Part II: Conceptualizations

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Part of the process of learning involves the making of models to guide action. A good model explains what has happened, communicates what is happening, and predicts what will happen. It serves as a schema for thinking about the world and how we interact with it. This can be freeing because a useful model points to new directions which are logical outgrowths of the current situation, but it can also be restricting if we come to believe that the model represents "truth" in capital letters and neon lights.

Whatever the flaws of the ultimate product, the process of building models is one mechanism for growth as a profession. When we begin to conceptualize regularities in what we do, we can be more systematic not only in our actions, but in the study of our field and the transmission of knowledge to others. The papers in this section represent attempts by several authors to build models which can direct our activities as professionals. Such models help the novice who is just learning the ropes as well as stimulating the master practitioner to think about his/her actions in a new light.