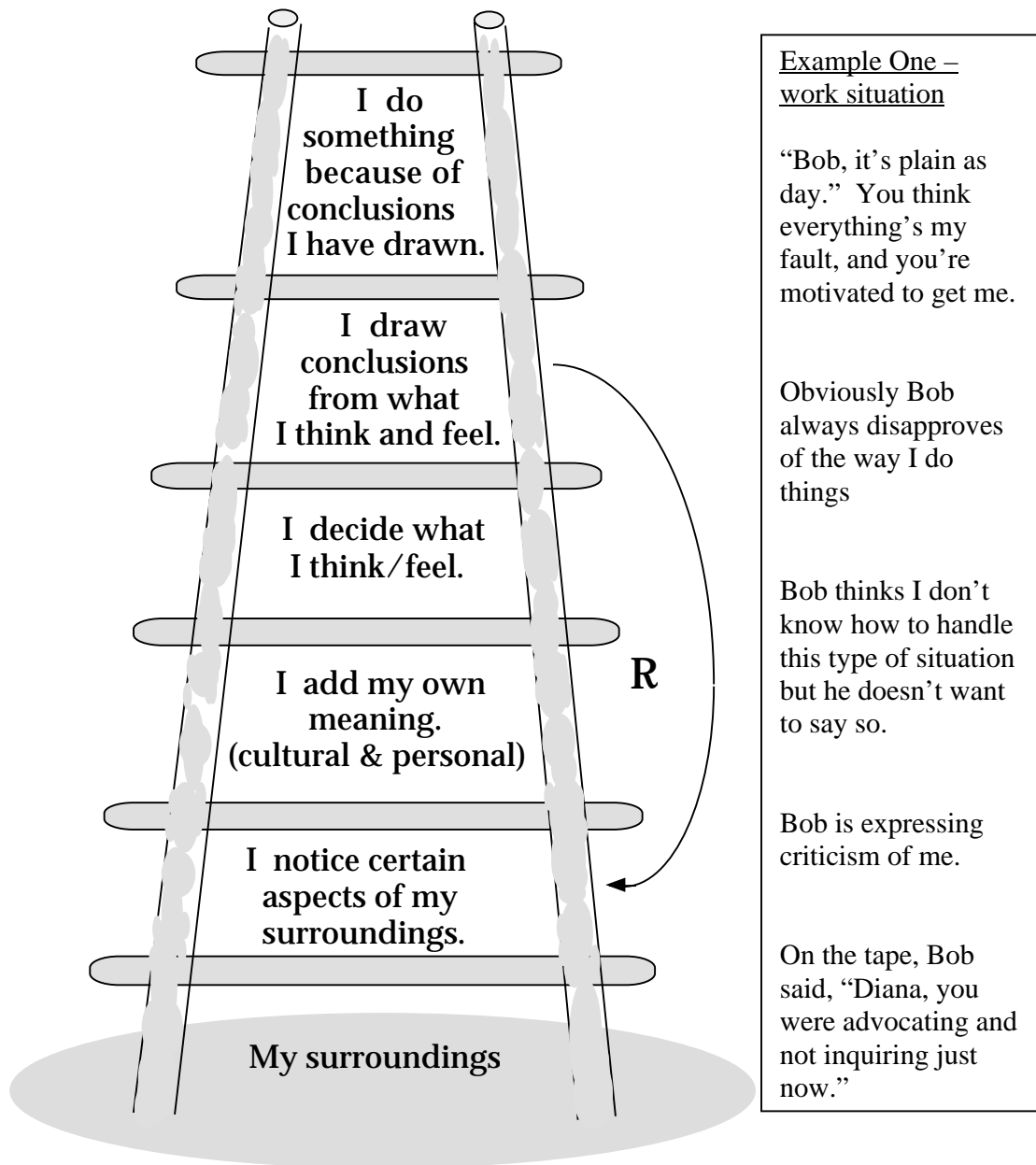


Title	Ladder of Inference
Acknowledgements	This lesson plan is based on use of a number of resource materials, many of which are available through Pegasus Communications (www.pegasuscom.com)
Overview	This section includes strategies for developing lessons that focus on the use of the ladder of inference as a tool for stimulating conversation about literature, history, science, math, or other topics.
Length	60-180 minutes for initial lesson, possible application throughout the school year.
Curriculum Context	Lessons exploring the mental models held by the writer of a story or novel, the creators of a government policy, the designers of a structure, the decisions made by an individual or group, etc. are appropriate contexts for the ladder of inference.
Lesson Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to explain the ladder of inference. • Students will be able to describe a scenario in relationship to the steps of the ladder of inference • Students will be able to explain why it is important to understand the human tendency to “climb the ladder”. • Students will be able to explain why it is important to test perceptions by checking for data, evidence, etc.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given a scenario students will be able to describe the possible inferences and conclusions that might occur and how those inferences and conclusions might affect decisions and actions. • Given a scenario students will be able to identify and explain possible data sources that would help people to avoid decisions and actions based on pre-conceived perceptions / mental models.
Systems Thinking Concept(s)	Mental Models
Instructional Considerations	<p>Depending on the instructional plan, these lessons could be used at the beginning of the year and reinforced and integrated throughout the school year, or multiple versions of the lessons could be implemented at various points of the year to support/enhance different units of study.</p> <p>The teacher should have a clear purpose for developing an understanding of the definition and importance of mental models and how they affect decisions and actions. The teacher must understand the importance of a</p>

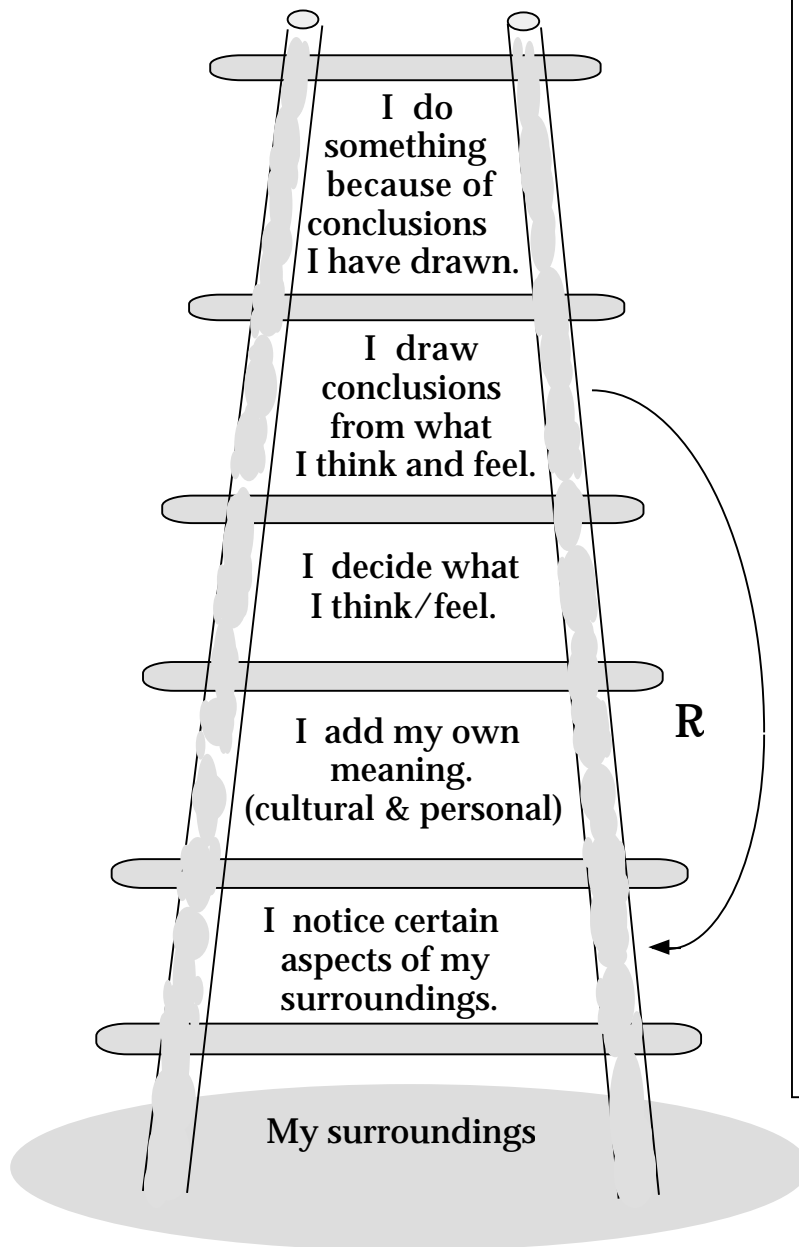
	<p>basic/rudimentary knowledge of the definition and characteristics of a mental models and the importance/place in the study of current and historical situations, fictional and non-fictional scenarios throughout the year's curriculum.</p>
Materials	<i>Schools That Learn</i> (ISBN 0-385-49323-1)
Activity Overview	<p>Activities are described in <i>Schools That Learn</i>. Processes include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an understanding of The Ladder of Inference and applying that understanding to text that is being studied. • Developing an understanding of The Ladder of Inference and applying that understanding to current or historical situations that are being studied. <p>Because the circumstances in which these lessons might be used vary significantly, we recommend acquiring <i>Schools That Learn</i> and then designing a set of exploratory, constructivist activities that serve your purpose and population. Use the framework of these activities and insert your curricular content.</p>
Modifications and Extensions	Extensions can include development or reinforcement of additional concepts of systems thinking and dynamic modeling.

Ladder of Inference



Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Last modified 3'00

Ladder of Inference



Example Two – classroom assumptions

Anna will never function as a capable adult.

Anna is so disorganized!

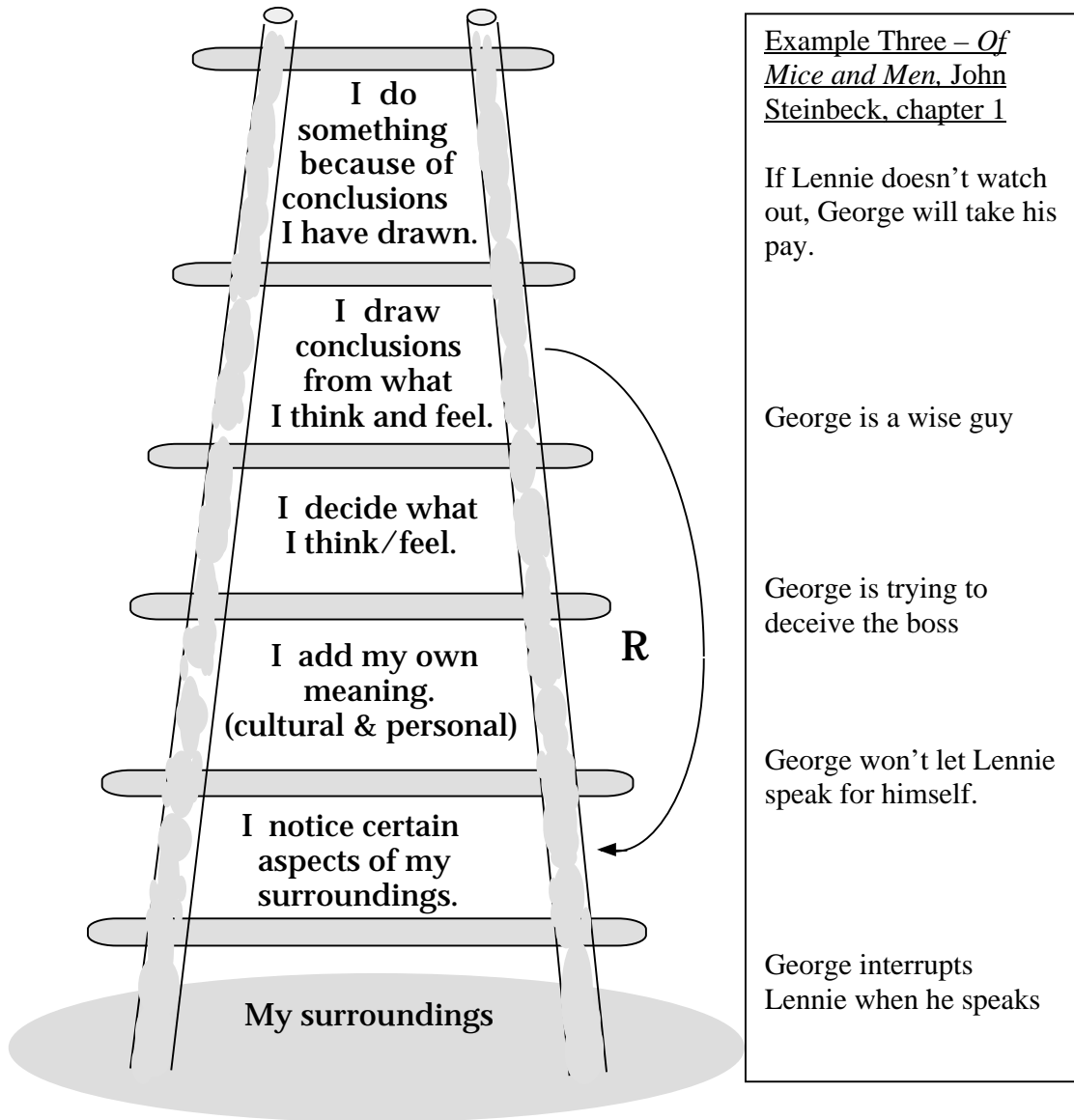
Anna can never find anything.

Anna lost her homework.

Anna says she can't find her homework.

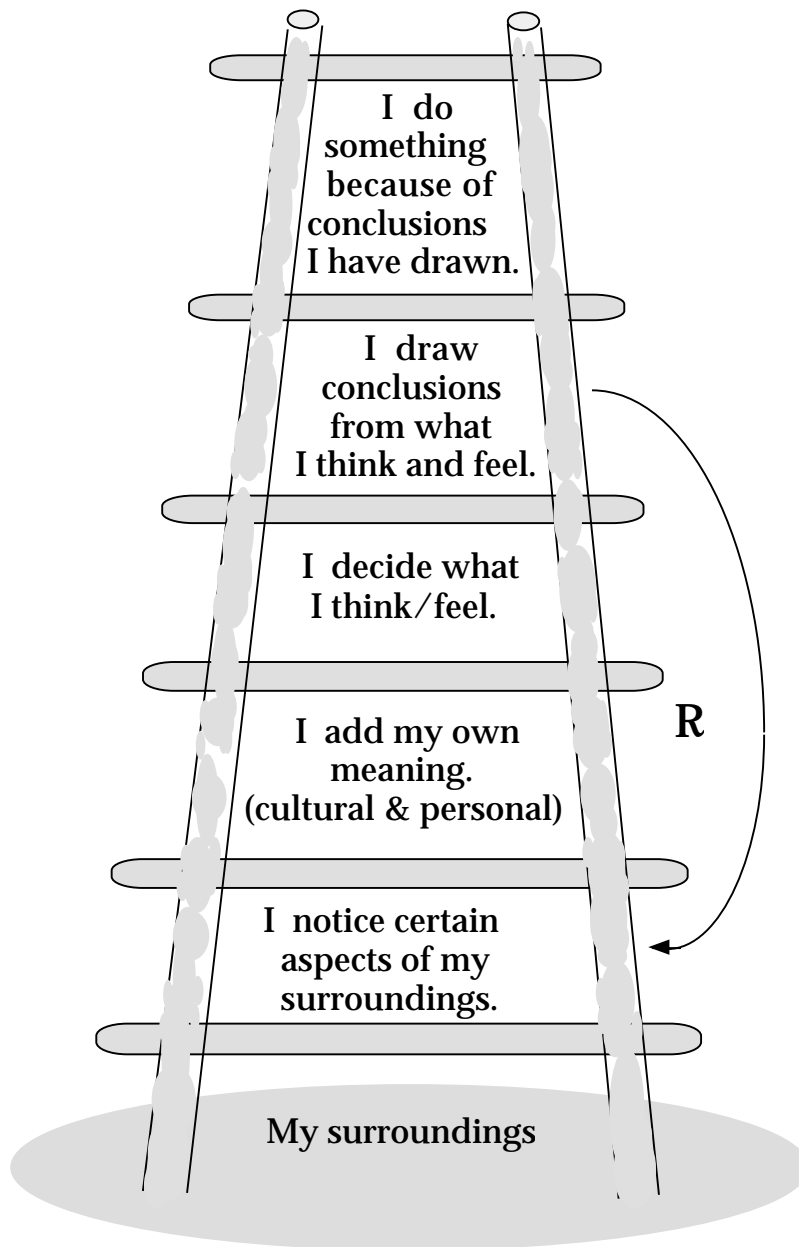
Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Last modified 3'00

Ladder of Inference



Adapted from [The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook](#) . Last modified 3'00

Ladder of Inference



Example Four – Student Perceptions

Ms. Kenerson is going to be fired.

She's always getting into trouble in this school.

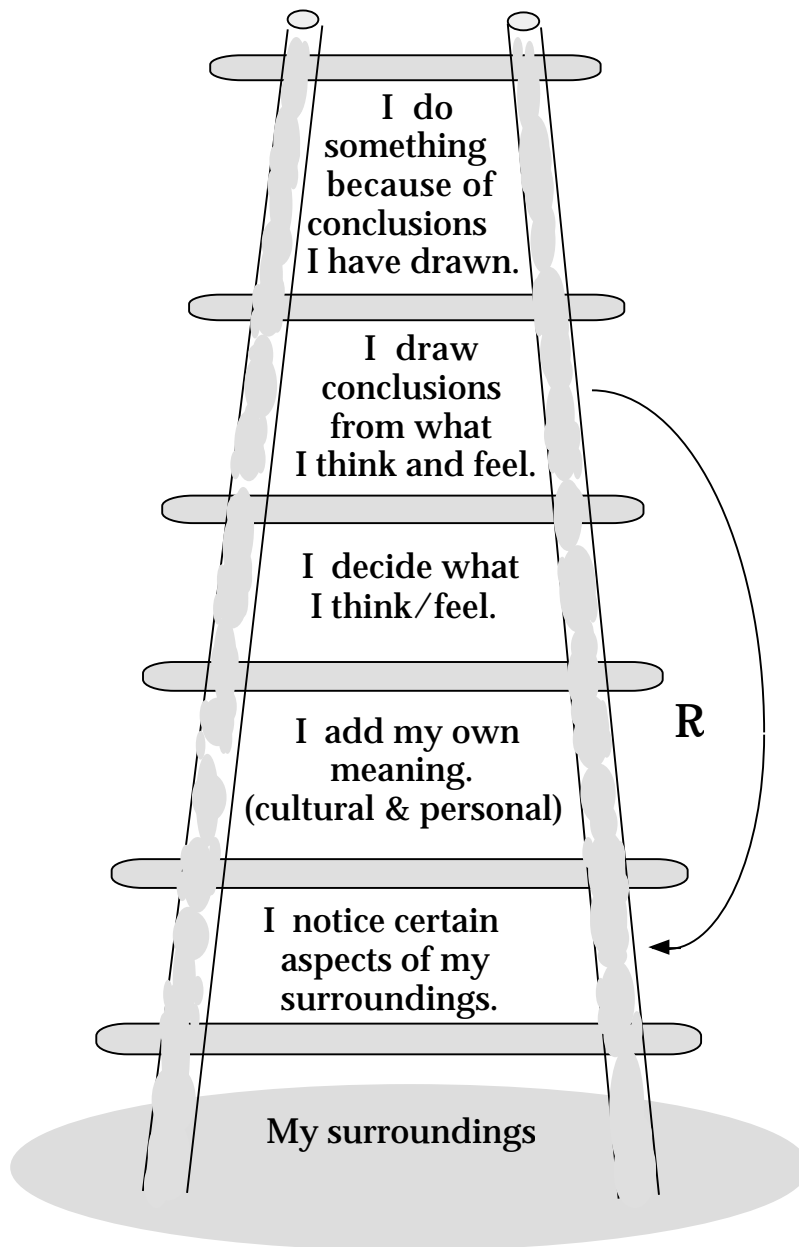
Ms. Kenerson must have done something wrong.

The principal was pretty mad.

The principal came in and said "I need to speak to you in the hallway right now."

Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Last modified 3'00

Ladder of Inference



Example Five – Friendships

My friends might not tell me the truth

She lied to me about being busy with family.

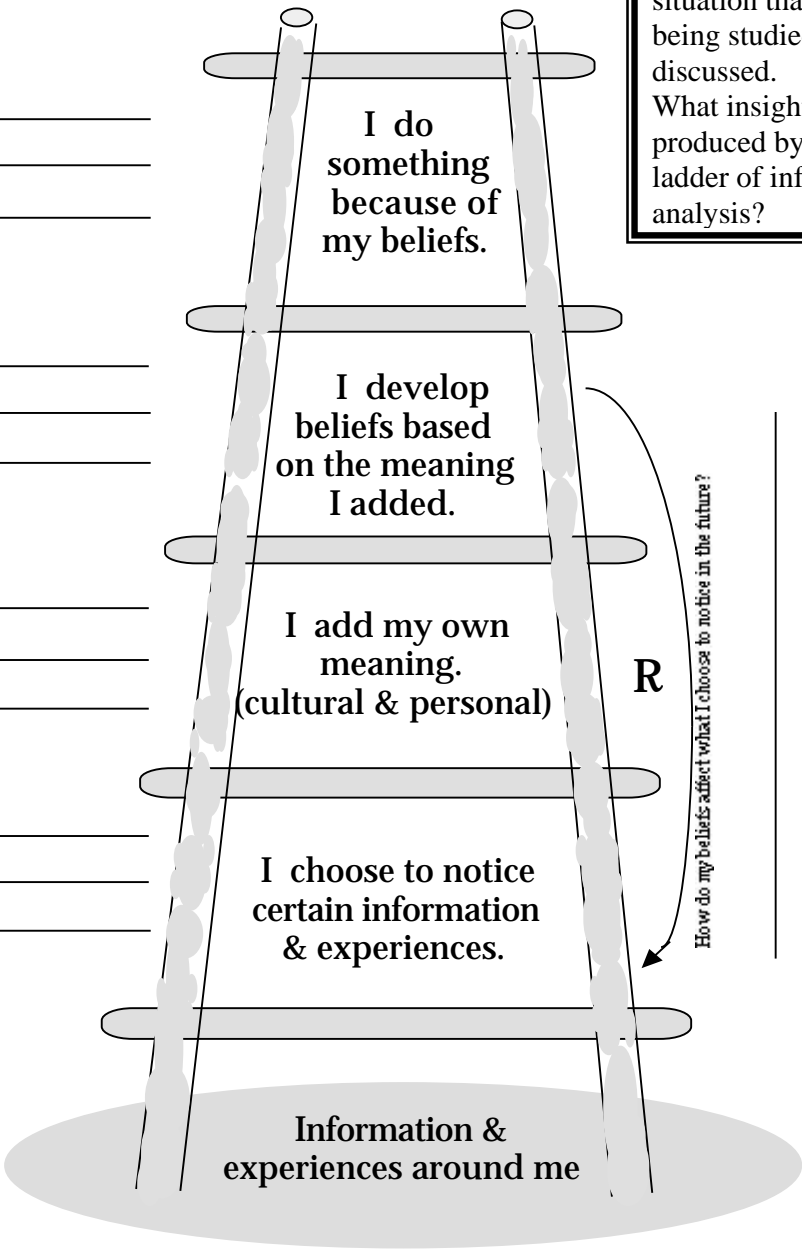
My best friend doesn't like me anymore

He/she must be here with another friend.

I see my best friend at the mall after he/she told me that they were busy with family today and couldn't go to the mall with me.

Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Last modified 3'00

Ladder of Inference



Worksheet – Fill in the blanks to fit the situation that is being studied or discussed. What insights are produced by the ladder of inference analysis?

Adapted from The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook . Last modified 3'00