematic coding’.

Template analysis approach can be seen as occupying a position between content analysis where codes are all predetermined and their distribution is analyzed statistically and grounded theory where there is no priori definition of codes (Symon & Cassell 1998, 118.).

Before the interviews and in the interview there were not any predetermined themes that I asked about, but the questions asked raised several different themes that were important to that particular interviewee. These themes were then put into codes and everything an interviewee said was out under that particular code. The themes that rose from the interviews were also put into hierarchies, meaning that the themes mentioned by many interviewees was higher in hierarchy compared to the themes that were mentioned by one interviewee.

According to the template analysis method, once having done this it was important that I work systematically through the transcripts, identifying sections of text which was relevant for my study’s aims (Symon & Cassell 1998, 124-125.). The template analysis method gives me the opportunity to choose the amount of structure I have in my data analysis method and I chose to have a semi-structured method, where I wanted to keep some openness, because it is a qualitative research.

I chose this method, because it is a highly flexible approach that can be modified to for the needs of any study in a particular area (Symon & Cassell 1998, 133.).

However, sometimes in a method where there are themes picked from the text, the individual participants voices may be lost (Ibid.).

4.5 Validity and reliability

Every study should be assessed critically as to how valid and reliable it is. Reliability refers to the stability of the measure and validity refers to the degree of

measurement capturing what it is supposed to capture (Ghauri, Grønhaug & Kristianslund 1995, 46.) A study is more valuable the more valid and reliable it is. I recognize that interviewing only one person from an organization does not give the whole picture of the organizations wishes and hopes, and that conclusions drawn from these interviews could be quite different had I interviewed more than one person from each organization. However, the persons chosen for the interviews have the required knowledge to answer the interview questions, which strengthens the reliability of my study.

In order to minimize any variables between the five interviews, they were all done in a similar fashion, though one interview took place via telephone. I was as consistent as possible with the interview process as it is possible in a qualitative research. This means that I tried not to lead the discussion in any way and the further questions asked were created by the answers given by interviewees.

When one goes to make an interview it cannot be fully objective. The concept of systemic thinking is that everything is connected to everything. The fact that I have done my six month work placement at Humap Ltd. and seen many leadership trainings could have influenced what questions I formulated during the interview and this could have affected the answers given and therefore the conclusions reached in the end.

5 Presentation and interpretation of the findings

I will present the findings from the interviews about what the interviewees wish from future leadership trainings and their thoughts on Humap Ltd. I will also provide Humap Ltd. with the interviewees' thoughts about their strengths and weaknesses.

5.1 Current situation

I wanted to find out not only about future leadership trainings, but also a bit about current leadership trainings; what they emphasize and consist of. From the interviews I noticed that most, four out of five, interviewees organizations current situation with leadership trainings is quite satisfactory and is moving along with the future trends.

However, there was one interviewee in particular, Interviewee A, whom was very disappointed with the current style of leadership trainings in her organization. She felt that in their organization the trainings currently concentrate too much on the management side and daily routines. The same interviewee felt that there could be more 360 assessments used, especially if they were to “challenge the relationships and where everyone would speak and think with their own name and think about the relationships” (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012).

Interviewee A (2012) also said that at her workplace the administrative skills are emphasized. She also thinks that there is too much emphasis on number know-how, but it is lacking understanding and creativity. “Facts can tell us how many people have been on sick leave, for example, but it does not tell anything about the workplace, if it is rotten or not”. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

5.2 Expectations for future leadership trainings

The main focus was to find out reoccurring themes and thoughts that the interviewees had regarding future leadership trainings and what issues they would want to be emphasized in these trainings. There were four themes that rose in most organizations and eight that one or two of the interviewees mentioned. This shows that there is a common understanding and opinion on future leadership trainings and what they should consist of to fit the world we live in today. These twelve themes will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

Theme	How many interviewees mentioned the theme
Whole system thinking	3
Well-being at work and environment	3
Early support, caring intervention	3
Leader as a coach	3
Basic leadership skills	2
Relationships, role and emotions	2
Leading individuals and change	2
Dialogue and communication	2
Tailoring/adapting to organization	2
Energy and direction	1
Positive thinking	1
Reflectioning	1

Table 2. The 12 themes that rose from the interviews

5.2.1 Whole system thinking

Seeing the big picture, entity means to be able to see the whole organization, all of its parts and recognizing that they influence one another.

Interviewee from organization A wishes that future leadership trainings would deal with the big picture. By the big picture is meant that the organization would be viewed as whole, not separate parts that are not linked to one another. The interviewee also feels that it is important to find out what kinds of entities are related to the work tasks; to ask “what happens when we do this, how does it influence other things..?”. The interviewee gave a good example from their organization: one department laid off quite a few people, but the other departments did not care and were not concerned. Soon the other departments noticed what a huge effect it had on other departments and it really caused problems. “No one thought about how many things it may affect or thought about a little bit more complex cause and effect relationship. Systemic thinking would give more capabilities to deal with this.” (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B also believes that trainings are moving towards trying to see and understand bigger pictures and that the trainings are integrated into the daily life of leadership work (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012). Interviewee C thinks that it is very important to perceive and see the big picture of everyday work life (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012).

5.2.2 Well-being at work and environment

Work is something which can make you sick and work can make you happy. Work that is rewarding, involving good relationships with colleagues and opportunities to feel a sense of achievement on a regular basis is a key factor in psychological well-being. Good psychological well-being is also linked to good physical health. Work conditions are very important, because dull and monotonous work, difficult relationships with other and work that is impossibly demanding or lacking meaning

damages resilience, psychological well-being as well as physical health. (Robertson & Cooper 2011, 3.)

Happiness, which requires also well-being at work, precedes important outcomes and indicators of thriving, including fulfilling and productive work, satisfying relationships and superior mental and psychological health and longevity (Lyubomirsky et al, 2005, 834.). This shows what an impact work conditions can have on a person's well-being and how the well-being of a person can influence work productivity among other things.

Work well-being was mentioned by three out of five of the interviewees as one of the most important themes in their organization. Work well-being is a difficult issue, since it is influenced by so many things, such as the way people communicate, how people interact, how employee emotions are taken into consideration and so on. Interviewees A, B and C have recognized that leaders play a big part in the employee work well-being (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012). Interviewee A gives a good example on how important a good atmosphere is; she told in her interview that her workplace has such an "awful and depressing atmosphere" that she spends as little time as possible at the work office, because the atmosphere is stressful as well (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012).

Interviewee B states that one expectation is to ensure work well-being. According to Interviewee B, this is important because if the work is in balance it will influence motivation and job satisfaction. He also thinks in a longer term; when the Finnish population is aging rapidly and retirement age is being raised, it is important to keep the staff fit for work longer. If work well-being is not addressed, Interviewee B feels that financial losses such as sick leaves and early retirement will increase. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012) Interviewee C also believes that sustaining and developing work well-being and the work environment is very important to have in the future trainings (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012).

The interviews gave a good interpretation of work well-being and why it is important to have well-being at work and how, when having work well-being, it influences the work community in a positive way. Interviewee A also gives a great example on what happens when work well-being does not exist in a work place and how it affects every day work life (Interviewee A, Mar 7 2012).

5.2.3 Early support, caring and intervention

Early support and caring in a workplace means that leaders need to be aware and have their eyes and ears open, to be sensitive to any changes in the workplace atmosphere. Once a leader has noticed a negative change or issue, it needs to be handled immediately, before it turns into a bigger problem.

Three out of five interviewees (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012) think that it is important for a leader to have their eyes, ears and other senses open to recognize when there may be a conflict or problematic situation ahead in a work place. The interviewees agree that intervening when the situation is at its early stages it is much easier to solve the issue.

Interviewees agree that if the situation is not recognized and grows after some time, it is much harder to try and intervene (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

Interviewee B states that early support is one of the contents in their trainings and thinks that early support or intervention requires interaction skills. He has had a lot of experience being a mediator in difficult situations and has seen that many conflicts go unresolved for even ten years. This is why he thinks that in a situation of conflict “it is important to think about where it is going, where it could go and what could happen”. The more time goes forward the harder it is to intervene in these situations he believes. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee D also talks about early caring and how a leader needs to have genuine presence and have his/her tentacles up to detect any changes in the atmosphere, for example. Also a listening and hearing leadership style is emphasized. This will eventually mean that leaders will be able to act as early as possible if a problem is detected. She explains: “it is kind of like a fever thermometer model; when there is no fever and no symptoms it is important to create a good dialogical work atmosphere which builds a lot of trust. If there are some symptoms of fever, the issues should be raised immediately and discussed, so that the fever does not go up to 40, because then it gets really hard to try and change anything”. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012)

Interviewee E also feels that early caring and intervening is growingly more important and this issue has been raised in his/her organization. She thinks that as soon as leaders notice something or hear something is wrong, they should intervene. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

5.2.4 Leader as a coach (to employee)

Having a leader that would have a role of a coach for the employee means that the leader would more actively guide and teach his/her employees.

Interviewees C, D, and E mentioned that it is very important in future leadership trainings to teach the leader to train his/her employees. This means that the role of the leader would be more coaching and guiding employees than in the past (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012.)

Interviewee C thinks that in the future the trainings should concentrate on how leaders can develop their employees and how they can coach their employees, because when employees feel like they can develop themselves in their work and organization they also prosper and enjoy work more. According to Interviewee C this could be reached by teaching the basics of coaching to leaders. (Interviewee C, Apr 3 2012)

Interviewee D also brings out the point that a leader that coaches his/her employees will have more emphasis in the future (Interviewee D, Apr 4 2012). Interviewee E also brings out the fact that leaders will become more like facilitators that pick up the vital things from employee discussions and take these things forward, so the trainings should include teaching the leader to coach their employees. She thinks this is important, because employees will work better in their work community. (Interviewee E, 5 Mar 2012)

5.2.5 Basic leadership skills

Basic understanding in this context means that leaders would have the basic leadership skills, such as knowing computer systems and also having the very basic knowledge of how to be a leader.

Interviewee B feels that one important thing for leaders to have is a basic understanding of what good leadership is and how to lead people (Interviewee B, Mar 13 2012). Interviewee C thinks that it is important not to forget the basic know-how that leaders should have (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012).

This shows that the interviewees see that a leader needs the basic skills first, to have the resources to learn more leadership skills that go beyond and deeper than basic skills.

5.2.6 Relationships, role and emotions

It has been recognized that the types of relationships and roles you have with others in a workplace can affect the atmosphere of the workplace.

Interviewee A feels that it is important to think about what kinds of relationships our own doings and actions create (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012). Interviewee D thinks that it is important for the leader to recognize their own way of doing things,

how they interact and to know their own role and be ok with the role they have (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012).

Two of the interviewees (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012) agree that there should be more emphasis on so called people skills. Interviewee A feels that there is not enough of emphasis on emotional skills. She feels that it would be important to recognize what these emotions are, what they can tell me, what they could tell me, what is behind these emotions, and what are the hopes and wishes behind these emotions. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

From the interviews it is evident that Interviewee A and D want to emphasize the leaders role and actions. As a conclusion it could be said that it is vital to know yourself, who you are and know your behavior and how it may affect others and to be self-aware. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012)

5.2.7 Leading individuals and change

In a world which is becoming more and more global recognizing that people are individuals and want to be led individually is important. This means that leaders take into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of employees and make the best of them.

Interviewees D and E say they have noticed a change in the work communities over the past years. The world is becoming more global (international) and diverse. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

Interviewee E believes that in the future leaders need to be able to encounter people as individuals and accommodate their leadership style to the employees and not lead everyone in the same way. Interviewee E concludes that “people want to be treated as individuals, so leaders need to learn this”. Interviewee E also feels that understanding the diversity between different people and recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of employees is very important. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

Interviewee D mentions that leading in a constantly changing world has its own challenges. Leading diversity is becoming a key aspect in leadership; according to Interviewee D “it is important to get tools and resources to know how to lead this changing group of employees”. Interviewee D also mentions that there may be internal and even external pressure that requires the need to change. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012)

Interviewee E also mentions that in the future there will be different kinds of employees. The younger employees according to interviewee E will want to participate more. Interviewee E thinks participation from all employees is a strength to organizations and that these organizations will probably perform the best. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

5.2.8 Dialogue and communication

Interviewees A and B emphasize the importance of communication and dialogues between leaders-employees and employees-employees and learning how to interact with others (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012).

Communication and discourse, the language you use when you communicate, is one of the most important aspects of systemic constructionism, because it affects everything. Dialogue means the spoken language, whereas communication can be either verbal or non-verbal.

Interviewee from organization A thinks that the trainings should have methods to teach the leaders how to have inspirational and genuine dialogues. Also learning how to reflect together and have the ability to recognize that things could be done differently is very important to interviewee A. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B states that functional interaction and personal skills are emphasized in their organization, and how you communicate in different situations. Interaction, not one way communication, is highly emphasized and doing things together is viewed as being important. He thinks these things are important, because many

problematic issues are a straight response to poor communication. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

5.2.9 Tailoring and adapting to organization

Tailoring and adapting to an organizations needs means finding out what the needs of the organization are at the moment and how to best meet these needs and be able to help the organization.

From the interviewees two (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012) mentioned that it is very important to tailor the trainings for the organization the trainings take place. Here the responsibility also lies with the organization; the organization needs to make sure that the consultant knows the real situation of the organization.

Interviewee C thinks that the training and its content should be tailored to fit the specific organization and that the trainings take into consideration the situation that the organization is in at that moment (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012). Interviewee E also mentions that it is important to take into consideration the people that are participating into the trainings and the world where they come from (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012).

5.2.10 Energy and direction

Finding energy in a workplace means to feel renewed and have motivation and energy to do the daily routines at the office. Having the right direction means that the energy can be channeled appropriately.

Interviewee A believes that finding new energy and new directions should be more emphasized; “they should be learned since they are not that well taught in our society”. Only one interviewee mentioned finding new energy as an important

leadership tool, but I also think it is very important. Finding energy and direction also motivates employees (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012).

5.2.11 Positive thinking

To think more positively means to concentrate on the positive side of things and people as well, instead of concentrating on only the problems.

Interviewee A believes that it is important to start with what is going well and is effective, rather than concentrating only on problems, since that is a never ending cycle. She also thinks that everyone should look for good and beautiful things in people and in everything and ask yourself: “what good do I see in this person?”.

Interviewee A is the only interviewee that mentioned thinking positively would have an effect. The leaders could be taught in trainings to think about things that are going well, rather than concentrating only on problems. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

5.2.12 Reflectioning

Reflecting means to stop and concentrate on the moment which is happening right now. In the hectic society we live in today, it would be an important skill to have.

Interviewee from organization A feels that it would require stopping to capture the important matters in an organization. She also questions whether larger masses would have the courage to stop and have the dialogues required for change to take place: “what would wake up a person that is so compartmentalized..?”. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

5.3 Future training practices

After finding out what would be important to have in the leadership trainings, I wanted to know what the interviewees thought would be the best way to achieve these important matters and also what methods consultants could use to get the best results from the participants.

5.3.1 Practices and participation

All of the interviewees emphasized the importance of participation from the participants in trainings. The interviewees saw it as a way for leaders to gain more resources, courage and self-awareness.

Interviewee A believes that practicing certain skills would bring more courage to leaders (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012). Interviewee B thinks that by practices people would get resources for their everyday work life. He also thinks that it is important to have theory in the background, but people having a true discussion with others is very meaningful and equally as important of a tool to enhance learning. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee C thinks that trainings where leaders are asked to practice different things are relatively effective, because it leaves a memory impression when you have practiced it yourself. She also thinks that trainings where leaders are made to participate work the best. (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012)

Interviewee D feels that the best way to capture the essential aspects are trainings where the leader has to participate, because “the leader gets tools to search themselves, see how their behavior looks to others, because we all have blind spots”. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012)

Interviewee E believes that it is important for leaders to be able to enable their employees to do a good job at work by supporting them and the employee knowing what is expected from him/her. Interviewee E also thinks that having real life examples and cases work the best in trainings, also simulations and games. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

5.4 Humap Ltd. as a training partner

All of the interviewees based some emphasis on HumapLtd.'s know-how in systemic constructionism as a factor when choosing a partner. Two interviewees (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012) mention that it was a very meaningful factor when choosing a partner.

Interviewee B states that they buy from the best know-how and especially in situations of change it (systemic approach) is a key aspect (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012). Also Interviewee C emphasizes that the consultants and their background is more meaningful than HumapLtd.'s systemic constructionist know-how (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012).

Interviewee D says that she completely agrees with the systemic constructionist approach to leadership, since in many work communities there are a lot of power structures and even a person who is withdrawn has power, because doing nothing does influence others as well (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012). Interviewee E also states that she believes that the systemic approach HumapLtd. has was in the background when they chose a partner (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012).

5.4.1 Strengths

All of the interviewees saw Humap Ltd.'s work as very valuable for their organization. Most organizations have had years of cooperation with HumapLtd., which was seen as a strength as well. The interviewees mentioned several things which they see as a strength for Humap Ltd..

Interviewee A definitely thinks that Humap Ltd.'s strengths are enthusiasm, energy, dialogue between Humapians, the desire and motivation to learn and study many things. Interviewee A states that "I think it is lovely how Humapians seem to live in a different world, in a world which I hope will spread". (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B thinks that HumapLtd.'s strengths are making connections, increasing understanding, social interventions, making visible something which is not visible, bringing out the meaningfulness of relationships and bringing them out in the open. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee C thinks that Humap Ltd. has expanded well into the work well-being, which is exactly what their organization needs. Also having years of cooperation with Humap means that Humap knows their organization and can tailor the trainings and take into consideration the different aspects of the organization. (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012)

Interviewee D sees that the strengths are the human-centric approach and the set of values which are visible also in the trainings. Also Interviewee D mentions Humap Ltd.'s appreciative approach to work that fits their values well. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012) Interviewee E mentions having strong theoretical knowledge and diversity and understanding is a strength for Humap Ltd., but there may be a downside if the theory part is too broad. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

5.4.2 Weaknesses

Gathering weaknesses of Humap Ltd. from the interviewees was more difficult. Two interviewees mentioned that there may be too much theory and it would be better to go into more practical things quicker in the trainings and that one training was too detached from their organizations' reality (Interviewee A, Mar 7 2012; Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012). Another interviewee mentions that is very important for Humap Ltd. to continue to listen carefully to customer needs in the future as well (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012).

Interviewee B had a hard time saying something negative about Humap Ltd. and pointed out that the success of any training is in the hands of the seller and buyer. Interviewee B felt that it requires two-way communication; "it means improving the

cooperation instead of improving the know-how of the consultant”. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee C could not come up with weaknesses, but stressed that Humap Ltd. should continue to listen carefully to the customer needs, so they can be fulfilled (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012). Interviewee D could not come up with any weaknesses other than that they have built their relationship with Humap Ltd. on one person, but also mentions that they look for a person with the right personality for their type of organization (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012). Interviewee E said that it would be important to go into the practicalities quicker and not maybe spend so much time on the theory part and giving more practical tips. (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012)

5.5 Humap Ltd’s theoretical framework in trainings

Humap Ltd.’s theoretical framework is seen as mostly a very positive thing, since it gives a sense of direction to the trainings. However, many interviewees agree that if the theory is too visible in the trainings, then it is too theoretical and should be more practical.

Interviewee A thinks that the theoretical framework used in the training was too detached from everyday life of the people participating that no one did the tasks required (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012). Interviewee B feels that in change trainings they are quite effective and diverse, especially in situations where something invisible needs to be made visible (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012).

Interviewee D feels that if the theoretical framework is too prominent then it is too theoretical. Interviewee D also feels that it is important to have a theoretical framework in the background to have a clear sense of direction, but not to have too much of theory. (Interviewee D, 4 Mar 2012)

5.6 Effectiveness of Humap Ltd. trainings

Interviewees felt that the effectiveness of Humap Ltd. trainings has been good, recognizing that one or a few trainings cannot change the whole organization, but can leave seeds that may grow in the right circumstances.

Interviewee A thinks that it is not only up to the consultants how well the training goes or what happens afterwards. If the upper management is committed then there is a higher chance that things will move forward. Interviewee A also thinks that in order to have long-term results it would require a longer process. However, interviewee A feels that trainings can leave small seeds that can eventually lead to bigger things and “even one person can have an influence in a workplace”.

(Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B states that they have been able to exploit and make use of projects Humap have been involved with regarding the support for change. Interviewee B has seen real change in how things are done and they have moved into more team-like organizations. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee C thinks that all leadership trainings have an effect. Some leaders in their organization pick up useful tools and take them forward (Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012). Interviewee D has heard from development discussions that the trainings they have had people feel that they have gained more courage to do their work and have received more support. Interviewee D thinks that if the participants have more confidence and courage to have development discussion with their own employees that it has already added a great deal of value to the training. (Interviewee D, 4 Apr 2012)

Interviewee E cannot mention any specific outcomes from Humap Ltd.’s trainings, but said that the trainings have definitely left some sprouts (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012).

5.7 Wishes for Humap Ltd.

From two of the interviewees I could pick up some subtle wishes and hopes that the interviewees would want Humap Ltd. to take into consideration in the future trainings.

Interviewee A would have hoped that the consultant would have challenged everyone and said why this training is taking place. Also it would have been very important to adapt more to the organization where the training is done and have a sensitive ear to hear what has been said. (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B has quite a different type of organization from the others and thinks that this could be more thought of when designing the trainings. The consultants could think more about how in this kind of an organization the others could be committed to a change, how to get the leaders aboard and to see what the greater good is for the whole, not just for own department. (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012)

Interviewee B also thinks that the technique part of the training could be more faded, so that the focus would be clearer (Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012). The techniques Humapians use are new for many people, so it would be important for Humapians to think about how to prepare the participants for something new and how to make it so that it is as natural as possible.

5.8 Future leadership training expectations and systemic constructionism

Half of the twelve themes that rose from the interview are connected to the systemic constructionist approach and I will be discussing this connection below.

One of the themes mentioned by three interviewees (Interviewee A 2012 7 Mar; Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012) was the importance of big pictures and entities. Recognizing and seeing the big picture is linked to systemic constructionism, because it also sees organizations as systems which consist of

many different parts, but are linked together. Seeing the big picture clarifies how if something happens it may influence something else in an organization and points out that everything is connected to everything.

Another important issue in systemic constructionism is communication, which was mentioned by two (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012) of the interviewees. In systemic constructionism it is believed that leaders co-create identities, relationships, and cultures through linguistic performances (Barge and Fairhurst 2008, 233.). It is recognized and emphasized by two interviewees that how a leader communicates affects the relationships at the workplace (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee B, 13 Mar 2012).

Energy was mentioned by one of the interviewees as an important thing for leaders to have and be able to create in others (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012). In systemic constructionism the importance of a leadership's role in creating and sustaining energy in the organization is highlighted as well (Barge and Fairhurst 2008, 242). Interviewee A recognizes the impact a leader can have on their employees and how it is connected to enthusiasm in a workplace (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012).

The theme positive thinking was brought up by one interviewee. Interviewee A mentioned that it would be important to concentrate on what is going well, instead of concentrating only on problems (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012). In systemic constructionism one of the value commitments, affirmation, stresses that a leader should be able to spot what is working well in an organization or situation, or what a person is doing well. This is also related to the theme leading individuals, which was emphasized by particularly one interviewee, because it is important for leader to see what the employee is doing well and use the strengths of that individual (Interviewee E, 5 Apr 2012).

The last theme related to social constructionism that rose from the interviews is well-being, which was mentioned by three (Interviewee A, 7 Mar 2012; Interviewee

B, 13 Mar 2012; Interviewee C, 3 Apr 2012) interviewees. In the social constructionist approach the important issues are very much linked to well-being at work. The aim of the social constructionist approach is to create well-being at work through various approaches such as communication.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

From the results and finding of the study I am able to provide conclusions of these findings and make some recommendations for Humap Ltd.

6.1 Conclusions

From my research and its findings there are a few conclusions that can be reached. I did not find any significant differences to the interview answers that were dependant on the size of the organization or what industry they operated in. Only Organization A was significantly a different size company than the rest and did show more of a lack of satisfaction. I believe this shows that in a larger organization change happens more slowly.

Firstly, it may be said that leaders have a significant role on the well-being at a workplace. Well-being is a broad concept, and as my research shows there are many things that affect the well-being of employees at work. The way to make leaders aware of the different things that affect well-being at work is to train and teach leaders on how their actions can have an effect on employees. This is why it is very important to practice good leadership at a workplace.

Secondly, it may be concluded that what Human Resource and Development Managers expect the most from leadership trainings in the future is that leaders are able to see the big picture, leaders enable and support well-being at work, leaders practice early support methods and leaders act more like coaches to their employees instead of a taking the old fashioned leader role. This means that in future trainings these issues should be emphasized to tackle the right topics.

Thirdly, it may be concluded that in future leadership trainings there needs to be methods and approaches to address the issues mentioned above. Practicality and

participation is highly valued and should be used in the trainings to reach more sustainable and long-lasting results.

Lastly, it may be concluded that systemic constructionism as an approach is very good and efficient to use, since half of the most mentioned themes in the interview were highly connected to systemic constructionism, as discussed in “Future leadership training expectations and systemic constructionism” part of my thesis.

6.2 Recommendations

From the interviews I am able to make some recommendations for Humap Ltd. From two of the interviewees I could pick up some subtle wishes and hopes that the interviewees would want Humap Ltd. to take into consideration in the future trainings.

Tailoring and adapting the trainings to fit the organization and their current situation is highly valued. Therefore, Humap Ltd. needs to have a well-established relationship and open communication with the organization they are cooperating with. Unfortunately, this is not only up to the consulting company, but the organization has a responsibility of telling the organization’s situation honestly. One of the interviewees did mention that Humap Ltd. has a sensitive ear to hear what the organizations situation is and recommends Humap Ltd. to continue having a sensitive ear.

Another recommendation picked up from the interviews is that Humap Ltd. could think more about how to get the leaders aboard and explain more about the reasons behind the training and why the training is taking place and what good can come out of it for the whole organization. Related to this, another recommendation could be that Humap Ltd. should prepare the participants by telling the aforementioned things to have a better reception and participation from the participants.

The knowledge and know-how of Humap Ltd. on systemic constructionism was very highly valued. The fact that Humapians study a lot is considered to be a great thing. However, three interviewees mentioned that theoretical approach in trainings should be more in the background and the focus should be elsewhere. This means that it is important to have the systemic constructionist know-how and theory in the background to support the training, but that the focus should be on more practical matters.

Lastly, it may be said that that what Human Resource and Development Managers expect the most from leadership trainings in the future is that leaders are able to see the big picture, leaders enable and support well-being at work, leaders practice early support methods and leaders act more like coaches to their employees instead of a taking the old fashioned leader role. This means that in future trainings these issues should be emphasized and addressed to meet the requirements and hopes of customers

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Attatchments

Attachment 1: Qualitative Interview

Background info

How many employees in the company?

How many leaders in the company?

How many leadership training days per year?

How many 360° assessments per year?

How much money is spent on average per year to train leaders/ or other trainings?

How many years of cooperation with HumapLtd.?

Expectations

What expectations do you have regarding future leadership trainings?

Why are these factors important, in your opinion?

What is the direction/trends the trainings are taking?

How can this be seen? Is this a good direction..?

What kinds of trainings capture the essential and important matters?

What are these important matters and how they can be captured the best possible way?

What skills seem to be emphasized in leadership?

Why do you think that they are emphasized?

Is there something else that you would like to emphasize?

Humap Ltd. trainings

Is Humap's systemic constructionist know-how a meaningful factor when choosing a partner?

Concerning these trainings, what could have been useful to have or have more of? Why?

Strengths and weaknesses of the trainings?

How effective was the theoretical framework and training methods?

What has brought upon results (positive or negative)? How did it show? What was the impact?