

# Organizational Culture Detectives

- Are keen observers of “what works” and “problem situations” in organizations
- Can use simple soft system analysis to look at problems
- Can move beyond analysis to some conclusions about “what might be done”
- Hence, they can translate problem situations into service opportunities

# Before we start the work for tonight

- Let's practice some stress management
- Four deep breaths
- The two minute meditation

# Problems are messy

- Problem situations often consist of no more than a feeling of unease, a feeling that something should be looked at...
- Much of tonight's material is from Checkland, P. & Scholes, J.(1999). *Soft system methodology*. New York: Wiley

# Get in your groups

- Each member share their observation about something that didn't work -- a problem

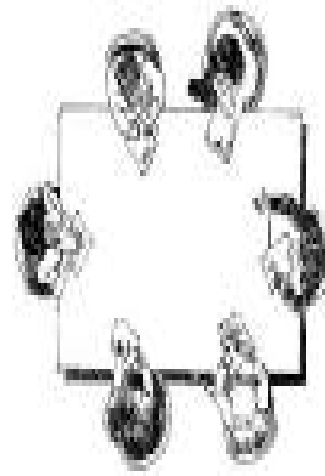
As you discuss, assign

One member to keep key notes

Then everyone summarize three key points they heard

Then do a concept map (like we did in Class last week)

What are commonalities you spot?



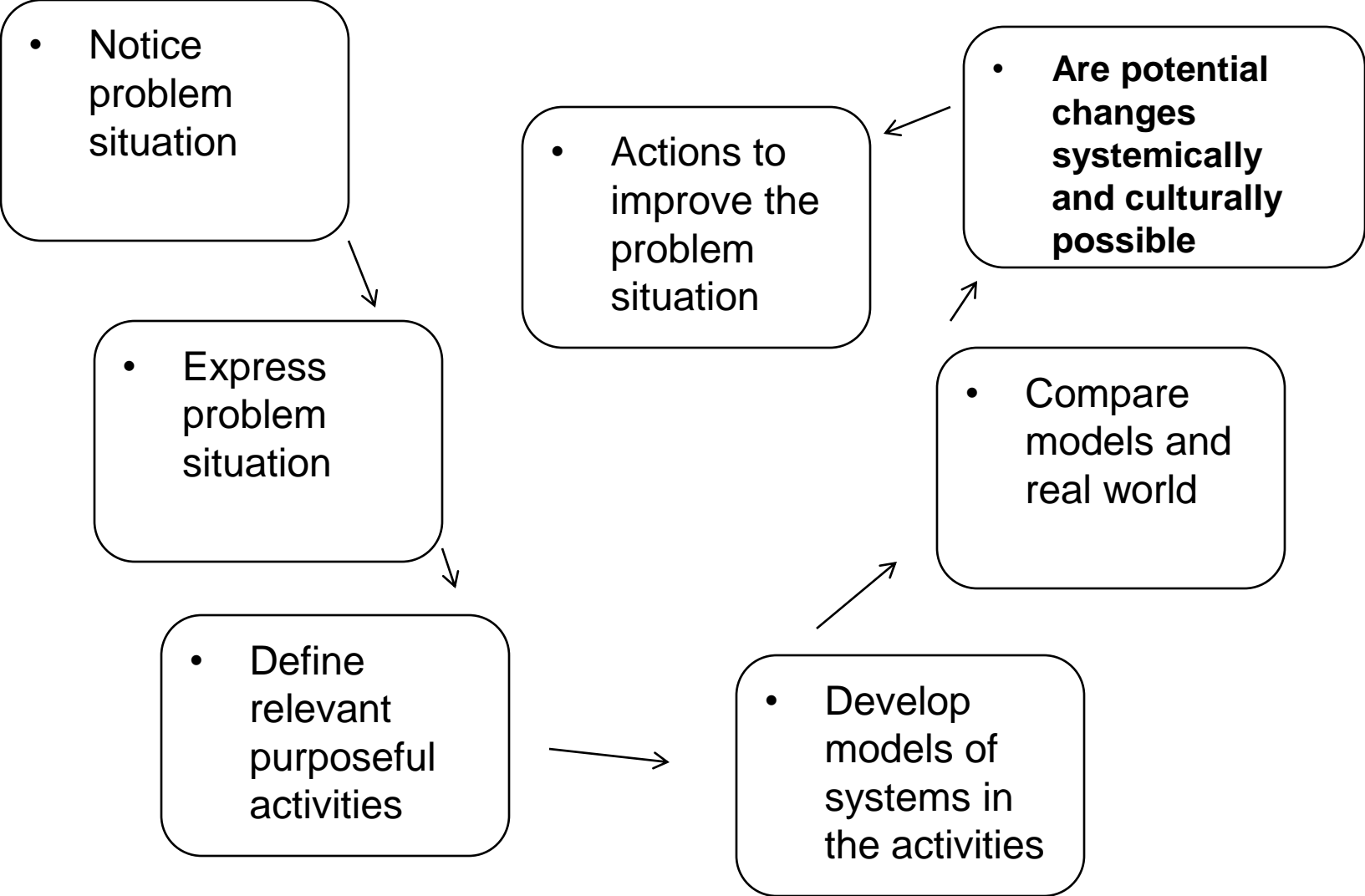
Have you noticed?-- In problems there are generally people involved

- In organizations, problem situations almost always feature human beings in social roles trying to take purposeful action that they feel has meaning

# This purposeful action

- ...is usually some sort of transformation process
- Examples – being served dinner at a restaurant; setting up a new customer record file; figuring out the content to be placed into a web content management system; socializing new employees;

# Soft systems methodology



# Get back in your groups

Discuss problems you have noticed at NCSU and /  
or  
College of Management

- Notice  
problem  
situation

Then choose ONE problem that seems to be the  
juiciest

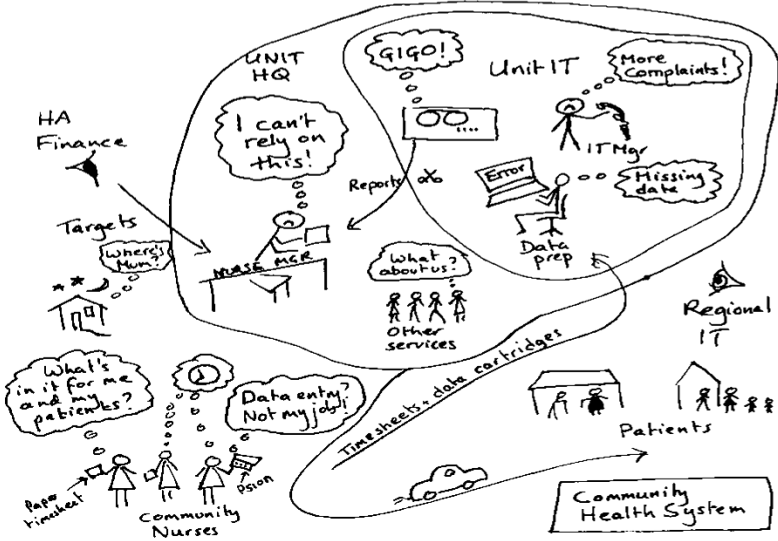
- Express  
problem  
situation

# Two major tools

- CATWOE matrices



- Rich pictures



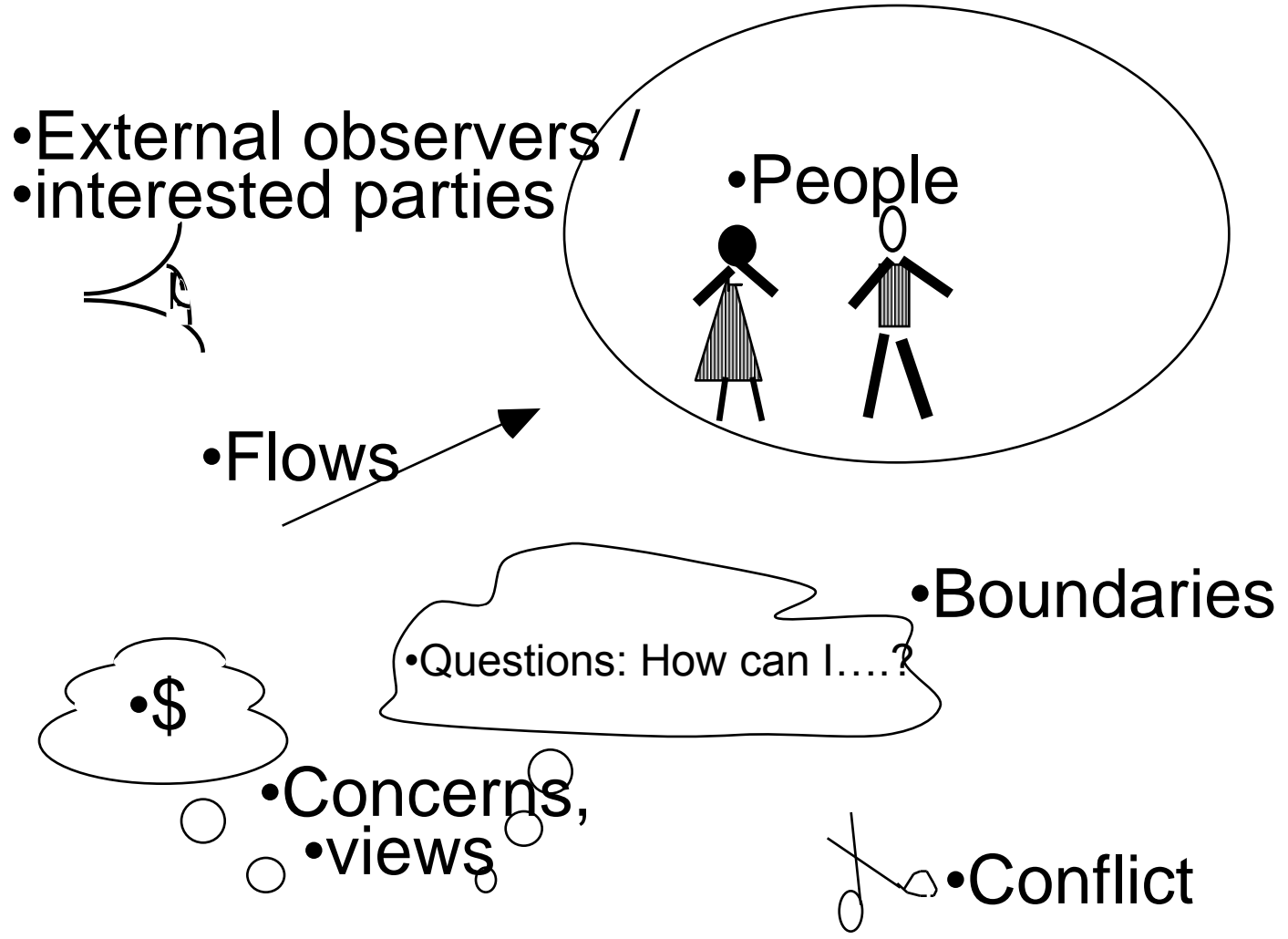
# CATWOE matrix

- **C**ustomers – the beneficiaries or victims of the transformational process
- **A**ctors – those doing the transformational process
- **T**ransformational process
- **W**orldview --that which gives meaning to the transformational process
- **O**wners – those who could stop the process
- **E**nvironmental constraints – elements outside the process that are taken as “a given”

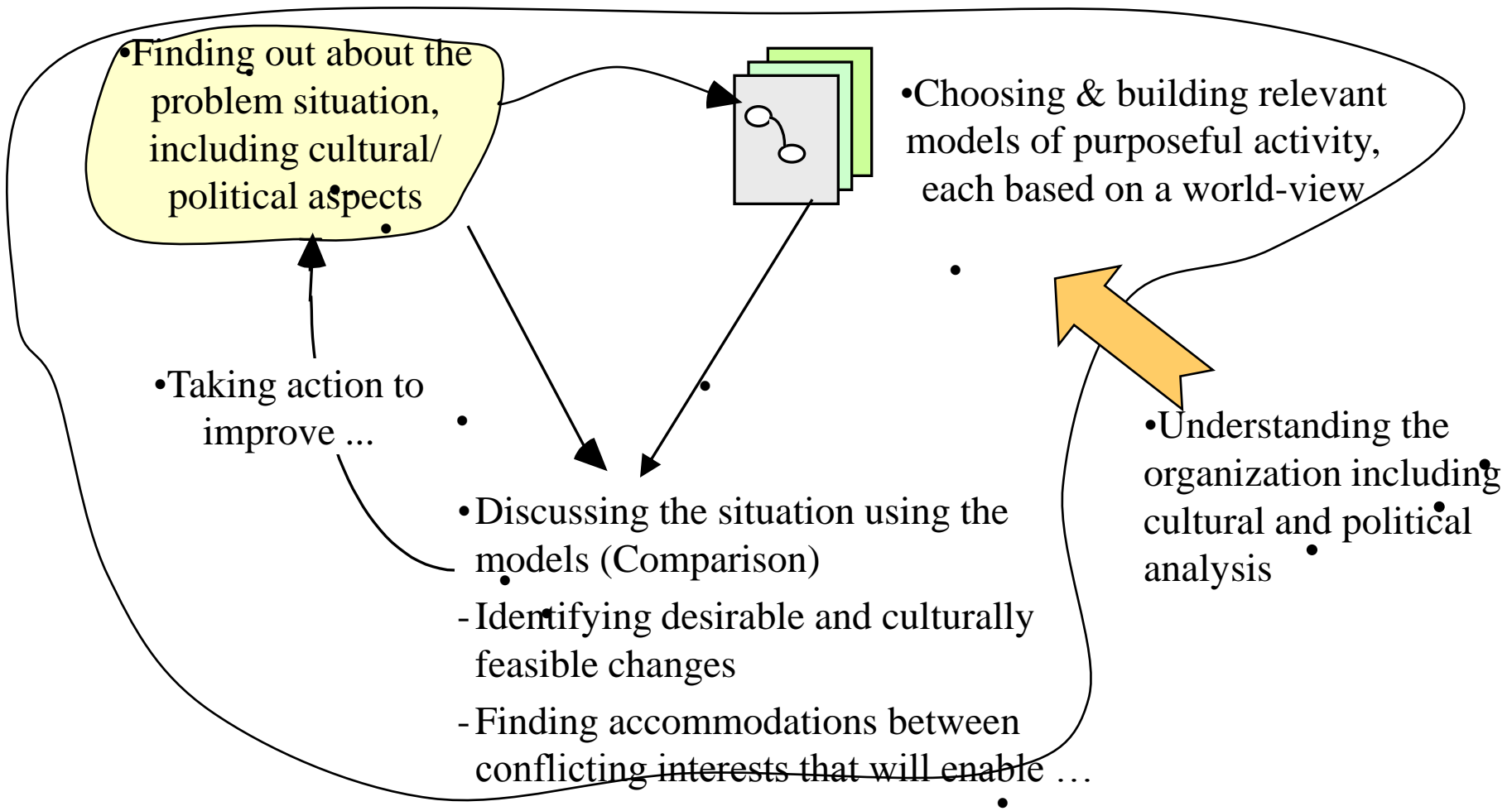
# What to put in a rich picture

- Structure, e.g.
  - departmental or organization boundaries,
  - geographical considerations,
  - people and institutions.
- Process - activities, information or material flows.
- Connections - the relationship between structure and process, and any associated problems.
- ‘Soft facts’ - concerns, conflicts, views.
- Environment - external interested bodies, factors affecting the organization.

# Rich pictures use symbols

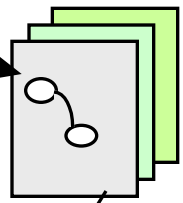


# SSM activities – these are not stages or steps.



•Finding out about the problem situation, including cultural/political aspects

•Taking action to improve ...



•Choosing & building relevant models of purposeful activity, each based on a world-view

- Discussing the situation using the models (Comparison)
- Identifying desirable and culturally feasible changes
- Finding accommodations between conflicting interests that will enable ...

•Understanding the organization including cultural and political analysis

# Let's use these tools for group example