



# Learning For Action: A Short Definitive Account of Soft Systems Methodology, and its use for Practitioners, Teachers and Students

*By Peter Checkland, John Poulter*

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From the father of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), Peter Checkland, comes a new, accessible text which clearly and concisely looks at SSM. The book leaves out all of the development detail and historical/intellectual material which can be found in Checkland's other classic works, but contains the practical essentials that will allow teachers to teach SSM accurately and students to learn it with real understanding.

## Features:

- Short and definitive account of SSM containing the practical essentials.
- Written with great clarity and presented in a reader-friendly way.
- Contains examples of SSM in action.
- Includes cases.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"This volume is a concise and definitive account of SSM for all who wish to use, teach or learn about it." Civil Engineering August 2008

#### From the Back Cover

The approach to tackling messy real-life situations known as Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) was developed in a 30-year programme of action research led by Peter Checkland. The approach is now used and taught around the world, and its development has been described in depth in four books published between 1981 and 1999, which are now regarded as classics in the field.

Peter Checkland and John Poulter now present a concise, crystal-clear and definitive account of SSM written for anyone who wishes to use, teach, or learn about it. This account also corrects the misunderstandings about the SSM approach, which plague its secondary literature.

*Learning for Action* first provides an overview of SSM and its use, then gives a detailed account of the techniques used within it. It also crisply summarizes many accounts of SSM in action in real situations in both private and public sectors, using the pattern: the situation; the use of SSM; outcomes, with references given to more detailed accounts.

Also covered are the craft skills which practitioners develop, the theory underlying SSM, and the fundamental shift in thinking away from the systems approaches of the 1960s which its development signalled – namely the transition from 'hard' to 'soft' systems thinking.

#### About the Author

**Peter Checkland** is the recipient of the 'Most Distinguished and Outstanding Contributor' Award of the British Computer Society Methodologies Group, 1994 Recipient of the Gold Medal of the UK Systems Society for 'Outstanding Contribution to Systems Thinking' and 1997 Recipient of a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship. Now retired from full time university work, Peter Checkland continues his research and writing.

**John Poulter** is a practitioner of SSM. He first used SSM formally when working with Peter Checkland in the UK's National Health Service in 1993. A founder member of the Soft Systems Research Group, he has presented papers and other publications on the use of SSM.

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Diana Sturgill:**

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**Celia Robertson:**

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**Joan Green:**

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**Chester Brown:**

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