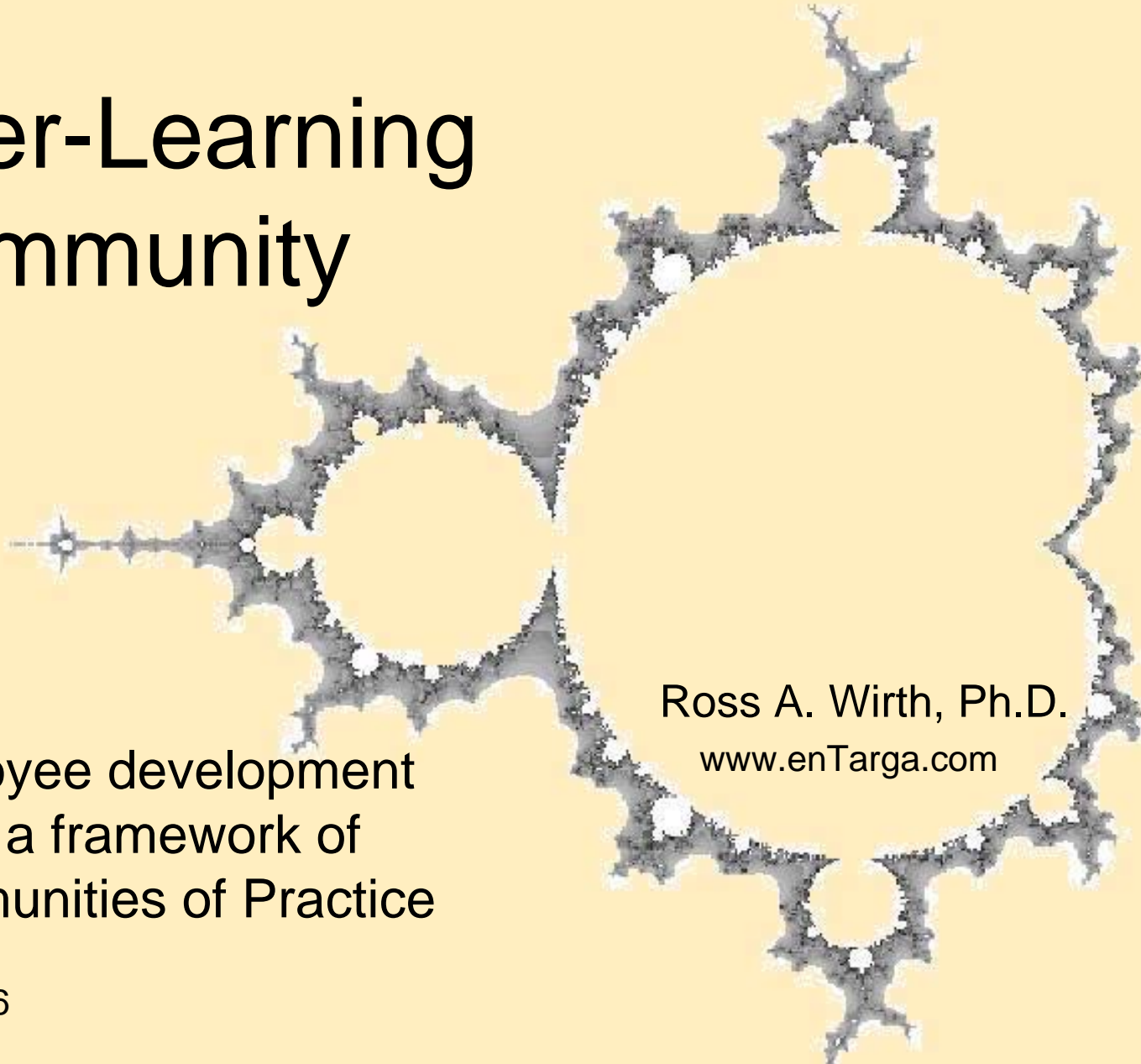# Peer-Learning Community

Employee development
within a framework of
Communities of Practice

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Peer-Learning Community

- A Peer-Learning Community is a
  group of employees that
  voluntarily work together
  for their personal development,
  within an agenda that is work focused
- Benefits
  - Learning is focused on personal needs
  - Retention is increased through immediate application on-the-job
  - Group setting aids in shared knowledge and encouragement for learning & application
  - Leverages available training resources

Learning Group – Start up

1. Register interest in an area of learning
   (reply to an existing topic or add a new topic yourself)
2. Organize 6-8 members with common interest – ideally co-located together
3. Individually identify specific learning objectives
4. Kick-off meeting (F2F or online) organized with support from facilitator
   - Introductions – clarification of individual learning objectives
   - Synthesize acceptable group learning objectives
   - Identification of business opportunities & problems to apply learning
   - Selection of relevant Computer Based Training (CBT) course
   - Identification of other resources that would be beneficial for the learning
5. Individually take the selected CBT course
6. Participate in group discussion
   - Discuss CBT points that may be unclear
   - Challenge each other on how the learning is being applied
   - Refine individual action plans for applying the learning and commit to the group to move forward
7. Individually assess progress toward learning objectives
8. Loop back to step 3, broaden the learning or drill deeper into a topic
   - Reorganize group membership as desired
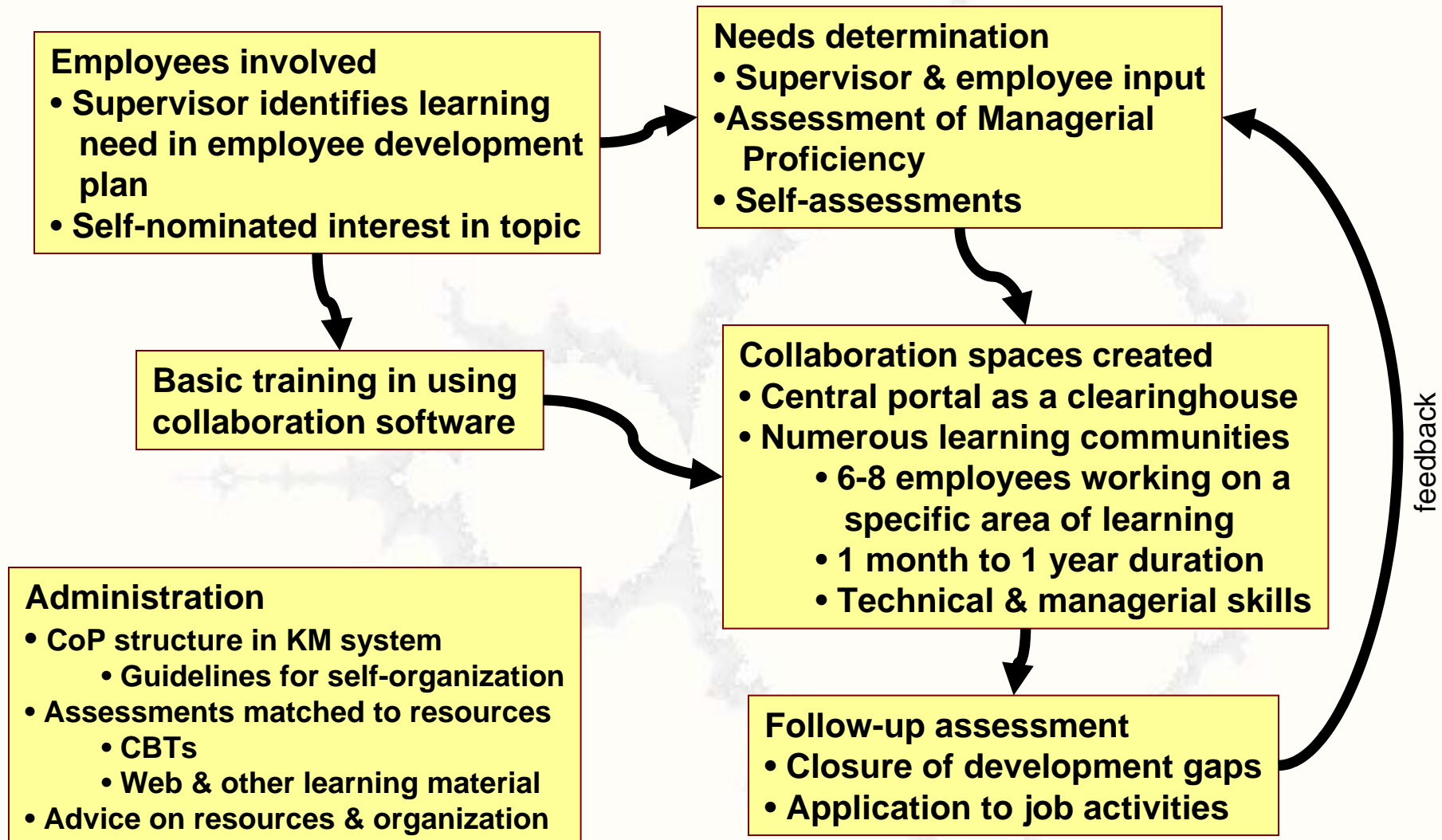
Learning Roles

- Individually
  - Identify key learning objectives
  - Identify how learning might be applied to your job
  - View CBT (Computer Based Training) module
  - Participate in group discussion
    - Assist others in understanding material
    - Encourage others to follow through in application of learning
  - Demonstrate use of knowledge learned or help others gain the knowledge through your effort
- Team
  - Discuss key learning points & possible applications
  - Design & carry out an applied learning project if possible
    - Possible projects include:
      - Establish an intranet resource page for this topic
      - Expand or organize reference links on the intranet resource page
      - Write an employee or supervisor oriented article on this topic
      - Specific on-the-job project that utilizes this knowledge for yourself or someone else
- Human Resources
  - Assist and encourage formation of peer-learning groups
  - Provide assistance on group facilitation process & collaboration software
  - Provide advice on available resources to support learning objectives

Peer-Learning Community

Employee development within a
 framework of Communities of Practice

The following slides provide further information on how peer-learning is becoming a best practice in a number of companies.

Process for Peer-Learning

Employees involved
- Supervisor identifies learning need in employee development plan
- Self-nominated interest in topic

Needs determination
- Supervisor & employee input
- Assessment of Managerial Proficiency
- Self-assessments

Basic training in using collaboration software

Collaboration spaces created
- Central portal as a clearinghouse
- Numerous learning communities
  - 6-8 employees working on a specific area of learning
  - 1 month to 1 year duration
  - Technical & managerial skills

Administration
- CoP structure in KM system
  - Guidelines for self-organization
- Assessments matched to resources
  - CBTs
  - Web & other learning material
- Advice on resources & organization

Follow-up assessment
- Closure of development gaps
- Application to job activities

feedback

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Learning Foundation

- **Group Action Learning**
  - Working on real world problems or dilemmas
  - Actively seeking lessons learned & best practices
  - Active implementation of learning
    - Individual benefits from learning experience
    - Company benefits from improvements
- **Individual Development Plans**
  - Identified business opportunity or problem
  - Specific learning objectives of current interest
  - Action Plan on the employee's development plan
- **Support system**
  - Peer-group impact
    - Encouragement for each other & offers of assistance
    - Commitment to learning objectives through peer-pressure for results
  - Progress tracking
    - Database of learning objectives & progress to date
    - Weekly email reminders to update progress

Objective: Peer-Learning Framework

- Leverages adult learning & collaboration practices to provide maximum benefit for the time invested
- Accelerates employee development through matching employees with similar developmental needs
  - Competency assessments – existing + other self-assessments
    - Development gaps mapped to various training resources
  - Clearinghouse for establishing learning communities
- Development that is immediately applied to workplace situations
  - Learning that is better retained through its implementation
  - Exposure to cross-organization knowledge & relationships
- Built-in peer encouragement & assistance with personal accountability
- Gains employee commitment through personal responsibility for success
- Leverages existing organizational knowledge & training resources
- Does not add additional overhead in administration, even if scaled upward