



FLANAGAN-HYDE ASSOCIATES, LLC
Connecting Knowledge and Data, Generating Solutions

QUICK READ

EMERGENT LEARNING

Emergent Learning (EL) helps groups learn together as they do their work, use what they know—intuitively and through evidence—to take action, review the outcomes, and adjust the next set of actions as needed. EL is not an “add-on” to the work. Instead, ongoing learning is part of the work itself.

Developed by Fourth Quadrant Partners (4QP), Emergent Learning helps groups take a methodical approach to their work and adjust plans before it’s too late to take corrective action.

The 4QP Emergent Learning Platform™ includes five core tools: Framing Questions, Action Hypotheses, Before and After Action Reviews, Emergent Learning Tables, and the Learning Agenda and Log.

Flanagan-Hyde Associates has integrated Emergent Learning into all of our work. Our clients have experienced the power of this approach in strategic planning, program development, social impact evaluation, strengthening nonprofit governing boards, building coalitions, and multi-sector collaborations focused on system-level change.

Many organizations use the Plan, Act, Reflect, Adjust model. The weak link is “adjust.” Emergent Learning embeds ongoing adjustment into the work itself, which improves efficiency and harnesses the value of lessons learned along the way.

Framing questions often start with “What will it take to...?” or “How can we...” The end of the question is a straightforward objective that everyone truly cares about. We keep questions simple, forward-focused, and action-oriented.

One particularly helpful concept is “line of sight.” Imagine that you’re hiking. Trees, cacti, and boulders obscure your view. Then you come to a rise and the vista opens—you clearly see the trail stretching ahead of you for miles.

In Emergent Learning, the line of sight is the path from where the group is now—the decisions and actions taking place in the present—to the desired outcome. To work efficiently, both the purpose of the work and the conditions that define success must be clear to everyone in the group.

Different understandings of purpose and intent often create obstacles. A clear line of sight and tools that support adaptive responses along the way—step around this boulder, duck under that thorny tree—support the collective learning process. The group achieves the intended results and acquires valuable information that can support future efforts.

We consult with organizations and coalitions for specific projects and initiatives, speak at conferences and meetings, and offer seminars on Emergent Learning.

Sharon Flanagan-Hyde is the first consultant who earned Master Practitioner certification in the 4QP Emergent Learning Certification Program™ and Peter Flanagan-Hyde is a 2015 certification candidate.

We offer complimentary one-hour consultations. Call 602-314-6460 or contact sharon@flanagan-hyde.com or peter@flanagan-hyde.com.