

**Beverly & Etienne
Wenger-Trayner**



About us

Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner are internationally renowned social learning theorists and consultants. Their pioneering work in the field of social learning has been influential in such diverse fields as learning theory, business, government, international development, healthcare, and education. Their consulting practice specializes in contexts where there are large-scale social learning challenges. They bring people together across organizations, geography, sectors, and disciplines to address complex problems.

Joint publications

Together they are developing and publishing conceptual frameworks and practices to address the learning challenges facing public and private organizations today. They are co-editors of the book *Learning in landscapes of practice*, where they contributed several chapters, in particular the framing chapter (2014). They are also the lead authors of a journal article on their value-creation framework for social learning (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2017). They recently published a book on an innovative project in higher education, *Designing for change: using social learning to understand organizational transformation* (2019). Their new book on their framework and its implications for social learning theory and practice *Learning to make a difference: value creation in social learning spaces*, was published in October 2020 by Cambridge University Press. In July 2021 they will be launching their latest book *Systems convening: a crucial form of leadership for the 21st century*.

What we do

Social learning strategies are key concerns for organizational leaders, educators and people in government and international development.

How do we connect people in meaningful ways? Break down silos? Turn organizational strategy into action and capabilities? What's more, how do we leverage the potential of social media in all this?

Approaches to these questions include the development of communities of practice, social networking, and social media. Our offer is to help you with a social learning strategy that integrates all these approaches into a customized, long-term road-map.



WENGER-TRAYNER

Here are bios of various lengths for use in announcements, programs, and brochures. Feel free to pick, mix, and match.

Full bio (448 words)

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Etienne is known for his consulting and seminal work on communities of practice. He has authored and co-authored many articles and books on the topic, including *Situated Learning*, where the term "community of practice" was coined; *Communities of Practice: learning, meaning, and identity*, where he lays out a theory of learning based on the concept; *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, a practical guide addressed to leaders of initiatives in organizations; *Digital Habitats*, which tackles issues related to the use of technology. Though he does not hold a full-time academic position, he is one of the most cited authors in the social sciences. He received honorary doctorates from the University of Brighton and the Open University in the UK.

Beverly is known for her work with international organizations including cross-boundary processes and the use of new technologies. Her expertise encompasses the design and facilitation of social learning strategies and coaching of social learning leaders in complex situations. Once an activist for international equitable development, her passion has matured into an intellectual drive to help people and institutions get better at making a difference. Recently, she acted as learning consultant for the World Bank on a long-term development project in Africa. Her 2014 report on using the value-creation framework in this project has attracted the attention of practitioners and evaluators across the international development community.

Together Etienne and Beverly are developing and publishing theoretical and practical frameworks to address the learning challenges facing public and private organizations, communities, and society today. To this end, they have founded the Social Learning Lab in Sesimbra, Portugal, where they host series of events oriented to theory, practice, and leadership. They contributed several chapters—in particular, the framing chapter—to the co-edited volume *Learning in landscapes of practice*, which expands the theory beyond single communities. In *Designing for change*, they use their framework to describe an innovative higher-education project. *Systems convening* sheds light on a crucial form of social-learning leadership for the 21st century. They are preparing a guidebook for communities of practice. They have started a book series called *Learning to make a difference*. They recently published the first volume, which introduces the concept of social learning space as a new foundation for the theory, and their value-creation framework as a tool for both conceptualizing and cultivating social learning.

Long bio (245 words)

Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner are internationally renowned social learning theorists and consultants. Their pioneering work in the field of social learning has been influential in such diverse fields as learning theory, business, government, international development, healthcare, and education. Their consulting practice specializes in contexts where there are large-scale social learning challenges. They bring people together across organizations, geography, sectors, and disciplines to address complex problems.

Etienne is known for his seminal work on communities of practice and Beverly is known for her work with international organizations. Together they are developing and publishing theoretical and practical frameworks to address the learning challenges facing public and private organizations, communities, and society today. To this end, they have founded the Social Learning Lab in Sesimbra, Portugal, where they host series of events oriented to theory, practice, and leadership. They contributed several chapters—in particular, the framing chapter—to the co-edited volume *Learning in landscapes of practice*, which expands the theory beyond single communities. In *Designing for change*, they use their framework to describe an innovative higher-education project. *Systems convening* sheds light on a crucial form of social-learning leadership for the 21st century. They are preparing a guidebook for communities of practice. They have started a book series called *Learning to make a difference*. They recently published the first volume, which introduces the concept of social learning space as a new foundation for the theory, and their value-creation framework as a tool for both conceptualizing and cultivating social learning.

Shorter bio (150 words)

Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner are internationally renowned social learning theorists and consultants. Their pioneering work in social learning is influential in such diverse fields as learning theory, business, government, international development, healthcare, and education. Their consulting practice specializes in contexts where there are large-scale social learning challenges. They founded the Social Learning Lab, where they host series of events oriented to theory, practice, and leadership. The co-edited volume *Learning in landscapes of practice* expands the theory beyond single communities. *Systems convening* sheds light on a crucial form of social-learning leadership. They are preparing a guidebook for communities of practice. They have started a book series called *Learning to make a difference* and recently published the first volume. It introduces the concept of social learning space as a new foundation for the theory, and their value-creation framework as a tool for both conceptualizing and cultivating social learning.

Shorter bio (100 words)

Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner are internationally renowned social learning theorists and consultants. Their pioneering writing and consulting is influential in such diverse fields as learning theory, business, government, international development, healthcare, and education. They founded the Social Learning Lab to host series of events oriented to theory, practice, and leadership. They expanded the theory in *Learning in landscapes of practice*. *Systems convening* and their upcoming guidebook for communities of practice provide guidance for social-learning leadership. They published the first volume in their new book series about theory and practice: *Learning to make a difference: value creation in social learning spaces*.

Click on the link below to access my images folder.



Designing for change

Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Beverly Wenger-Trayner (2019)

How empowered students can lead an education revolution.
Learning for a small Planet.



Learning in landscapes of practice

Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (Eds.) (2014)

identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning. Routledge.

Our published Books



Systems convening

Wenger-Trayner, E., Wenger-Trayner, B. (2021).

A crucial form of leadership for the 21st century. Social Learning Lab.



Learning to make a difference

Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Beverly Wenger-Trayner (2020)

Value creation in social learning spaces. Cambridge University Press.





Video footage

Take a closer look at our Social Learning Lab



Our Events



Journal articles and publications

[Cameron, J.](#), Wenger-Trayner, B., [Wenger-Trayner, E.](#), Hart, A., Buttery, L., Rathbone, A., Kourkoutas, E. & [Eryigit-Madzwamuse, S.](#), (2018). Community-university partnership research retreats: a productive force for developing communities of research practice. In Banks, S., Hart, A., Pahl, K. & Ward, P. (eds.) Co-producing Research: A Community Development Approach. Policy Press.

Wenger-Trayner, B., Wenger-Trayner, E., Eryigit-Madzwamuse, S., Cameron, J., and Hart, A. (2017) Boundaries and boundary objects: an evaluation framework for mixed methods research. Accepted for publication by the Journal of Mixed-Methods Research.

Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015) An introduction to communities of practice: a brief overview of the concept and its uses. Available from authors at <http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice>.

Wenger-Trayner, E., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2014) Learning in landscapes of practice: a framework. In Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (Eds.) Learning in landscapes of practice: boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning. Routledge.

Wenger-Trayner, B., and Wenger-Trayner, E. (2014) Systems conveners in complex landscapes. In Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (Eds.) Learning in landscapes of practice: boundaries, identity, and knowledgeability in practice-based learning. Routledge.

About the lab

The Social Learning Lab is a physical space in Sesimbra, Portugal and a mindset. It is also our home. Here we develop the theory, practice, and leadership of social learning - across sectors and countries and at different levels of scale.

The view from the lab is spectacular, the ceilings are high, glass windows bring in plenty of light and perspectives on the sea and the sky. The different spaces, inside and out, call for different types of conversations.

We host three types of events that can be in-person, hybrid, or virtual:

Workshops, retreats, summits convened by us
Workshops, retreats, summits that we help organize in partnership with you
Your meetings or events where you would like a social learning twist

A social learning twist

At the social learning lab, and in our approach to work, we try and live the following twists:

- No-one comes into the space as an attendee. Everyone is invited to participate. We are all potential hosts of a conversation. We see each other as potential learning partners.

- Negative and positive experiences are part of learning partnerships. Work from the assumption that no-one gets anything totally right. We embrace our fallibilities and our uncertainties as possible drivers of learning.

- Learning is a process of experimentation and we value the courage and persistence that this takes

- Pay attention to learning partners when they talk and when they act. Pay attention to the difference a person wants to make, acknowledging that the most important things are often those that have not been - or are not yet ready to be - articulated.

- The difference we want to make most likely has a trajectory longer than our own. It is often unclear ,That never stops us from giving our all for shorter-term gains in the service of that uncertain, subject-to-change, trajectory.

- A person is embodied in the joys and complexity of their history, circumstances, culture, religion, gender or race. And in their imagination and trajectory. Human experience is always more complex than its expression.

- Power, playfulness, and participation are key components in creating a stage for agency. Power issues are always in the room. We'll never get it right. But it doesn't stop us from trying.

- It's not where you start with social learning capability, it's where you go with it. It can change the world. But you don't know how..

Our invitation to anyone in the social learning lab is to embody these twists in the ways that feel right for them.

Note: Mental health issues are....

There are no attendees in the space
I have to remember that I, too, have done stupid things

Increasing social learning capability can be done for all sorts of motives...
But we sort of believe that in the end increasing social learning capability cannot but have an effect on motives...

Social learning approach to justice will influence even the corrupt prime minister
Gives a kind of courage to engage with people whose motives she finds abhorrent...

When everyone sees each other as learning patterns. Embody, in their presence, the principles of sls
Interested in the person
Person on a trajectory
Show interest, pay attention when they talk and when they act...
Pay attention to the difference someone wants to make

We take very seriously the intrinsic tension between learning and power.

Complex relation between power and learning...
Face it and address it is part of the process of social learning capability...
Learning will give you power, but that power can prevent further learning..

Our story

We came together as a working and marriage partnership in 2011

Why Portugal?
Portuguese citizen
House called to us
Something about this house and the way it's designed.
Lot of riffing potential
Lots of affordance for different ways to engage with each other

House was in a neglected state. Saw the potential through it...
Sesimbra - magic, friendly
They have bought a house in Sesimbra, where they have started the Social Learning Lab. Both home-bodies, they love the idea of developing the Lab and hosting its events in their home.

Importance of hosting
Hybrid
Sense of history associated with a building for which the place acts as an anchor
Importance of physicality for learning,
Importance of hybrid - how to create a hybrid space (10 years of history)
Owning the space - riffing and developing practices out of it

Vision

They share an ambitious dream to leave a legacy that contributes to our survival, as a planet and a species. They think it depends on the ability of individuals, groups, and institutions to learn quicker and more effectively around emerging challenges and opportunities that surface in everyday practice; it depends on advancing our social learning capability at scale.

Contact us

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Social Media

