The Architecture of Quality

Issues when clients can't evaluate outcomes

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What am I going to be talking about?

◆ A service organisation with a number of separate operating units in which

 – It is very problematic to know how the clients of these operating units are evaluating outcomes

  ◆ there are difficulties of accessibility, complexity, timescales, and differences of view.

 – The professionals working within the organisation can claim to 'know best'

  ◆ it is possible to get 'stuck' inside the view of the world defined by the professionals themselves.

What are the key points I want to make?

1 **Architectures of Quality**

» what happens when an organisation has an *active* relationship with its 'users'?

2 **Managing to change**

» are there approaches to change that are more difficult to make work?

3 **Critical Process**

» what does a change process need to be able to put into question?

4 **Changing 'step-by-step'**

» what is difficult about "raising the strategy ceiling"?

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The Organisation

◆ In the voluntary sector, supporting 250 people in residential and nursing home care.

◆ Residents and clients with

– mental health problems,

– problems associated with age,

– learning disabilities and

– challenging behaviours.

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The Organisation's Context

◆ The product of a health and local authority

◆ Employing 225 staff in 18 houses and a central office

◆ Income of £7.3 million from contracts, client contributions and allowances

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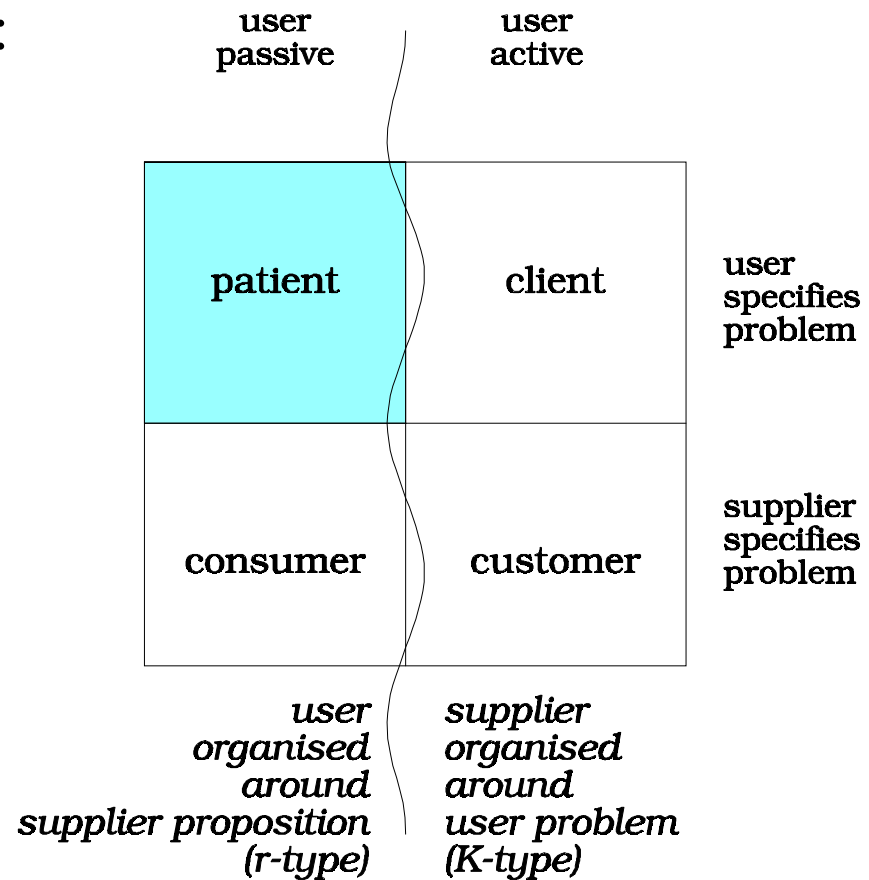http://www.brl.com

Key Challenges Then

- ◆ Securing employment contracts of staff
- ◆ Positioning the organisation in relation to emerging markets
- ◆ Securing compliance with the regulatory frameworks
- ◆ Securing freedom to act from the Board of Trustees
- ◆ Organising around client needs rather than those of staff and managers

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Architectures of Quality

◆ The Relational Challenge:

– Moving to an *active* relationship with the user

» **r**eplicating 'supply' of a service

versus

» **K**now-how organising supplier in response to user

	user passive	user active	
user specifies problem	patient	client	
supplier specifies problem	consumer	customer	

user active

user specifies problem

supplier specifies problem

user organised around supplier proposition (r-type)

supplier organised around user problem (K-type)

Managing (to) Change
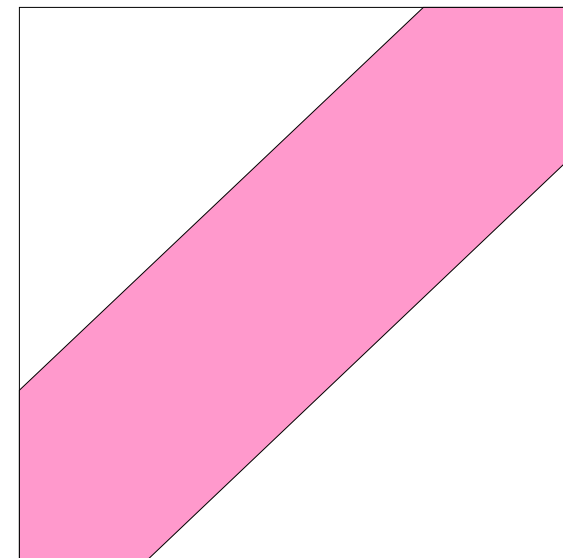
Are there approaches to change that are not going
to work?

Quality as
Balancing Differentiation and Integration

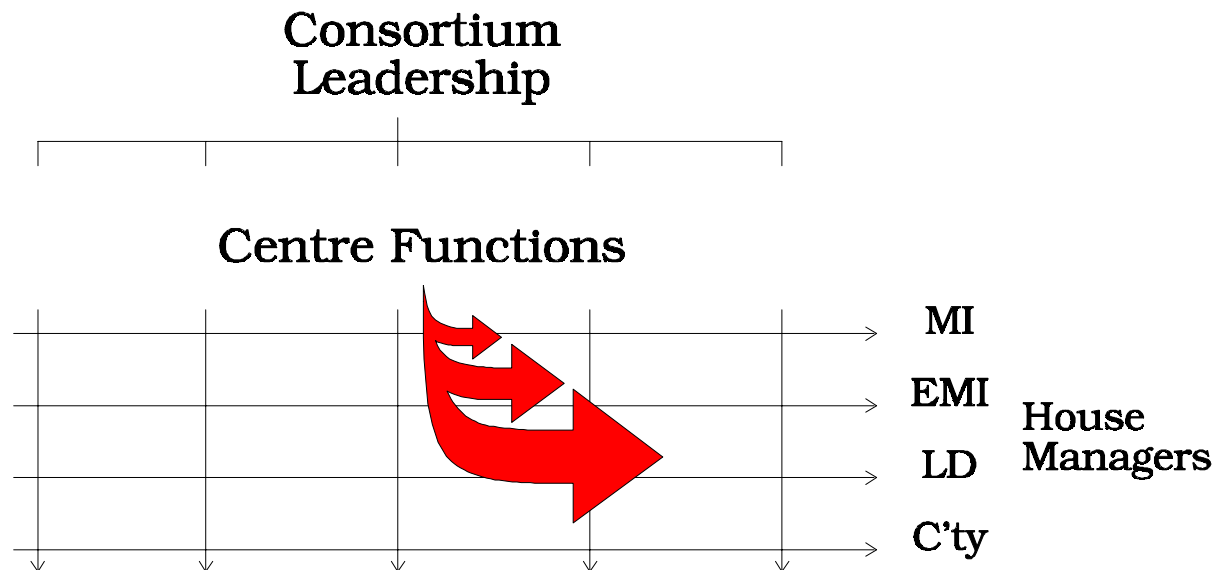◆ *Viability* depends on requisite differentiation of behaviour.

Integration of
differentiated
behaviours

◆ Integrating processes maintain *Identity*.

Differentiation of behaviour

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The 'Red' Route

Professional *identity* privileged:

Consortium
Leadership

Centre Functions

MI

EMI

LD

C'ty

House
Managers

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The 'Green' Route

Viability of client relationships privileged:
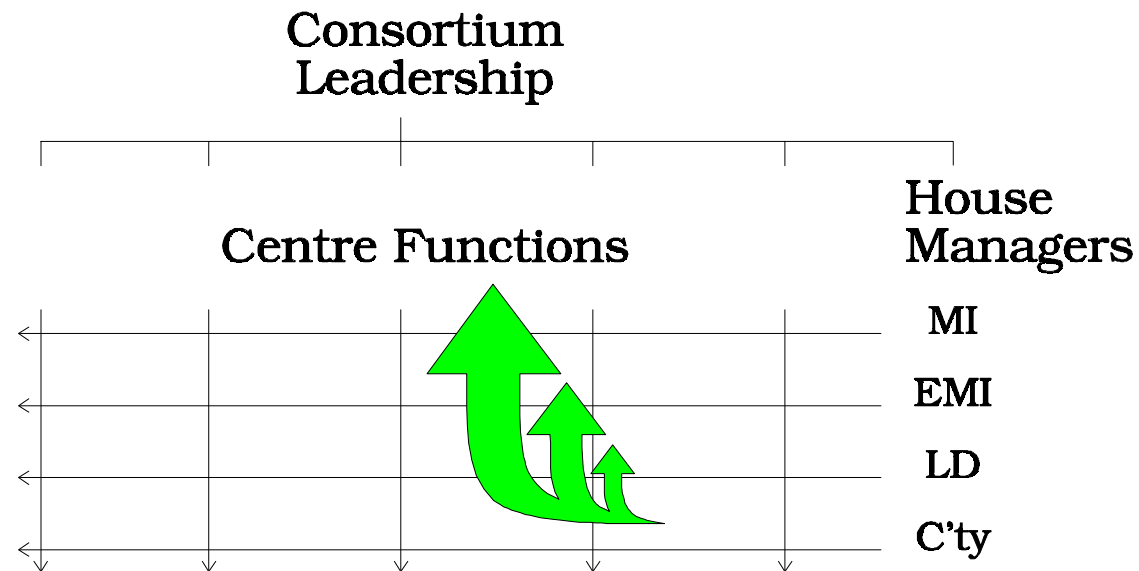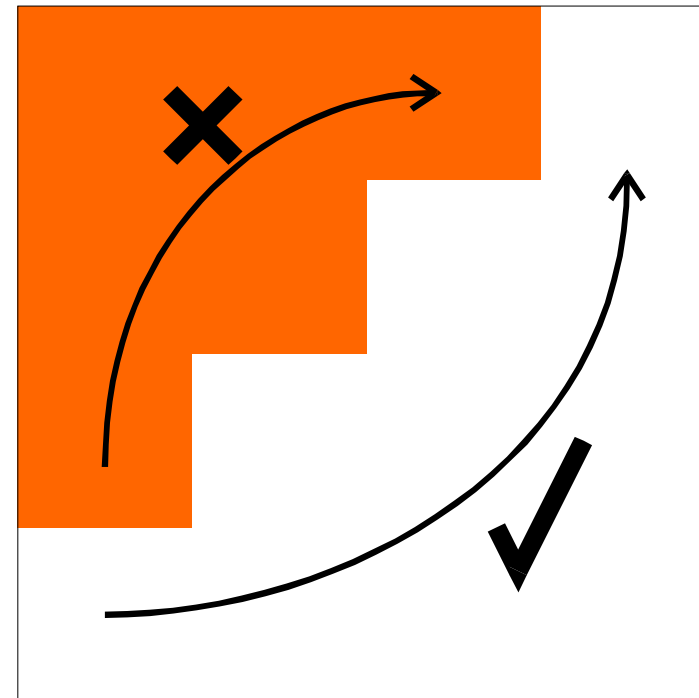
Managing (to) Change

♦ *Up-and-Over*
Identity privileged

✖

♦ *Across-and-Up*
Viability privileged

✔

Integration of
differentiated
behaviour

Differentiation of behaviour

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The Intervention

What does a change process need to be able to put
into question?

Outline of Intervention

[1990	First sessions one-to-one with CEO]
May-Aug 94	Initial Interviews, workshops with senior management team
Sept-Mar 95	Tackling the basic logics through 'working conferences'
May-Oct 95	Re-organisation around 'QAGs'
Nov-Mar 96	New agendas: 'critical process', the role of trustees, changed constitution
April 96 -	Long-term viability, new funding, new challenges

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The letter - identifying dilemmas

[You said] that these four men are more alive and less conflicted when they are doing what they want to do, exploring new places, doing new things, meeting new people…. outside the house…

Being confined in the house increases their disability: it "makes them worse". It also undermines your expectations of them... you come to think of their behaviour in the house as normal for them.

You are drawing attention to a profound challenge: how to create conditions in which these men are free to discover what they want, what they like, what they can do, and what they have to give; and how to do this within the constraints of their own limitations, and of the world they live in…

This world is in many ways unfriendly to them. This makes the challenge what it is, not only to the staff of the house, but to the SCO, the [purchasers], and to the society we all represent.
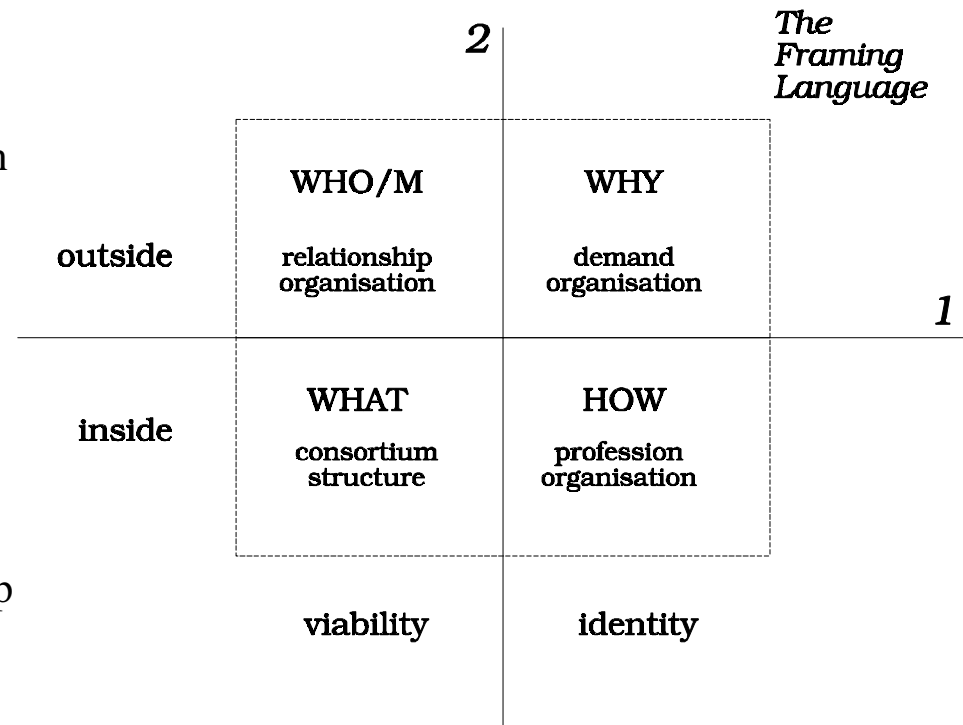
The 'cuts'

◆ Where is the 'cut' made between *inside* and *outside* the organisation?

– Regulators and Purchasers

– Purchasers and Consortium

– Centre and Houses

– House Managers and Staff

– Staff and Clients

– Clients and Communities

◆ Whose *identities* are to be privileged?

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Critical Process

– 'outing' the assumptions habitually driving responses

- ◆ 'functional' specialisms within product-based organisations tend to privilege a particular definition of 'outside'.

- ◆ Professions within service-based organisations tend to privilege a particular (professional) identity.

- ◆ In both cases, an across-and-up process has to be able to call this privileging into question.

The Framing Language

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outside	WHO/M relationship organisation	WHY demand organisation
inside	WHAT consortium structure	HOW profession organisation
	viability	identity

1

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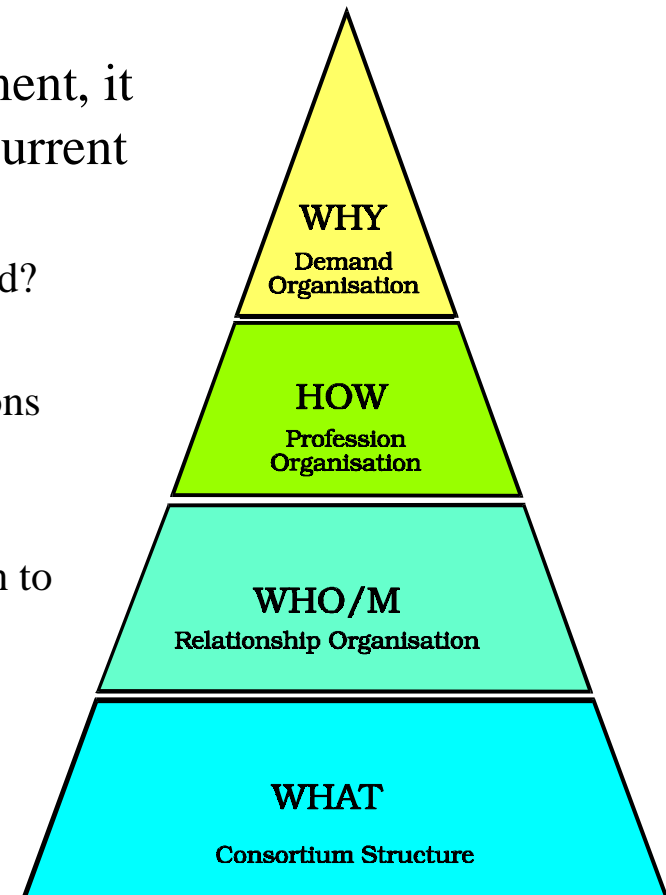
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The Question(ing) of Architecture

What is difficult about "raising the strategy
ceiling"?

Calling a 'Time-out'

- ◆ Dilemmas facing the work of the organisation become problematic in the process of moving 'across-and-up'
  - ◆ Such problematics are therefore opportunities for change as well as threats to current identities.
  - – It was therefore important to establishing the right for anyone to call a 'time-out' to examine such problematics:
    - – What is going on that is problematic?
    - – How are we organising our response to it?
    - – Whose interests are being served by this response?
    - – What are the assumptions under-pinning this approach?
  - – But this depended critically on the way line management responded
    - ◆ So what do we need to change?
    - ◆ How do I support and sustain these changes?

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Levels of Identity

- Insofar as this was difficult for line management, it was because of their own attachment to the current architecture of the organisation…..
  - WHY: what is the underlying logic of demand?

  - HOW: how are the structures of the professions organised?

  - WHO/M: 'who' is the professional in relation to 'whom'?

  - WHAT: what does the consortium actually consist of?
- This 'attachment' created a strategy ceiling.

WHY
Demand
Organisation

HOW
Profession
Organisation

WHO/M
Relationship Organisation

WHAT
Consortium Structure

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Step-by-Step

….. So the across-and-up process had to proceed step by step in moving the strategy ceiling:

	Operational	Professional	Positional	Relational	
				7	**why**
			5	6	**how**
Above the ceiling *like a 'family'*		3	4		**who/m**
Below the ceiling *like a business*	1	2			**what**

The Strategy Ceiling

Unfolding 'Quality Assurance Guarantees'

QAG I   purchaser ➜ centre (WHAT)

QAG II   centre ➜ managers (WHO/M)

QAG III   managers ➜ staff (HOW)

QAG IV   staff ➜ clients (WHY)

government/
regulator

purchaser

The
Board

1

centre

2

house
managers

3

house
staff

4

clients

The
Members

communities

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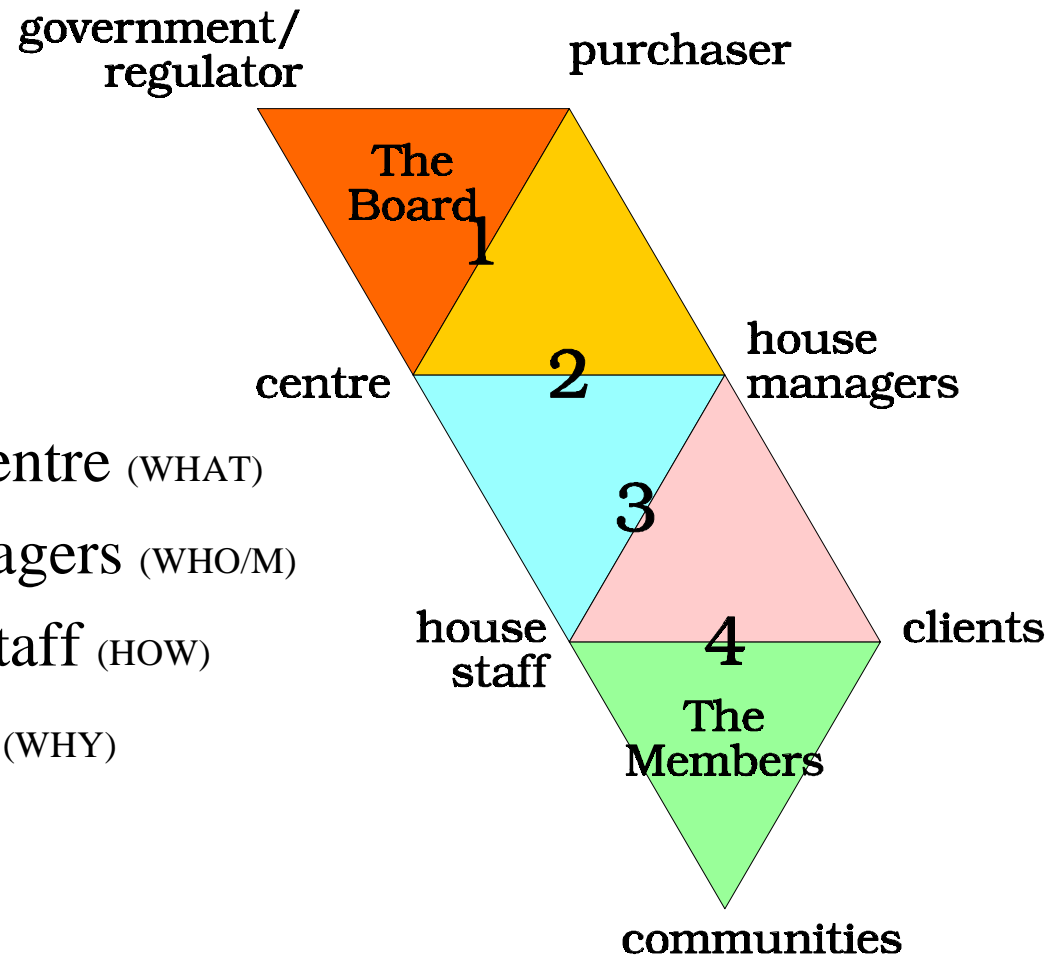
Key Challenges Now

- A high quality provider that no one can afford

  » who cares if the clients come first?

- Defining the '*why*' of the organisation without referencing back to the usual value statements

  » moving from the desire-of-the-leader to the leadership-of-desire.

- Differentiation at the level of service delivery *versus* integration at the level of the organisation-as-a-whole

  » separating out the 'micro' and 'macro' integrating processes.

- Calling into question the '*for whom*' without disabling operations and failing on compliance with regulators

  » extending the questioning of architecture to the procurement and regulatory frameworks.

…. and key challenges for myself

Who knows who knows best?

◆ **Working on the relational axis with the client**

  » how is it possible to sustain a (valued) learning process within the client system?

Positional

Client

	knows	doesn't know
knows	expert	guru
doesn't know	apprentice/ outworker	critical process 'box 4'

Consultant

Relational