

**THE INSTITUTION AS A LEARNING SYSTEM**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**by**

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To Ruth

for her unwavering support and encouragement without  
which this thesis would never have been finished

--oOo--

## ABSTRACT

### The Institution as a Learning System

Maurice Randall

The work reported here was carried out whilst the author was Head of Education and Training at the TSB of Birmingham and the Midlands. Ten studies were carried out. They were part of a new training operation and so their objectives and relationship to the work of the Department and the needs of the Bank are carefully described. The major influences on the work are reviewed from three perspectives: Psychological definitions of man; promoting learning at work; evaluating the learning enterprise. The studies were directed at establishing a method whereby managers can significantly influence the development of the learning competence of their staff, and at installing a management development system using the principles on which this method is based.

The early part of the research dealt with the nature of learning in organisational settings and the role of education and training processes in achieving business results. The survey-based proposal to management about how to cost-effectively direct managerial learning was not taken up, and the sequence of studies was concluded by acquiring a detailed understanding of the rejection of the proposed learning philosophy. Whilst this work was in progress, the method for influencing the learning competence of subordinates was developed. It is based upon the philosophy of self-organisation of learning elaborated by the Centre for the Study of Human Learning. Its utility for engendering significant revision of both the conceptualisation and practice of learning was confirmed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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His approval was endorsed by the Board of Trustees, via the stewardship of their Personnel and Training Committee, chaired by Robert Nixon. Whilst recognising that the research was likely to outrun the life of the Bank, Mr Nixon put aside parochial concerns, acknowledged the potential value to be gained from its results, and readily endorsed the General Manager's commitment.

The work described in the following pages soon involved, in one way or another, all the staff who worked with me in the Education and Training Department. To all of them - Linda, Geoff, Joy, Peter, Barry, Karen, Margaret, Jackie, Terry and Anne - I would like to express a heartfelt thankyou. They entered into the experiment with great spirit. They came to embrace the ideals pursued in this research and together we shared a great deal. Their enthusiasm gave me encouragement when I seemed to be faced with enormous difficulties. I owe them so much.

I am also indebted to other staff in the Bank. I would like to thank all of those who cooperated with me, not only in pursuit of education and training objectives, but also by giving of their time, consenting to be interviewed, and

freely giving of their opinions. Without their participation the work could not have been done.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE INSTITUTION AS A LEARNING SYSTEM:

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

"An essential quality of human behaviour is that, although in some degree innate or inherited, it is in great part learned: present conduct is largely our visible response to past experience newly interpreted. It follows, first, that the daily round offers constant learning opportunities and, second, that these opportunities should be of great interest to managers. When, moreover, we discover that the quality of such learning is largely determined by the morale of the organisation that offers it, that interest becomes profound. Indeed, we may now assert that the observable differences between organisations otherwise comparable in technical, financial or environmental character, are determined by whether or not their members are likely to develop in and from the course of their daily employment. One enterprise can, in short, behave as a learning system, constantly and fruitfully working out autonomous solutions to its own problems: its neighbour, built to the same technical specifications, engaged in the same tasks and reporting to the same higher authority, may be an organisational sore, running with irresoluble conflict and unendurable frustration"

Reg Revans, Brussels 1969.

TSB Group Plc is now a much different organisation to the one I joined in September, 1978. Then there were 16, semi-autonomous Banks throughout England and Wales. I was first appointed Education and Training Manager to two of them, namely TSB of the Midlands and Birmingham Municipal TSB, about to amalgamate as the TSB of Birmingham and the Midlands. This formally took place in November, 1979. At that time Trustee Savings Banks were well on the way towards becoming a fully-fledged, commercial operation. They had already experienced considerable change and more was to come. To meet the developmental challenges posed by such changes the status of education and training was enhanced and expertise was obtained from outside of the banks to establish it on a professional basis.



## 1.1 Introduction to the Banks and an overview of their needs

The newly-formed Bank's deposits were slightly in excess of £300 millions. It employed about 1300 people, and had 114 branches across the West Midlands. Subsequently, during the restructuring of the TSB Group in 1983/84, it was absorbed into the Birmingham Region of TSB of England and Wales plc.

The constituents of the TSB of Birmingham and the Midlands (TSBBM) each had a Board of Management, representatives from which made up an Education and Training Committee. This was set up to ensure that satisfactory arrangements were made for this function prior to amalgamation, and to oversee the establishment of the Education and Training Department of the new bank. My first task as Education and Training Manager (later designated Departmental Head - Education and Training) was to assess education and training requirements and make recommendations about staffing, accommodation and finance for the new Department within the proposed TSBBM. I was given a free hand. Whatever time was needed for the work could be taken. There were no restrictions on discussions with staff. Initially information was collected about the Banks - what they were, where they had come from, how they operated. This was supplemented by individual and small group discussions with both administrative and branch staff about their jobs and how they felt about their work and the changes taking place. The intention was to understand the history and culture of the Trustee Savings Banks, to grasp the way in which Banks work (in terms of objectives,

responsibilities and relationships) and to develop a broad-based view of needs. From this the key aims of a training strategy emerged. These formed the basis for my recommendations about people, money and property required for an effective Education and Training Department for the shortly-to-be formed TSBBM. These aims were to be the foundation for the activities of the new Department during its initial period of operation, namely: (i) the establishment of the Education and Training Department as a matter of some urgency; (ii) the extension and maintenance of the Bank's capacity for meeting demands for procedural training (eg basic training of recruits); (iii) an improvement in the comprehension of organisational and employee roles; (iv) the design and operation of development programmes for managers, supervisors and clerical staff; (v) the development of corporate and individual skills in marketing and selling; (vi) the identification and use of appropriate systems and techniques for improving the ability of individuals to work in groups.

The needs from which these purposes derived are described separately below. These six, key areas of work encapsulated the training problem. They also indicated anticipated ways of working. This training strategy was accepted, along with the proposals for the new Department. All but three of the posts were filled at the outset and the Department became operational in July 1979 with a budget of £0.2m for the first year of its operation.

With this background in mind, attention can be turned to the needs identified. These existed at three levels: organisational; job (or category of employment); individual. They consisted of two types: "technical" and "behavioural".

The former concerned questions to do with the essential nature and objectives of the business: Was the organisational framework sensible? Was sufficient financial control exercised? Was a satisfactory marketing plan in operation? The latter referred to how people work and how energetically they are prepared to work. The analysis presented to the Education and Training Committee dealt expressly with the latter, whilst adding the proviso that for training to be effective there should be no obvious technical deficiencies in the organisation's operation.

In assessing the behavioural needs discussions covered: Employee perception of identity; skills available for the required tasks; and the level of morale - the available energy for committing skills to the achievement of objectives. For the purpose of these discussions identity, skills and morale were defined as follows:

Identity - understanding of the purpose of the organisation;

- understanding of current operating objectives of - the Bank,
  - the Department,
  - the Branch;

- understanding of the relationship of task accomplishment to the achievement of objectives.

Skills - any activity involved in managing and carrying out procedures designed for each type and level of job.

Morale - that which is demonstrated by enthusiasm, flexibility and cooperation; a desire to achieve high standards, and a concern for

correct action to be taken regardless of job demarcation or hours of work.

The conclusions under these headings were:

Identity was characterised particularly by: (i) Relative ignorance of the reasons for the amalgamation of the two Banks; (ii) anxiety at the perceived direction the TSBs were taking; (iii) limited understanding of Bank objectives; (iv) uncertainty about the contribution that their own job made to the achievement of objectives.

Skills available varied considerably: (i) In banking and finance there was both good and bad knowledge and practice; (ii) in management and supervision knowledge was poor, but ability unknown; (iii) marketing and selling were not differentiated and there was limited ability in these spheres; (iv) dealing with customers showed a significant lack of confidence.

Morale could only be described as low: (i) There was a pronounced division of "us/them" between branches and Head Office; (ii) communications were lacking; (iii) there was a low feeling of involvement; (iv) the senior management of the Banks (via the Head Office departments) managed by the issue of instructions, so much so that job holders came to consider that their job was totally defined by the instructions associated with it; (v) intra- and inter-department jealousy existed; (vi) people were highly cynical about the reasons for the delay in the amalgamation; (vii) there was high frustration with the slowness of decision-making; (viii) often management took action without adequate explanation.

In addition, for this assessment to be considered in context, eight operational factors had also to be taken into

account: (i) Managerial direction of branches was being increased by the addition of the position of District Manager in the management hierarchy; (ii) despite pressure for an increase in the volume of business, traditional ways of dealing with customers had to be retained; (iii) the complexity of the branch manager's job was increasing, especially by virtue of the introduction of corporate lending; (iv) there was mounting pressure on branch managers to be more "entrepreneurial" and "aggressive" in selling; (v) management was anxious about the effect of the low CIOB Examinations' pass rate on the supply of qualified manpower to branch manager positions; (vi) there was widespread support at senior levels for the view that an increase in staff productivity was urgently required; (vii) management were reluctant to clarify roles and relationships, especially in the case of the branch manager; (viii) there was a pronounced belief that learning by experience was the best form of training, associated with an over-reliance on training courses when it was acknowledged that an organised training solution was appropriate.

The last of these suggested that, in mounting a training and development strategy to meet the identified needs within the matrix of operational factors, it was necessary to look beyond immediate and direct concerns if the enterprise was to be successful.

## 1.2 Management's approach to training and development:

### An overview of the situation confronting the newly-formed Education and Training Department

It was often recited that "training is attending

training courses" and "experience is the best teacher". These sentiments belie the good sense hidden within them and suggest an inability to explicate a personal theory of knowledge. This inability was prevalent in the Bank. It seemed symptomatic of a rootedness in the past, of unreflected-upon ways of doing things, which entrapped present-day action for future repetition. This acceptance seemed closely related to a tendency to quickly adopt solutions to problems; and despite these solutions being superficial or lacking in evidence or rational justification. Similarly whilst they were dissatisfied with how training had been in the past, they were unclear about what it might become in the future. For example, there was considerable propensity for embracing the change brought about by new business operations, but no ideas about new ways of organising and managing work. This showed particularly in the gap between what management wanted from staff and the actual response that their behaviour elicited. It was also realised that management's desire to improve education and training would not necessarily lead to any confrontation of their beliefs, feelings and action.

So it seemed that the Education and Training Department should have a dual role. Firstly, its "overt activity", had to ensure that it helped directly with skill acquisition as change gradually demanded new competence. Secondly, and covertly, it appeared necessary for it to be an instrument for helping management become more aware of its own need to consider changing; not only as a consequence of the intended changes in the system, but also in order that learning could be translated into productivity. Management needed to be persuaded that their task was not only ensuring

that the structural environment resulted in acceptable productivity (ie the "technical" system referred to earlier comprising essentially job structure, job design and the allocation of resources). It also needed to be convinced that education and training processes could not be divorced from that environment, nor from their relationships with subordinates, without detriment to their effectiveness. If "experience is the best teacher", then both manager and trainer must ensure that "experience" is appropriately structured. To this object Education and Training Department had to establish a dialogue with management, that embraced the establishment of priorities for learning and the use of learning resources and opportunities; a dialogue that integrated harmoniously with manager/subordinate conversations about productivity.

But the boundaries and rules for the Education and Training Department's involvement in the organisation were rooted in the past. It was constrained perforce by what management construed as realisable, by what was deemed efficacious and legitimate. Traditionally, problems of performance were attended to by formal learning in the classroom. This insensitivity towards the complexity and dynamic nature of the human aspects of performance constituted a serious obstacle to achieving effectiveness of education and training. If the Bank was to meet the demands of change, its management had to ensure that staff acquired the requisite competence. Equally importantly, it would have to address its own short-comings, particularly by considering the implications for human resource development of changes they themselves implemented.

But how might this state of affairs be achieved? The

Head of Education and Training had no remit for seeking changes in the way the management operated. As far as could be ascertained at the outset, the Education and Training Department was there to provide expertise in helping branch managers and their staff to acquire banking, financial and selling skills. That an outsider to banking was appointed to run that Department was not easily understood by most people in the Bank. As a (relatively) young man, without banking knowledge and experience, how could the new Department Head be of any help? If "training is attending training courses", it followed that he needed to be a teacher, expert in the skills of banking, a repository of knowledge, able to impart lessons learned from the practice of banking.

Similarly, middle management were satisfied with how training used to be. It had dealt only with clerical staff, particularly at entry to the Bank. Learning beyond this level occurred as a result of normal working experience, sometimes aided by allowing people to circulate between branches and Administration. It therefore seemed reasonable to ask: "Why do we need a different kind of Education and Training Department?" The new Department had enhanced status, increased resources, and was going to be more costly to run. Also it seemed to them doubtful that this increased expenditure was justified. The common conception of the training problem was that it resided only at the level of the cashier at entry to the Bank. If people in the past went on training courses after they had gained maturity and substantial experience, it was because they had failed and the object of attendance on the course was remedial. So what, in the eyes of middle to senior management, was the



task of the new Education and Training Department? This was very perplexing for certain managers and there were few opportunities for attempting to influence how the learning process was construed.

So the question became: "How could communication between management and trainers be enriched?" Certainly conversation about needs and performance deficiencies was possible. But the problem was to find ways of conversing about developing potential and realising high productivity. Moreover, these conversations would have to include what was possible not only through learning of knowledge and skills, but also through increasing the release of energy by raising morale. The Department was faced with a number of opportunities and constraints, namely: (i) The Bank was changing dramatically, first in relation to the products and services it offered, and secondly in what it expected from its staff; (ii) a large increase in recruitment was expected which presented many opportunities for contact with a cross-section of the staff; (iii) initially, there was almost an eagerness to offer "problems" for rectification by "training"; (iv) a rigidity of view about what territory education and training could legitimately enter was still encountered; (v) there was a pressing need for an increase in the number of people qualifying as bankers; (vi) there were limited opportunities for the exchange of ideas with management, meetings being concerned with decision-making about "practical matters"; (vii) the new Department's staff were enthusiastic, ambitious and eager to do well and were located in a building outside of the existing Head Office which gave the opportunity to create a new ethos untainted by traditional values; (viii) there were no invitations

initially to Education and Training Department to participate in the design and implementation of new operational procedures; (ix) there was little agreement about goals for the personnel function in the Bank and the Personnel Services and Education and Training Departments collaborated minimally at the outset; (x) there seemed to be no serious obstacle to: (a) collecting data when engaged in a "training problem"; (b) stimulating questioning generated by data collection about operational arrangements; (xi) there was an acceptance that the Education and Training Department had to be established quickly and a desire for it to operate cost-effectively.

All that remained was to find a vehicle for uniting these in the support of educational and training goals, formulated for the advantage of the Bank's operations. The idea of research, and particularly action-research, seemed ideally suitable for such a purpose. The interest in cost-effectiveness was closely related to evaluation and thus investigation - finding out precisely what was happening, assessing its appropriateness and adapting if necessary. There did not seem to be any serious obstacle to data-collecting, certainly not in the early stages. It reinforced the opportunity for experimentation, readily apparent at the outset and increased the ways in which the Head of Education and Training might seek to influence management thinking. By collecting evidence, and involving a wide range of people in the Bank, management's attention might be directed to specific questions concerned with enhancing learning effectiveness.

### 1.3 Overview of the research

The foregoing sets out the situation that confronted the new Education and Training Department. It remains to describe the work reported here, particularly about how data were collected and the use made of them with management and within the Department's operations. As far as I was concerned, it was beyond any reasonable questioning that if the Department for which I was responsible was to be truly effective it had to influence management's view of the nature of learning and the role of education and training processes in achieving business results. The success of the Education and Training Department was thus, in part, dependent upon securing a change in management's understanding of and commitment to the kinds of outcomes pursued and processes used in developing people. Whilst I believed that significant progress in that direction was made, the methods used in that endeavour are not reported here. Much of what transpired between the Head of Education and Training, the management team and certain Trustees of the Board of Management is not reportable. This work was not amenable to data collection, despite it being deemed of crucial importance to the success of educational training processes.

The context of this research was organisational change. Whilst that goal informed much of my work with the Bank's management, for political reasons, it was something that could not be considered as a main-line concern of the Education and Training Department. Whilst accepting the paramount importance of organisational change, in its involvements with management the Department had to avoid

being perceived as working towards this end. Such intentions would, at best, have been regarded as disloyal and, at worst, as subversive. It was essential that the Department's progress should be maintained. There was much to do and it was important that most of the time the Department was perceived to be dealing with the Bank's needs. These needs had led to a formulation of specific purposes from which a training strategy had emerged. In forming this strategy, account was also taken of operational factors and the approach that management had taken traditionally towards training and human resource development. The resulting work of the Department concentrated upon four main concerns: (i) Representation of the Department and communication with the Bank's management; (ii) clerical staff training; (iii) professional studies support; (iv) management development; and in this way, to varying extents, all of the six key aims, as originally outlined as the basis of a training strategy, were met. The relationships between the Department's work, the rationale behind the work, and the research reported here are shown in Fig 1, together With a chronology of the research projects in Fig 2.

So there were many opportunities to be in action. In providing training services questions could be asked, data collected and information presented, options listed and pressure applied for choosing ways of doing things other than how it had always been. In this way a change in both conception and practice was sought. Consequently, what is reported here are studies which attempt to help with the understanding of learning in the context of an institution. The work was carried out as part of the normal workload of

Supported by research:

● Studies of management (Chapt 5, 6, 7)

● Studies with subordinates (Chapt 8, 9)

Aim: Organisational change

Attempting change in management thinking so that learning resources used optimally

But avoiding this change being seen as the object of research

Method: Conversations focussed on understanding learning in organisational settings

Within the context of achieving educational and training effectiveness

Condition: Dialogue with management as the key to success

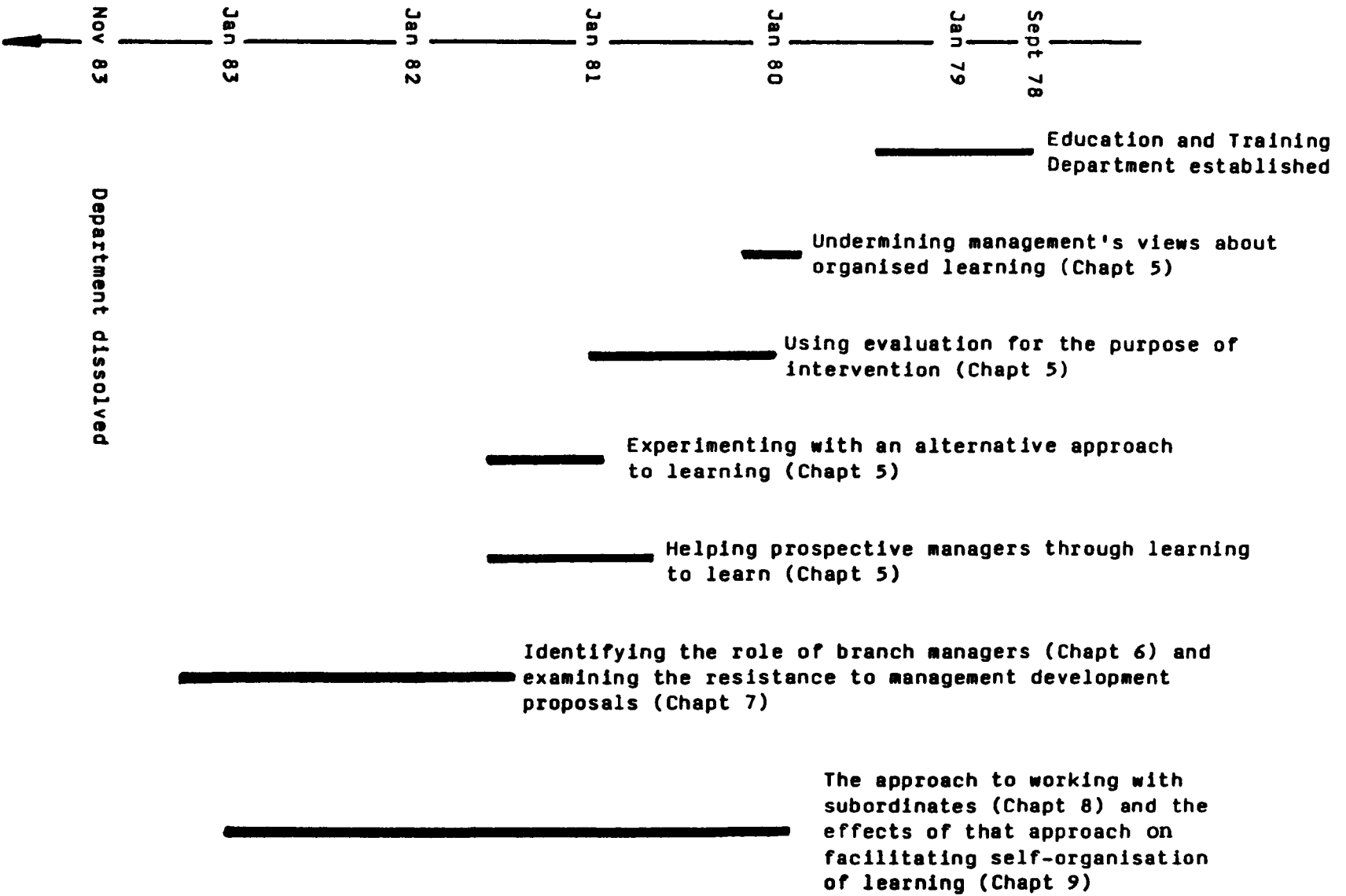
Built around helping managers learn more variedly

Objective: Obtain revised action of managers

Particularly directed at creating environments conducive to learning

The work of the Department: Provision of education and training programmes and ongoing support for learning

Fig 1: Relationship between the Department's work, its rationale and the research studies



**Fig 2: Chronology of the research projects**

the Education and Training Department. As such it was directed at meeting operational needs, and where it was regarded as stepping outside of that arena, this was justified by reference to the need sometimes for a fuller understanding of what is involved in accomplishing education and training purposes. In this way the Education and Training Department's effectiveness might be maximised.

The early attempts at such "maximisation of effectiveness" were in the realm of seeking agreement with management about the sound use of learning expertise and resources. These studies were directed at providing an input to building and maintaining a dialogue with management, and finally at attempting to understand why that dialogue was not satisfactorily sustained. They are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. In setting up and carrying out these studies it was accepted that the normal round of managerial activity must be maintained. This required a sensitive awareness of the culture in which those exchanges took place. It was normal to accept things as they were. Questioning of a kind directed at having things done differently, whilst not expressly forbidden, was rarely to be found. Despite inefficiencies being diagnosed at one level in the hierarchy, they remained unnoticed at more senior levels. There was no acceptance of the idea that the people who occupied jobs were the people likely to know most about those jobs. Without directly challenging this state of affairs, the studies were aimed at engaging the attention of management in events, to create a dialogue around an increasing awareness of what was going on. It seemed that solutions to problems were identified with little reflection on the real nature of events. All too

often these solutions raised further questions which unfortunately were not being addressed. So the studies sought to push management back into the action. They offered data as a spur to reflection and the generation of alternative explanations. They were attempts at finding mutually (manager and trainer) acceptable courses of action that would enhance the learning enterprise through the optimised use of learning resources. The management studies cover: performance analysis; the use of a formalised learning opportunity; testing receptivity of new ideas in teaching; introducing learning to learn; the introduction of a management development strategy via the specification of branch managers' roles; and an investigation of the resistance to those proposals. They aided attempts at agreeing with management what was deemed to be appropriate action at the workplace, and with determining how best to help people become more effective in a variety of situations.

In these ways the research studies contributed to the Education and Training Department's search for effective learning. They obtained data from authentic activities taking place in the Bank. These were then used to press for reflection on and (hopefully) adaptation of those activities, thereby creating more satisfactory conditions for learning at work. These studies initiated, supported and enhanced the dialogue with management about the purposes and methods of education and training and their relationship to management activity. In addition, they helped with the development of systems within some areas of learning. They were dealing, essentially, with the antecedents of successful learning. In effect this work was



designed to move management development to a revised status, to break with the past and its emphasis on training courses. As a result of this, it was hoped that managers would learn new ways of learning, leading eventually to an environment conducive to the enhanced learning of their subordinates. The studies thus pressed for detailed consideration of the managerial responsibilities and behaviour required to ensure that people acquired the competence deemed to be essential for successful business operations. This meant that the relationships between manager and trainer, and between manager and subordinate, needed to be more closely understood.

The roles of the manager and subordinate in a learning environment were examined in the final series of studies in this research. They were conducted within the Education and Training Department and involved most of the staff working with the Head of Department. They are reported in Chapters 8 and 9. The studies focus on the way in which a learning environment was created, and within this, how people were encouraged to learn how to learn as the process whereby their capacity for self-organisation of learning could be increased. Specifically, the purposes of these studies were to see what kind of changes people experienced in pursuing greater self-organisation, what they came to understand of the method used to achieve such changes, and what demands helping with these placed on the manager. The Department was an ideal test-bed for the development of ideas for use with managers at large. In offering an opportunity to staff to direct their own learning (in the context of agreed, departmental objectives) an attempt was made to deal with the crux of the learning enterprise.

All of the above studies were part of a search for the rightful place of education and training in the pursuit of business results. In this process research was used as a vehicle for change. It was directed at understanding the nature of learning in organisational settings. It used opportunities within projects that had been agreed with management as being a necessary part of the Bank's operations. Always it sought to confront management with a balanced view of the consequences of the action management took or proposed to take, whilst offering alternative understandings for managing the human resource. A more detailed description of the various studies and how they relate to each other is given below in the final section of this introduction to the research.

#### 1.4 Purposes and methods of the research

The work involved various groups of managers, and the staff of the Education and Training Department. Both parts were designed to promote an understanding of the requirements for effective learning within an institution. In preparation for this, in view of the wide range of interests, it seemed sensible to deal with the literature in two ways. Firstly, to isolate what might be termed fundamental questions the answers to which provide a basis for action within all the studies. Secondly, where appropriate, to deal with specific issues and report these more parochially with the work to which they relate. The first of these is given in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. These cover, respectively, psychological definitions of man, promoting learning at work, and evaluating the learning

enterprise. Thus competing approaches to the assumptions that can be adopted about the psychological nature of man, how this evolution seems to be paralleled in the field of facilitating learning, and how accounts of the human experiment might be drawn up, are all set out. However, it was realised at the outset that it was impractical to attempt to deal extensively with all the issues contained within such a wide variety of concerns. Nor was it necessary. This was not to be a theoretical exposition, neither was the author intent upon becoming a psychologist prior to carrying out the work. Certainly, there was a recognition that the range of problems covered by the research called for a satisfactory representation of the relevant issues. But it was also felt that such a representation was possible without an all-embracing survey of the relevant bodies of knowledge, for which, in reality, a lifetime might be needed. Accordingly, a systematic and tightly defined review is presented followed by more specific treatments of subjects in the chapters reporting the work carried out.

The projects reported here are described in Chapters 5 to 9. The first of these, "Working with Management", grew naturally as part of the process of establishing the new Education and Training Department. The studies comprising this project are contained in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 5 presents four studies: A look at the diagnosis of needs; the evaluation of the use of a series of training courses; an experiment with an alternative to a conventional training course; the introduction of learning to learn to young managers. Together they represent a search for a "contract" between management and trainer. A

contract which embraced a set of concepts that allow a common understanding of a variety of facts, promoted communication by the establishment of a common language and facilitated further investigation of how learning outcomes might profitably be pursued.

The first study in this chapter describes the taking of an opportunity to confront's management's views about organised learning. It sought to inculcate a broader - based approach to performance problems by exploring the definition of training and the relationships between manager, trainer and performance deficiency. It therefore sought to make explicit how the Education and Training Department might best be of service. It also established that a basic step in the provision of training was the agreement about the definition of job roles, which was of crucial importance to the later study of branch managers.

The examination of how needs are diagnosed was a good start to management/trainer conversations about learning. It was followed by an evaluation of how training courses could be used effectively. This was intended to influence the District Managers in their approach to their staff development responsibilities, namely to press for a closer link between training and business results and to ensure that the responsibilities of the learner were properly recognised. In so doing the study was complementary to the results of the first investigation, and sought a correct alignment of intentions, learner, the process whereby knowledge is gained, and the assistance that can be given to that process.

The third study of this initial series was an experiment with an alternative to the training course. It

stressed that there are other options when managing learning strategies. In this way the reliance of managers on training courses might be weakened, the nature of the learning process made more explicit, and the contingent and personal aspects of learning reinforced. These three studies, respectively, posed and sought answers to: (i) How do we diagnose needs? (ii) What is involved in using a learning resource? (iii) What might be the alternatives for devising learning opportunities? Thus was begun the development of that necessary set of agreements with management about how learning problems might be solved. This work was extended by the fourth study of the management project which introduced learning to learn to prospective managers. It was course-based, but nevertheless challenged the conventional teaching model. It employed the services of the Centre for the Study of Human Learning and emphasised the pre-eminence of the learning process within a coherent view of the self-organisation of learning. This was an important study in that it demonstrated the universality of learning ideas and techniques, offered in-depth experience to some of the staff of the Education and Training Department, and promoted the newly installed scheme for improving examination results of the Bank's students.

These studies constituted the first phase of the management project - defining the training task. It prepared the way for a detailed study of the role of the branch manager which is described in Chapter 6. This study was designed to build on the idea that role definition was the key to the provision of successful training. It also sought to incorporate the dimension of situation into thinking about training design. At that time training was

focussed on the individual, on particular jobs and how they were described, as the starting points for training responses. It was essential, therefore, that management realised that job occupants acted not merely in accordance with their job definition, but also by reference to the demands they perceived in their situation. The importance of the role of individual perception in personal action was the final ingredient in the array of considerations about helping people to learn how to do that which was expected of them.

At this stage it appeared that management thinking had been successfully challenged and that a receptivity to ideas about new ways of working had been established. Data had been collected and proposals made for management development. But somehow, action was being stifled, and the initiative ground to a halt. It thus remained to dig deeper into the management psyche and tease out possible explanations for that resistance. Certainly, the Regional General Manager was a prominent figure in opposing progress. Whilst appearing impressed with the findings reported in Chapter 6, he had failed to maintain his support. Unfortunately, it was not possible to confront this particular difficulty. Instead attention was directed to other levels of the management hierarchy. This group, if committed to the ideas presented and substantiated by earlier studies, might have been able to move the project forward. Their reluctance called for closer examination if the limited degree of conviction generated by the management development initiative was to be understood.

The failure to mobilise that source of influence was the cause of deep disappointment and motivated the final

Studies in this project, described in Chapter 7. They were directed at a deeper understanding of managerial constructions of learning and consisted of: (i) An examination of learning styles; and (ii) a detailed exploration of conversations with senior managers about learning at work. Learning styles could easily be looked at with managers attending courses at the training centre without arousing suspicions or hostility. A complete cross-section of branch management participated. Not only could a specific measure of learning preference be obtained, but also additional insights into the organisation's culture that might supplement those already obtained during previous studies. This work led naturally into a further study of managerial beliefs about learning which involved the actual recipients of the management development proposals - the 18 people comprising the top management of the Bank. The specific objectives were to uncover the conclusions each participant had reached about the promotion of effective learning. A detailed analysis of these might offer a better understanding of the nature of resistance to training and development and the culture from which it derived.

These studies concluded the management project. It had attempted to redirect management thinking about human resource development. Whilst significant progress had been made in certain spheres, overall it might be described as a failure because it came to a premature conclusion. Certainly, it ensured that the Department's operations were soundly based. And there were signs of an altered conception of how the Education and Training Department might work with senior managers to solve performance problems. Indeed other projects (outside the scope of this

research) were carried later that otherwise might not have occurred at all. There was no doubt that the Bank's management held very rigid views about people, learning and managing. Whilst these were unable to prohibit the momentum of the Department in its pursuit of effectiveness, nevertheless they enabled many of the management team to continue to reside safely in the comfort of the past.

The second project of this research consists of studies with subordinates in the Education and Training Department. They are reported in Chapters 8 and 9. The first of these deals with the way the Head of Education and Training went about facilitating self-organised learning amongst his staff. This work is set in the context of those activities needed to establish the Education and Training Department as a viable operating unit, able to contribute effectively to the Bank's needs. The approach used enacts the philosophy adumbrated in the chapters on management studies, and elaborated when describing the introduction of learning to learn to students. The focus of the chapter is the way in which a learning environment was created and within which people were encouraged to increase their capacity for self-organising their learning process. Particularly, it is about the role of the Head of Department in helping subordinates bring about personal change whilst all were engaged productively in setting-up and running a department.

The importance of Chapter 8 is that it deals with the conditions central to the implementation of the ideas that informed the management project. Much of what that project revealed was put to use in isolating the parameters that constitute the building blocks of the learning culture sought as the key to propagating independent learning at



work. The chapter concludes with how these parameters were operationalised through the definition and management of specific, situational influences designed to promote the development of increased learning competence. The work described in this and the following chapter relies heavily on the view of self-organised learning developed theoretically and experimentally by the Centre for the Study of Human Learning. What is shown is how a managerial ethos and practice can be erected that allows the pursuit of such principles and ideas whilst achieving high levels of productivity and morale. It is a personal statement describing as faithfully as is possible what actually happened as the Head of Department developed and refined his own thinking about learning and then applied it for the purpose of increasing the learning competence of his staff. It sets out five managerial value positions which underpin and predetermine the shape and content of manager and subordinate interactions. This description of value positions is an attempt to describe the fundamental choices open to managers as a pre-requisite to setting-up detailed arrangements for carrying out the tasks demanded by a pursuit of increased learning competence. This is complemented with a description of how the values were enacted expressly for the purpose of eliciting from staff both commitment and willingness to learn and for aiding the acquisition of greater learning competence.

After setting out the values, beliefs and techniques of a specific kind of communication with subordinates, Chapter 9 takes a detailed look at the effect of that approach. The creation of a learning environment in the Department was directed at harmonising learning and production. The

response of staff to this learning opportunity is the subject of this chapter. With the help of the Head of Department, subordinates were able to articulate their experience. By such probing of their unique world of learning an attempt was made to gauge the feasibility of inculcating self-organisation at work and the extent to which people can reasonably be expected to achieve it. The study was thus directed at answering: (i) What kind of changes do people record about themselves as learners as a result of seeking greater self-organisation? (ii) What do people come to understand about the method used to facilitate self-organisation, and thereby, the more fundamental question of what constitutes self-organisation itself? (iii) What demands does working with subordinates, for the purpose of their acquiring self-organisation of learning, place upon the leader of these subordinates?

Chapters 8 and 9 thus describe the implementation of that ideology offered to management and students in the Bank - the living-out of a set of beliefs and principles about the nature of human beings and the possibilities that they present for human endeavour and accomplishment. They offer a testimony in support of the theoretical framework offered directly and indirectly to others in the Bank. This was an attempt to show what was possible when an informed approach to self-definition is pursued with vigour and optimism. It is an important end-piece to this research and is reported fully.

### 1.5 Summary

In concluding this introduction to the research it

remains to summarise what has been said so far. The overall goal of the Education and Training Department was to influence management thinking, to effect a change in behaviour such that a more informed response might occur to situations, in the sense of becoming aware of the need to examine alternatives fully and to take a rounded view of the likely consequences of any particular proposed course of action. This goal was not the object of research however. The circumstances of the Head of Education and Training did not render that work amenable to study in the fashion demanded of an academic thesis. Choosing not to report it here is not to be construed as suggesting that it was not important. On the contrary, it is a vital area for research. Rather putting it aside recognises the difficulties involved when such studies are attempted internally without a mandate from management.

What was studied were processes of learning in organisational settings - as the basic ingredient in all strategies for organisational change. An important part of this is the examination of what might be termed the antecedents to the learning process - those conditions that have to be satisfied if a proper start is to be made to the learning enterprise. All of this was set in the context of seeking the optimal deployment of education and training resources.

The rationale of the research therefore begins with the need to explore management thinking about how to achieve high quality performance coupled with effective use of educational and training expertise. The Management studies essentially provided the data for pursuing these considerations in depth. The idea being that whilst the

Department operated to meet Bank needs, as agreed from time to time, opportunities could be taken to explore certain aspects of the Bank's work in-depth, with a view to confronting management with the results of such investigations. This feedback of data was intended to seek commitment to further work by the Department, to influence management's views of what was happening in the Bank and to gain acceptance of how best to help staff gain the competence required as the Bank evolved.

As the management studies progressed (and the richness of the dialogue with management increased) the work with education and training staff sought insights that could be used to help managers revise their own managing style, approach to learning and their orientation to assisting with the development of their own staff. In this way managers might be influenced to consider such questions as: What are learning, learning skills, the position of the learner in the learning enterprise and the boundaries which apply to that enterprise? What is the relationship between learning and achieving things at work? What specifically should the relationship be between managers and managed when engaged for the purposes of learning and productivity? What is involved in providing settings for people at work from which meanings can be built that promote commitment and enhance learning competence? What are the implications of those activities for the organisation's culture?

The studies within all of the projects overlapped considerably and each was influenced by the other. They represented a concerted attack on specific aspects of the status quo within the Bank. They raised questions about how far one can go in pursuit of organisational change if the

remit for seeking performance improvement excludes those responsible for directing the organisation. In seeking to create the right conditions for the effective use of learning expertise, a variety of priorities had to be met. The research studies were but part of these and this raises questions about how to optimise the use of research ideas within a milieu of practical considerations; which others interested in action research might further investigate and eventually answer more satisfactorily.

Reg Revans has been a considerable influence on this work and it is perhaps fitting to end this introduction with another quotation from him. The work reported here has sought to contribute to an understanding of these three demands cited by Revans in his address in Madrid (1986), namely that teachers of management should: "(i) enter more closely into the study of what managers actually do; it is not enough to enrich their intellectual understanding of managerial tasks, but they must also sense the emotional overtones of carrying responsibility for actions with uncertain outcomes, it is not only that action (implementation) is more complex than diagnosis (enquiry) but also that personal (subjective) commitment is more threatening than logical (objective) analysis; (ii) study the improvement of organisations as living (self-modifying) systems more deeply than they have been studying them in the past; a traditional concentration on the individual as the object of educational endeavour has prevented us from seeing as clearly as we ought the inefficiencies with which he is confronted, exacerbated by his new knowledge after the individual returns to his own organisation; (iii) give more attention to the evaluation of their own efforts, not merely

to justify their expenditure in time and money, but also to promote the constant improvement of standards, and to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs set out in (i) and (ii) above."

This inevitably raises questions about the nature of the human sciences, suggesting that they might be likened to history. Firstly, in attempting to understand the present we need to examine the past, that afterglow of established meanings that all too often warms our current behaviour. Secondly, that history is really about exchanges between people - Who did what? Why? When? And to what effect? The totality of the stream of consciousness, that vast gathering together of the minutiae of our endeavours is the real subject. And so with the psychological study of man. Is it not intent on the same quest? Understanding not only behaviour but also what inspires it? Not necessarily in the positivistic sense of the ultimate cause, that reductionist pursuit of a unitary, fundamental mechanism. But more in a qualitative, phenomenological sense of retaining a feel for the richness of the data whilst attempting to isolate an explanatory interpretation. But then one is pushed into practicalities. Can all the data be amassed? If not, what is to be left out? How do we resolve the dilemma of the "view and the window"? Kelly's metaphor of "man as scientist" seems to be an attempt to transcend this consideration. But in offering this, his optimistic postulate of constructive alternativism seems to presuppose that we can determine what is "best". But where are the means for helping us to decide if our best has been done? This research is offered in the hope that in some small

measure it contributes to answering that question.

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## CHAPTER 2

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF MAN

#### 2.1 Introduction - The variety of perspectives in a search for a universally accepted definition of man

There is much variety in psychological experimentation and theory-building, ranging from the existential, phenomenological approaches of such as Rogers and Kelly to the natural science-based behaviourism of Watson and Skinner. It is outside of the scope of this review to chart the relative merits of the various schools and approaches. Rather the intention has been to highlight some of the elements in psychology's evolution by briefly overviewing the main ideological pathways towards an elusive definition of man in psychological terms.

Hampden-Turner (1981) uses the concept "mind" to bring together a comprehensive, though carefully selected, array of thinkers from philosophy, psychology, sociology, cybernetics, psychotherapy, biology and systems theory, thus illustrating the variety and interrelatedness of the ways into considering man. His intention, however, is to seek a revision of social science, religion and philosophy so as to "stress connectedness, coherence, relationship, organicism and wholeness, as against fragmenting, reductive and compartmentalising forces of the prevailing orthodoxies". In offering his survey he uses a classification of mind embracing nine levels: Emancipation from the servitude of being directed by others; psychoanalytic and existential; physiological; creative; psychosocial; relational (by virtue



of communication, language and symbolic interaction); psychobiological; paradigmatic; cultural. In apologising, for the arbitrary nature of inclusions and exclusions, he points out that the "anti-imagists (the behaviourists)" exclude themselves. He has searched for an overall coherence which deterred him from collecting "separate pieces", and considers the work to be a "start in the process of putting the pieces of Humpty-Dumpty (psychology) together again because it needs to be done and so few are even trying".

Miller (1983) offers a similar assessment, though much more restricted in scope. His conversations with 15 psychological investigators emphasise Freudian and Cognitive psychologies whilst including an analysis of social activity, interpersonal relationships and language. But his introduction to the work reinforces the idea of the continuing evolutionary nature of psychology by asserting that "with the birth of cognitive psychology not to mention the scientific study of linguistics, some of the other inadequacies of the empirical tradition have become clearly apparent. It is widely recognised that perception can no longer be explained in terms of passive reception, and that the mind is furnished with active powers of creative conjecture without which the information provided by the senses would remain disorganised and chaotic".

From an entirely different perspective, that of experimental psychology, Wright et al (1970) propose that "psychology is the application to human behaviour, including speech, of the observational and experimental methods of science; and its aim is to locate the antecedent conditions associated with particular forms of behaviour,

and to explain these relationships through theories which may or may not take account of what are ordinarily understood as mental processes". They later go on to say that psychology is a collection of specialisms (learning, perception, personality, etc) although the boundaries are far from distinct. These authors accept the conventional classification of specialisms and structure their work on the assumption that psychology has its roots in biology and that it spans the gap between the other biological sciences and the social sciences. In describing their exclusions (applied fields such as clinical, occupational and educational psychologies) they draw an interesting distinction which helps with developing a perspective on the nature of psychology, namely, that research in applied fields has given rise to important theoretical considerations, but in general the applied studies are concerned with effecting changes in people's behaviour rather than discovering principles which make behaviour understandable.

Ross (1931) has pointed out that psychology literally means "science of the soul". It emerged from philosophy and experimental physiology as an independent, scientific discipline in Germany during the middle of the 19th century. Its preoccupation was with the mind and its method was introspection. Soon objections were raised about the kind of psychology that had appeared. These objections provided the mainsprings for several, separate strands of psychological endeavour. The main components of this differentiation and expansion of psychology are set out in Fig 3.

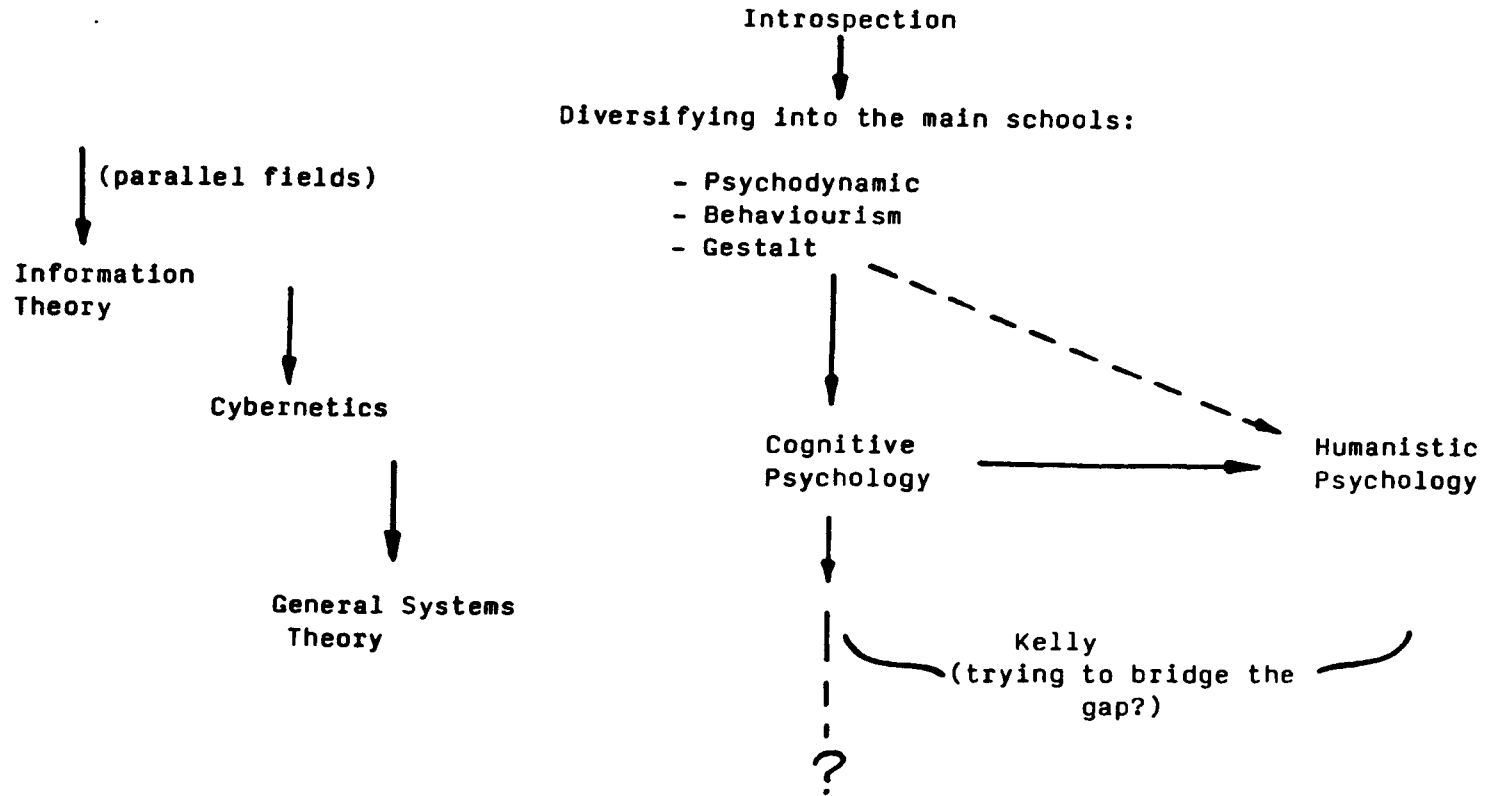


Fig 3: The main branches of psychology

Hall and Lindsey (1978) cite four main influences on personality theory which seem to serve also to indicate the main influences in the development of psychology. These are: Clinical observation; a desire to preserve the unity of behaviour; laboratory experimentation (particularly about learning); measurement of individual differences. Thus psychology was pushed along by desires on the one hand to establish itself as academically and scientifically respectable, and on the other to create a functional body of practice for the benefit of people who needed therapeutic help.

## 2.2 Psychology's plight - A failure to achieve paradigmatic status

Psychology has evolved by what seem to have been attempts to create what Kuhn (1970) described as a "scientific revolution.....a transformation of the world in which scientific work was done". Perhaps the most notable attempt at paradigm - building, if only by virtue of its widespread influence in western psychology and personality theory, was that by Sigmund Freud. But during the early days of psychology it was soon apparent that some questions about man and his life could be more easily answered than others. Buchdahl (1961) points out in his survey of scientific method that the "romantic" movement against science urged that "there is more to the world than science can uncover" . Jung (1964) himself reinforced this view when he said: "I know enough of the scientific point of view to understand that it is most annoying to have to deal with facts that cannot be completely or adequately grasped. The

trouble with these phenomena is that the facts are undeniable and yet cannot be formulated in intellectual terms. For this one would have to be able to comprehend life itself, for it is life that produces emotions and symbolic ideas". But psychology was intent on being a "science", if only by the use of "scientific methods". In this regard the dominant force was Watson's rejection of introspection and ultimately the establishment of Behaviourism. Harré and Secord (1972) have suggested that much of psychology's experimental work has been based upon a mechanistic model of man, Hume's conception of cause, and a logical positivist methodology. But this extreme reductionist emphasis on ultimate causes of human behaviour gave birth first to Cognitive Psychology and, ultimately, Humanistic Psychology and the Personal Construct Theory of George Kelly.

But as far as Giorgi (1976) is concerned this profusion of theoretical frameworks does not bestow on psychology the paradigmatic status it requires, and he is dissatisfied with the direction that psychology has taken. Similarly, Cronbach (1957) felt that the historic separation of experimental psychology from the study of individual differences impeded psychological research. And in 1976 he considered that the complexity of aptitude/treatment interactions and the dimensions of the situation and of the person were such as to force one to "once again to ask: Should social science aspire to reduce behaviour to laws?". He argued that "30 years ago psychology sought a nomothetic theory. Model building and hypothesis testing became the ruling ideal, and research problems were chosen increasingly to fit that mode. Taking stock today, I think most of us

judge theoretical progress to have been disappointing. Many are uneasy with the intellectual style of psychological research".

From the field of personality theory Allport (1957) contrasted the philosophical assumptions of Anglo-American and European viewpoints, illustrating how psychology was gripped by competing value positions. In the Anglo-American tradition man is seen as a tabula rasa, an empty slate on which events are written. The environment is emphasised and man is seen as being reactive to stimuli. In contrast to this, the European tradition sees man as self-active and driven by constitutional and instinctual forces that operate from within his body. The Anglo-American view emphasises roles and how an individual presents himself in different situations, whilst the European view emphasizes instincts that drive the organism. The Anglo-American view is pragmatic, optimistic, empirical and involves theories based on brain models and the computer. The European view is philosophical, pessimistic and involves theories that try to understand the total uniqueness of the individual. The two traditions are seen as leading to different kinds of theories and different techniques for the assessment of personality and the amelioration of psychological problems. The European tradition is infused with existentialism whilst the Anglo-American tradition is behaviouristic.

Pervin (1975) also sums up psychology's plight by isolating two viewpoints. One he describes as humanistic, man-centred, and phenomenological; the other as "scientific", pragmatic and empirical. The former is associated with the uniqueness of man and a tendency to emphasise free will and choice, whilst being unsympathetic

to standardised techniques for the assessment of personality. This approach is seen as trying to understand the world as it is experienced by the individual. People are studied with an attitude of "disciplined naivete", a disciplined inquiry without bias, towards an understanding of the organism's experience and perception of the world and not as it is defined by the scientist. The "scientific" approach is seen as considering all men to be alike and to emphasize determinism and drives. It prefers objective and standardised methods of personality assessment, vigorously adopting an empirical approach. This point of view considers phenomenology a part of philosophy, and instead of getting rid of biases simply employs new ones. A study of the individual is at best seen as a source of hypotheses, but is not in itself science. What a person says, his verbal behaviour, is not different from any other kind of behaviour all of which should be studied in the same rigorous way. The goals are objectivity, reliability, standardisation and validity; not intuitive understanding but empirical explanation. In conclusion, he feels that implicit in these two points of view is a major difference in the emphasis placed on and the attention given to the individual, an issue highlighted by the idiographic-nomothetic controversy in psychology.

### 2.3 Current studies of man

As to the direction of current studies of man, Beard (1982) extensively reviewed the literature in both psychology and sociology and concluded that the trend was firmly towards what he termed a "humanistic" inclination.

And by this he meant an increasing tendency to adopt a theory of knowledge which gives priority to the study of man which at its core has the investigation of how individuals construct meaning, and with how aspects of the world are constituted in the individual's own terms.

Shotter (1975) also supports the view that man should be considered by reference to what is going on inside him, but seeks to go beyond merely understanding man in his own terms, by establishing psychology as a "moral science of action". This contrasts with psychology as a "natural science of behaviour" in that it uses experiential criteria of the inner world rather than external observation of behaviour. These experiential criteria structure the intersubjectively-shared meanings and common understandings by which people live their lives. This means dealing with the person as a whole and a person is considered to arise out of social exchange. He defines a person as follows: "Being able to deliberate before one acts and, as a result, make clear to oneself one's own reasons for action, is part of what it is to be an autonomous, responsible person, not reliant like a child upon others to complete and give meaning to one's actions." Man exists in a stream of activity and the whole point of psychology as a moral science of action is "the extension of our ability to decide for ourselves how we will act by making clear to us the nature of the goals available to us, so that we may choose what to do next. This is a hermeneutic science of man. But it is concerned not only with interpretations of our intentions, but also with our own definitions of our self. In forming such definitions, communications after birth are crucial in determining personal existence. The social



context for meaning is emphasized: "Man, in community, as a socially responsible agent, unlike the task of man-the-thinker, has the task of giving intelligible form to the world, his life, and the living of it, not simply to describe it; it is a practical not a theoretical task - hence, the emphasis is away from thought to action, and a social view of man."

Only through personal relations does personal existence come into being. "Man is not just in nature, he is man in a culture in nature. And a man's culture is not to be characterised in terms of objective properties like all other things that he sees in nature from within his culture. The culture from which a man views the world and deliberates upon how to act in it structures his consciousness and can only be characterised in terms of his beliefs." In his psychology as a moral science of action "a world must be invented in which it is possible for people to hold, store and act upon beliefs, to realise intentions, to have their actions informed by concepts, and to be able to give one another reasons for their actions, and in so doing help transform one another's mode of being in the world".

Fransella (1975) in considering the two paths that psychology has followed picks up the subject of action. She describes first what she calls "a ping-pong ball model of man" approach in contrast to the other pathway via the idea of "man in action". Man being active in the world is attributed to Kant. He explained sensory experience in terms of mental categories the use of which to sift sensory experience enables us to understand. Mangham (1978) illustrates the transcendental quality of Kant's thought with a quotation from Blumer: "I have always admired a

famous statement of Kant which really defines the character of the concept and indicates its limitations. Kant said brilliantly: "perception without conception is blind; conception without perception is empty". We therefore see through the mind's eye. We are an agent rather than an observer. To explain a piece of behaviour we need to find out what the agent intended to do, or indeed thinks he is doing. Harre (1983) succinctly makes this point when he maintains that the "grasping of paws" is a biological inheritance far removed from the many interpretations now possible when two people are seen to shake hands. Thus what we see is dependent upon our interpretation and classification. Considering man as agent allows a psychology to be built that is completely different from its experimental counter-part, the contrasts between which have been indicated already.

#### 2.4 "Man as Agent" - A possible unifying concept?

To understand the basis of this new psychology one needs to go back to Husserl, regarded as the father of phenomenology. His ideas have been set out via the analysis by O'Neill (1974) of Merleau-Ponty's essays. Husserl's philosophical endeavours were basically directed at the simultaneous solution of crises in philosophy, science and particularly the sciences of man. The sciences of man (psychology, sociology, history) and philosophy were in crisis because they tended to show that all opinion was the result of external conditions working in combination. Philosophy especially was regarded as in trouble in that if a philosopher wished to distinguish between true and false

he needed to express not merely certain natural or historical conditions external to him, but also a direct and internal contact of the mind with itself, an "intrinsic" truth which seemed impossible so long as research in the field of the human sciences showed that at each moment the mind is externally conditioned. The crisis in science and the sciences of man was that they led to an irrationalism. Reason itself appeared to be a contingent product of certain external conditions. Phenomenology, therefore, has a double purpose. It will gather together all the concrete experiences of man which are found in history, ie knowledge, life and utilization, and at the same time discover amongst these facts a spontaneous order, a meaning, an intrinsic truth, an orientation of such a kind that the different events do not appear as a mere succession. So Husserl sought a way of knowing which is neither deductive nor purely empirical. This knowledge is not to be purely conceptual in detaching itself from facts. Nevertheless it must be philosophical, or at least it must not make the existence of a philosophising subject impossible. It is essential to Husserl that our life should not be reduced exclusively to psychological events, and that in, and through, these events there should be revealed a meaning which is irreducible to those particularities. This emergence of truth in and through the psychological event is what Husserl called "the intuition of essences", a grasping of universal meanings in and through contingent experience. According to Husserl, the seeing of essences is nothing but the clarification of the sense toward which consciousness is directed. This insight rests simply on the fact that in our experience we can distinguish the fact that we are living

through something from what it is that we are living through. Insofar as the essence is to be grasped through lived experience it is concrete knowledge. But insofar as a person grasps something through experience which is more than a contingent fact, an intelligible structure that imposes itself whenever the intentional object is thought of, another kind of knowledge is gained. The person is no longer enclosed in the particularity of his individual life, but attains an insight which holds for all men. He has gone beyond his singularity, not insofar as his consciousness is merely a series of facts or events, but insofar as these events have a sense. The intuition of essences is simply a regaining of this sense which is not thematised by our spontaneous, unreflective experience. Thus phenomenological investigation is borne of a decision to place in suspense, or out of action, all the spontaneous affirmatives by which we live; not to deny them, but to understand them and make them explicit. For Husserl there is a problem when psychologists study such a consciousness: In order to study it, they have to consider it as a "thing", as an "object", and thus distort it. Husserl considered consciousness to be accessible only to intentional analysis and not mere factual observation. If psychology operates by induction it remains blind because it does not know what this induction is dealing with. This led Husserl to propose an "eidetic psychology, a reflective effort by which we clarify the fundamental notions, which psychology constantly uses, through a contact with our own experience. Empirical psychology must be preceded by eidetic psychology - thus, the definition of notions which will enable us to understand the facts of (empirical psychology) belongs to

phenomenology". Fransella (1975) has pointed out that whilst Husserl produced a method he did not produce a substantial body of knowledge. There have also been a number of criticisms of Husserl's ideas, but this is not the place to engage them. What is of significance here, is that Husserl established that since only the phenomenal world and not the noumenal world can be known, then human science has to be based upon inter-subjectivity, the means by which one person can gain understanding of the thoughts and feelings of another, the sharing of the meaning of experience.

## 2.5 A possible "peaceful co-existence" of competing views

Taylor (1985) has examined the philosophical bases of the human sciences in his search for a definitive statement about human agency. His own name for the agenda he pursues is the term "philosophical anthropology". He began his work with a polemical concern, an argument against the understanding of human life and action implicit in influential theories in the science of man. The common feature of this family being the ambition to model the study of man on the natural sciences. This difference of epistemology he considers as the fundamental cause of psychology's divisions. Basically, his objection to classical behaviourism, centralist and neurophysiological accounts of man is that they purport to apply to the whole of man when clearly they apply to only part of him. Particularly he feels they exclude the significance feature of human action. As human agents we have the capacity to formulate the significance that things have for us. In contrast the natural science-based psychologies demand

experiments based on what he calls "brute data" - data available without any personal discernment or interpretation on the part of the observer, otherwise known as data that are intersubjectively univocal or that the experiments are replicable by anyone. A second requirement is what he calls "univocal operations", ie the calculations and transformations carried out on the input data which are used to map the underlying processes are univocal. These two requirements are usually compounded by a third, namely an attraction by their adherents to physicalism, especially in American psychology, stemming largely from the consideration that a subject's introspective data are available only to him. But for Taylor this set of requirements runs up against an obvious objection in any science dealing with human emotion or action. This is that the phenomena of this domain, ie acts and feelings, are partly characterised in terms of the thoughts, images, intentions and ways of seeing of the people concerned. In short, he argues that we are agents - beings who act, have purposes and desires - and that social theory must take subjects as agents of self-definition whose practice is shaped by their understanding. Consequently, accounts of human action must make the agent more understandable - they must make sense of the agent. And so his principal objection to mechanistic, materialist approaches to man is the contention that human beings are self-interpreting animals. This means there can be no adequate description of how it is with a human being, in respect of his existence as a person, which does not incorporate his self-understanding, that is the description which he is inclined to give of his emotions, aspirations, desires, aversions, admiration, etc. What we are at any

moment is partly constituted by our self-understanding. However, in rejecting reductionist science and in asserting man as agent, it does not follow that he sides with the phenomenologists. On the contrary, he is not intent simply on understanding the person in his own terms. Certainly the understanding of man that he seeks involves being able correctly to apply the desirability characterisations which the subject applies and in the way he applies them. For him social science is interpretive. Whilst this requires a mastery of the agent's self-description, in order to identify the investigator's "explananda", it by no means requires that the scientist's "explanantia" be couched in the same language as that of the subject. Certainly the temptation to by-pass the agent's self-description is implicit in the natural science model. But his view of psychology as an interpretive science is that it must not be misconstrued as adopting the agent's point of view. This is because agents explained only in their own terms rules out an account which shows them up either as wrong, confused or deluded. So he proposes a hermeneutic model for the study of man that completely avoids ignoring self-description, and yet does not take those descriptions with ultimate seriousness so that they become what he terms "incorrigible". Interpretive science, if it is to be of use, must go beyond and sometimes challenge and negate what we think we are doing, saying, feeling and aiming at. And this it cannot do without being clear about what we think about our action and feeling. Taylor avoids ethnocentricity at this point by maintaining that we do not have to hold to the view that language for understanding an agent must be either the agent's or that of the investigator. He suggests

that it is neither, but instead a language of "perspicuous contrast". This is a language in which, we could formulate both their way of life and ours as alternative possibilities in relation to some human constants at work in both. In this way a three-level relationship for conceptions of human science is offered, embracing: (i) The natural science model; (ii) the incorrigibility thesis (the choice between ethnocentricity or using the language of the agent); (iii) the interpretive science; which prepares the way for Taylor to propound a possible rapprochement between competing views in psychology, the possibility of a "peaceful coexistence" as he calls it. In offering a critique of the natural science approach, he seeks to free the "scientific" outlook from illusory pretensions to defining the totality of our lives as agents, without attempting to reject them altogether. Similarly, there is no attempt to suggest that the interpretive viewpoint is globally right either. Interestingly, Westland (1978) whilst reviewing what he regarded as psychology's series of crises, came to the same conclusion. He pointed out that whilst there is no common conceptual basis for defining and examining psychological problems, nevertheless the validity of the various models or images of man used for psychological enquiry need not be decided upon an "all or nothing" basis, it being possible to argue for using a particular model for some purposes without insisting that man is "nothing but" whatever the model specifies. The problem as Taylor sees it is the "limitless imperialism" of the reductionist, mechanistic schools. He believes that once they accept their limits they can exist peacefully with the rest of psychology's diverse interest. His scheme involves three kinds of study, a typology which



enables a dividing line to be drawn between the two major models of science - those of behaviour and of action:

Level 1

The study of the infrastructure of our capacities, eg physiological psychology, or studies of perception of the conditions necessary in the stimulus array for a certain level of discrimination or a certain perception.

Level 2

The study of the structure of our capacities, ie our competences, eg transformational grammar of Chomsky or Piaget's stages of child development.

Level 3

The study of performance, ie actual, motivated behaviour, particular exercises of competences to a given end.

A large part of experimental psychology is taken up with level 1 studies. The classical model of science is the most appropriate one for the psycho-physical domains. The aim of these studies is to discover correlations between physically defined dimensions and certain psychic states or capacities which are unambiguously present or absent, for example between a certain state of body chemistry and feeling hungry. At level 2 are sophisticated theories which make appeal to developed formal structures, but the study of competences can be carried out also at a more empirical level, such as the correlation involved in intelligence testing. At level 3 explanation of action and feelings are sought. It is in this domain that Taylor's interpretive science is appropriate, whereas the classical model invades it at its peril, eg behaviourism being incapable of

distinguishing between a capacity and its many uses. About this typology Taylor says its point "is not to establish a boundary between the spheres of influence of the two epistemologies, but rather to account for both the powerful attraction of the classical model and the disastrous results that occur when it is used as a universal key to psychology. Correlators cannot believe that the classical model is all wrong because they are well aware of its successes in the first domain. Where they go wrong is in assuming that the whole of psychology is homogenous with this first domain, that it is simply a matter of proceeding further and adding more correlations of the same sort in order to account for fully motivated behaviour - that what one discovers in this way about the conditions for recall of a list of nonsense syllables is a step on the road to learning about language acquisition. To see the distinction between infrastructure and fully motivated behaviour is to see why the success of the model at one level is no warrant for its appropriateness at the other. If this point is allowed then coexistence in psychology is possible". As to the usefulness of such coexistence Taylor adds "that this kind of recognition of the limits of the classical model is necessary not only to create a climate of tolerance in which theories of the interpretive kind can develop; it is also necessary to liberate our imagination, without which these theories are sterile. For the myth of the omnicompetence of the classical model not only prevents us from posing the kinds of questions that only interpretive psychologies can answer, it also severely restricts the answers we can come up with when we do pose them".

## 2.6 The position of the Centre for the Study of Human Learning (CSHL)

A similar attempt at integration of psychological viewpoints, though significantly different in one respect from that Taylor's, has been made at the Centre for the Study of Human Learning at Brunel University. Their typology uses conversation as the classificatory mechanism, and through it arise both a relational system for considering the approaches that have been made towards man as well as a model for understanding the concurrent meaning attribution of conversants. The work of the CSHL has been varied whilst maintaining human learning in its natural setting as its central concern. It is not the intention here to review the Centre's achievements, but instead to extract that part of its work that has relevance to the work reported here, namely the establishment of a new paradigm for conversational research in human learning. This methodology emerged in the late '60's and was firmly established during a series of studies sponsored by the SSRC about: (i) How to help young adults to improve their ability to learn by reading; and (ii) how to investigate and measure their consequent ability to organise their own learning and which was reported by Thomas and Augstein (1976). Since that work this approach to understanding the nature of man, in the context of learning, has been expounded variously by the Centre, but notably in Augstein and Thomas (1975), Harri-Augstein (1976), Harri-Augstein (1977), Thomas (1977), Augstein and Thomas (1979), Thomas (1983)<sup>a</sup>, Thomas (1983)<sup>b</sup>, Thomas and Augstein (1984) and culminating in Thomas and Augstein (1985) in which the foundations for a

conversational science for psychology are laid. In this last work they seek to rehabilitate the concept of learning - to give it life - and put it back at the centre of human action and thought. In so doing they seek to redefine learning in terms of the way we elaborate structures of meaning and to offer tools to aid that elaboration.

As Taylor inveighed against the natural science paradigm, Thomas and Augstein align Skinner and Mager with trainer-organised approaches to learning. They see the client-centred approach of Rogers as nearer the spirit of their work, but yet want to go further than he does, in suggesting that he still falls short of addressing the learner directly. Roger's belief that people must understand themselves is regarded as insufficient. Their conversational paradigm maintains that no-one can know themselves unaided, a point supported strongly by Vaysse (1980) when reporting the work of Gurdjieff. For Thomas and Augstein the potential of the person cannot be realised by the facilitation of a non-directive counsellor. The process for them whereby a human being enhances his capacities and viability in the world is conversational. And by this it is implied that "whilst meaning is stored, each participant remains free to accept, reject and/or reconstruct the shared meanings .... thus, the "conversational science" paradigm recognises that each person is a separate node of personal meaning; but that people can communicate and therefore influence each other. Such influence is not one of direct "cause and effect" since each person has the potential for self-organisation. A conversational technology accepts people as full participants using their unique position as observer of their own experience".

This is made clear when considering how "conversation" is defined. Conversation is not "chit-chat", the empty exchange of sentences, phrases and words. The first level of conversation is factual or ritualistic, eg helping someone memorise a list. Here the purposes are short-term and no permanent change in a person's meaning system is achieved. The next level of conversation is instructional or informational. At this level the person acquires an ability and large amounts of information are often involved. The third level of conversation is explanatory in which models, systems or interpretive frameworks are conveyed. These enable activity to take place outside of the content of the original conversation as they are designed for helping with interaction with the world by provision of tools that have applicability across a range of situations. The fourth and fifth levels of conversation are constructional and creative, respectively, through which the boundaries of previous levels are transcended. At these levels profound effects on the individual occur, and represent truly personal learning. At the lower levels learning is regarded as impersonal, often consisting of fragments acquired in isolation.

Conversation is regarded as consisting of both content and process. Both of these are "controlled" by either the investigator or the subject, in the sense of it being "steering, encouraging, guiding and enabling" the conversation. As the "control" is shared by participant and researcher the conversation is symmetrical, whereas in asymmetric conversations each participant has separate and distinct roles which remain fixed. Reference to these concepts provides a means of contrasting approaches to the

study of man. Using the distinctions of content and process and whether or not conversations are symmetrically or asymmetrically controlled, it can be seen that there is a progression in psychological investigations from: (i) Natural science - based approaches where the investigator controls (in the traditional, asymmetrical sense) the elicitation of content by use of a process model which defines and limits it; to (ii) person-centred approaches where models are used to mirror process such that content is elicited from any domain relevant to the subject's needs. Here the investigator considers that only the person's explanations of himself are valid, but it is not always clear as to the origins of the theoretical frameworks or explanatory systems used for the construction of such explanations; to (iii) the conversational paradigm in which both investigator and subject can be aware of and can control both content and process of their verbal interaction; from which it follows that the last seems to have greater facility for explaining the others than they have for explaining it. From this it is clear that the conversational foundations from Thomas and Augstein provide a means of elaborating and sharpening the distinctions to be made in the interpretive sector of Taylor's model so that the adoption of a psychological viewpoint for understanding man is made easier.

This research has been about the actions that people take in natural settings. In the study of these it has been accepted that there is a need for an interpretive stance, as Taylor would have it, or a conversational involvement as referred to by Thomas and Augstein.

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## CHAPTER 3

### PROMOTING LEARNING AT WORK

#### 3.1 Types of learning and their definition

This chapter does not comprehensively review theories of learning. Its purpose is to set out the salient features of the view of learning that has been especially influential in the work reported here. In this respect, it is interesting to consider that Hill (1972) has pointed out that if one were to attempt a definition of learning it is unlikely that it would be equally pleasing to all psychologists. However, in describing phenomena to which the term either is or is not applied, she points towards a grasping of its nature. For her, "in psychological usage, what is learned need not be "corrective" or adaptive (we learn bad habits as well as good), need not be conscious or deliberate (one of the advantages of coaching in a skill is that it makes us aware of mistakes we have unconsciously learned to make), and need not involve any overt act (attitudes and emotions can be learned as well as knowledge and skills). Reactions as diverse as driving a car, remembering a pleasant vacation, believing in democracy, and disliking one's boss all represent the results of learning".

Hilgard and Bower (1966) thoroughly reviewed the subject of learning and define it as "the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation, provided that the characteristics of the change in activity cannot be explained on the basis of

native response tendencies, maturation or temporary states of the organism, eg fatigue and drugs, etc". Stammers and Patrik (1975) regard this as an operational definition and consider that it would meet with little disagreement. Borger and Searborne (1970) describe some of the important areas of learning theory beginning with stimulus-response theories, cognitive theories with their emphasis on goal-directed behaviour, and finally to theories that embrace the physiology of the organism and behaviour itself, which indicates neatly the range of perspectives in this field. Merrill, Kelety and Wilson (1981) indicate a changing emphasis in views on learning by considering it more appropriate to regard learning in terms of specific information processing components such as encoding, storage and retrieval mechanisms, representational structures and meta-cognitive components, and that these views have overthrown the traditional learning theories as being overly simplistic and unable to account for cognitive behaviour. Hill (1972) speculated about an ideal learning theory that may arise in the future. Such a theory would be formally expressed so as to make it precise in its predictions, but capable of undergoing modification without altering its basic structure. It would cover "the whole range of learning phenomena in animals and men and the whole range of independent variables that affect learning; yet it would cover all this range with a small number of postulates". She adds ruefully: "It is easy to see why most psychologists consider such a theory far into the future". This ideal theory would have to encompass symbolic learning, insightful problem-solving, and make allowance for the flexibility of behaviour. It would have to deal with simple conditioning,



with rote memorisation, with skills that we can display without really knowing how we do them, and with habits. In addition to all these forms of behaviour the theory must also say something about the conditions under which each of them will occur. There is also the developmental process, as well as the detailed stimulus situation, to be taken into account. Finally, the ideal theory would have to deal with motivation and reinforcement. In looking for a candidate to meet these criteria Hill finds fault with all the approaches currently pursued (connectionist, cognitive, combinations of these two, or the feedback model).

It seems reasonable to suppose that a universal theory is unlikely to be found. A useful approach might be the adoption of a framework similar to that proposed by Taylor (1985) for psychological theorising. This would employ many theories to explain learned behaviour. They would be arranged hierarchically, dealing first with functioning at the physiological level and concluding with the intentions and related actions of the total organism. Perhaps, for the time being, the way forward is to align with Kelly (1970) and decline to separate learning from man's construing. In this way one can put aside concepts such as needs, drives and motivation and concentrate on man as a generator of meaning as the central consideration in understanding learning.

Jahoda and Thomas (1964) looked closely at how learning is defined. For them learning embraces both process and outcome. It is necessarily an inference and one needs to look at the origins of such inference if one is to understand learning clearly. This leads them to posit three types of learning, or as they point out "to be more precise,

three sets of conditions within which the inference that learning has occurred can be made." The first of these is learning that occurs in the classical teaching situation or in the classical learning experiment of the psychology laboratory. This type (A) of learning means changing in specific ways defined by the teacher or experimenter. The second type (B) of learning can be defined as an inference made by the learner about the degree of success achieved in pursuing self-defined directions of change. But these authors felt that a third type (C) of learning had to be considered for a complete definition to be made. They say "observation, retrospection and discussion about the process that goes on when people report that they have been learning does not seem, in practice, often to fit Type A or Type B definitions. Few people are happy in the long run to align their whole development only on objectives and criteria laid down by institutions, teachers and other people who attempt to influence their behaviour. On the other hand, very few of us can honestly report experiences of having set out a clearly defined learning objective and having pursued it unerringly until it was successfully achieved". This third type of learning is defined as an inference made retrospectively by a learner about the degree of change that has occurred in directions that only became clear to him during or after the activity. This leads them to an interesting observation, namely, "that this type of learning is more difficult to define in practice and much more difficult to measure since the basis for measurement cannot be decided until after the event and, therefore, any strict "before and after" comparisons are impossible".

This aspect of personally-defined directions of change is emphasised by Thomas and Augstein (1984) when they define learning as "the construction, negotiation and exchange of personally relevant and viable meanings" and set it in the context of notions about the self-organisation of learning as part of a conversational science for the study of man. This very much embraces Kelly's view of learning and aligns strongly with Rogers (1969) with his emphasis on self-direction and personal meaning. It is interesting also to note from the world of management training that Revans (1982) pursues personal meaning as critical in learning by regarding "the central process (in a manager's development) as learning about oneself .... and detecting new relationships between familiar thoughts and what was previously seen as unrelated". This way of looking at learning is elegantly captured by Larsson (1983) when he describes the view of learning adopted by a research group at the University of Goteberg. He says: "When members of the group give learning the meaning "qualitative changes of the conception of the world around us", they have brought a new perspective to learning. Traditionally, learning has been described as quantitative changes. By making test subjects learn nonsense syllables, researchers have described changes in retention through time, and have in that way been able to demonstrate regularities, eg in the form of curves of retention. Our research group has demonstrated that this way of describing learning in terms of quantitative changes does not apply to the learning of meaningful material. Indeed, it applies to one case only, ie the learning of nonsense syllables. It is pointless to describe retention of the content of an article by curves of

retention. If one is able to remember what the article is about, it is not a matter of repetition, but depends upon an understanding of the message and the integration of this message into the person's conception of the world. For this reason it can be concluded that learning of meaningful material can best be described as a change in the conception of a phenomenon and that such change is qualitative".

In summary, it can be seen that learning is characterised by reference to: (i) Change; (ii) inferences drawn from different perspectives; (iii) both behaviour and experience, both process and outcome; (iv) being intimately connected with meaning; (v) it being difficult to dissociate it from the other, psychological processes of a human being; (vi) it being aided when the learner is active and seeking to understand patterns or relationships between phenomena; (vii) time and the complexity of the task and the variety of responses that they elicit.

### 3.2 Learning and training

The previous section proposed a way of considering learning. This section deals with what is involved in helping learning to come about. Traditionally, in commercial organisations, these activities have been subsumed under the label "training", and lately "training and development". In the terms of the systematic approach to training it is usually defined as a cycle of activity embracing: (i) The identification of needs; (ii) design of training events; (iii) implementation; and (iv) evaluation of outcomes. Schein (1970) has offered the view that training could be conceived broadly as an aid to: (i)

Orienting and indoctrinating a new employee; (ii) teaching him the specific skills, knowledge and attitudes he will need to perform the job; and (iii) providing opportunities for education and self-development which will make it possible for the employee to rise successfully within the organisation. The Department of Employment's Glossary of Terms (1972) reinforces the emphasis on knowledge, skill and attitude and defines training as: "The systematic development of the attitude/knowledge/skill behaviour pattern required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given task or job. This is often integrated or associated with further education. The use of learning experience to integrate the concept of training and education is increasingly common". Hesseling (1971) considered training as "a sequence of experiences or opportunities designed to modify behaviour in order to attain a stated objective." Oatey (1970) defined it as "any activity which deliberately attempts to improve a person's skill at a task". Both of which seem also to include education and development. Hamblin (1974), in contrast, defines training as "any activity which deliberately attempts to improve a person's skill in a job (as opposed to education which is mainly concerned with personal development as opposed to direct job relevance)."

It might seem useful at this stage to separate out definitions of "education", "training" and "development". However, the definition of the work of promoting learning within the institution used in this research is that "training" is any organised attempt to help people learn to do that which is expected of them. This puts aside as

unnecessary distinctions between types of activity by relation to a classification of their outcomes.

Pratt (1976) has pointed out that, regardless of the ideological position of those responsible for learning design, education, training and development all involve identifying goals and determining the communication with the learner deemed to be necessary for their accomplishment. Thomas (1985), in fact, assigns job roles for illustrating the range of communication format or style, namely: "teachers, trainers, therapists, tutors, counsellors, coaches, custodians and consultants".

In commercial institutions the style of communication with learners is that of providing courses of one sort or another. Cole (1981) surveyed training in 11 major companies and found that whilst a variety of methods were used most were contained within the training course format. Cooper et al (1977) surveyed the literature on the evaluation of management education and used the following nine categories for constructing their bibliography: lecture; programmed learning; role playing; case method; gaming method; project method; experiential learning (including T-groups and social skills training of all kinds); general management development; organisation development; further indicating the emphasis given to courses. By far the most ambitious collection of methods for management training is that of Huczynski (1983). In the typology that emerges from his listing of methods the predominant mode of working with learners is the organised event where people gather off-the-job with a "trainer". In what follows, the emphasis is on professional-client communication and where there is reference to training it is

meant to include related activities such as education and development.

### 3.3 The need for congruence of trainer activity and the trainer's assumptions about the learner

In view of the huge investment in training courses, it seems pertinent to look at the conditions regarded as necessary to their success, and to ask whether or not they are the most appropriate way of communicating with people for the purpose of change. A fundamental consideration would seem to be whether or not there is a positive correlation between the assumptions the trainer has about the learner and the inferences that can be drawn from these about the behaviour that trainers should engage in expressly for the purpose of influencing the learner. If there is a failure at this level the training course venture would seem to be irrelevant, even if the evaluatory yardstick does not extend beyond the time lapse of the course. However, there seems to be a dearth of contributions on this subject in the literature. Revans (1982) makes the claim that: "It is a major weakness of much management training that it is not explicitly based upon any known theory of learning. Yet the four cardinal conditions of successful learning are (or can be) fully satisfied by an action learning programme. These are: (i) That the subjects are motivated to learn of their own volition and not solely at the will of others; (ii) that they may identify themselves with others who may not only share their needs but who are also able to supply or satisfy some of those needs; (iii) that they can try out any (supposedly) new knowledge (learning) in action of their own

design; and (iv) that, within a reasonable lapse of time, they can obtain first-hand knowledge of the results of these trials." Burgoyne and Stuart (1977) looked at what it is about management development programmes that determines what learning people take away from them. They argued that the manifest characteristics which constitute management programmes enact some kind of implicit or explicit learning theory, and the extent to which the programmes are successful is determined by whether or not the learning theory is appropriate to the objectives being pursued. In their research and from their review of the literature on learning theory, they isolated what they called eight "schools of thought" about learning theory: Conditioning; trait modification; information transfer; cybernetic; cognitive, experiential; social influence; pragmatic. They were able to couple these variously with different types of learning outcome, though not conclusively, and from this urge that perhaps an important outcome of their study will be a greater realisation and acceptance that there are indeed "horses for courses", and that the goals of a management development programme will determine the appropriateness of the programme's educational strategies. However, they are mindful of the difficulties with this kind of research, namely that there are more variables involved than learning theory and learning outcome. Accordingly, their conclusions about which learning theories are appropriate to the different kinds of learning goal are offered as hypotheses. Interestingly, their approach is congruent with the view expressed in the preceding section, namely, that learning ought to be looked at hierarchically with the available theories of learning being arranged at



different levels according to the model of the learner employed. In a clinical setting Kelly (1958) made the point that the therapist's assumptions about the patient determines the form of treatment to be applied. But it is not the intention of this section to explore in detail the relationship between learning theory espoused and its consequences when enacted, but instead to draw attention to this as a crucial factor in determining success of training events. Generally speaking, there seems little explication by trainers of what underpins the methods they use, which seems to be a serious weakness when it comes to considering the utility of training courses for assisting the learning process. Summers (1982), in drawing attention to the need to include epistemology in the training of science teachers makes a valid point for training, namely, that it should be central to the practice of any profession that its members are able to justify what they do and how they do it.

#### 3.4 Internal and external perspectives on training course effectiveness

Training courses can be examined as to their effectiveness from both internal and external viewpoints; from the immediate response of the trainee through to identifying longer term changes in behaviour and/or performance. Effectiveness gauged internally is to do with the kind and extent of response elicited from participants during the event itself, and without reference to whether or not there will be an application of the learning after the course. In this respect the distinction made by Monaghan (1985) between natural and deliberate learning is useful.

For her natural learning is that occurring without institutional instruction, sometimes without awareness or conscious effort. Deliberate learning, in contrast, is that occurring through organised intervention, teaching methodology, the refinement of cognitive skills, and directed achievement. The latter equates with Type A learning of Jahoda and Thomas (1964) and clearly there is the possibility of it being misplaced insofar as the learner's circumstances and preferences are concerned. The split is supported by French (1981) who describes natural learning as the process whereby an individual grows up with a unique view of the world and one which recognises that he has an in-born capacity to extend and develop himself throughout his lifetime. Moreover, he adds that in contrast with this, many, perhaps most, adults believe that learning is principally an affair of the mind and that most things to be learnt must be taught. Kelman (1958) captures both this dividing of learning into two kinds and the willingness of adults to participate in the offerings of trainers when he describes the response of learners to organised learning opportunities as being within a sequence of three phases: Compliance; identification; and internalisation. If responses during training courses are restricted to the compliance, and to some extent, the identification phases, then the probability of the learning being artificial and impermanent, with consequent low training effectiveness when viewed from the perspective of the workplace, is high. Most evaluation by trainers appears to be internal, at the level often of assessing trainees' reactions to training courses. But the ultimate test of effectiveness is whether or not there is application of learning at the workplace. The

utility of the event is determined by the degree of acceptance of its output within the context that inspired it. The conditions underpinning success of training courses can thus be considered by reference to: (i) Their relevance as viewed from a variety of perspectives; and (ii) the trainee's response expected by the training system.

### 3.5 General considerations in judging the relevance of the training course design

The first consideration in looking at relevance is whether or not the actual method is regarded as appropriate to the learning task. Carroll et al (1972) looked at the appropriateness of programmed instruction, sensitivity training, computer games, television lectures and conventional lectures with questions, role playing, discussion, films and case studies for particular objectives. They had difficulty in coming to conclusions from the published research and decided to focus on expert opinion of practitioners in the training field. The training objectives used in the study were: Acquire knowledge; change in attitudes; participant acceptance; retention of what is learned; development of interpersonal skills; development of problem-solving skills. The rank order of effectiveness of methods for these objectives varied enormously across the range of objectives. Consequently, a proper discrimination in the evaluation of the alternative methods would seem to be a necessary factor in successful training. However, such choices do not appear easy. Pearn (1970) describes a training design algorithm for choosing the most efficient methods. The

recommendations it makes are for the most part based upon specific research findings, but despite this it is, "at best, a general guide only". A similar view is expressed by Belbin (1975).

The notion of transfer of learning has long been established in relation to judging the relevance of a learning event. Binsted et al (1980) define transfer as "how learning is used to modify action in the context of the manager's role". Stiefel (1974), also in the realm of management training, felt that positive transfer of learning was most crucial to its success. He identified five barriers to the transfer process: Innovation-resisting organisation climate; role expectations of work environment (peers, subordinates, superior); dissimilarity between learning and job environments; incongruence between learning intensity and behavioural intensity on the job; lack of possibilities to apply new learning. Temporal (1979) is also concerned with blocks to learning but considers these to reside within the individual as well as within the climate in which the individual works. Huczynski and Lewis (1980) looked at the transfer from two management technique courses. The characteristics they found that assisted transfer were: Delegates attending on their own initiative; believing prior to the course that it would be beneficial; discussion with one's boss prior to attending the course; preparedness of the superior to listen to new ideas and to allow experimentation with them. The attitude and style of the boss were the most important factors in management training transfer. Vandeput (1973) studied 62 managers and looked at environmental influences on transfer. The greatest concern to managers were personal relationships. Groups are

more often perceived as inhibitors than individuals. Superiors are clearly perceived as more inhibiting than subordinates or peers. Whilst the most frequently occurring inhibitor is perceived lack of influence of the trainee. Berger (1977) studied the conditions that facilitate learning when 51 managers, from a variety of organisations, of varying age and job functions, attended either a leadership, general management or selling management course. The research highlighted the importance of the participant's motivation to learn and the organisational context within which learning is to be implemented. The interface between the worlds of learning and work must be managed if transfer of learning is to be optimised. Such management would be directed at meeting the following pre-conditions of learning: (i) The learner should be clear about his needs and have specific learning goals; (ii) the training programme selected should be geared towards these needs/goals; (iii) the learner must have the autonomy to change the way in which he performs his job. These findings support those of Fleishman (1953) whose work on leadership with first-line supervisors showed that the effects of the training were intimately linked to the culture of the departments from which the men came. These cultures had as much effect on the trainees as did the training. Consequently, the training was effective, in terms of its own goals, only in those departments in which the culture from the outset supported the training goals. Similarly, how errors are made when attempting to match training programmes with needs are elaborated by Harley and Koff (1980). Mismatch arises when: Training is applied regularly because it is believed that this will keep-up morale and

will reinforce the idea that training is a worthwhile activity; unrealistic expectations are held about what a particular training course will achieve; use is made of courses that deal with too wide a range of subjects; training is sought because it is dealing with what is currently fashionable; the training programme is believed to be good because it's expensive or because of the reputation of the provider. The relationship between culture of the organisation and the kind of activity and outcomes of a training programme has been looked at by Burgoyne (1981) . For him management development should ensure that "the emerging conclusions from both the individual and the organisational process are put together and talked through such that: (i) Both the organisational and individual stream of thought can adapt to each other by realistically taking into account the constraints and opportunities that each is likely to constitute for the other; and (ii) specific placement decisions can be made in a way that maximises the chance that it will be organisationally effective and individually fulfilling." To which he adds later that "locating management development activities in relation to the predominant culture (of the organisation) is a key strategic choice for those concerned with management development." Stuart (1976) has proposed the idea of a "contractual triangle" involving the manager, the educational institution and the manager's employing organisation. The intention is to produce "compatible contracts" which make expectations of the development process explicit and confront the areas where conflict becomes apparent. Elliott and Knibbs (1982) see some difficulties, however, in that providers are often faced

with delegates who have a variety of reasons for attending a programme. They support the idea of making explicit the expectations of the three parties, but feel that in practice movement towards compatible contracts is likely to be small. Randall (1985) has shown, however, that it is possible, in an environment that encourages self-organised learning, to develop relationships between manager, subordinates and learning opportunities and resources such that the context for effective learning is created.

### 3.6 Correlating the trainee's response expected by the training course with that demanded by the workplace

Relevance of training courses can also be considered specifically from the point of view of the relationship between what it is actually like when working and what trainers believe to be an appropriate understanding of the work for which their courses are designed. Binsted and Stuart (1979) draw attention to the many expressions of trainees that indicate that somehow managerial learning events are not linked to the "real" world in which they operate. Mant (1970) asserts that "most of the management theory offered to experienced managers is offered according to no theory of management learning whatsoever, and the kind of things which actually do bring about changes in an experienced manager's performance are diverse and unpredictable". Later Mant (1976) contrasts the assumption that to a large extent management is an ordered and logical activity with the growing realisation that in practice it tends to be characterised by variety, discontinuity and brevity. He adds "that managers work rather through

informal power networks than through the elaborate organisational structures they inhabit. Decision-making, one of the main planks of the "management science" movement, tends to be done by the seat of the pants, but rarely in an orderly "scientific" fashion. What the manager has to be able to do, therefore, is to keep track of the shifting and unpredictable world in which he works and to keep his bearings at the same time". More recently, Peters and Waterman (1982) maintain that "perhaps the most important failing of the narrow view of rationality is not that it is wrong per se, but that it has led to a dramatic imbalance in the way we think about managing". Brown (1979) and Taggart and Robey (1981) would argue that ultimately the explanation for such distinctions about managerial and organisational behaviour reside in neurological understanding of the brain. Graves (1976) adds a further distinction by insisting that in making provision for the learning of managers there must be a clear separation of what the manager actually does, what he says he does, and what others maintain he ought to do. He recommends to educational designers that effective management training must deal with what the manager really does. Stewart and Marshall (1982) go further and insist that what managers believe about managing is likely to influence their reception of management training. Therefore, management teachers need to try and understand how managers think about managing. The beliefs expressed by their sample of 86 managers suggest that they are unlikely to be receptive to management training, especially in the behavioural subjects. This raises questions about whether or not management training can ever be effective, and perhaps explains the



finding of Burgoyne and Stuart (1976) that managers consider that doing the job is the principal source of their learning. Similarly, Margerison (1980), when asking chief executives about what major influences had helped them develop, found that special "off the job" training came last in their list of 18 factors. Training practices in large UK companies were surveyed by Hussey (1983) and most of the respondents "could give no idea at all of the penetration of management training" and gave the impression that many managers were resistant to it.

### 3.7 The role of the trainee in organised learning

The appropriateness of a training course can also be considered by reference to what it expects of the participants. As a precursor to this one needs to begin with what effect their early educational experience might have on their use of subsequent training initiatives. Stewart (1977) reminds us that an adult learning is not the same as a child learning. Whilst it is tempting to treat adults as an older version of a classroom full of children, learning for the former is often a painful process involving an implicit admission that what was being done before was wrong. The experience of school has a very great influence on a person's attitude to learning. Handy (1984) describes the education sector as a "disabling system". For him the "British educational system today probably harms more people than it helps. That is not intentional. The teaching profession is, on the whole, both diligent and dedicated. It is the fault of the system, designed at other times for other purposes, but now disabling rather than enabling the

many who pass through it." This failure is described by reference to good intentions which have had unintended consequences. These are that: (i) Education became to be seen as an alternative to work, "for civilisation rather than for industry"; (ii) university criteria being applied to all rather than those who want to go to university; (iii) marks being norm-referenced so that no matter how well people do, a certain percentage is bound to fail; (iv) the primacy of knowledge and analysis are reinforced by employers who have no other system for selection; (v) teachers joining the profession direct from education without work experience thus further reinforcing the view that education is apart from work. But he feels that the most damning indictment of all is that "organisationally, the secondary school, is not organised around the pupil as work, but around the pupil as product". In other words, the pupils move around as if on a conveyor belt being attended to by various operatives (the teachers).

A striking example of the encouragement of passivity in schools is given by Revans (1982). He looked at classroom lessons in ten secondary modern schools to see if meaningful records of them could be obtained. The data were collected by filming at three second intervals. Over a million snapshots were obtained. Whilst this presented a problem of taxonomy, seven criteria were selected for classification. Five of these were looked at in more detail in a sample of 200 minutes of classroom work in eight different schools. These were: (i) listening to the teacher, or appearing to do so; (ii) referring to or reading from a document; (iii) writing; (iv) not attending to what is going on; (v) asking or answering a question; and the percentage of the 200

minutes spent on each of these was calculated. The proportion of time spent on items (iv) and (v) were about the same, and this amount was considerably below the proportions spent on each of the other three. In contrast to all of this there are signs of dissatisfaction and a desire for change.

Berman and Roderick (1973) want the curriculum to put the person at the centre of what is learned. For them, "curriculum has long been thought of as that which is taught to someone else. Persons act as though what is a fact one day is a fact another, as though all persons perceive phenomena in the same way, as though the world is static rather than dynamic." Pope (1983) argues strongly for getting away from a passive, receiving-receptacle approach to teaching in education, considering that too often students' viewpoints or conceptions of the world are ignored. In particular, she says that a "cultural transmission approach has dominated Western education and that teachers of this persuasion would see the primary task of the educator as the transmission of information, rules or values which form the "truths" of one's cultural heritage. In the extreme, their philosophical approach is that absolute truth can be accumulated bit by bit, subject by subject, and their epistemological position is that of the realist who views "true knowledge" as knowledge that corresponds to the world as it is and that this knowledge is, therefore, independent of the subjective constructions of the learner." Consequently, teaching methods based upon this "cultural transmission" approach emphasise the student role as a passive receiver of information rather than an active participant. An important implication of which is

that this influence affects not only trainees on training courses but also the trainers as well. Pope goes on to say that whilst emphasis on the person as a meaning-maker is now a dominant theme in educational theorising, in practice the phenomenological world of the learner is often neglected. Posner (1981) also feels that there should be interest in the student's preconceptions, purposes, values and conceptions of past experiences. These things are resistant to change. There is the danger that students may "compartmentalise" their knowledge, claiming that a problem is merely a physics (for example) problem and therefore having nothing to do with the "real world" - which puts the transfer of learning problem into a different perspective!

### 3.8 The movement to greater emphasis on the individual and self-help

But in a variety of places there are examples of movement to a greater emphasis on the individual. Self-paced instruction or the Personalised System of Instruction (Keller Plan) has been described by Vaughan (1982) in the field of chemistry and by Brook and Thomson (1982) in the field of statistics. Kanellopoulou (1982) has developed a new method of teaching secondary mathematics in Greece, called "guided dialectic self-teaching". Whilst studying modern teaching methods she realised that: (i) Every single method (expository, discovery, programmed, learning by doing) has its own "pros and cons"; (ii) that text books using only one method cause saturation and monotony; and (iii) that hitherto no text-books ever included dialectic work - those dialogues conducted with a class during the

development of a new topic. Dixon and Taylor (1979) have used the project method as part of an undergraduate management studies course. The intentions were to improve the quality of subject learning and give experience of learning independently so that learning might continue after formal education is finished. In support of these aims they cite the following advantages of project working: The student/teacher relationship and the topic-based project offer great opportunities to plan a programme that meets the needs and the ability of the student; this movement towards joint planning develops a marked attitude in the student for sharing the responsibility for planning his education; the teaching flexibility is similar to that in a one-to-one tutorial; the one-to-one situation provides the greatest opportunity for the student to question and challenge - thus creating the optimum teaching/learning environment; the experience develops higher order education objectives, eg thinking for oneself, resourcefulness, initiative, the creating process, etc. Boud (1981) has brought together a series of contributors from different disciplines in tertiary education to show how attempts have been made to produce autonomous students, ie students who can learn without the constant presence or intervention of a teacher. The methods covered range over: (i) The use of learning contracts; (ii) students working in pairs to facilitate each other's learning; (iii) courses on which students, working on their own and in groups, initiate projects and put them into practice; (iv) peer support systems in which newly arrived students can get help with problems of personal and academic adjustment from experienced students; and (v) collaborative assessment in which staff and students

cooperate in establishing and using criteria for student assessment.

But the move to individualised, independent learning is particularly prevalent in management training and development. Pedler (1982) goes so far as to say that there is a growing recognition that formal, institutional and expert-based management development will not contribute much to the resolution of the major problems facing British industrial society, namely, the rapid and demoralising decline of the manufacturing sector and the fact that those who are in employment are not working to anything like their full and creative capacity. Moreover, he maintains that current understanding of the manager's world suggests that there is little in it that can be taught directly, ie by formal classroom processes.

Burgoyne et al (1980) have highlighted the reasons for the movement to self-help as being: (i) Dissatisfaction with organised forms of training; (ii) cost-effectiveness of self-help; (iii) its flexibility to the needs of individuals and organisations; (iv) the trend in society for individuals to be more self-directing, questioning, individualistic, etc. Boldero (1981) and Cunningham (1981) have described self-managed learning for managers at the Anglian Regional Management Centre and the development of independent study at the North East London Polytechnic, respectively. Pedler et al (1978) believing in the need for and value of increasing the manager's capacity and willingness to take control over and responsibility for events, and particularly for himself and his own learning, have set out in their guide an invitation to managers to work on their own personal development.

### 3.9 Action learning as a major manifestation of this trend

Perhaps the most comprehensive and sustained attack on the traditional business and management school approach to management education has come from Revans (1982). He believes that if one is to know about management one must go and study it taking place. The "university must therefore be able to study how industry is, in fact, administered and with what results. This is where the trouble begins. For while at the university there is as much access as anywhere else, and while it can even build its own laboratories and workshops to conduct its own experiments and make and test its own machines, it cannot run its own industries for the benefit and instruction of its students in the department of administration. The only contact it has with the realities of industry is in the coal-mines or the factories in industry; it is in these that the studies of administration must be carried out. Thus the first practical step that needs to be taken if the universities are to make any valid contribution to industrial management is for them to carry out research into the practices of management and the consequences that result from them".

In pursuing his idea that the workplace and the personal experience and values of the manager are the starting points for helping managers become better managers, he poses some intriguing questions to the providers of university education. He says: "In conducting the undergraduate through a syllabus based on an external and detached view of these subjects (eg, economics, psychology), can something more personal be done for the older and

already experienced manager? Can we present to him, not merely a critical analysis of, say, the principles of economics, but also an intelligible interpretation of his own economic experience? Can we usefully discuss with him, not only the leading cases before the Industrial Court, but also his personal experiences of the shop stewards at his factory? Can we talk about leadership, not merely in terms of Moses or Alexander the Great, but also in terms of his current difficulties with his own department heads? For in describing to such a manager the latest techniques of, say, standard costing and budgetary control, we are merely showing him new forms of applied arithmetic .... by a patient application to the syllabus .... he may acquire an encyclopedic grasp of verbal or numerical material, without becoming more adjusted to his personal task; the ability to compose eloquent sermons is no guarantee of a virtuous life and universities in particular often assume that the intellect is a sufficient expression of the personality".

But in offering such criticisms, Revans also offers an alternative: Action learning. For him this is "a means of development, intellectual, emotional or physical, that requires its subject, through responsible involvement in some real, complex and stressful problem, to achieve intended change sufficient to improve his observable behaviour henceforth in the problem field. "Learning by doing" maybe, perhaps, a simpler description of this process, although action learning programmes assume a design and organisation unnecessary in the everyday actions that supply the learning of young animals and of small children. In most of the action learning programmes developed by the writer, subjects learn with and from each other by mutual



support, advice and criticism during their attacks on real problems, intendedly to be solved in whole or in part. The learning achieved is not so much an acquaintance with new factual knowledge or technical art conveyed by some authority such as an expert or teacher (although such fresh acquaintance is not ruled out), as it is the more appropriate use, by reinterpretation, of the subject's existing knowledge, including his recollection of past, lived experiences. The reinterpretation is a social process, carried on among two or more learners, who by the apparent incongruity of their exchanges, frequently cause each other to examine afresh many ideas that they would otherwise have continued to take for granted, however false or misconceived. Action learning particularly obliges subjects to become aware of their own value systems, by demanding that the real problems tackled carry some risk of personal failure, so that the subjects can truly help each other to evaluate in what they may genuinely believe. Action learning demands real-time and hence observable activity on the subjects' parts, and thus tests whether the subjects are committed to what they can, in other conditions, merely asseverate. This may well be done by followers of the case study, business game or other simulation, but it is impossible in the "we-have-now" of operational reality. Action learning therefore leads the subjects to undeceive themselves in ways denied to the seminar; since it also bears keen witness to the quality of its organisers it will never become the common practice of the business schools."

It is to be noted that the definition does not attempt to specify any particular programme, by level, economic or

social factor, range or duration. But this method has been called one in which the blind lead the blind. Revans counters with "action learning does not contrive that the blind lead the blind, but that the blindfold shall help the blindfold to strip away the veils and bandages of custom and practice". With this in mind he illustrates how people, mutually acceptable to each other, can be of great mutual assistance - and sounds a warning for the would-be intervener: "Ordinary persons do not cast off their blinkers if they are unaware of them, or unless they are obliged to; nobody seeks a new view of the world so long as he does not suffer by retaining the familiar. Managers will therefore join action learning programmes for the first time only after all else has failed and their needs to act are still desperate; an impending concentration of the mind is a condition well-disposing to action learning. Another is that managers, especially if in high positions, genuinely only respect other managers who seem to have been successful. So complex is the world of management that non-managers cannot understand it in what they take as the rational terms of an objectively communicable vocabulary; what real managers may exchange as helpful between themselves is thus largely unintelligible to those who do not know subjective responsibility. Experts and teachers whose understanding, however brilliant, is confined to their conscious intellects suffer crippling disadvantages in trying to interpret the ultimate anxieties of practical men; the confidence needed to deal with these is best acquired from their colleagues in an action learning mode."

Action learning is a longstanding attempt to deal expressly with the learning process of managers, seeking to

make people realise how change comes about. It contains a management philosophy and is often regarded as central to management development. Of late it has been used for organisation development purposes. These things seem to obscure, however, that its central aspect is a recognition and elaboration of the way people learn. It does not seek to do away with formalised learning of the classroom (although its originator is scathing of business schools and experts). Because it accepts totally that, despite the efforts of teachers, the learner, comprehending what he can, seeing what he can see, being interested in what interests him, takes from the learning event what he wants, what is important to him, it is closest of all the approaches to the author's ideology about the methods that can be used to enrich the development of personal meaning.

### 3.10 Summarising the movement to more effective teacher-learner dialogue

A summary of the movement to self-direction of learning as an important factor in successful learning is contained, in effect, in the working assumptions offered by Boud (1981) for the pursuit of autonomous learning in higher education. These assumptions are:

"(1) Autonomous learning is not an absolute standard to be met but a goal to be pursued; what is important is the direction - towards student responsibility for learning - not the magnitude of the change in any given situation.

(2) The goal of developing student autonomy needs to be as actively pursued and as clearly stated as any other; it is

unlikely to be effectively pursued if it remains unarticulated in particular courses.

(3) Autonomy in learning does not mean that students work on their own in isolation from others. Autonomy in learning does not imply that there should always be a one-to-one relationship between a student and a teacher or supervisor. It is compatible with autonomous learning for learners to opt to be "taught" in situations in which they have decided that it is desirable for their own ends. Developing autonomy does not simply involve removing structured teaching, it may require a greater degree of structure than didactic teaching, but of a different kind.

(4) The centrality of the goal of developing autonomy in higher education is such that it cannot be limited to peripheral topics or extra-curricular activities and it cannot be pursued partially. The exercise of autonomy cannot be realistically limited to any one part of the learning process: For example, in course content, but not assessment or in choosing one's own pace but not one's objectives. Autonomous learning, as all learning, involves the whole person, not just the intellect; what is to be learned should not be seen separately from the motives and desires of students. Postponement of the opportunity to exercise responsibility for learning actively discourages the development of the capacity to do so.

(5) It does not follow that in autonomous learning that which is to be learned must be originally what is essential is that the goals of learning should derive from the needs of the learner.

(6) Moves towards developing autonomy can be blocked if extrinsic rewards and incentives do not support it.

(7) Students bring a great deal of prior learning and experience to any situation; this should be used. Students are in the best position to know what their own learning needs are: However, they are not always able to identify their own needs unaided, especially if they have been "educated" in a system which places a low value on this activity. Individual students have individual needs which must be treated as such.

(8) All students are capable of working independently, it is not the exclusive province of the most able. Autonomous learning can take place at any level or at any age; however, it will not manifest itself in the same ways in all situations. Students themselves are a significantly under-used resource for teaching in higher education; given suitable conditions they can facilitate and support each other's learning.

(9) Teachers are still necessary. Teachers are usually more effectively used as facilitators of learning rather than as transmitters of information.

(10) Autonomy cannot be developed if teachers deny their competence and authority and abrogate their responsibility for facilitating learning. Non-autonomous teachers do not make the best facilitators of autonomous learning.

(11) Significant steps can be taken towards developing student autonomy in learning in even the most rigid institutions. Independent learning does not have to cost more than conventional teaching; the range of costs for independent learning are as great as for conventional teaching and depend on the specific forms and arrangements which are made."

Thus it would seem that for organised, formal, classroom-based learning to be successful there has to be movement on a variety of dimensions that describe the teaching-learning enterprise as indicated below:-

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>
Knowledge as a commodity	→	Knowledge as a process of generating personal meaning
An emphasis on changes in behaviour of the learner	→	An emphasis on changes in both behaviour and experience of the learner
Acquisition of "facts" skills	→	Releasing potential within the learner
Making good "deficiencies" that learners have	→	Elaborating, differentiating and extending personal competence
Selecting learning events from a prepared list	→	The learner creating his own list of learning events
Being syllabus-based	→	Processes of planning, deciding and experimenting
Problems of transfer and application	→	Learner's awareness as the source of learning.

Attention to study skills and revision	————→	Attention to learning to learn
Other learners seen as merely providing moral support and encouragement	————→	Other learners seen as partners in the learning venture capable of challenge as well as support
Tutors as experts	————→	Tutors becoming managers of learning process and collaborator in the learning enterprise
Emphasising external standards of measurement	————→	Including the learner's evaluations of outcomes of learning
Learning being organised by others	————→	Self-organisation of learning.

The trend is clearly complementary to the conversational methodology of Thomas and Augstein (1985). They advocate learner and teacher negotiating purposes of learning on an equal basis, so that there is a full commitment of the learner to the significance of that which is to be learned, coupled with efficient use of resources and the meeting of satisfactory standards.

### 3.11 Learning to learn: A cautionary note

For all sorts of reasons those wanting to learn (or being coerced into it) come together with those intent on being of assistance in that process. The mode of communication between these two parties varies in accordance with their purposes. The variation ranges from the highly prescriptive stance of the instructor, who demonstrates precisely what is to be learned, through to the acceptance of the Rogerian therapist who offers a process for his client to use in understanding himself. The trends in the way in which these kinds of personal communication are conducted were adumbrated in the last section. It now remains to consider the role of the teacher of independent learners. However, Augstein (1976) suggests that first two other questions should be answered: "(1) What are the optimum conditions which make it possible for a learner to interact in a self-organised way with resources? (2) What are the unique, inner processes that initiate, sustain and restyle the cognitive maps of a person?" Both of which presuppose that it is possible and desirable to achieve an enhanced state of learning competence the achievement of which summons up particular responses from the "teacher".

The transition from traditional mode of teaching to a more balanced interaction is characterised by Augstein (1985) by reference to four types of communication with learners: (i) No conversation, no awareness of the process of doing the task (robotish); (ii) focussing on content, but instructor is aware of how he does the task; (iii) the learner is evaluated in the tutor's terms; (iv) there is awareness of the process of doing the task and in full



learning conversations procedures for learning to learn are included.

As one moves from (i) to (iv) the learner is increasingly engaged in a process of learning to learn, the pursuit of changes in the ways the learner engages in the process of learning.

But what is learning to learn and what exactly is the outcome to which it is directed? Before embarking on answers to these it needs to be emphasised that there is an inherent difficulty in seeking a description of learning to learn and that to which it leads. And it is to do with the fact that learning is a process within and of us, intimately bound up with what we are, so much so as to be easily in danger of crude reduction by attempts at designation and delineation. Watts (1957), when considering the origins of buddhism, provides a parallel to the elusiveness of attempts at such expression. He says: "To serve their purpose, names and terms must of necessity be fixed and definite like all other units of measurement. But their use is - upto a point - so satisfactory that man is always in danger of confusing his measures with the world so measured, of identifying money with wealth, fixed convention with fluid reality. But to the degree that he identifies himself and his life with these rigid and hollow frames of definition, he condemns himself to the perpetual frustration of one trying to catch water in a sieve." Similarly, Revans (1982), in promoting action learning, makes the point that there is "one way alone, of getting to "know" what action learning is, and that is by doing it .... to "know" what action learning is, one must have been responsibly involved in it; since this cannot have been done merely by reading

about action learning, it is impossible in this, or any other, note to convey more than the vaguest impression of what this educational approach may be. The day action learning becomes explicable in words alone will be the day to abandon the practice of it".

### 3.12 A definition of learning to learn

But despite this difficulty some attempt must be made. Downs and Perry (1986) indicate what is involved when they offer some practical advice to trainers about how to help trainees to become more aware of their learning process and thereby improve ways of learning. The changes in trainer behaviour that they suggest are required for this purpose are: "(i) Letting trainees plan new activities jointly with the trainer before a task is begun; (ii) letting trainees tackle whole tasks; (iii) giving trainees time to work things out before the trainer intervenes; (iv) getting trainees to evaluate their own performance before the trainer assesses the trainee; (v) getting trainees to puzzle out a mistake's causes before giving them the trainer's views; (vi) allowing trainees to complete the task to a minimum acceptable standard and repeat it a number of times; (vii) giving some trainees responsibility for other trainees. "

Such activities are directed at altering the relationship between trainer and trainee so that the latter is pointed toward discovery about himself. Cunningham (1985) neatly expresses this with the view that learning to learn is about "changing the way we change". For Vaysse (1980) this process has a particular significance in that

learning to learn is directed to a knowledge of a new quality of life, other than that ordinarily seen, and that when one is confronted with ideas in books about the kinds of inner life possible for man, the learner finds that "all this is theoretical". We may perhaps believe it insofar as it does not conflict with our experience or with ideas we have already acquired; but, in fact, the conclusions of others can really convince us only to the extent that we rediscover them again for ourselves. Books can help guide our experience, but we can never be sure except of that "which we have verified and lived through ourselves".

The idea of discovery has been used by Richardson and Bennett (1984) to construct a three-level definition of learning and development which incorporates the idea of preferred learning style. At level I learning is construed as problem-solving and the learner employs his preferred learning/problem-solving style. At level II an awareness of learning process is involved, "the individual can work on his process of learning/problem-solving and identify how to establish the conditions and support for maximising the potential of his preferences. This might well include working on organisational blocks to his preferred style." They term learning at this level as "learning how to learn". At level III the learner learns how to learn in different ways. This is a process of seeking alternatives to his preferred style of learning and may involve working on personal and organisational blocks to learning in non-preferred ways. This type of learning is termed "learning how to learn how to learn". Gibbs (1981) also draws attention to the need to involve learners with process when they are faced with the need to alter their conception of

the learning task. In describing the adjustment that students have to make when starting university he points out that the "meaning of learning itself changes" if they are to successfully adjust. For such an epistemological shift to take place the student needs space and time to examine not just the content of their learning, but also its process. Mumford (1986) in surveying the literature and good practice in learning to learn suggested that it has the major elements of "helping managers to know the stages of the learning process and the blockages to learning; helping them to understand their own preferred approaches to learning; assisting managers in making the best use of their existing learning preferences or building additional strengths and overcoming blockages, and helping managers to carry their understanding of learning from off the job to on the job opportunities".

The work of the CSHL in learning to learn has been extensive, dealing with all kinds of learners. Learning and learning to learn is grounded in a theory of conversational science (already described in Chapter 2). This offers an understanding of the learning enterprise such that both participants (teacher/pupil; trainer/trainee; etc) have the opportunity to influence both the content and the process of their communication.

Consequently, learning to learn conversations are directed at the learner acquiring his own mechanisms for the examination and reconstruction of what is appropriate as a learning strategy for a given learning task. This suggests that the concept of "learning style" or "preferred ways of learning" is a fruitful approach to this problem. Jahoda and Thomas (1964), however, felt otherwise. They expressed

doubts about the utility of cognitive and perceptual measures, (derived in the laboratory in relation to relatively simple tasks of short time-span) for understanding the strategies adopted typically by learners when faced with sizable, long-term, complex tasks.

### 3.13 The outcomes of learning to learn

The outcomes of learning to learn are varied, but always are to do with an alteration of a person's construction of himself as a learner, and consequently as a person. Solomon (1980), in describing the Enlightenment in France, introduces Descartes as its philosophical father. For him Descartes epitomised the "age of criticism". Descartes insisted on grasping the truth for himself and proving it, by himself and to himself, beyond all possible doubt. Solomon goes on to point out that "there could be no appeal to authority or tradition, no retreat to "commonsense" or the assertion that "we have always known that". It was a revolution in philosophical method, and ultimately a revolution in human thought. The key to his method was autonomy, a new confidence in one's individual ability to seek out and find the truth by the "natural light of reason". Whilst this may seem perhaps too grand a parallel to offer, nevertheless it quintessentially captures what is involved in learning to learn as a process whereby the learner throws off dependence on "authority or tradition" and becomes able to use his own analysis and specification of purposes and methods rather than continue to rely on their prescription by others.

Thomas and Augstein (1975) studied three approaches to helping people with learning (termed structured, guided and "freedom to learn") using reading as a vehicle for learning how to learn. The studies revealed that the main issue is to do with the nature of control over the teaching/learning process. Particularly, this concerns structure and freedom, which they polarised as "adaptive processes versus rigid mechanisms". Adaptive responses, at worst, can degenerate into laissez-faire: Uncontrolled, misdirected, structureless freedom. Rigid mechanism can ignore adaptability or the needs of the learner, by persisting in a standard sequence of instruction. The ideal is when adaptive responses and rigid mechanisms merge into "a network of choices and a joint search for personal understanding on the part of the learner; structured, articulated conversation with the teacher as a resource; diverse progress of the learner which is closely monitored; a modelling of the learning processes at work. For this to come about the learner must be able, like the teacher, to generate the structures that describe his learning processes and progress. He becomes independent of the teacher, not by escaping the teaching/learning dialogue, but being able to comment critically on it. He can make informed responses to teaching, or if necessary, respond unaided. He is able to adopt a variety of approaches, using a wide range of skills, all of which being selected appropriately for the learning task at hand. In the terms of the Centre for the Study of Human Learning he has become "self-organised". Augstein and Thomas (1975), in advising university students defined self-organised learning as follows: "Successfully submitting to being taught is not the same as successfully learning how to learn. The

skills of learning are themselves learned but seldom taught. Acquiring competence as a learner is difficult to achieve. Developing skills for facilitating competence in others is equally difficult. Neither the educational climate nor the person's ability to understand himself foster the essential pre-requisites for a movement towards autonomy. Instructional materials may be so programmed that the learner has little to do but rote learn. This removes the need for personal skill and judgment. A less structured approach offers opportunities for personal exploration, but usually, in the end, the criteria for evaluating success are controlled by teacher and educational institution. Freedom to learn, when it is given, leaves the learner in a vulnerable position and he (or she) is often unable to define purposes and assess the quality of the outcome in terms which are satisfying to her/himself or the teacher. Recent emphasis on study skills provides the learner with a battery of prescriptions to follow. This "systems approach" does offer procedures for analysis and sequencing of strategies for learning, but there is always the danger that they may be followed too rigidly. No one prescribed strategy can be useful for everyone. Each learner comes to his chosen resource with his own purposes. However well or badly these may be articulated, his past experience, beliefs, values and skills set up expectations which influence the way he learns. The quality of learning ultimately depends on his own inventiveness.

Human beings possess a tremendous capacity for learning, yet somewhere on the educational escalator this is stunted. Common pathologies of educational life include a sparse range of partially developed skills which have

consolidated into fixed habits from which the individual learners find it hard to escape. Self-organised learners, on the other hand, can take off from their basic skills in ways which enable them to create effective opportunities for learning in most situations in education and life.

Self-organisation is concerned with the ability to teach oneself by creating and exercising choice. The self-organised learner is able to identify and articulate his own needs and the demands made on him. He can translate these into realistic learning purposes such purposes become defined out of a wide-ranging personal repertoire of ever-expanding purposes which have continually developed from past learning experiences. He can plan how to go about the learning task, recognise his own skills and limitations, recruit effective strategies and tactics and put these into practice. Interaction with the chosen resource is controlled by an ability to create alternative purposes and strategies, depending on its structure and organisation. Resources that will challenge, contradict or annoy as well as those that feed directly into his existing understanding will thus be treated differently. He learns to recognise that his expectations about a given resource may be wrong and he remains free to redefine his purposes and strategies so that these allow him more effective interaction with the resources. A self-organised learner is aware of his personal learning outcomes and can assess these in the light of his developing purposes. He freely seeks, selects, accepts or rejects sources of feedback information that allows him to interpret the success of his learning. Self-organisation depends upon the power to evaluate one's performance.



If the self-organised learner is to improve his own capacity for learning he must periodically bring his learning processes under review. He has to acquire the ability to be flexibly aware of the total learning process. He can then relax into non-conscious use of his skills without losing the ability to bring them back into conscious review. Awareness and review is hard to accomplish without external assistance. A self-organised learner can converse with himself about his own learning processes, so that he can identify dimensions of his problems, intellectual, attitudinal and emotional, so that he can seek out appropriate assistance. In so doing he creates for himself a learning network, made up of peer learners, tutors, colleagues, resource specialists and experts in the various fields of knowledge."

Elsewhere such abilities are appealed for by systems of "open learning" although few seem to meet the criterion of the removal of both administrative and educational constraints, suggested by Coffey (1977) as the hallmarks of open learning. Birch and Latcham (1984) describe such constraints in the form of dimensions on which the nature and extent of student autonomy may be examined, namely: Aims and content of the learning; characteristics and stage of development of the learner (at entry); process of learning (mode, resources, mode of attendance, pace, interaction between learners); method of assessment. Whilst they do not regard this list as exhaustive, they suggest that openness of learning is increased when student control and discretion on such dimensions as these are increased.

These authors later indicate the nature of self-organised learning by considering the implications for

teachers of a completely open learning system. They maintain that "a move to greater openness will almost certainly make the job of a teacher more complex. New skills have to be acquired and higher risks accepted. The teacher may need to: Negotiate with the student and accept some erosion of control; move from being a lecturer to being a facilitator and consultant; become skilled in diagnostic testing, guidance and counselling; work within a team and more publically; develop learning resources; use learning resources developed by others." They also support the view of Thomas and Augstein that adaptive responses can degenerate into laissez-faire by maintaining that "an increase in student autonomy does not of itself guarantee effective learning. Student direction needs to be operated through a process of negotiation which is supported by counselling and guidance".

Self-organisation is thus about the ability to identify the direction of learning, efficient use of resources in accordance with those purposes, and the maintenance of commitment to their accomplishment. It is an informed involvement in the learning enterprise, in which there is an ability to create, as well as understand, the "standards" that viably assess learning outcomes. The sequence and structure of learning process embodied by such a definition, and which has informed to work reported here, are set out in figures 4 and 5.

### 3.14 Helping the learner to learn how to learn

It is now possible to consider what is involved in helping people to learn how to learn. Fransella and Jones

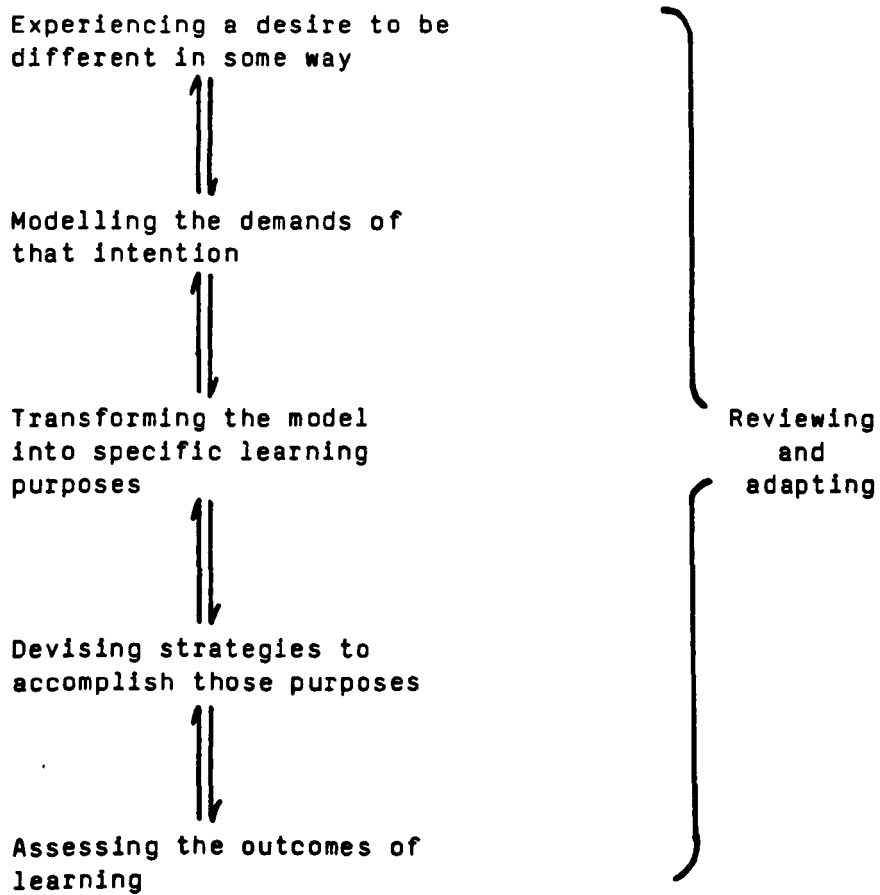


Fig 4: The sequence of learning process

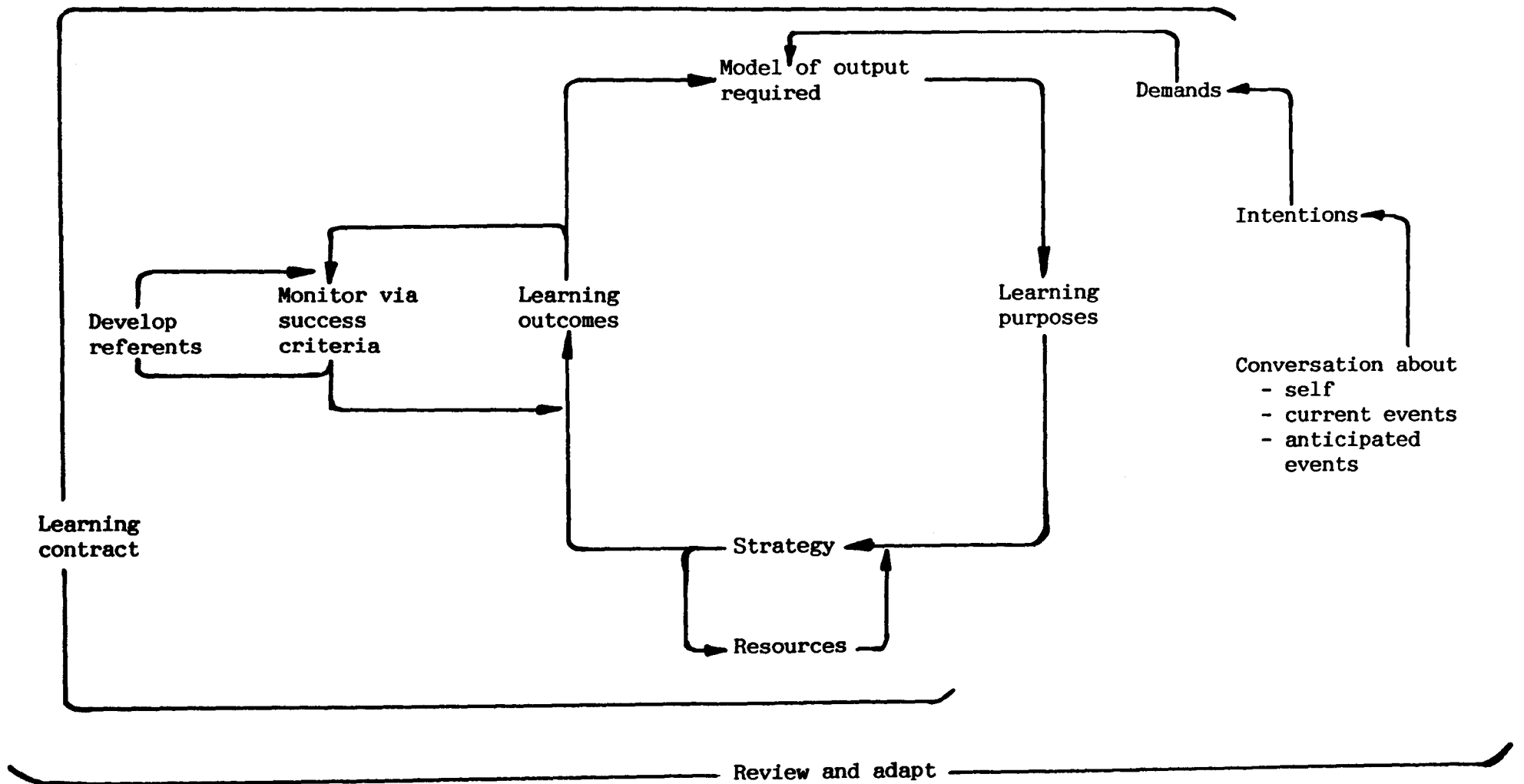


Fig 5: Structure of learning process

(1985), in describing their work as therapists, stressed how important it is to get to know intimately their clients. Not just understanding what the client thinks, the content of his thoughts, but rather the process of his construing and its relationship to how he acts. Similarly, Miller and Mattson (1972) involve their clients in a detailed exploration of their recurring patterns of behaviour so as to reveal their underlying motivational thrust as the key to formulating career choices. These illustrations indicate the essential nature of the process of engaging with a learner for the purpose of learning to learn. It is one of aiding and encouraging learners to change by exploring with them their construct systems and inviting their rearrangement. This venture can, of course, arouse strong, adverse reactions in the learner, who usually has no awareness of alternatives to the way he learns.

Musgrove (1977) offers a key to understanding such reactions when he defines socialisation. This is "the process by which men are moulded by their society and the social relationships in which they are involved. A distinction is commonly made between primary socialisation in the early years of life, principally in the family, and subsequent secondary socialisation into an occupation, marriage, parenthood and community life. Through primary socialisation the individual apprehends a reality which appears inevitable and has a peculiar quality of firmness; secondary socialisation, to be effective, must be congruent with this first conception of this world." If one considers entering self-organisation as an instance of Musgrove's secondary socialisation, then the origin of resistance to this transition is that this secondary socialisation is

incongruent with earlier experiences at School. Jung (1964) may have anticipated learners who insist on pre-judging forthcoming experience when he referred to modern man's desire to operate first on a rational level rather than being prepared to act first and then reflect.

Velikovsky (1982) prefers to explain such adverse reactions by reference to suppression. He says: "The reaction against efforts to bring to the surface of consciousness repressed contents that struggle to stay repressed can be violent and cause an outburst of hatred; the person trying to help another to bring up the suppressed may himself be accused of fomenting hatred and discord. Hostility against the therapeutic procedure may ascribe to the therapist vile motives actually existing in the analysand himself under a veneer of reasonableness." Similarly, Conquest (1982) considers that people have a habit of reverting to their Stone Age ancestry when confronted with the unusual, a reversion to that "primitive man, stumbling and gibbering, his little pig eyes red with hate of the strange thing he cannot understand". Matchett (1981) echoes this point of view, despite its colourful and remote metaphor, when describing the problem of adjusting to a new situation. He considers people take one of three courses of action, namely to "(i) become confused and disillusioned, soon retreating into one's shell and making minimal positive moves in any direction; (ii) become antagonistic and destructive, hitting out at anyone who appears to be remotely connected with the unwelcome change in circumstances; (iii) appear not to notice the external changes - no matter how traumatic - and continue making responses that were acceptable in the previous situation

which is unlikely to return,". He attributes such behaviour, in large part, to "the desire for destruction which lurks in the shadow side of every human being". Champagne et al (1980) explain this conflict between the past and a possible future by reference to what they term "prior world knowledge" of the learner, a set of understandings and convictions about how things operate in the world. Ward (1974), reinforces this view with an example from religion of how firmly held beliefs can get in the way of progress.

If learners are to be helped with learning to learn this resistance must be clearly understood as a first step in overcoming it. Temporal (1979) classes individual blocks to learning as either perceptual, emotional, intellectual or expressive. Jones (1984), in relation to problem-solving, feels they arise from strategic, value, perceptual and self-image barriers within the individual. Thomas (1984) and Thomas and Augstein (1985) subsume this working through of "blocks" or "barriers" to a learner's progress within the need to develop a framework of learning conversations. In these the learner is encouraged to reflect upon his learning process and to seek greater levels of competence and independence by confronting personal myths about learning thereby reconstructing the learning task.

In bringing about personal change Lewin (1968) has identified three phases: Unfreezing; reformulation; and fixing of the new behaviour. These parallel the reconstruction of learning competence by the processes of learning to learn. Harri-Augstein (1976) and Harri-Augstein (1977) stress the need to raise awareness as the starting point for learning to learn conversations. Perls et al

(1951) call this "a contact with reality", which Lockwood (1982) describes as a staged sequence to greater learning skills. The object of such heightened consciousness of personal activity is to provide an opportunity to render it more useful for the learner's purposes.

Wilson (1972) has described human behaviour as if much of it could be segmented. Each segment is considered to be under the direction of a robot, specifically developed for the task, and which can be left safely to work unattended by the person's consciousness. Gallwey (1975) graphically describes this idea of robotic actions when dealing with the reconstitution of physical performances. Similarly, Langer (1982) uses the concept of "mindlessness" to account for much of the activity that people engage in. Raising awareness of what we do allows these habitual routines to be brought into conscious view so that their utility can be assessed against current purposes and criteria of successful accomplishment.

From awareness-raising begins the process of change. If learning to learn is to be fully expressed the learner must meet the challenge of redefining the whole learning task. The demands of the learning enterprise must be assessed. Working through such demands dictates the selection of specific learning domains, eg reading, building a strategy for a particular learning purpose, discussing, finding out. The learner then has to confront his or her preferences in the construction of the learning process. The CSHL has developed a methodology for dealing with such changes, built around a search for internal congruence of purpose-strategy-outcome complemented by a demonstration of its external viability. This methodology applies to all



types of learning and for the CSHL Type C learning is as important as that sought by formalised educational and training initiatives. Accordingly, the Centre's methodology for promoting self-organisation embraces the need to enable learners to acquire the ability to provide their own feedback and criteria for assessing the outcomes of their learning.

The final phase of learning to learn is the disengagement of the person helping the learner. Learning to learn is an intensely personal venture. But the learner needs help with the changes involved. This is especially so regarding the need to maintain resolve, overcome obstacles and to guarantee sufficiency of the learner's explanatory frameworks. Ultimately, however, the learner must assume responsibility for and develop a commitment to independent action. Throughout the exploration of learning process the person helping the learner occupies many roles - expert, resource, reflector of process, confronter and supporter of decisions/actions taken by the learner - but, as Thomas and Augstein (1981) stress, throughout all these exchanges great care is needed by the helper to avoid acting like a traditional teacher. In this way nothing is done that undermines the learner's progress towards independence.

Essentially, the learner is pushed towards establishing the ability to provide himself with a meta-commentary of his learning performance. Directions, standards and achievements are examined and an example using reading is given by Augstein and Thomas (1983). All this should culminate in a series of self-directed learning contracts. Harré (1983) has pointed out that man can shape his future by forming and pursuing intentions. Thomas (1977) points out that learning

conversations do exactly this - they lead to contracts the learner makes with himself, about how he proposes to be different in the future, the successful fulfillment of which takes the learner further towards learning to learn's goal: The ability to self-organise learning.

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EVALUATING THE LEARNING ENTERPRISE

4.1 Validation or evaluation?

After looking at the nature of man from a psychological viewpoint and considering the learning processes he engages in, it now remains to examine how the investigator of learning can involve himself, for the purpose of forming accounts of a satisfactory scientific nature, with the processes and outcomes of human learning at work.

A distinction has traditionally existed in industrial and commercial training between validation and evaluation. The UK Department of Employment's Glossary of Training Terms (1971) defines these as follows: "Validation (of a training programme): 1. Internal validation - A series of tests and assessments designed to ascertain whether a training programme has achieved the behavioural objectives specified. 2. External validation - A series of tests and assessments designed to ascertain whether the behavioural objectives of an internally valid training programme were realistically based on an accurate initial identification of training needs in relation to the criteria of effectiveness adopted by the organisation. Evaluation: The assessment of the total value of a training system, training course or programme in social as well as financial terms. Evaluation differs from validation in that it attempts to measure the overall cost-benefit of the course or programme and not just the achievement of its laid-down objectives. The term is also used in the general judgmental sense of the continuous

monitoring of a programme or of the training function as a whole."

Hamblin (1974) prefers to incorporate validation within his definition of evaluation, which he gives as: "Any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training programme, and to assess the value of the training in the light of that information." In contrast to this he feels that in the Glossary: (i) Evaluation (except for the last sentence) is strictly impossible, as defined, as one cannot measure the total value of a programme in social as well as financial terms; and (ii) that the definition of validation is too narrow because it is confined to laid-down objectives which therefore excludes unanticipated effects. Thus the definitions are too narrow and restrictive, on the one hand, and all-embracing on the other. He prefers to avoid any distinguishing of evaluation and validation, and instead deal with what he calls different levels of evaluation, as will be seen later.

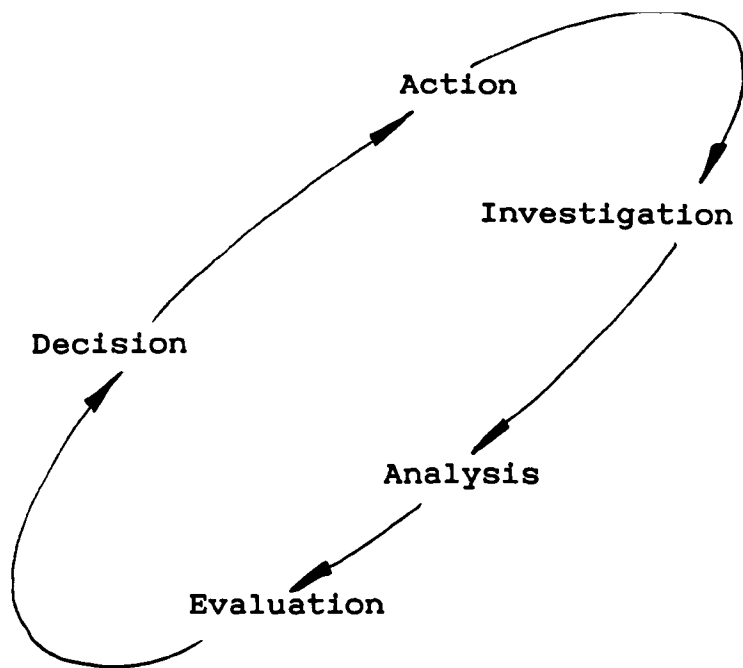
Hepworth (1972) endorses this combining of the supposedly separate concerns. He uses the term evaluation "in a global sense to refer to the total range of activities involved from the analysis of organisational and individual training needs and setting of training objectives (normally external validation), through the planning and implementing of the training process itself (normally internal validation), to the investigation of all post-training repercussions on the individual trainee and his organisation, whether these be in the financial or social, cost-benefit sense, or in the more tractable form of changed, on-the-job knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour." He considers that if evaluation is not

understood in the global form the result will be a narrowing of focus on to the elements comprising the total range of activities.

This research also has avoided distinguishing between evaluation and validation. In preference a "global" view has been adopted with the emphasis on finding key questions of concern to evaluator and participants and valid ways of answering those questions. Moors (1981) draws attention to the need for evaluatory purposes to be set out clearly. For him "evaluation sequences can run astray or remain incomplete because the evaluative questions and interests remain undefined." Cranton and Legge (1978) unequivocally put the elucidation of purpose as the foundation of successful evaluation. Lawless (1981) views evaluation as the investigation of learning situations and materials with a view to improving them. He poses three fundamental questions: "What are the stages of the learning process? How can they be evaluated? What types of changes is it likely to lead to?". The important consequence of which is that the evaluator's interests can then bridge both processes and outcomes of learning.

#### 4.2 Competing frameworks for fixing the orientation of evaluation

The orientation of an evaluation, and hence the sort of questions appropriate to it, can be established by reference to a number of alternative frameworks. Hamblin (1974) suggests that there are two basic purposes for evaluation. The first is the control of training such that evaluation is seen as part of a decision-making system, namely:



The second is to do with a positive facilitation of the learning process whereby trainers and trainees are helped to realise new opportunities, and so increase their freedom of action. In both cases evaluation should be an integral feature of the training system rather than a "tacked-on addition". In his scheme evaluation is the collection of information about the changes that have been caused by the training. There are five levels of effects to be evaluated, namely: (i) Reactions; (ii) learning; (iii) job behaviour; (iv) organisation (ie changes in the way that work is organised); (v) ultimate values (ie changes in the capacity of the organisation for achieving its goals). Within this the basis of evaluation strategy is: "What are the questions to which we really need answers?"; and "What are the most acceptable methods of obtaining those answers?"

Bramley and Newby (1984) support the idea that evaluation should aid the learning process by considering that evaluation should be more to do with improving than disapproving of action taken. In evaluation design they see three, main stages: Deciding the purpose of the evaluation; identifying which aspects of the learning process to focus

upon; selecting techniques appropriate to the chosen focus. They propose that the techniques used and the part of the learning process to be examined will both vary according to the purpose for which the evaluation is intended. They suggest that there are five types of purpose: Feedback; control; research; intervention; power games (ie manipulative use of data to assist in some organisational power conflict).

The fore-going reflects what is possibly the most widely accepted conceptual framework for evaluation, namely that an educational or training activity sets in motion a chain of consequences, made of cause-effect links. Burgoyne and Cooper (1975) have pointed out that this sequence can be restricted to a given education or training programme or widened such that the consequences of education and training actions are part of a feedback system to inform decisions about future education and training activity. This distinction would seem to have practical significance. Burgoyne and Singh (1977) point out that the former case tends to aspire to perfection, in terms of experimental design and data collection methodology, ignoring costs and not feeling any urgency to come up with results. In the latter case there is more inclination to compromise about methodology so that results of some kind can be produced and decisions made using systematically collected evidence. These orientations are concerned, therefore, with adding to a body of generalised knowledge and facts and with improving the quality of education and training decision-making in the short-term, respectively.

This distinction underlines the position of Bramley and Newby. Burgoyne and Singh precurse their views with the

observation that any evaluation needs to specify clearly not only the point or points in the consequence chain that it is concerned with, but also whether it is attempting to generate enduring or transient information, or both, so that appropriate methodologies can be used. They also comment that whilst the "chain" model of the consequences of education and training is well established, no equivalent model exists of the decision-making process which determines the nature of educational and training events. How they relate this decision-structure to the types of evaluation purpose is shown in Fig 6. Interestingly, Cooper et al (1977) have shown that the majority of published work about training evaluations are at level 2 (method decisions). This idea of long-term evaluation as an end in itself and short-term evaluation as a feedback process was used by Ashton et al (1978) who adopted the latter in their proposals for auditing management development. A similar distinction, in the field of programme evaluation was made by Scriven (1967) when he proposed the concepts of summative and formative evaluation.

Easterby-Smith (1981) draws attention to a movement toward using evaluation as part of the decision-making process and regards this an attempt to reassert the usefulness of evaluation as an activity. This echoes the inference that can be drawn from Warr et al (1970) that the purpose of evaluation should be to help the trainer to make decisions about a particular programme as it is happening. Easterby-Smith also highlights that there is increasing recognition by evaluators of the importance of context in training and evaluation processes. He adds in relation to this that a distinction is needed between diagnosis of the



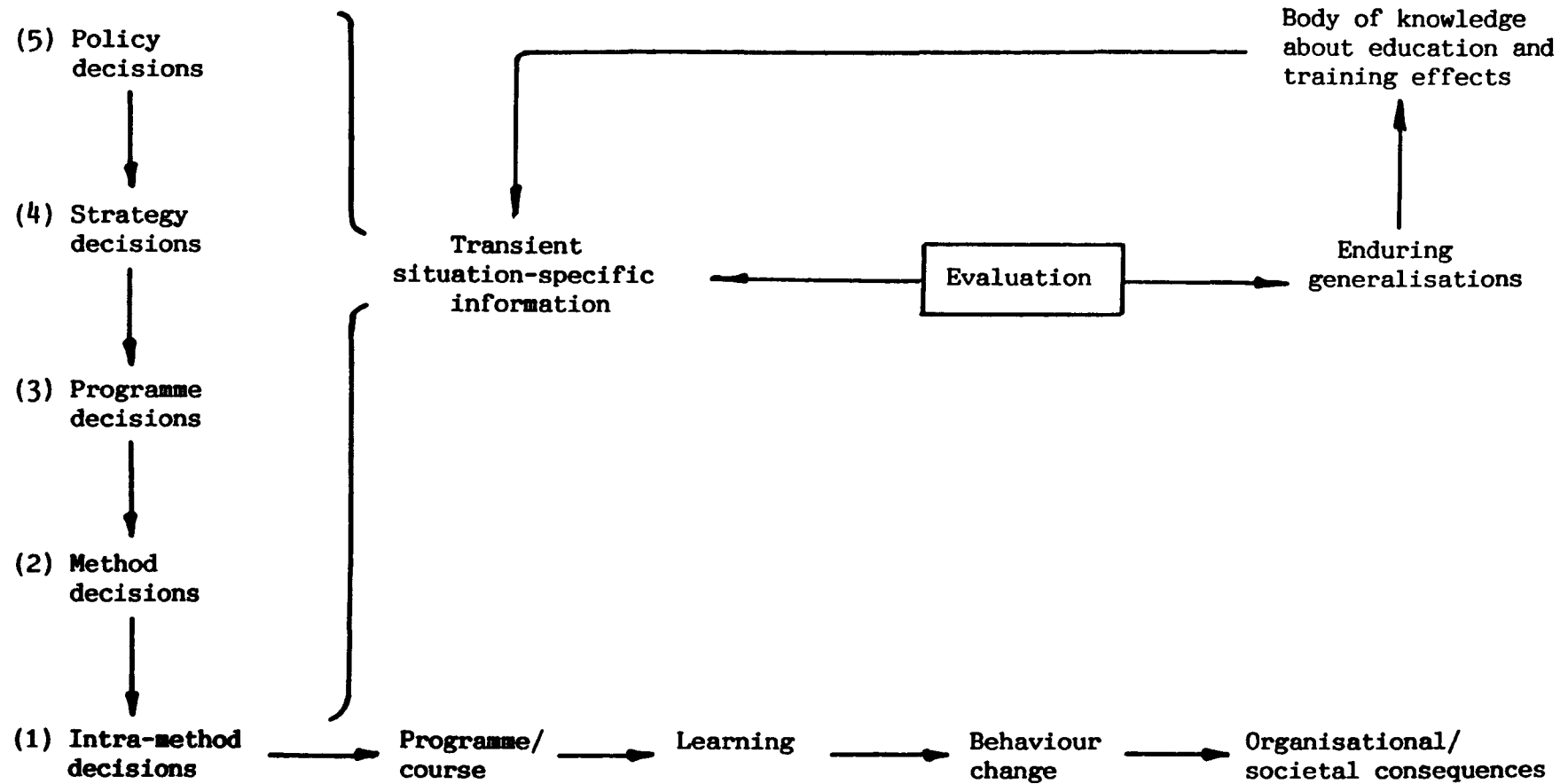


Fig 6: Evaluation and the decision-making process

overall needs of the organisation and the examination merely of factors that might affect the implementation of the training programme after its general direction and objectives have been determined.

Friedman and Anderson (1979) illustrate a pragmatic approach to evaluation that embraces the importance of context from both perspectives. Their model has four stages: (i) Identifying problems; (ii) prescribing programme solutions; (iii) evaluating the operation of the programmes; (iv) evaluating the effectiveness of the programme. A very direct way of integrating context into an evaluation is the reversal technique of Luthans and Maris (1979). In this an intervention is applied, withdrawn and re-applied to establish a link between it and the variable it is designed to influence; participants serve as their own controls and inter-subject variability inherent in control-group experimental designs is eliminated.

#### 4.3 Choosing the methodology of the evaluatory approach

The evaluation structures described above link specific questions with the purpose or purposes of the evaluation. But these approaches do not determine what is appropriate as a set of evaluatory questions, nor what is legitimate as data for answering them, or indeed how to select data for particular questions. Thus, whilst the orientation or emphasis within an evaluatory intention might be decided upon, there remains the problem of what is an appropriate methodology within that orientation or approach.

Traditionally, evaluation has been goal-oriented, using a causative model for the intervention/outcome relationship.

This emulation of the natural science rationale emphasises control groups, before and after testing and the isolation of dependent variables. Such an approach is illustrated by Popham and Baker (1970) who described evaluation as consisting of just five basic operations: Establishing goals; developing a measuring device; pre-assessing students; implementing an instructional plan; and measuring and interpreting evidence of student achievement. McDonald-Ross (1973) offers a critique of goal-oriented evaluation, particularly citing four weaknesses: (i) A possible neglect of how adequate the goals are; (ii) problems of reliability/validity in the measurement of outcomes; (iii) difficulty of attributing the outcomes to all of the causes involved; (iv) uncertainty about the feasibility of being able to specify objectives in advance; (v) not taking unintended outcomes into account.

Support for this sort of criticism has led to a proliferation of evaluation approaches. Lefrere (1982), quoting first Erant and then Hawkridge, shows that between 1972 and 1978 these authors were able to write about 11 and 30 models of evaluation, respectively. Willis (1979) considered that "as in any field where strict definitions are neither appropriate nor possible, evaluation begs the participant to constantly re-assess his options in search of a better way". In seeking to differentiate between these "better ways", he cites the ERIC Clearing House in Adult Education alone as listing 58 models then in use. And such proliferation of models seems not to be randomly varied. Jahoda and Thomas (1964), when elaborating their notion of three kinds of learning, succinctly indicate the shift in what is important in evaluating when they point out that

evaluating by "before and after" measures is obsolete in relation to Type C learning. Beard (1982), in a scholarly review, terms this movement a "humanistic trend". And such a trend would seem to be in the direction of seeking an increased understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of each case. Stake (1967) occupies a prominent position in such a movement. He advocated a "countenance model" of evaluation. Included in this he wanted not only outcomes, but also their antecedents and transactions, and thus considerably widened the goal-oriented approach. Scriven (1977) also questioned why intended and unintended effects should be distinguished. He maintained that the evaluator needs to study both kinds of effect of a programme and therefore contact with the rhetoric of intent of the programme's designer would be contaminating. Accordingly he advocated an evaluation methodology in which the evaluator was unaware of the programme's goals. Thus achievements are to be judged against needs identified by learners themselves, and against costs incurred and the alternatives available. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) extended these processes significantly by offering not just another methodological package, but a general research strategy which aims to be both adaptable and eclectic. They recognised that people like Stake had led the movement to make evaluation more flexible, uninhibited by superficial notions of "hard" data.

In the movement from comparative experimental design and standardised testing and quantitative methods, Parlett and Hamilton articulate well the position of these "responsive" evaluators who had looked to ethology and anthropology for their paradigm. In seeking to "illuminate"

problems and issues, rather than adjudicate worth as the evaluator sees it, they put aside experimental and psychometric traditions dominant in educational research, in favour of finding ways more able to elucidate complex problems and to contribute effectively to the decision-making process. Their illustration of the problem is vivid: "When an innovation ceases to be an abstract concept or plan and becomes part of the teaching and learning in a school or college, it assumes a different form altogether. The theatre provides the analogy. To know whether or not a play "works" one has to look not only at the manuscript but also at the performance, that is, at the interpretation of the play by the director and actors. So, it is not an instructional system as such but its translation and enactment by teachers and students that is of concern to the evaluator .... it is therefore important to study an innovation through the medium of its performance and to adopt a research style and methodology that are appropriate". All of which means necessarily that the evaluator must involve himself increasingly in the learning enterprise. Morgan et al (1980) built upon Parlett and Hamilton's framework. They emphasise a qualitative approach which provides insights of how learners approach the learning task and what influences the way they use learning materials. The focus of evaluation is on qualitative changes in learners' understanding of key concepts that form part of the learning programme.

So it would seem that there has to be a merging of the assumptions of the evaluator, programme designer and learner about the nature of learning, its facilitation and what constitutes a satisfactory method of investigation by the

evaluator. Burgoyne (1973) forcefully focuses on this aspect in the context of management development. His criticism of evaluation methodology is that it has adopted a "stimulus-response" approach to the people participating in educational or training programmes. In contrast to which he points out that, contrary to the stimulus-response idea, people have their own powers of choice and self-control. In short they are "agents" not "patients". Consequently, this rediscovery of the person in management development needs to be matched with a similar shift in the assumptions of the evaluator if the attempts at facilitating learning of the former are to be usefully interpreted by the latter. Critten (1982) takes the argument still further when asking the question: "How can maximum value be realised from a given programme of education or training designed to bring about learning?" Critten argued that evaluation studies have focused on only one side of the evaluation equation by omitting to examine the existing values of those engaged in evaluation and how they are changed by its very process. Thus the potential value of a programme, that otherwise would not be fully realised, is in fact obtained by the process of making values explicit. In other words the source of the value lies outside of the method used to give expression to it. An example is that the value of a heirarchical model of evaluation lies not in the levels themselves, but in the ability of the model to articulate possibilities of change hitherto unrecognised. Thus maximum value from a given programme derives from making explicit the values of all who are party to the evaluation process, namely the client, the designer/change agent, the learner and the organisation (ie the social system of which the

learner is a member).

In a different context, Mangham (1978) seems to precede this argument. When making a plea for a qualitative research methodology in the human sciences, he proposes that "an empirical science is not to be brought into being by endless debate and disputation about concepts with the weakest of empirical references; it is constructed out of the interplay of data and speculation that generates the concepts and at the same time grounds them in a context of empirical materials". Later he adds that "the way to avoid emptiness and to stimulate groundedness is to be intimately familiar with one's subject matter - to have a detailed and dense awareness of a particular set of social actors over a period of time and to seek to understand how it is that they go about defining and acting in their particular social world; to participate with them while observing or, as a second best, to spend a considerable amount of time talking to them in a relatively unstructured form about their perceptions and their actions." This then leads Mangham to consider what is needed for the development of a qualitative research tradition; a point of view which has been especially influential in the approach to the research reported here.

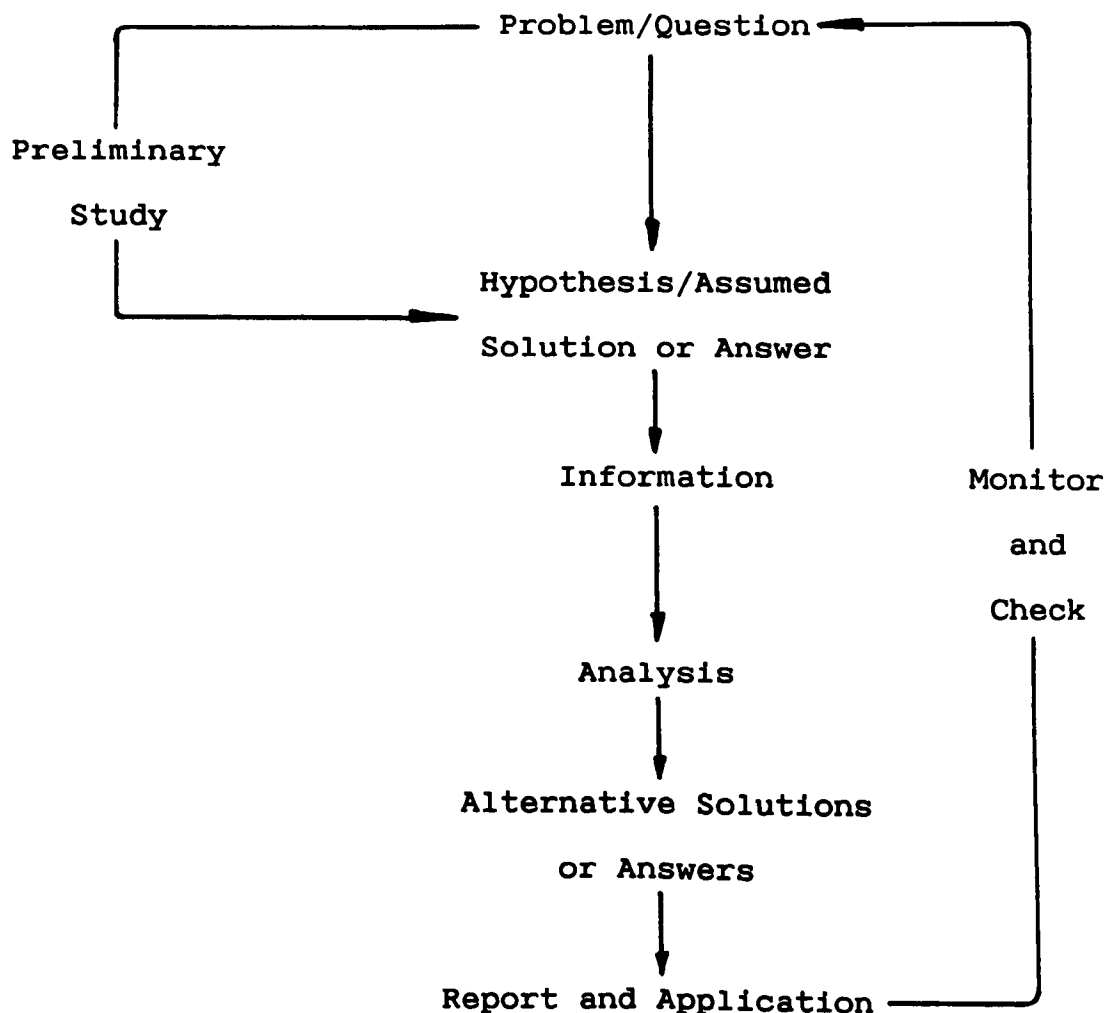
He points out that whilst knowing fully a particular set of social actors in specific circumstances is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient one for the development of a research tradition. For him "a qualitative research programme needs to be able to link the specific with the general and to delineate the particular in terms of its universal, transcendent and analytic aspects. To do this, working from the observed or from the perceptions of

those involved in that situation, the qualitative researcher should be able to draw out a number of inferences which have wider application and to present these inferences at an appropriate level of abstraction. The best work in this developing tradition presents both concepts and the concrete instances which embody or illustrate them."

#### 4.4 The approach to evaluation in this research

At this point it seems appropriate to set out the important aspects of and influences on the approach to research/evaluation adopted in the work reported here. Burgoyne and Cooper (1975), in their review of evaluation methodology, consider the function and purpose of evaluation. They point out that every evaluation "embodies, explicitly or implicitly, assumptions about the function of evaluation research". Bramley and Newby (1985) cite five main types of purpose for evaluation one of which considers evaluation as research. This would seem to align with that part of the distinction made by Burgoyne and Singh (1977) that has to do with evaluation adding to a generalised body of knowledge. In this way evaluation and research merge in pursuit of greater understanding of the processes examined. In relation to which Bennett (1979) has dealt with what he calls the "reality of research". He considered that research is not a "careful enquiry" for its own sake. It always starts with some sort of problem, if it is to be of use to anyone. He defines "pure research" as obtaining more knowledge about a phenomenon of which we know little; "applied research" is directed at helping us do something we could not do before. His model for the research process is:





In relation to which he posits four levels of research: (i) Description of the thing looked at; (ii) classification or comparing and grouping for differences and similarities; (iii) explanation or seeking to understand what is happening; (iv) prediction of events or behaviour; and as far as human action is concerned he feels that research is largely at level (iii).

So two important dimensions come together: (i) Seeking understanding and generalisation; (ii) focussing of attention on what is important in terms of utility or applicability. In relation to the latter, one has to take into account the context or circumstances of the evaluation. As Lovelady (1980) pointed out for example, increasingly attention has been given to "the differing perspectives of

academics on the one hand, and practitioners on the other, on the subject of the evaluation of planned change. One might argue that this is a matter of little importance. However, if the stringent evaluation designs, put forward by academics, result in their being refused access to information, then their work cannot continue. A gulf seems to exist between what is expected to happen, in terms of the "best practice" of evaluation and what is actually happening; and between the time-scale of the academic and the time-scale and action focus of the consultant." Similarly, Warr et al (1970) recognised that there is a trade-off between the cost and duration of a research design and increasing the quality of the information which it generates. Thus attempting a structured approach to research/evaluation, within which the tenets of Mangham (1978) might be incorporated, called for a pragmatic consideration of the circumstances within which the research was to be carried out.

As to considering the origins of the problems and questions that might be considered by a researcher, Pepper (1942) has argued that they can be understood by reference to six metaphysical systems, or "world hypotheses". These are not scientific hypotheses about the world. Rather they are coherent sets of metaphysical presuppositions about such knowledge-generating matters as the basic, commonsense terms which people use in thinking about reality, ie criteria for establishing truth and what kind of evidence (if any) is admissable in the system. Roberts (1982) considers that for the purpose of examining the means of generating knowledge in a rational context two of the hypotheses can be dispensed with since they do not entail any concept of evidence.

There are thus four adequate world hypotheses: Formism; mechanism; contextualism; organicism. It is the third and fourth of these that are most relevant to this research, in that contextualism deals with the event in its context and organicism reflects a preoccupation with integrated wholeness, ie a fitting together of the "pieces". Formism and mechanism are particularly to do with comparisons of things and with isolating causes. The former pair of world views rely heavily on qualitative data, the latter on quantitative data. But this is not to say that necessarily one eschews quantitative data. On the contrary, as Hayes et al (1983) and Bramley (1985) point out there can be a place for both kinds of approaches in evaluation. Indeed, as Roberts (1982) pointed out, an appropriate way to construct science education reality is by reference to both the "machine" and "situation" metaphors. In dealing with situations the researcher is also "in situation". Consequently, something needs to be said about his relationship to the organisation. This is best done by reference to the distinguishing features of action research as set out by Warr (1977), namely that it is an activity engaged in collaboratively with the organisation, involved with change, in which the researcher gains knowledge which is otherwise unavailable, which necessarily has to cope with changes in roles and relationships, whilst trying to learn from the activity and generalise findings from that process.

Finally, and most importantly, in engaging with people for the purpose of reaching altered understandings about phenomena, the view of man adopted is that already described, ie man as agent, able to choose, interpret, actively respond according to how significance is

attributed. Accordingly, the view of Kelly (1963) that the subject of the human experiment can and ought to be involved fully in that enterprise has pervaded all of the work that is reported here.

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## CHAPTER 5

### WORKING WITH MANAGEMENT TO DEFINE THE TRAINING TASK

This chapter presents the results of four studies, namely: (i) Taking an opportunity to undermine management's views about organised learning; (ii) using evaluation for the purpose of intervention; (iii) experimenting with an alternative approach to learning at work; (iv) helping prospective managers through learning to learn. They were directed at establishing the basic agreements through which the work of the Education and Training Department would be understood by management. Thus, they laid the foundation for later studies which were of direct consequence for the Department's contribution to the Bank's operations.

#### 5.1 Taking an opportunity to undermine management's views about organised learning

The situation facing the newly-formed Education and Training Department was outlined in Chapter One. Management's attitudes towards training were firmly rooted in the acceptance that training is synonymous with taught courses. It was thus not surprising that requests were made to the Education and Training Department to solve performance problems by designing and running a training course.

As amalgamation of the Banks approached there was an increase in the emphasis given to selling. This was coupled with an increasing realisation that branch staff had

limited marketing and selling ability. This echo of the findings of the assessment of needs, presented to the Education and Training Committee, provided an opportunity to work with the Bank's management on a concrete problem that they had identified and felt strongly should be solved.

At this time (early autumn 1979) the constituent Banks had different operating arrangements. In Birmingham Municipal TSB there were about 70 branches supervised by 4 area managers; in TSB of the Midlands there were about 44 branches administered directly by Head Office Departments. A request for assistance came from two of the Area Managers. As far as they were concerned it was a relatively simple matter: "Our cashiers are not very good at selling; can you train them in selling techniques?" It was not clear at the outset what understandings the cashiers had about their role. However, it was confidently asserted by the Area Managers that things would be better, ie branch performance would be improved, once training was given to this group of employees. It was also implicit in their request that the training to be offered was in the form of attending a course.

This request was resisted. It was agreed instead that before taking action a careful look at the problem should be taken. In this way, good training arrangements, if necessary, might be made. It was apparent that branch performance was the key concern and that it had been assumed that this was caused by a lack of ability of the cashiers to sell the Bank's products and services. However, marketing and selling were of fundamental importance to the Banks and cashiers were just one component of a branch's operation. It was decided, therefore, that the survey of the problem

should cover the marketing activity of the branch as a whole.

The primary purpose of the investigation was to find out how branches actually sold services and products, and in this way: (i) Test managerial perceptions about the cause of poor productivity; and (ii) develop a solution on the basis of evidence to be collected. This opportunity was especially valuable: It enabled the Department to find out what was actually done at the workplace and to have a detailed involvement, around a "real" problem, with some members of the senior management team. It was the first opportunity for the Department to offer a broader-based approach to performance problems and an important step in the exploration of a definition of training. With these research purposes and background in mind the study was carried out and its findings first discussed with management and later used in the Department's work.

#### 5.1.1 The survey method

Data were collected from branch staff only using structured interviews. 15 of the Bank's 114 branches were included and which represented the full range of business performance. 73 interviews were carried out (8 per cent of the total number of staff in branches) and all grades of staff were included. The question's used with managers were different to those used with their staff. These interview structures were derived from an analysis of performance model developed during task analyses carried out in branches when the Department was first set up (not reported in this work). Whilst the reason for using this model was to ensure

that a wide range of issues were covered, interviewees were still allowed to develop a personal viewpoint if they wished. The structure for the interviews used in the survey is included as Appendix 1.

### 5.1.2 Conclusions

The survey produced a range of findings all of which were reported to the Bank's management. What follows are conclusions to this project that had a particular bearing on the development of the Education and Training Department and on this research.

#### Confirmation of the initial assessment of needs

It was important that the momentum of the progress of the Department be maintained. The assessment of needs presented to the Bank's Education and Training Committee (later to become the Personnel and Training Sub-committee of the amalgamated Banks) had offered a starting-point for the Department's work. This assessment had indicated that staff lacked confidence in dealing with customers and that they had limited marketing ability. It was extremely beneficial to the Department's continued progress that the survey confirmed these findings and laid the basis for specific training recommendations.

#### Clarification of the role of education and training in assisting with productivity gains

A number of understandings and agreements were reached



about the part education and training processes can play in helping overcome performance deficiencies.

(i) The first of these concerned the nature of education and training. Traditionally, the former had been associated with obtaining the Banking Diploma. As the Department got under way senior management began to propose educational needs other than those associated with professional qualification. There was a real danger that this division of needs into those that could be met by "education" as opposed to "training" would be unproductive. The survey's findings helped curtail this (anticipated) sterile debate. In short it was suspended in favour of an agreement that it is preferable to focus attention on learning. A new "training" definition emerged, namely that the work of the Department was concerned with any organised attempt to help people learn to do that which was expected of them. This had far-reaching implications, notably to do with the need to clarify what employees were expected to accomplish. This overall conclusion about orientation of the Department was supported by a series of detailed points:

(a) Being trained is not equivalent to attending training courses. Courses, whilst still being essential, are not a complete answer to the learning problem.

(b) There is a need to get people interested in the process of carrying out tasks as well as being interested in carrying out the tasks. Whilst this, in itself, is of limited value, it is of crucial significance in understanding how competence is acquired.

(c) There is no "right" direction to take in developing managerial ability. This contingent approach enables attention to be given to moving along an agreed path rather than trying to find the "correct" way of doing things. There is no need to be dependent upon outside experts: Solutions to learning problems can be found within the Bank.

(d) In taking action about the development of people, what is done does not have to be revolutionary. What is required are shared understandings of what is to happen, particularly what parts are to be played and who the actors are. Whatever the approach the key need is integrated management decision-making so that training designs might arise in a more coordinated and cooperative arena.

(ii) Secondly, a method of investigation was established. The utility of the analysis of performance model was confirmed. This was to be used later, in a variety of spheres, for the observation of behaviour and the identification of learning needs. In addition, the vital importance of clear definitions of roles was established. The all-important notion that there is validity in survey-based, subjective data feedback gained a foothold and a commitment was gained to further use of this approach.

#### A commitment to further studies

It was clear from the survey that many branch managers needed detailed direction about policy, objectives and branch operation. This called for sound line-management

which, in turn, demanded a clarification of roles. As the Banks amalgamated a new position of District Manager was created and the survey helped to underline the need to ensure that this role was clearly understood. Similarly, the role of branch managers needed determination. The survey had shown many managers to be confused about the direction of the Bank and often unsure of what was expected of them. There was some conceptual difficulty indicated with certain areas. Importantly, what were considered essential features of a branch manager's job varied considerably. These future studies are presented in Chapter 6. The continuing work with management about ideological issues in the use of learning resources and opportunities is reported below.

## 5.2 Using evaluation for the purpose of intervention

As the marketing survey came to an end, the TSB Staff College offered a new series of courses for branch managers. The College was financed by the subsidiaries of TSB Group and each received places on its courses in proportion to the financial contribution made. A variety of courses were on offer covering such as developing business, effective presentation, commercial lending, appraisal, etc. A great deal of interest centred on team work.

Whilst a financial commitment to the College had been made, the use of this kind of resource was in its infancy. A great deal of managerial uncertainty surrounded the use of training courses. Clearly, there was an operational need to ensure that this particular learning resource - the College's courses - was used effectively. Similarly, it

seemed sensible to use this opportunity to exploit the advantage gained by the branch marketing survey.

Agreement was, therefore, obtained for the Education and Training Department to carry out an evaluation of the use of the course: "Team Building and Team Leading", offered by the College in 1980. As to why this course was selected, available resources dictated that only some of the courses could be evaluated. "Team Building and Team Leading" was ideal because: (i) Its subject matter was relevant to the task of integrating management, learning and productivity; (ii) of all the courses offered this was the most popular with branch managers. The second reason was particularly important. It meant that greater impact could be made by virtue of a cross-section of branch managers (including the least and most able) using the same course, rather than a series of small groups attending several courses.

The reason for the study was declared to be the desire to acquaint those who would attend such courses in the future, together with those responsible for arranging such attendance, with the many issues involved in extracting benefit from such an activity. In this way, the usage, not only of the course to be evaluated, but of all management training courses might be improved. Specifically, three objectives for the evaluation were agreed: (i) Assess the effectiveness of off-the-job management courses by analysing the effects of attendance by branch managers on the Team Building and Team Leading course; (ii) identify any actions to be taken before, and/or after, attending courses to maximise their benefits so as to obtain value for money;

(iii) collect data that might be helpful in designing the Bank's management development activities.

The overt intention of the evaluation was thus to improve further training activity by developing productive working relationships between line managers, their subordinates, the Education and Training Department and the course providers. The research purpose was to use the vehicle of training course evaluation as a means of influencing District Managers' thinking about staff development, by seeking commitment to the idea of subordinating formalised learning opportunities to a contingent view of performance improvement, whereby the position of the individual is more prominent, and in which learning is derived from the need to achieve business results.

#### 5.2.1 The evaluation method

Ideally, the evaluation programme would have collected data from all of the elements shown in Figure 7.

##### Pre-Course

A: Manager's performance before attending the course including personal style, abilities, observed and perceived influences on behaviour and achievement.

B: The methods of selection and the reasons for wanting the subordinate to be trained; the participants' aims in attending the course.

##### During the course

C: The running of the course from the tutor's viewpoint, including measures used to assist his judgement of

delegates' progress and achievement of course objectives.

D: The delegates' views of the success of the course, and particularly the extent of the achievement, and possible reformulation, of his aims.

#### Post-Course

E: Changes of behaviour and experience of the participant, particularly via the explicit application of learning at the place of work.

F: A longer-term assessment of permanent change as a result of attending the course.

### Fig 7: An example of the components of a complete evaluation programme

Such an extensive examination would need several investigators over a considerable time. Even if such resources were available it would be unlikely that all aspects of manager performance would be scrutinised. The available resources were limited, and other work had to be attended to whilst the evaluation was in progress. The study concentrated, therefore, on the application of learning. There were three stages in the generation and collection of data: (i) Pre-course briefings: These were carried out, with few exceptions, a week prior to attending the course. The purpose of the briefing was to explain why and how the evaluation exercise would be conducted. In addition the participant was prepared for the course itself. It consisted of a discussion of the main components of the branch manager's job, together with a description of the course objectives, content and method of teaching. (ii) Action planning: On the last day of the course delegates

Prepared a plan of action for the use of what they had learned on the course. It was expected that criteria of success would be set so that outcomes could be measured in relation to them. The way in which the participant applied himself to his action plan and the extent to which he was successful with it would be important indicators of the value to be gained from the course. The kinds of action plan drawn up would also throw light indirectly on: (a) The impact the course had on the participant; and (b) the willingness of the participant to engage in the enterprise and make an effort. (iii) Post-course interviews: Each participant was visited within one or two weeks of return to work. At this interview their immediate reactions to the course were noted and a copy of their action plan obtained. The participants were then visited approximately two months after that to identify the progress achieved and record any further observations about the training and its effect upon them. Particular attention was given to why they thought they had been successful/unsuccessful, as appropriate.

### 5.2.3 Conclusions

The specific findings relevant to this research, expressed as influences on an individual's usage of the training were:-

- (i) The extent of the articulation of the purpose of attending the training course.
- (ii) The relevance of the individual's preference for a particular style of learning.
- (iii) The degree of fixity of attitudes incongruous with the objectives, methods and content of the course.

- (iv) The participant's intellectual ability.
- (v) The participant's strength of belief about the effect of age on intellectual process (eg memory) and the ability to learn.
- (vi) The kind of emotional response elicited by the various components of the course, including the response to the tutor as an expert and as a person.
- (vii) The degree to which participants are prepared to take an interest in their job/work and seek high standards, and therefore see learning as a relevant and valid activity.
- (viii) The capacity of participants for becoming aware of their assumptions and prejudices and their preparedness to evaluate and change them if appropriate.
- (ix) The degree of ability and willingness for making connexions between that dealt with on the course and the world of the workplace.
- (x) The strength of the belief that the participant and his branch are unique and that ideas, theories, principles and practices offered by others from other contexts are irrelevant.
- (xi) The degree of compatibility of the perceived expectations of the participants and the ideas stimulated by the course, together with the extent to which the participant is prepared to challenge ways he no longer feels are sensible.

From an organisational viewpoint the major findings of this study were threefold:

- (xii) The realisation of the power of organisational culture for ensuring conformity and for extinguishing



counter-cultural initiatives induced by the learning event. This had considerable influence later when the management development survey was designed.

(xiii) It demonstrated that in the realm of learning personal meaning is crucial. Convictions held about how things are and what is realisable in altering human capabilities either stopped participants from making any progress or allowed them to reorder their beliefs and values such that a more adaptive meaning structure was created. In any event, the individual and his personal view of how things made sense in the world was the starting point for learning as opposed to it being the offering of well-ordered chunks of knowledge in the hope that their absorption would lead to review and performance change. This crucial realisation was influential later in connexion with a more extensive study of manager beliefs and values at a more senior level.

(xiv) The acceptance of the need for close working between line management, the participant and Education and Training so as to focus attention on the proper articulation of needs, correct selection of learning opportunity or resource, and to provide assistance with removing obstacles to progress. Underpinning this conclusion was the realisation that clarification and exploration of purposes was of prime importance: Without a painstaking construction in detail of the reason for attending the course and of what that opportunity offered, the chances of successful use of the learning opportunity, in a lasting sense, seemed minimal.

### 5.3 Experimenting with an alternative approach to learning at work

The previous study looked deeply into a particular method for learning - the training course. Whilst its recommendations for closer working between line management, the participant and the Education and Training Department were well received, they were but a small step in the direction of gaining an optimised usage of learning opportunities and resources. There was a great deal more to be done and the evaluation of the Team Building and Team Leading course had prepared the way for: (i) A stronger, richer forging of the operating links mentioned above; and (ii) experimenting with a new approach to acquiring skill.

At the time Pendleton (1981) was nearing the completion of his work on doctor-patient communication. In seeking to improve the way in which a doctor uses the time available for a consultation, he had evolved a methodology embracing: (i) The specification of outcomes; (ii) video-filming of actual performance in the surgery; (iii) structured feedback based on the video-film; (iv) measurement of patient satisfaction with their consultation as an indicator of changes in the doctor's performance in consulting. There appeared to be a number of parallels between doctor/patient consultations and branch manager/customer interviews. There seemed no reason why these ideas should not work in the Bank. Whilst it was a radical departure from past practice, it was an immensely attractive technique. It seemed to offer, by its use of actual, as opposed to simulated performance, a way around that commonly expressed criticism in the Bank, that training courses were artificial and

"theoretical". It also coincided with an upsurge in attention to lending. As the Bank moved into the commercial sector, there was a need to increase the amount of money on loan, whilst minimising the risk of it not being paid back. The interview played a key part in the lending process.

The initial examination of the new technique confirmed it was worthwhile to explore it in detail. A proposal was presented and accepted to carry out a feasibility study of its appropriateness to the Bank's needs and circumstances. This feasibility study had three parts: (i) Working with management to extend their commitment to and understanding of the method by jointly developing a description of the structure of the interview, removing fears about the filming of actual loan interviews, and to remove obstacles to identifying dimensions of customer satisfaction; (ii) a factor-analytic investigation of the dimensions of satisfaction of customers with interviews in the process of granting personal loans; (iii) a pilot course with invited managers to test the method and use the data obtained in the earlier stages of the study.

So an opportunity was created to continue the good work already done, which might further open up thinking about the options available for helping people learn. Hopefully this would lead to being able to challenge successfully the reliance of managers on conventional training courses, make more explicit the nature of the learning process and build upon the contingent aspect of learning referred to in the study reported in 5.1. The feasibility study would put the organisation of learning closer to actual practice and the way the learner construed the learning task, and thus away from the organisation of learning by reference to expert

knowledge. Finally, this initiative also made a small start on the introduction of learning to learn by making explicit the individual's responsibility for the direction of learning.

### 5.3.1 Gaining management's commitment to the method

This began with the General Manager who soon sanctioned its extension to involve others. There was some concern about the relevance to banking of ideas/practices from medicine. It was clear that the first objective was to remove doubts about the applicability of the methodology to the Bank. This led to more specific stages, namely, developing an interview evaluation form (which described the tasks that a successful interviewer accomplished), testing customer reaction to being filmed and illustrating how the various components fitted together in the new training method.

#### 5.3.1 (a) Application of the methodology to the Bank

Essentially, Pendleton (1981) was trying to help GP's find ways of giving a better service to the patient, by encouraging them to evaluate their own performance. The feedback device was video-film. Through an examination of strengths and weaknesses in the performance, higher quality standards of working could be negotiated. The approach to performance review was positive and unthreatening.

At the heart of the process is the specification of the outcomes expected of the communication. The tasks needed for

their accomplishment can then be prescribed. The sequence was represented by: (i) What are the desired outcomes of a doctor/patient consultation - both quantitatively and qualitatively - such that the consultation can be considered a success? (ii) What tasks must therefore be accomplished to achieve these outcomes? (iii) And what skills are needed to carry out these tasks? So that overall a complete description of the role to be played by the doctor is obtained. It is not difficult to see the transfer to the Bank when "doctor" is replaced by "branch manager", "consultation" by "interview" and "patient" by "customer".

In so helping the doctor to review and improve his performance in the consultation, there was no attempt to prescribe the selection and usage of skills. The model allowed the doctor discretion in his choice of strategy to achieve the task. Learning begins with the doctor's own, established repertoire of skills. The emphasis of the help with learning is on aiding the doctor explore that repertoire and amend it as required. A number of "experiencing systems" were considered as the basis for describing doctor roles, eg the patient is diseased, has no symptoms, and does not seek help. With these three characteristics (diseased, existence of symptoms and seeking help) seven categories of patient arise:

- 1 Diseased, no symptoms, does not seek help
- 2 Diseased, has symptoms, does not seek help
- 3 Not diseased, no symptoms, but seeks help
- 4 Diseased, no symptoms, seek help
- 5 Diseased, has symptoms, seeks help
- 6 Not diseased, has symptoms, does not seek help
- 7 Not diseased, has symptoms, seeks help.

From which it is apparent that the doctor's roles should be: (i) Screening patients for disease, (ii) treating diseases, and (iii) educating patients to prevent disease and seek help intelligently when needed. In the Bank's terms an equivalent seven customers can be imagined arising out of the characteristics: (i) Has a money problem; (ii) indicators of money problem; (iii) seeks advice/financial service.

5.3.1 (b) Determining with management the structure of the lending interview:

The object here was to produce an "interview evaluation" form, a description of the tasks that the branch manager must accomplish satisfactorily, in order to meet the requirements of the designated roles. The study was restricted to personal lending and the roles specified for the branch manager were: Sound lender; educator; salesman. Naturally, the Bank wished its managers to operate prudently, granting loans freely, but always provided that the risk to repayment was at a minimum. To ensure a sensible use of money and money services called for customer education. This contributed to repayment by improving customers' financial management as well as ensuring they understood thoroughly the terms and procedures of granting and repaying a loan. This factor would also play an important part in the development of customer loyalty. Finally, the Bank's business has been diversified extensively over the last few years with consequent attention given to business promotion and selling. In personal loan interviews opportunities for "cross-selling"

needed to be developed. The branch manager must therefore assume the role of "salesman" if he is to fully exploit the interview for its possibilities for examining customer needs and offering appropriate products and services for their satisfaction. Interestingly, of these roles, only that of "educator" raised queries, fortunately to be swept aside by the results of the customer satisfaction survey.

The task description embracing the three roles was established as:

1. Putting the customer at ease and maintaining an informal atmosphere.
2. Confirming, or finding out, the reasons for the interview.
3. Assessing the viability of the proposition.
4. Completion of documentation and obtaining the customer's signature.
5. Ensuring the customer understands and accepts all of the procedures and loan arrangements.
6. Spotting and responding to opportunities to sell other products and services.
7. Arranging a subsequent appointment (if necessary).
8. Using time and resources to best advantage.
9. Creating a helpful and informative relationship.

An iterative approach to the confirmation of the list of tasks was used. In this the list was successively revised in the light of critical comment from branch managers observing themselves on film, eg

Cycle 1: (i) Draft interview evaluation form (the task

list).

- (ii) Collect examples of interview on tape.
- (iii) Revise interview evaluation form by reference to film of actual loan interviews.
- (iv) Feedback to and comment from managers participating in filmed interviews.

Cycle 2: (i) draft etc.

### 5.3.1 (c) Testing customer reaction

With the structure of the interview established, examples of loan interviews by two volunteer branch managers were obtained on video-tape. These were presented during a one-day meeting with senior management (General Manager, Assistant General Managers, Departmental Heads and District Managers). The purposes of the meeting were to: (i) Report customer reaction; (ii) demonstrate the use of video-film in the training method; (iii) confirm the interview evaluation form; and (iv) gain acceptance of the next part of the study in which scales of customer satisfaction were to be constructed. This involvement with senior management also convincingly demonstrated the applicability of the method to the Bank and removed lingering misgivings about the use of video-filming. These fears were understandable enough, eg "Will the participant be put off his stride? Will the manager "ham it up" for the camera? Will the manager's judgment be affected? Will the customers be reluctant to object because they fear it would affect the decision about their loan application?" Whilst definitive answers to these questions could not be obtained, sufficient



reassurance was given that the technique was not detrimental and approval was obtained to go to the remaining stages of the feasibility study.

### 5.3.2 Factor analysis of customer satisfaction

The previous section described how the method was demonstrated to the Bank's management during a one-day meeting. In addition to illustrating the approach, approval was given for surveying opinions of customers about recently completed personal loan interviews. This customer perspective would help refine branch manager roles, be helpful as feedback to particular managers, and enable a "before and after" evaluation of training to be made.

#### 5.3.2 (a) Why involve the customer?

When discussing with management the roles of branch managers in personal lending interviews, there was some doubt about the validity of including the role of "educator" of the customer. When branch managers first began to lend (as TSBs moved away from operating only as deposit-takers to provide a full range of banking and financial services) it was inevitable that they would give great attention to the Bank's procedures for the proper conduct of a loan interview. Whilst the Bank was concerned to launch lending quickly, it also did not want to make any mistakes and so emphasised the need to keep bad debts to a minimum. Naturally, managers, when interviewing a customer applying for a loan, attended carefully to the evaluation of risk and the correct completion of documentation - as the main

requirements of a good loan interview. The Senior Officers now being asked to adjudicate on the composition of roles were themselves steeped in this experience of careful attention to the technical and procedural aspects of processing a loan.

In this climate, it did not seem unreasonable to them to doubt the wisdom of including the need to ensure that customers were satisfactorily acquainted with their loan arrangements and relevant aspects of financial management. But yet the needs of the customer had never been established. Whilst it was held to be desirable to encourage loyalty through friendly service, its development by educating the customer (ie carefully explaining how a decision was made, reassuring the customer that in fact they could afford to repay what they wanted to borrow, carefully describing how repayments are made, and so on) had never been considered. A survey of customer opinion would test the hypothesis that education of the customer was an important part of the role definition.

Looking ahead to the operation of this training two possibilities existed for the use of customer data. Firstly, to complete the trio of influences moulding the actual performance required. By taking feedback from customers one could not only learn about specific shortfalls in acceptability of behaviour (by reference to individual scales of satisfaction), but also seek to ensure successful interviewing by virtue of maintaining (ultimately) high levels of customer satisfaction. In the initial stages of training the second use of customer data would be for evaluating performance change (indicated by changes in customer satisfaction) attributed to learning. The final

part of the feasibility study was a pilot course and it was important that it be evaluated carefully; the availability of customer data was felt to be an invaluable enrichment of such an evaluation.

5.3.2 (b) What is satisfaction and how to measure it?

Locker and Dunt (1978) have reviewed theoretical and methodological issues in sociological studies of patient satisfaction with medical care. Whilst they note that studies of satisfaction are at an early stage, they are able to give some specific advice for carrying them out. Whilst it seems that a definition of satisfaction does not exist, something can be said on that which expressions of satisfaction are based.

Satisfaction is related to perception of the outcome of the care (service) and the extent to which it meets the patient's (customer's) expectations, and this link, between satisfaction and expectation, seems well established in the literature. Preferred and anticipated expectations of outcome need to be distinguished. Also the ability of the respondent to articulate what he expects may vary from respondent to respondent, and for a given respondent could improve with time. If this is the case, then expressions of satisfaction should always be interpreted in the context of some understanding of the rationale of those expressions rather than taking them at face-value. Secondly, it indicates that expectations are not static, but likely to change with accumulating experience.

Locker and Dunt cite three uses of studies of consumer opinion: (i) To evaluate the quality of a service; (ii) as an outcome variable; (iii) as indicators of those aspects of the service that need to be changed to improve patient (customer) responses. In this research, customer opinion is considered as an outcome variable related to planned changes in the service being offered.

Collecting data from customers is obviously a crucial activity; questions can be either open or direct. Results with the former can be variable and Locker and Dunt (1978) say "individuals will report satisfaction or dissatisfaction with particular aspects of the service when asked directly, but may not give sufficient priority to those aspects to mention them spontaneously in response to an open question." In other words, they say that the recall and reporting of an event is related to its importance for or impact upon the respondent. Hence, careful interviewing procedure is needed to elicit those items that are likely not to be recalled and reported. They therefore recommend that initially open questions be used to obtain both favourable and critical comment, followed by a series of direct questions based upon prior research or experience of the event being examined. In this way is found out what the respondent considers a priority aspect of the exchange as well as about which items are dissatisfying and which the respondent considers of low significance.

With regard to rating of collected responses, three methods are suggested: (i) Global evaluation; (ii) a satisfaction measure for each aspect of the service offered to the individual; (iii) a composite measure derived from separate responses. Locker and Dunt (1978) conclude that

the requirements to be met by a consumer satisfaction measure must include: (a) Differences in level of satisfaction across the items concerned; (b) a multi-step (equal) scale for each item; (c) responses based on actual and recent events.

There is then the problem of reliability of responses. Do they reflect true feelings? Will the participant be reluctant to be honest if the person being evaluated is liked? Lebow (1974) looked at this question extensively and concluded that it was not possible to guarantee the absence of reactivity, nor that validity could be assured. In the context of the Bank, where customer loyalty is high to individual managers, and where it is considered highly likely that customers will be satisfied, provided they obtain a loan, this is a vitally important area. Locker and Dunt (1978) acknowledge that more research is needed, but in the meantime feel that the best approach is to get respondents to give an assessment of an actual experience, to separate questions about the service from the person providing it, and to use composite measures rather than global because of the insensitivity of the latter.

#### 5.3.2 (c) The pilot study - designing the questionnaire

Customer opinions about personal loan interviews were to be collected by questionnaire. The purposes of the pilot study were to: (i) Collect data from customers immediately after their personal loan interview, from which items for the questionnaire would be selected; (ii) test with a small group of customers the suitability of the wording of the

questionnaire and gauge the reaction of those customers to being approached in this way by the Bank; (iii) confirm with senior management their acceptance of the items in the questionnaire.

About two dozen customers were to be interviewed initially. This group ideally would representatively reflect the characteristics of the customers of the Bank as a whole. However, this was not easily arranged because the Bank did not have full details of customer characteristics. To get around this problem a variety of branches (and therefore, it was assumed of customers) was selected by the Business Development Department and known to be representative of all the Bank's branches. The branch categories used were: City centre; inner city suburb; outer city suburb; small town. From visits to all of these types of branches, 21 customers were interviewed after they had seen someone about a personal loan.

The interviews began with a brief description of the project followed by open questions asking the customer their opinions and feelings, both favourably and critically, about their conversation with the manager.

These were followed by appropriate direct questions. This ensured that all aspects of the loan interview (as defined by the three, agreed roles) were covered. Content analysis of these interviews revealed 88 separate references to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with either the manager, the interview arrangements or the Bank's procedures and conditions for the granting of loans. The extent of difference between some of these statements was quite small. In other cases, many examples of a personal quality of the manager were given, eg he was friendly, informal, relaxed,

etc. After grouping like items together, one item from each group was selected as a representative statement of the quality described by the group, and 29 of these were included in the questionnaire. Added to these were statements asking for ratings of overall satisfaction and an indication of feelings by people who were refused a loan, together with questions seeking demographic information and ideas about how to improve the loan interview. The actual questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

A group of 12 customers completed the questionnaire in the presence of the author. No customer objected to participating in the exercise. Nor were there any difficulties with the wording and on average it took 10 minutes to complete. The presentation of the questionnaire to the Operations Management Team raised very strong 1 objections to two of the statements: (i) "The manager seemed very honest"; (ii) "the manager was someone I would trust". It was said that these items would suggest that we were checking our managers' integrity and that it might put ideas into customers' minds about the reliability of staff for dealing with their financial affairs. These were accepted as valid objections and the items were removed from the main study (see Appendix 2).

#### 5.3.2 (d) Factor analysis of customer satisfaction personal loan interviews

The survey was directed at customer opinion as an outcome variable of personal loan interviewing. A variety of views were held by managers in the Bank as to what constituted a "good lending interview", about what was

"important to the customer", ie how they should be treated from professional and humanitarian viewpoints. But these things had not been looked at in the customers' terms. The object of the survey was therefore to identify factors of satisfaction as construed by customers, and to relate them to the roles prescribed for the manager.

Participants: 39 of the Bank's 114 branches took part. They were spread across the Bank's area, representing all types of customer and location. The Branch Manager explained the project to the customer and arranged for completion of the questionnaire. The number of questionnaires issued to a branch was related to the number of people expected to apply at the branch for a loan in the period of the survey. In all 208 (48 per cent) completed questionnaires were returned out of an issue of 435 and 78 per cent of respondents were male. The relationship between social characteristics of the respondents with those who ordinarily apply for a loan and with the customer-base at large was not studied because of lack of data, but the sample was considered to be representative of all customers when the occupations of respondents were examined.

Procedure: Each branch manager was contacted by the author and invited to participate. Any manager who considered the exercise detrimental to the welfare of his branch and to his relationships with his customers could decline to participate. Only one manager subsequently opted out. The project was explained fully to the manager and was confirmed in writing. Each manager estimated the number of applicants for loans he was likely to get in the next five weeks and



that number of questionnaires were sent to him. To avoid influencing the replies directly the manager was asked to get the customer to complete the questionnaire outside of his office in the enquiry area. Failing that he was to leave the customer in his office to complete the questionnaire in his absence. Customers were assured that whilst the manager supported the exercise he would not see the replies. A stamped addressed envelope was provided for returning the questionnaire after the customer had left the branch. An assurance was given that replies would not be detrimental to the manager's career, nor would they affect future dealings of the customer with the Bank, as they were being treated anonymously and confidentially by the people opening and scoring them.

Analysis: Scoring of the replies took into account the wording of the statements, so that a score of five was always given for maximum satisfaction, whether or not it had been negatively worded. An uncertain option was not included; there were no missing values, incomplete questionnaires being discarded. The inter-relationship between the responses to the statements was calculated by factor analysis (SPSS alpha factoring with varimax rotation).

Results: Means and standard deviations of the responses are shown in Table 1. Eight factors emerged with eigen values, greater than one but a screen test (Cattell (1966)) of the eigen values made it clear that only four factors added significantly greater proportions of common-variance-accounted-for. They accounted for 75.7 per cent of total

Variance. The factors are described below in Table 2. The statements with highest factor loadings are also shown (ie loading >0.4) and these were used to define the factors. In so doing the wording of the questionnaire's statements has been rearranged to indicate maximum satisfaction.

Table 1\*

Means and standard deviations (n = 208 in all cases)

	*	o
1. I did not mind having to make an appointment	4.47	0.90
2. The manager made me feel welcome	4.76	0.81
3. The manager did not make me feel at ease	4.36	1.33
4. The manager was friendly	4.83	0.60
5. The manager was able to ask questions without causing offence	4.65	0.94
6. The manager did not seem to understand my situation	4.41	1.24
7. The manager was open with me	4.79	0.57
8. The manager seemed keen to help me	4.65	0.97
9. I have/would have preferred to fill in the forms myself	4.08	1.17
10. I did not think all of the questions were relevant	3.92	1.34
11. The manager was too formal	4.51	0.93
12. The manager came across as the sort of person who is not easily fooled	4.39	1.11
14. The manager seemed to know what he was doing	4.87	0.60

Table 1 (Contd)

15. The manager was not easy to talk to	4.55	1.03
17. The manager did not treat me with enough respect	4.68	0.96
18. I did not like answering some of the questions	4.22	1.16
19. I was able to say what I wanted to say	4.75	0.77
20. The manager was fair with me	4.83	0.62
21. The manager helped me to think clearly about what is involved in having a bank loan	4.67	0.74
22. I did not mind the manager suggesting other services to me	3.89	1.11
23. The manager explained things to me fully	4.83	0.56
24. The manager was able to give me helpful advice	4.60	0.91
25. There are still things I do not understand	4.34	1.17
26. I was satisfied with the decision that was made	4.79	0.76
27. I fully understand the arrangements for my loan	4.89	0.52
28. I feel that if I got into difficulties with the repayments I could come back and discuss it	4.73	0.79
29. I feel I was given enough time in the interview	4.89	0.47

(\* 13 and 16 taken out of the survey)

Table 2

Description of Factors

Factor 1: REASSURANCE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING LOAN

ARRANGEMENTS

44.4 percent of total variance

statement	loading
27. I fully understand the arrangements for my loan	0.674
14. The manager seemed to know what he was doing	0.572
24. The manager was able to give me helpful advice	0.571
19. I was able to say what I wanted to say	0.549
29. I felt I was given enough time in the interview	0.506

Factor 2: MANAGER'S KEENESS TO HELP

12.8 per cent of total variance

statement	loading
2. The manager made me feel welcome	0.783
8. The manager seemed keen to help me	0.738
5. The manager was able to ask questions without causing offence	0.726

Factor 3: RESPECTING AND UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

10.2 per cent of total variance

statement	loading
17. The manager treated me with respect	0.679
15. The manager was easy to talk to	0.666
16. The manager seemed to understand my situation	0.459

18. I did not mind answering some of the  
questions

0.403

Factor 4: BEING OPEN AND FRIENDLY

8.3 percent of total variance

statement

loading

4. The manager was friendly

0.783

29. I felt I was given enough time in the  
interview

0.556

7. The manager was open with me

0.553

3. The manager made me feel at ease

0.448

Factor 1 is characterised by REASSURANCE brought about by understanding what was going on and what was to happen subsequently, being able to ask questions and not feeling rushed. Customers are anxious at the time of applying for a loan for two reasons: (i) Because they are not sure if it will be granted; (ii) because they are worried that they might have asked to borrow more than they can afford. The greatest relief seems to come when they are reassured by the manager that in fact he is satisfied that they can afford the loan and will be able to repay it. Hence the importance given to the manager seeming to know what he was doing. The manager's attention to making his assessment accurately - to meet the Bank's need for minimising risk - in fact created high satisfaction by ensuring understanding of what was happening and by providing a confirmation of their assessment prior to seeing the manager. This was particularly revealing because it demonstrated the power of adopting an educative role in contrast to the widely held

view that the most important contributor to creating customer satisfaction was being friendly.

Factor 2 clearly is important by virtue of a demonstration of the manager's keenness to HELP. Customers felt that the interview would be difficult, that the manager would have to be persuaded in some way to agree to lend the money. The obvious desire of the manager to lend money whenever possible was very satisfying to customers and no doubt closely supported the first factor's effect. Customer expectations of the manager were largely that he would be middle-aged, stand-offish, and difficult to talk to.

Factors 3 and 4 deal with the customer's realisation that the manager was someone who could identify with him, who did not feel he was superior, who was friendly and easy-going. What was interesting also was that being treated respectfully and as an individual come above the customer's desire for friendliness on the part of the manager. In conclusion, it was quite clear that cognitive variables were most important in establishing a foundation of satisfaction notwithstanding the considerable affective components in the remaining factors.

### 5.3.3 Testing the method with a pilot course

At this point five major outcomes had been achieved: A growing commitment on the part of management; a confirmation that the filming of customer interviews did not create problems; the description of a task structure for personal lending interviews, which incorporated three roles (sound lender, educator, salesman); a four-factor structure describing customer satisfaction in which it was realised

that the greatest satisfaction came from reassurance by the branch manager that the customer was not seeking an inappropriate level of borrowing, underpinning the importance of the educator role; a demonstration of the power of a review of video-film of a live customer interview.

What now needed to be done was to put these components together in a short training programme to demonstrate its viability for routine use in manager training. The object was not to test the efficacy of the video-playback device as a training technique. Pendleton (1981) had already established this showing that doctors who want to deal with patients empathically may benefit from training in the recognition of the patient's feelings and of the patient's attempts to influence the course of the consultation. What was particularly interesting in his work was that this was achieved without modelling the trainee's behaviour on that of an expert. He asserted that whilst modelling can be useful when the trainee has very little interpersonal competence, it can create problems of congruence or genuineness. His training technique of video-filming consultations with reviewed playback reaffirmed the relationship between the emotions experienced by interactants and their behaviour, and enabled noticeable differences in medical student performance in consultations to be achieved over a three week period. It was felt that the application of this work to the Bank's circumstances needed to be demonstrated in order to maintain momentum of the work and secure complete acceptance for the use of modern training techniques.

Six managers were invited to participate in a pilot course. They were experienced lenders and mature branch managers and could be relied upon to provide objective, critical comment about the technique. It was explained to them that their invitation to participate was not because they needed to learn, but rather that their reactions on experiencing the technique would be invaluable in developing it further. Whilst personal benefits from participating were not the object of the exercise, they were not discounted, and it was an opportunity to test the technique's utility for refining the performance of experienced managers.

For review of interview performance each manager provided two interviews on video-film. In addition, 12 completed questionnaires for calculating customer satisfaction were also obtained for each manager. These were to provide a "before" measure of the effect the branch manager had on his customers in personal loan interviews. The training course lasted two days. It consisted largely of the review of the video-films, with each manager being encouraged, with assistance from the other managers, to analyse critically his behaviour in the interviews against the agreed roles and task structure. The environment for such critical feedback was positive and supportive with rules to ensure dysfunctional effects of the discussion were minimal. After the course a further 12 satisfaction questionnaires were collected for each manager.

The briefing of the participants at the outset made it clear that the use of the method in the Bank in the future was in their hands. Their response was unanimously in its favour, for both experienced and trainee managers. The



participants were generally regarded to be amongst the best in the bank having been selected after advice from the Assistant General Manager (Operations), the Personnel Department and the relevant District Manager. These managers were overwhelmingly in favour of the course. What was particularly encouraging was their declaration of how much they had learned, how useful they had found structured discussion amongst their peers, and the obvious commitment to make changes in their well-established interviewing routines. The impact on them was astounding. The proof of the pudding had indeed been in the eating.

The Bank's general management were happy to accept this methodology and the evidence this test provided. The only amendment to be made for future use concerned the customer satisfaction scales. The results here were inconclusive, throwing doubt on their use in subsequent programmes. The expertise of these managers at interviewing personal loan applicants was already high. Consequently, improvements made were unlikely to produce significant changes in customer satisfaction. There were other indications, too, that even with novice managers there would not be noticeable changes in satisfaction as indicated by the questionnaire. Unsolicited comment from customers when filling in the questionnaire suggested that the ratings given were artificially high at the outset, and thus disguising any potential change induced by improved performance of the interviewer. There was obviously a great desire on the part of the customer to please. Despite assurances to the contrary, they felt they were providing information that would be presented to the manager, some of whom were well known by the customers. In some cases the questionnaire was

seen as a device by Head Office to "spy" on the manager, and they gave good replies because they did not want "to get the manager into trouble". Perhaps most influential in distorting responses was being in ignorance of the decision about their application for a loan when they completed the questionnaire. They were therefore very complimentary with their ratings because of the mistaken view that it would contribute to a decision in their favour.

But, nevertheless, the validity of the method was established. It was whole-heartedly accepted, especially by the participants, who subsequently proved to be admirable ambassadors of the Education and Training Department. They forcefully declared that "it worked", that problems were not experienced in its use, and, perhaps most importantly, that "theory" had been seen to triumph in conclusive practice. Misgivings had been swept away and the Training Department seen in a new light.

#### 5.3.4 Conclusions

This was a highly significant study in the developing relationship between the Education and Training Department and the Bank's general management. It demonstrated convincingly that training was much more than "inventing" training courses, and that when that activity was called for it was, in fact, a quite complicated affair needing to be handled very carefully. It brought together in one concerted drive: The collection of data in a scientific, objective way; the involvement of customers; the joint working of management and the Education and Training Department in devising a way of tackling a training problem;

the incorporation of the Bank's policy into training methodology; a demonstration that managers of sound competence and maturity could refine further their well-established practices; and, perhaps most importantly, gave a concrete illustration of the learning to learn paradigm and the preeminence of the individual in the learning enterprise.

Of great importance was that it illustrated that "simple" solutions (ie intuitive), whilst sometimes capable of working, are not always successful, and that sometimes a careful, thorough, theoretically well developed, approach is required. Coupled with this was the fact that the Training Department, with its relative absence of lending expertise, was seen as being able to help even senior branch managers in the development of their interviewing skills. That the trainer did not need to possess the skill being learnt was an important realisation, if full use was to be made of the growing learning expertise within the Education and Training Department. The dependence of the learner on an expert, experienced in that being learned, was to resurface in a later study when managerial beliefs about learning were closely examined.

But perhaps of greatest benefit to the promotion of education and training was that this exercise undermined the belief that those who could profit from training had "something wrong with them". The participants were experienced, capable, respected managers. Their achievement of higher levels of performance convincingly demonstrated that training could assist not only with the acquisition of new skills, but also with the pursuit of excellence by the refinement of existing performance. This did much to remove

the idea that if you were experienced you only underwent training on a remedial basis. That habitual ways could be reconstructed into greater effectiveness was indeed a valuable lesson, the implications of which provided a solid base for future initiatives.

#### 5.4 Helping prospective managers through learning to learn

One such initiative was in relation to the Bank's need to improve the supply of qualified bankers - budding managers of the future. Little had been done for this group of people, assistance having been restricted largely to financial support. The gradually mounting concern about the low rate at which students were successfully completing their courses, presented an opportunity to continue experiments with approaches to learning whilst attempting to improve the rate of return on the financial investment made in study support. About 250 prospective managers were studying for the (then) Institute of Banker's Diploma. This two-part examination consists of a generalised preparation followed by advanced study of subjects more specifically related to the practice of banking.

A variety of study methods were in use: Day release; correspondence courses; evening classes; private study. Some attempt had been made in the past to help with examination success by providing revision courses. These were of short-duration and not part of a planned programme of assistance. In addition, one half of the Bank provided study leave and the other half did not. This leave was related to length of service; it was expressly for study and had to be taken on Bank premises.

With all this in mind how was one to proceed? Certainly revision classes could be reintroduced. Advice, in various forms, could be given about how to study. But these approaches seemed to beg the question, namely, that success depended ultimately upon the student doing something for himself as opposed to having something done to him. No amount of cramming or advice-giving was going to make the students study - particularly as there were indications that the Bank's young people resented having to be students again. The problem had to be tackled at a more fundamental level - a way had to be found, that enabled young managers to overcome distractions and maintain a disciplined approach to the achievement of goals. They needed to be active, to take responsibility for their own learning, indeed, to take charge more effectively of their own lives. Of course, study advice and revision aids would still play a part, as would the development of insight about the use of study techniques. But more importantly, it seemed that assistance should be focussed on helping students gain command of their learning process.

Here was an opportunity to break with the past. Each year a considerable sum of money was spent on course fees and much of it wasted. There was no influence on who embarked on study. Many employees appeared to study for the wrong reasons. The standards of tuition they experienced varied considerably. Some found their branch managers interested in their progress and some did not. There was thus the need for the Education and Training Department to address the problem from a variety of viewpoints if examination success was to be improved and control exercised over the Bank's investment. Particularly, there was a need

to match the number studying to the estimated number of qualified staff the Bank needed in the future. Eventually, a comprehensive policy was established, but the immediate concern was to consider the ways in which young people might be helped with: (i) The decision to study; (ii) developing effective ways of studying; (iii) maintaining the desire to succeed.

In relation to which the philosophy and techniques of the Centre for the Study of Human Learning (CSHL) seemed to promise much. Their notion of the self-organisation of learning embraced not just acquisition of specific, learning skills, but also an opportunity for self-redefinition. Its ideology might thus be directed not just at study techniques, but at stimulating that process of mastery of self needed if managerial competence is to be fully gained. So the decision was made to give priority to learning to learn. Such a process would challenge the student's assumptions about himself, learning and studying. It would confront the products of educational socialisation, namely, passivity, dependence and unreflectivity, and, hopefully, lead students to question themselves in such a way that they might achieve a higher level of competence.

#### 5.4.1 A description of the learning to learn course

There were three reasons for using the expertise of the CSHL: (i) It provided an innovative response to the Bank's need for qualified staff and dealt fundamentally with the perceived problems; (ii) it enabled a professional start to be made; and (iii) it would help the Staff of the

Department to extend their thinking about their role in the teaching and learning enterprise. The course was offered at the beginning of the academic year. The students then had the possibility of applying new ways of learning throughout their programme of banking study.

Ideally, attendance on the course would have been voluntary, but it was made compulsory to avoid District Managers undermining the initiative by putting difficulties in the way of voluntary attendance. The composition of the group was also important. It was considered advantageous to make this heterogeneous (by reference to age, sex and method of study), but to standardise on the stage of study reached. The choice lay between experienced students and those about to begin their studies. It was decided to give priority to the former, and particularly to those students who were experiencing some difficulties but who, with a little help and encouragement, might be successful.

The course was entitled "Learning to Learn for Bankers" and its aims were to: (i) Help students to become more aware of and reflect upon their own learning experiences; (ii) encourage students to describe in their own terms both the structure and process of their study course; (iii) use these experiences to predict the learning demands which the course will make on their skills, strategies and organisation; (iv) encourage students to identify their learning strengths and weaknesses; (v) explore newly-developed learning to learn skills using the resources of the course; (vi) build learning skills together to operate effectively in various learning situations; (vii) enable students to improve their capacity to learn from the resources offered by the course. It was of four days

duration.

#### 5.4.2 Some considerations in the operation of learning to learn courses

Before considering the effects of and reactions to the course, it is important to consider first: (i) why a "course" was chosen as the method of introducing learning to learn; (ii) its operation from the "teacher's" perspective; (iii) the issues addressed by its content.

Introducing learning to learn by using a course is itself a contradiction. People cannot be taught how to learn and therefore the process of learning to learn cannot be prescribed. So why use this mechanism? The alternatives seemed to be: (i) Working individually with students as study problems arise and aiding each student to articulate his own solution; (ii) a self-managed workshop in which problems brought by individuals can be examined by the group with guidance from the workshop leader; (iii) the option adopted.

At the start of this project, the Education and Training Department lacked both expertise and resources. This automatically ruled out option one. The novelty of learning to learn, coupled with the observation that the Bank's aspiring managers were, relatively, unsophisticated students, suggested that it would be unwise to risk option two. Option three was feasible provided that certain conditions were met in its operation. It had the advantage of offering to the Education and Training Department a tested and comprehensive view of the learning to learn paradigm. Moreover, this experience of the process of



developing self-organisation of learning would be enormously beneficial in developing further learning to learn initiatives. Option three, therefore, was selected.

So what conditions of course operation preserve the integrity of the learning to learn concept? Essentially, they dictate the means by which the process of learning to learn is revealed. The emphasis throughout teacher-learner interaction is on getting the learner to think about how he learns and not on attempting to tell him how to learn. In particular, this means that the "teacher" must: (i) Treat learners as equals so as to avoid suggesting in any way that the "teacher" is somehow superior; (ii) force the learner to take an independent stance by withholding feedback on his performance; (iii) decline as much as possible the roles of presenter of information, controller of direction and sequence of events, and setter of standards (iv) push the learner to formulate his own purposes by withholding his own; (v) offer new ways of thinking about learning and being a learner; (vi) push the learner to question why and how he operates as he does; (vii) emphasise reflection as a tool basic to the process of change; (viii) use a variety of tools to increase the learner's awareness of process, to reveal the personal myths through which are manufactured particular approaches to learning; (ix) offer either a model of effectiveness (eg of the process of reading) or devices which the learner can use for checking his own model (eg the purpose-strategy-outcome framework) so that prescription of technique is avoided and the learner is encouraged to examine critically new ways of learning; (x) adapt a pre-set plan for the course to suit the needs of the learner as they are revealed during the event.

These then are the conditions for resolving the inherent conflict in offering learning to learn by a course. In successfully fulfilling these the "teacher" becomes a resource in the learner's reconstruction of himself. To be able to do this depends ultimately upon a clear view of the issues involved in assisting learners to become effective as their own teachers. These issues can most conveniently be represented by a series of questions, namely: (i) What is a skill? (ii) Is learning a skill, and if so, to what extent can it be learned? (iii) If it is a skill and can be learned, can it be learned with learning as the subject of learning, or must another skill be used to raise awareness of the learning process? (iv) Or are there certain, innate characteristics required for effectiveness at learning without which learning competence is impossible? (v) What happens when we attempt to change existing, fluent, habitual performances and what is involved in carrying through this change? (vi) Is there a need for a common language for the exploration of the learner's world? (vii) Is there a need for the learner to develop a taxonomy of kinds of learning as a framework for devising strategies for his learning needs and purposes? (viii) To what extent is articulating one's previous learning experiences a problem and, if so, how do we make these explicit to the process of reconstruction? (ix) What are the advantages of being passive and reproductive, as opposed to active and constructive, as a learner? (x) Are the limits of and methods for change in human performance dependent upon the metaphor that one adopts for the explanation of human functioning? (xi) Can the demands of a learning task be sufficiently quantified to enable learners to check them

against what they see as their strengths and weaknesses, and in so doing, how does one help the learner gauge his learning strengths and weaknesses? (xii) Can the future be pre-empted by contracting with oneself about what one intends to do and how one is to do it? (xiii) Is there any end to the process of learning to learn - is it just about how we learn about things, or is it about learning about ourselves? With these considerations as a background the responses of the participants to the course can now be examined.

#### 5.4.3 The response at the end of the course

This kind of course had never been offered in the Bank before. It was expected to play an important part in improving examination success and, therefore, it was followed-up very closely. Observation during the course showed clearly that the students' experience was unlike any other they had had previously, particularly, at the outset. No one seemed too sure why they were on the course, or what was expected of them. Whilst things seemed to become clearer, as the course drew to an end, they still seemed in doubt as to how to apply its ideas. Information was therefore collected from the participants about their response at the end of the course and about the progress they made subsequently. The responses collected at the end of the course are illustrated by quotations under five headings: Expectations; intellectual level; things learned; motivation; learning contracts.

##### 5.4.3 (a) Expectations

"Make the purpose known/clearer at the beginning"

"It was not explained fully enough at the beginning"

"We all found the first day boring and confusing"

"It should have been explained that we were not here to learn anything, but to be made to think for ourselves about resources, tasks, skills of learning"

"Would have liked to be told more about the course beforehand; even though we were given the course aims I still felt that I would be taught something in the conventional learner-teacher situation"

"I would have preferred to have known that I would be examining my own thoughts and ways of learning"

"Emphasise the purpose of things much more - if the introduction had been more informative the first two days would not have been so confusing"

"As the approach of the course is the opposite of all other courses experienced, by being learner-oriented, I would have preferred to have had a bit more guidance or instruction at the beginning"

"I appreciate now that we were being made to think for ourselves, but I feel that this strategy should have been explained at the outset (despite the fact that it might not have made much sense at that time)."

"My main criticism is that the course was not explained fully enough at the beginning. However, after the course I feel that if it was too fully explained at the beginning the meaning would be lost"

"Perhaps the order of the subjects needs rearranging so that it all links together better. It was only at the end when the subjects "fell into place" with each other"

"One of the reasons I did not get a lot out of this course was that I did not know what to expect and the whole situation was new"

In response to which the following observations can be made. They seem to be saying: "Tell me what I am going to learn before I learn it", except for two participants who indicated they had some insight to the incongruity of this position. If one adopts the view that we can only infer learning after it has taken place, then the conclusion to draw tentatively from these quotations is that their view of the nature of learning had not changed at all. Clearly, in

the early stages, they were unable to understand the intentions of the course. But they were able to tolerate that uncertainty and got through what seemed to them a very uncomfortable phase. Which suggests that an optimistic view can be taken of the learner's ability to handle the stress that this undoubtedly created.

Despite explanations to the contrary they came along expecting to be taught. Their expectations about "a course" were so strong that perhaps an even more forceful attack on their prior conceptions was needed. For despite their indication of a clearer understanding as the course progressed, there was no pronounced evidence of realisation about educational socialisation as the origin of the strength of their expectations. The confusion at the outset was regarded apparently as a failure on the part of the course organisers/presenters. No one attributed it to their lack of understanding or preparations, which seems to accord with how one would predict their explanations using Attribution Theory.

#### 5.4.3 (b) Intellectual Level

"I felt on a "lower level" than the others, but this may be my lack of confidence"

"We havent had the opportunity to listen to a highly qualified lecturer for many years .... he was sometimes over our heads"

"The information should be given on our level of thinking"

"This has been the most intellectually demanding course I have ever been on"

"Use simple words not big ones, which at times I did not understand"

"I did feel that they spoke a lot higher than my understanding could take in - they were on another level entirely"

Whilst these respondents represent less than half of the total, their views indicate considerable unease with the intellectual demands of the course. Whilst they rated the course about right on detail (3.35) and degree of informativeness (3.78), some interesting questions are raised: (i) Did the course go deeper than was necessary? (ii) How far should one go with intellectualising about learning to learn when actually helping people to learn how to learn? (iii) Were some of the difficulties caused by tutor style, eg discussing how to proceed with the course whilst still in the classroom, musing aloud as to whether or not to include x, appearing to go "backwards and forwards"? (iv) Is it counter-productive to treat learners as equals insofar as intellect and vocabulary are concerned?

#### 5.4.3 (c) The most important things learned

"That I have not been using my ability to the full, not using all the resources available to me"

"I am more aware now of myself as a person, and am more truthful to myself; but I am not sure if I will be able to use all this"

"That I am in control of my learning"

"How to examine my own skills as a learner. I may go away and attempt to rethink my own method of learning and possibly improve on it - only time will tell"

"I feel more confident at planning my work, but I am not sure how long this will last"

"I have become more aware that I can have control over my learning skills - I feel that I really want to take control of my learning and become an active self-organised learner rather than being passive and waiting for things to happen to me"

"That different strategies can be employed in addition to the ones I previously used, eg with regard to reading"

"I have realised that learning is my own responsibility"

"To think more about the way I study; to look at

myself when studying and search for continual improvement; to try and set a higher criteria"

"That learning is not just a matter of drumming in information, but a process of manipulation and interrogation. That by using different approaches to a subject it should be possible to overcome stumbling blocks"

"That the reason I fail exams is not that I lack content but rather I lack a logical way to record and recall information"

"I have learned to think for myself"

"To change my outlook on learning and use resources better; how to read more efficiently; an awareness that I have to do things differently and with more control of organising"

"That we are all learning constantly, but we need to be aware of how we learn in general and to improve on those skills; the importance when note-making of writing down only what information is really needed - but I don't really think all this will be that helpful, mainly because of the way it was put forward, not the subject matter"

All of which suggests: (i) That awareness has undoubtedly been raised about how they operate as learners presently and how they might operate in the future; (ii) but that, by virtue of the generality of the comments, there was a failure to grasp deeply the course's message, which explains the absence at the end of the course of concrete, specific courses of action for seeking improvements in their studying. Nevertheless, the comments are optimistic and forward-looking, particularly with regard to the need to accept responsibility for learning and for a desire for gaining control over their learning. What is somewhat contradictory, however, and therefore disappointing, is that they rated the course's usefulness at 4.21.

#### 5.4.3 (d) Motivation

"Has encouraged me to go ahead with my studies with confidence"

"The course has provided greater motivation to make a concerted effort at studying"

"Will make an honest attempt to apply the contents of this course to my next year of study"

"We did discuss amongst ourselves that we would like to all meet up again, to encourage one another and see how we are all doing"

These suggest, though far from conclusively, that they still have an impersonal model of human functioning, which demands that if they are to be motivated something must be done to them or for them. This raises the question as to what extent the course influenced their beliefs about themselves and about what they might become. It also suggests that in offering an opportunity for learning to learn more has to be done to help the learner confront himself as a human being. For unless there is acceptance of the possibility of some change taking place at that level, the prospects of getting people to "reconstruct" themselves as learners seems forlorn.

#### 5.4.3 (e) Learning contracts

At the end of the course each participant was asked to prepare a learning contract. This is not an arrangement between the student and tutor, but one the student makes with himself. It consists of the learner: Establishing his purposes; planning a strategy to achieve those purposes; determining how it will be known that the purposes have been accomplished successfully; making provision for reviewing all of that. The students were introduced to this idea on the first day of the course. They were encouraged to begin compiling a contract right away, and to confirm their intentions on the last day. The following extracts from



those contracts describe each student's purpose:

"To improve on my existing learning skills, ie make the ones I have already more effective. To use my other skills as a back-up. Make my note-taking skill more effective. To improve my input, store and retrieval system."

"To realise a better way of organising. Make better use of resources available. More aware of the best and most profitable way of answering exam questions."

"To study and pass my Law Related to Banking exam. In the long-term to qualify as a member of the I.O.B. and consequently succeed in my job."

"Achieve better input and storage of information, to recall it when required. Better forward planning. Recognise own capabilities."

"To improve learning skills."

"To get more from the resources available and take in a wider scope of resources. Think more about my own criteria, as against judging what other people are doing and at which particular stage they are."

"To obtain a greater awareness of studying as I do it, in order that I can reach a more truthful and accurate assessment of what my conception of study is - and alter either my method of study so as not to frustrate the conception or to recognise the original conception as invalid or ineffective and to reassess the concept."

"To make sure that any possible learning abilities that I may possess can be used to their greatest advantage. All aspects of learning such as reading, writing, listening, etc, can be changed in some way to make them more interesting. The major problem I find at the moment is that any subject which "bores" me is difficult to learn from my point of view. Therefore, if they can be made more interesting, I should have a chance of passing the exams. Obviously the major purpose is still to pass all the exams by the best way and in the shortest possible time."

"To become a better self-organised learner. Gain a better understanding of the tools used on the course."

"To improve the way I learn, by assessing the ways of learning. To concentrate and plan out the subject so that I pass the exams. To be able to organise my learning. "Man as personal scientist" and to incorporate it into work as well as written qualifications."

"To find an ideal way of learning. To be able to observe how I learn. To be able to do a structure of meaning on the Examiner's report."

"To pass Economics and Law exams. To be able to absorb instructions received in my job more efficiently. To

observe myself when in a learning situation."

"To use various resources and skills pointed out on this course to increase my learning ability." "To learn in a different way, to be more aware of what I am learning."

"To learn in a different way, to be more aware of what I am learning."

"To help me to try to use my own ability to make studying easy to understand and to obtain more ideas about resources."

"Learn how to learn properly. Tutors to point out where I am going wrong and tell me how to put it right."

All of which seems to bear out the observation made earlier (when commenting about the most important things learned) that the course had not enabled them to make concrete plans. Largely, the contracts are about "making better" use or "being more aware" of something, or deal with the context for the contract, namely, passing of examinations. But how does one explain this? The course approximately followed the structure and time-plan prepared at the outset. Is the explanation for limited progress to be found in the mode of presentation? Was it simply too difficult to comprehend? Is four days too brief? Certainly, there was sustained interest. Morale was good and a jovial atmosphere maintained. But are these deceptive? Do they belie an underlying malaise of confusion, dissatisfaction and a failure to make the opportunity intelligible? Should there have been some leading of the students so that they could have left the course with a more extensive understanding of how they might improve their studying. It now remained to see what they actually did achieve in the months following the event.

#### 5.4.4 Longer term responses to the course

The students were contacted three times after the course. Except for two of them, everyone was interviewed within four weeks of attending the course. It was assumed that what was said at this stage would represent what was of most importance to the student. Any euphoria generated by the course would by then have been dissipated, it being difficult for them to repeat what they might consider to be desirable things to say. At that time they would have had every opportunity to get underway with their studies and to have confirmed a plan of action about learning to learn.

Notwithstanding all of that, the first interview would still be near enough to the course for learning to learn conversations to be meaningful. Its main emphasis was on reconstructing the event so as to continue the learning process. Much of the interview, therefore, was about their understanding of what the course had been seeking to achieve and how they had personally related to it.

Three months were then allowed to elapse without further contact from the Education and Training Department. The students were free to seek help if they wished, and this was made clear to them at the end of the course and during the first interview. No one sought assistance from the Department. They were then interviewed a second time. The emphasis during this contact was equally distributed between data collecting about progress with learning to learn, providing help with assessing their progress towards the examination, and with making further plans about successfully completing their studies. Data from this interview were combined for analysis with information collected by telephone shortly after students had sat their examinations. The interviews throughout were semi-

structured and Appendix 3 illustrates the approach adopted at each stage.

The purposes throughout the interviews were to: (i) Collect data about the behaviour of the student that indicated a change in approach to study which could be related to the learning to learn course; (ii) provide continuing support by way of sustained contact, offers of help, encouragement, guidance and clarification about learning to learn and the actual study method employed.

The data are presented first as a set of definitions of learning offered by the students. The work of Saljo and Marton has shown conclusively that a key factor in distinguishing successful and unsuccessful students is the degree of sophistication of their personal definition of learning. It seemed reasonable to suppose that a course that concentrated upon learning, the responsibility of the learner, and the methods whereby learning competence can be increased, ought to lead to definitions that reflected an increased awareness and knowledge of the learning process.

Secondly, the individual's assessment of the effect of the course is then illustrated by a series of quotations. They describe changes they have experienced and are going to make in their studies, and which they attribute to the learning to learn course. After the quotations a summary is given of the conclusions reached by the student at the end of this learning to learn sequence.

#### 5.4.4 (a) Definitions of-learning

Learning is a difficult concept to describe. It was felt inappropriate to begin the interview with a question

such as: "How do you define learning?" Equally it was undesirable to preface a request for a definition with conversation about learning itself that might influence the student's response. The definitions were therefore collected in the early part of the conversation and usually after the student had been asked to give his recollections of the event.

The students considered learning as:

"Seeing something that you have not seen or heard before, but understanding it as well as knowing it, which is being able to repeat it parrot-fashion";

"Being aware of your own ability to understand, getting all the facts, being able to store them, by making connexions with other things, word associations, and then recall later";

"Appreciating what and why you are doing it, the subject, a general background of appreciation, awareness of the "what" and "why" of what is going on";

"Something that happens within oneself, its getting a better understanding, and by that I mean being able to see what things mean";

"Understanding, remembering and recall. (remembering is storage; recall is output and understanding is being able to explain it afterwards in my own words)";

"Gaining knowledge, improving knowledge in your job and things that apply to that job, getting a better understanding of what is going on";

"Being taught used to be how I thought of it, but there is more to it than that, you can learn on your own without being taught, you can teach yourself, can motivate yourself, you have to be active not passive";

"A process you use, eg reading, for taking it in, what you do with it when you've got it, how you put it into practice";

"Gaining extra knowledge that you did not have before and being able to use it";

"Something that meant nothing to me before; now its not just reading or asking questions and storing information, its a process where if its stored correctly the work on the memory is easier; and to actually think more about what you are doing; if you store it properly it can be recalled properly";

"Absorbing information by using skills available to you";

"My interpretation of a set of facts and the proof of learning is doing something with the knowledge";

"Working for yourself, not waiting for others to do it for you; its a process where you have got to decide what to do, not wait for someone else to tell you".

5.4.4(b) The individual's assessment of the way  
in which the course had influenced the  
approach to study

E

"Before I used to sit down to study and hope that someone would telephone which would take me away from it. Now I get in a proper frame of mind, relaxed, knowing I am settling down for a couple of hours, and then you can get some enjoyment out of it. So I think a bit more, concentrate more ....

"I now realise that doing things parrot-fashion is no good - you have to know something rather than just be able to repeat it ....

"I like the structure of meaning approach, building up from one word on the page, this is better than writing a description of something, this is an example of something working and making me less sceptical about the course"

E finally abandoned his studies because of personal problems. His approach to preparing for study was continued successfully. He also learned about himself by continued reflection about the course. He realised that it is an habitual response of his to question the utility of events like the learning to learn course and that this has prevented him from gaining from these, rather than it being a fault of the event itself. Initially, he thought that he already knew what was being dealt with on the course because he had worked out the purpose of each session, just before it was described by the tutor. He had realised, however, that this was not the case, and that a great deal of the course was, in fact, new to him. He felt both of these realisations were important learning experiences for

him.

M

"I feel I am more disciplined now, more enthusiastic. I have also more carefully calculated how long it will take to complete the correspondence course. But the main thing is I am more committed, I am enjoying it now.

"I read more deeply now and spend more time on my reading, I think whilst I am actually reading, and make notes in my own words. I am more active when I have a problem, eg I will go to the library, in fact I have already got extra books. I now look at the syllabus in relation to what the correspondence course is doing - I have not done that before.

"I now believe that I have the ability to do it, I feel more confident."

M postponed his examinations from April to September due to his wife having a baby. He continued obtaining books from the library and continued to enjoy his studies.

Ma

"Before the learning to learn course I did not think about the examination when I was trying to learn. I was not learning for the examination before. But I do now. Each time I read now, I think: "Is that going to be in the examination?" It makes me discover little bits I do not understand. Before the course it used to bother me if I skipped studying. Now I study when I feel like it and if I do not study it does not bother me anymore."

Ma was unable to study successfully since the course because of her husband's illness and her father's death. She reverted largely to her usual way of studying. There were signs, however, of lasting influence. She still felt she read more actively and believed that she can be successful at examinations. She was much more aware since the course of how she studied and she seemed to be more questioning. As evidence of increased confidence with people she cited being able to interview customers in the manager's office with less nerves than before. In the

examination, she was not "afraid" of the questions, she felt calm and able to read them carefully.

#### A

"Learning has now become enjoyable. It is now possible to make it interesting. The course has given me the motivation I needed ....

"I now look at the subject as a whole, particularly via the syllabus ....

"I do not accept things quite so easily, I question more, I do not accept the Correspondence College as "gospel"

"My reading is different. I go to the exam questions first. I assume that the subject must be important if an exam question has been asked about it ....

"I am now trying to work to a timetable - set times for study - before I did it when I felt like it"

The course seemed to have influenced her more at work than at studying. At work she did not accept things so easily and was more inclined than previously to defend her actions. She abandoned the new reading strategy, reverting to reading as far as she can understand after which she then reads aloud, "lecturing herself" as she put it. She intended to make notes during her studies, but did not; she found it more relaxing just to read. She is inclined, however, to make notes just before the examinations. When making notes she said she did not have the confidence to "miss bits out". She seemed to have been motivated, initially, and the course made her aware that studying can be a pleasure and that it can be in her control - but it appeared that she was unable to maintain her commitment.

#### B

"When reading, I now look at the questions first to identify the things they are looking for, what it is they are trying to draw out of me, so I know what to concentrate upon. Another thing I have changed is that I do not just



start to read - what I did before was to read in blocks, mastering each block before going to the next - now I read the whole chapter first, quickly, to get an overview. Then the second reading is a block reading and what I have in mind is that the things in questions are those that will be looked for in an exam, so these are the things I need to remember."

B sustained his altered approach to reading. However, his use of a text seemed to be influenced more by the type of text (journal, book, newspaper) than his learning purpose, which he underlined by indicating that the course had had "no real influence" on him. He regarded himself as being more active as a student, but attributed this to working in the Education and Training Department rather than to the course. He did feel that the major contribution of the course had been to "bring home that effective learning comes from taking responsibility for one's own learning" which helped him make the "shift from school learning, where everything is done for you". Specific examples of maintained influence of the course were: (i) More attention to command words to determine what was wanted by an examination question; (ii) use of a greater range of resources which include TV, radio and specialist newspapers.

#### D

"I have a different attitude as I read now. I watch myself and I realise now that I have the ability to control what I take in, and I think that will always be with me ....

"I am more enthusiastic than I was, talking about learning to learn has made me want to learn. I am now determined to discipline my mind and the course has given me the confidence to think that I can do it if I try. There is only me in charge of whether I learn or not ....

"In the past I have tried to study knowing that I have not allowed enough time, and that I could not possibly reach the standard, and yet I still do it. I now realise that is just wasting time, there is no point. I now give equal time to the two subjects; before I spent a lot of time on one and ignored the other. I am trying to organise my social life to give time for study. I have allowed time for understanding as I go along. I have read one part, now

intend to do a flow diagram to ensure I understand ..

"When reading I look at the headings, sub-headings for a chapter before reading it. Before I just read through it word by word. Looking at the headings prepares my mind for it, lets me know what to expect. I only read through once, but I do jump back. The reading exercise made me see that you do have to keep jumping back. I've realised that its not enough just to look at the words, you have to understand.

D did not start her studies energetically, but was trying to catch up as the examination approached - she felt she worked better as time runs out. She still seemed to be heavily involved in social life. She abandoned quickly her plans to use the flow diagram technique, as she found diagrams "difficult to understand". She tried an experiment of "automatic note-making". In this she picked up a pen as soon as she began to read. However, this led her to copying everything she had read and it was soon discontinued. With regard to her hopes for controlling what she takes in, it turned out she could only do this when "in the mood". She soon felt that she did not need to "prepare" herself by reading through the headings and gave this up. Her reading seemed to return to what it was before the course. The course gave her the enthusiasm to begin studying, but this has now worn off.

### Mi

"I find that when I am reading I do not take things in always, so I tried to think of how I am reading as I go along. And I realised that if I read something four or five times instead of just once it goes in much better. I also marked difficult passages in red which I did not do before. I have always read aloud the difficult bits, word by word, to get each word going into my head. Sometimes I would think I was going daft for doing it, but I realised on the course that it was helping me. It made me think about why I am doing it.

"Just before the course I had tried a new method of note-making. But it did not work, it was probably too near the exam. After the course I thought I might try it again. I

have used this new way of note-making to prepare for a test paper and it seems to be working."

By her own assessment she was "not doing very well". She had initially continued with her approach to reading, but had not pursued her note-making idea - she did not have time anymore for making notes! After the examination, she felt she had not worked hard enough and expected to fail. She had by then put the learning to learn course to one side. Her experiments had been abandoned as the examination approached because she did not have the confidence to continue with them.

De

"My reading is different now. I now read thinking about likely questions, or I read through and see if I can answer questions. Sometimes I underline main points - the things that seem to me to be the most important. I make notes now as I go along; I never made notes before at all. "Before I used to read things through and through and at the end of the month try and answer the questions. Now I attempt to answer the questions in note form as I go along. I do not know if it will work, but it cannot be worse than before; only time will tell."

De continued to read differently (although with less attention to questions) and felt he "takes notes a lot more now". Whilst the learning to learn course did not help him with his examination preparation, it did help him with answering questions in the examination: "I made notes before I began answering, before I just went straight into answering without preparing my thoughts." But he felt, in summary, that the main thing the course had given him was "a boost, an increased interest, improved morale, an incentive to study".

S

"I changed the way I make notes. Before I used to write it all out in my words. Now I write only one sentence per paragraph.

"I have changed a little in reading for pleasure; sometimes I now skip a bit - but obviously I cannot do that with Accounts because I need to understand every sentence."

S discontinued study shortly after the first interview due to considerable personal difficulties. One of these was that she had never studied without face-to-face tuition and she found that she "just could not discipline myself to work each evening. If I had been at College, it would have been alright." She was a nervous girl, "frightened" by such things as the Correspondence College giving her notice of the documents that were to be sent to her. She also saw her Assistant Branch Manager having difficulty with studying and assumed that she would have little chance, therefore, of passing.

C

"I have not had much chance to put things on the course into practice. I could not get into the reading thing. When you have done the reading thing for a long time, it sticks, its hard to get out of the routine, the rut you are in.

"I remember the cards clearly (structure of meanings) but it did not seem relevant to me.

"So, basically, there is no difference in my studying, except I feel I am concentrating harder, and I am trying to be a better listener. The trouble is I have not really got a fixed motive in mind - I'm still floating around - as regards the exam - I'm not sure which way to go ...."

C confirmed that at the end of the course he did not really have a plan and was "a bit confused". He felt the course had "given me some ideas, but I did not think they were much help because I could not relate them to passing an exam". The major influence seemed to have been that he now does not rely on reading material only once. Interestingly,

he did not use the syllabus: "I have concentrated more on learning it, rather than seeing how it's set out in a syllabus." He relied a great deal on his tutor at the College to ensure that he covered the syllabus, and determined the emphasis he should give to topics by reference to the questions he was set for homework. As the examination approached he was especially keen to attend a revision course because "it's in bits and pieces now; it would structure it for me, give some pattern, and provide a chance for me to test my memory". Certainly his motivation had been sustained and his colleagues confirmed the effort he made.

## J

"I can honestly say that studying has become a lot easier, perhaps because I've taken a few practical things from the course. Its the practical things I could relate to, eg: (i) I recall facts from studying and as they occur to me I write them down, and these recall other things, and it seems that once I have got it down on paper, its leaving room for something else to come through; (ii) I carry a book with me now, when my mind is on the exams, I take it out and read, ie when I'm in the mood, which is better than sitting there for an hour when you are not in the mood.

"I remember better now what I have read because I read when I want to learn. I have had the idea for a while of studying when I feel like it, rather than to a fixed timetable, but since the course I have had the confidence to do it.

"As to the future, I have sent off for exam papers and will work from my notes to see if I can answer the questions.

"I am going to use the library better than I did before. And try to apply the reading technique so as to relate the text better to what I am studying.

"I feel I am also more attentive at listening. I try to take the bare-bones out of what is said, try to read into what people are saying, trying to get more out of it.

"I feel I am now able to speak out in groups. I had never done that before. I enjoyed speaking out on the course. I also feel that I am thinking more about what to say, so that I can get to the point quicker - and one or two people have noticed improvement there."

J postponed taking his examinations from April to September, because he felt he had not done enough work. However, he felt he had been successful at: (i) A flexible study pattern (despite it resulting in the quantity of work being insufficient); (ii) taking books from the library; (iii) remembering things; (iv) accepting the validity of setting personal criteria for effective study, eg being honest about whether or not time was beneficially used, studying when you want to and not to a pre-set plan, etc, but that he had not successfully applied them; (v) not relying completely on the providers of teaching material. He had abandoned the other objectives he had set himself. He missed the stimulus of working with other students and his success seemed totally dependent upon whether or not he liked the subject of study.

#### Ba

"I have not changed anything really since the course, but I feel I am more aware of things. I have found myself watching how I read, which is inhibiting really, because part of my concentration is used in watching and less notice is taken of the content. On those occasions I have gone back and read the passage again, without watching myself, to make sure I had not missed anything.

"I have started to make notes of just the main points. Before I used to make "essay-type" notes, practically copy the book out.

"I have also thought about including revision and review in my time-plan, which I have not done in the past. Before it has been a quick cram at the end. I realise now this is wrong. I intend to plan a campaign to review regularly and to revise at the end.

"The learning contract is different. I am not in agreement with that. It's jargon. The fact that after writing it you can change it freely means it loses a lot for me."

Ba did not engage in much study following the learning to learn course. He had applied for a correspondence course, but the delivery of the materials had been delayed

and he had waited patiently for them without complaining or seeking assistance. Basically, he retained his previous method of study, feeling "safer" to stay as he was. He has failed examinations previously, but he put this down to lack of effort rather than faulty technique. His only change in approach seemed to be to add scanning of texts to his normal straight-through read pattern and that whilst scanning he made notes of "key words".

## F

"The reading exercises had quite an impact. I have confirmed since that I do need spectacles. I have been practising selective reading at the branch. In the past I just re-read until I understood. Now I go forward to see if that helps me understand the bit I am having difficulty with. And it works. The other thing I want to do is to progress to speed reading.

"I used to expect people to teach me. I can see what Laurie meant, it is me that is going to learn, therefore, I have got to research the information, put it together in a way that I can understand.

"I have also prepared a plan for Economics, by finding out from the syllabus what I am supposed to know. This idea really appeals to me, of getting to grips with the whole subject first.

"I feel more motivated. I now see that I ought to get my exams.

"I have also decided to read when I want to, not just follow a pre-set timetable.

"But it is the syllabus that has done it for me, seeing the whole instead of tiny parts in isolation. What I am doing now is to put the subject together before I begin reading. I can see where each part fits into the whole.

"I am spending more time on studying because I am confident now that I can get through the exam, and this is why I have sent off for the whole course."

F felt he had carried forward his plans successfully and was still particularly keen on the use of the syllabus, especially to give purpose and emphasis to his reading. He felt he had become a better student in that he is more

relaxed and less concerned about studying. At the examination he was quicker than before in deciding which questions to answer and was able to "understand what they were about more quickly than before". He felt that the learning to learn course had: (i) Helped him "put everything into some order" and created a logical pattern for his study; (ii) enabled him to plan his reading such that "each time I picked up a book I felt that what I had done had been a worthwhile thing in preparation for the exams." He acknowledged that his ineligibility for applying for jobs recently advertised in the Bank had caused him to study a lot harder in order to make progress with his career.

#### Ca

"Well it certainly encouraged me regarding my creative writing; I have now completed some stuff and sent it off for publishing. I also feel I am more critical now. I speak up more. I feel I am more active. I liked the participation on the course. I tell people more what I think.

"I have thrown my notes away and replaced them with a card index system. I have tried to use the flow diagram technique, but have not been too successful; they make sense to me, but I am not sure they would make sense to others.

"I think I am more active with my reading. I seek understanding, which to me is making sense of it, fitting it with what I have read elsewhere, adding to what I know. I underline things now after I have read through, then I write notes, which hopefully will fit with what I am trying to learn. If I am not happy with the text, I look elsewhere now, at other resources, papers, other books, to help me understand. Before I used to just leave it if I did not understand.

"In the future I intend to do exam questions; in the past I looked at exam papers but did not do anything about them. But I will later, to check my understanding.

As she approached the examination, Ca deliberately reduced the time she was devoting to creative writing to give herself more time for studying. Her card index was



successfully maintained. But she abandoned the use of flow diagrams because she did not have enough "confidence with the subject I was learning". She did retain her belief that she is more active in her reading. But her use of "extra resources" was soon confined to one text book to support the correspondence materials. Her resolve regarding examination questions wavered. To save time she looked at the questions and talked through the answers to them. She planned a timetable, but abandoned it. She acknowledged that she had not done enough work but did try to catch up. She explained: it as: "I'm very idle, I need to be made to work". She also had begun to query the worthwhileness of studying, which is undermining her commitment. She appeared to derive more satisfaction from doing things other than studying. Her summing up of the contribution of the learning to learn course was: "It gave me more of an interest, because of the interest taken in me. It reduced the sense of isolation. Because someone else is involved it makes you feel that you ought to try, because somebody else cares about you."

#### 5.4.5 A commentary on the outcomes of the learning to learn course

Introducing learning to learn in TSB of Birmingham and the Midlands was a new venture. It was offered in the hope that not only would study problems be ameliorated quickly, but that the students could continue a search for improved ways of studying without continued tutorial assistance. To this end both a coherent theoretical framework and an intense learning experience were made available. The course expected a great deal of the participants and sacrificed none of its principles or standards in delivering its message. It spear-headed a move to a comprehensive

management of professional qualification. Its outcomes, therefore, needed to be evaluated carefully. It was felt that a quantitative "before and after" assessment based upon examination results would be too crude to gauge the impact of the course on the students and their study methods. Indeed, it was far from certain that a significant correlation would occur. In addition, other action (outside of this research) was being taken that would influence results such that it would be extremely difficult to isolate reliably any cause-effect relationships.

It was decided, therefore, to adopt a qualitative, conversational approach. This would attempt to uncover achievements of any kind from which conclusions might be drawn about the course of further work. What follows is drawn from the observation of reactions during the course and thereafter as the students prepared for their examinations over several months following their learning to learn experience. The conclusions are tentative but taken together represent a comprehensive description of the difficulties and opportunities in this area of work.

The process of learning to learn is an intellectually and emotionally demanding experience. The students' convictions about "training courses" were so strong that they rejected the description of the course given to them at the outset. What the students had experienced in the past, how they had come to think about learning, being on a course, etc, dictated completely how they were to react throughout the first day. Consequently, there was considerable confusion at the outset because the course presenters did not behave as (traditionally) teachers do. The students perceived the course as unstructured, without a

sequence they could identify. The "point of it" was lost - no one explained why things were being done. The shock of this was such that one person sought guidance about how to behave in these circumstances. She had never before been called upon to respond in this way. This raises an important dilemma in learning to learn. If a start, however small, is made on teaching a person how to use a learning opportunity can they thereafter be helped to learn how to learn? If anxiety is created by withholding conventional teaching, at what point does this become dysfunctional, and how can the course presenter avoid it?

As the course unfolded all participants confessed to experiencing intellectual difficulty. They were being asked questions about things they had never thought about before. There were many references to being out of their "depth". Consequently, the question must be asked: Can learning to learn and self-organisation be simplified such that students of widely varying intellectual ability can embrace it? This would seem paradoxical, but yet any statement of the learning process runs the risk either of obfuscating the student or trivialising the concept. The task for the future is thus to find a language of learning to learn which ensures its application is unrestricted.

But despite the stress that the course undoubtedly created the students displayed remarkable capacity for persevering in adversity. Not one student abandoned the course and all worked hard throughout it. But yet, to what extent was this a product of the prevailing culture of the organisation? Learning to learn embraces confrontation of the status quo, in order to find a "better" way. But what if the organisation's culture prohibits that kind of behaviour?

Could participants, driven by the need to conform, participate vigorously in the course whilst at the same time experiencing increasing stress brought about by the intellectual and emotional challenge the learning opportunity presented?

Finally, in relation to a general consideration of student reaction to the course, there is the problem of people blaming other people or things outside of themselves when things go wrong. The students were no exception, blaming the organisers for their early confusion, for "not telling us what we were going to learn". This suggests that learning to learn presents an opportunity, not exploited fully by the course, for helping people to redefine themselves psychologically. It is logical to suppose that in the absence of external obstacles to study progress (eg lack of resources) that solutions to study difficulties reside within the student. But attributing failure to others inhibits an internal exploration, and therefore this kind of attribution must be confronted directly if an openness of mind, pre-requisitional to learning to learn, is to be established.

The course affected the students' feelings about learning more than it affected how they employed specific techniques of studying. Throughout the period of data collection all the students stressed how much more aware they were about the way they studied. But this awareness was not always translated into specific action designed to change what they did. This showed particularly in the way they drafted learning contracts at the end of the course. Largely, they set purposes at a high-level of generality and often dealt with the context for their studying and desire

for success. Significantly, little attention was given to these contracts after the end of the course. Several students willingly disclosed that they had looked at their contract after the course only because they were about to be interviewed. No contracts were amended. Clearly this device was not seen as important, all of the students failing to recognise the importance of the concept.

The changes attempted in their study methods were quite small, though nevertheless potentially significant to the individual concerned. This further supports the idea that the course insufficiently helped the students to take charge of themselves as learners. The descriptions they offered about study were crude and contained much that was ineffectual. Perhaps, for students of this kind, before attempting learning to learn, some form of preparation is needed such that their basic approach to study is reasonably sound? The variety of views they expressed about what was appropriate study practice certainly pointed towards finding out more about their conceptualisation of this process. The definitions of learning they produced after the course can only be described as limited. They still closely related learning to information, and particularly to the concept of "absorption". In some cases they were concerned that this information be used, but no student produced a definition of category 4 or 5 as set out by Marton and Saljo (1984).

Further evidence of limited intellectual impact of the course was the piece-meal take-up of ideas. It was as if someone had offered a checklist from which certain steps had been identified as relevant. Perhaps most important of all, there seemed to be hardly any realisation about the role of personal myths in learning, those personal theories through

which students direct their studies. Certainly they were more open to discarding attempts to study unproductively, in favour of studying at times when they felt strongly inclined to do it. However, it was not always clear that in doing this there was sufficient control over the total time spent studying, and consequently whether or not it was an effective substitution.

Sustaining commitment to the pursuit of self-organisation proved extremely difficult. In the majority of cases they could be described as guilty of falling into what Gurdjieff called "forgetfulness". They simply retreated into their previously, well-established routines. Thomas (1985) has drawn attention to this phenomenon and described the kind of support needed to help people through the period of adjustment to (hopefully) a higher level of skill. Without this, however, it appears that only a minority of learners are able to cope. This ability seems to be characterised by: (i) A creativity of mind; (ii) an almost obsessional desire for having things better than they appear to be; and (iii) a strongly felt need for independence.

Another way of interpreting their withdrawal is by considering it as learned helplessness. To put this helplessness to one side calls for courage and objectivity that seemingly few possess. Which suggests that there is a need to find out more about students' circumstances as a pre-requisite to developing ways for empowering them to take charge of their lives.

A major component in seeking personal change is the generation and maintenance of the will to succeed. Unfortunately, in all cases the students demonstrated the possession of an impersonal model of motivation. They all

felt encouraged by having attended the course. "It" had motivated them. There were many references to lacking discipline, not being able to concentrate, and being in doubt as to whether there was enough time for study. Indeed, some of them even wondered if they wanted to study at all. But the intensity of these feelings was diminished by attending the course and having someone take an interest in them. This motivational problem may be related to the student's relationship with their managers and with how they feel about the organisation as a whole. This relates to the point made earlier about the effect of the organisation's culture on the students' responses to the course, and it would seem that the successful introduction of learning to learn depends intimately upon a satisfactory understanding of and response to the situational influences upon learning.

The learning contracts and the kind of preoccupations of the students in the period immediately following the course show a pronounced emphasis on processes at the expense of outcomes. Hayes (1985) has shown that success is built on competence in a job. Competence for him is not just being able to show that one knows, or that one has acquired the skills indicated by the job description, or those specified by the relevant training programme. It is instead being able to employ the gained knowledge and skill usefully in an actual job. All of which can be applied to the "job" of studying. The learning contracts and subsequent actions of the students reflected the components of the course rather than the translation of those components into effective studying. And effective performance at studying would include such things as covering the syllabus on time, adequately rehearsing for the

examination, displaying the ability to construct answers to acceptable standards. Unfortunately, these concerns were in the minority.

These detailed case histories created an overwhelming conviction that their meaning can only be preserved by retaining their individuality. The significance of the students' achievements can only be understood in their terms. By comparing them with external frames of reference they appear simple and elementary. But for the student they were important and powerful. And yet, at the conclusion of this project, it was clear that if help with learning to learn was to be given effectively to future students, it was necessary to understand more about the conceptual world from which those students would come. Further studies (outside the scope of this research) were carried out into this aspect. They used factor analysis and reported upon definitions of study held by both the student and manager populations of the Bank.

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## CHAPTER 6

### WORKING WITH MANAGEMENT TO IDENTIFY THE ROLE OF BRANCH MANAGERS

At the commencement of the Education and Training Department, "training" was viewed narrowly. Emphasis was placed on the provision of courses and needs were responded to as they emerged. This view was strongly challenged. The intention was to replace it with a more active, dynamic relationship between manager and trainer, and one that included the notion of training sometimes acting proactively to help management form its manpower development plans. No attempt was made to change the role of training as being there to provide management with what it wanted. Rather the debate was about the kinds of conclusion reached about what actually was wanted. Sometimes the Bank's management was unsure about what it ought to expect of its Education and Training Department, often failing to recognise when it could make a contribution to the improvement of performance problems. The opening discussions with management challenged this state of affairs and sought a re-ordering of understandings about the manager's responsibility for the development of his staff and the effect of situational influences on an individual's ability and willingness to learn.

As the Education and Training Department increased its operations, it was able to demonstrate the complexity of the learning enterprise. The reliance on adopting ready-made solutions to perceived problems was undermined by the In-Branch Marketing Survey. Additionally, and more importantly, this project was especially influential in

gaining acceptance of the proposition that the role of the branch manager was far from clear and opened the way to a more comprehensive and searching exploration of branch operation.

The evaluation of training courses confirmed the need for the proper integration of training and the workplace. An important aspect of this was the introduction of ideas about the relationship between organisational culture and transfer of learning. Whilst this did not add significantly to how the Bank viewed the use of training resources, it did make an important contribution to the design of the branch operation study.

The interviewing skills study and the learning to learn experiment vividly opened up understanding about the process of learning. They established the fundamental importance of the individual and demonstrated the reliability of contingent solutions. But perhaps most important of all, they powerfully illustrated that the pursuit of excellence was a worthwhile use of training expertise. This extension of training's role, from helping with first-time acquisition of abilities and remedial attention to low-performers, was highly significant because it facilitated acceptance of further initiatives.

#### 6.1 Initial conclusions about learning at work

These studies demonstrated a number of key conclusions concerning the learning enterprise in institutions. They can be most conveniently presented as a matrix of inter-related dimensions each composed of competing polarities, as follows:

## Teaching versus learning

The teaching perspective is one of abilities acquired by reference to a syllabus. In this, knowledge is determined by the teacher, ordered and objectively arranged. It is pre-digested and offered to the learner somewhat detached from the workplace. Knowledge of this kind subordinates the learner and is located in public meaning space.

In contrast, the learning perspective relates abilities to personally constructed knowledge or meaning. Whilst being idiosyncratic in the mode of its creation, it is still viable; the requirements of the workplace and the circumstances, preferences and uniqueness of the individual are combined. In this perspective, other-organised knowledge is subordinate to the learner and his purposes and the locus of control is within private meaning space.

## Passivity versus activity

Conventional teaching induces dependence and passivity. But learning is an active process, not just in the sense of apprehension and alertness, but in the sense of formulating intentions. The learner, actively directing his own learning, must not only make choices from that which confronts him, but also must be willing to accept responsibility for that which is going on within himself. In seeking to take command of himself the learner necessarily strives for independence and that ability to organise within himself the process and structure of his learning. It is thus directly opposed to the absorption of "facts" offered

by others in accordance with how they anticipate the learner's needs and processes.

### Isolation versus incorporation

Training programmes suffer if their values, structure and methods are in conflict with the needs of the workplace. This separation isolates the acquisition and potential use of skills. It trivialises the development of competences by restricting them to being a product of the interaction of a learner and an organised learning opportunity. By incorporation is meant the removal of this separateness by making the style and content of learning in harmony with that which is of crucial concern to the workplace.

The way in which employees carry out their jobs depends upon many things, not least of which are the conclusions they reach about what the organisation expects of them. These conclusions relate to what is considered appropriate action concerning such as: (i) Quality and output of work; (ii) priorities and objectives; (iii) what is regarded as legitimate work activity (especially regarding the use of discretion and initiative, the display of feelings and how personal problems are resolved); (iv) the effort the employee is prepared to make.

The influences eliciting these conclusions are both direct and indirect. The former are statutory and procedural in nature, eg definitions of jobs, operational rules, published standards of acceptable work. The latter are subjective and qualitative in nature, eg the means by which recognition is bestowed, the way mistakes are treated,

the maintenance of traditions, and the conventions for interpersonal contact.

It follows that "incorporated training" cannot deal with a designated job category; it must also include reference to that job's superior position. Indeed, if it is to be fully operational it must engage the totality of the cultural process whereby employees are influenced to comply with norms, values and beliefs, which means that the management hierarchy as a whole must be mobilised in the elucidation of ways of organising, directing and performing work. This raises the possibility of creating mechanisms directed not just at maximising the transfer of learning, but which are also capable of being used for organisational change through the detailed exploration of problems and intentions.

#### Absolute versus contingent

"Absolute" is intended to convey the idea that solutions exist outside of the system within which the problem resides. Absolute solutions are expert-based and available for application by judicious selection from competing alternatives. Contingent approaches, however, stress that the solution lies within the problem. Moreover, it can also be found by the people concerned with the problem and without recourse to external experts. Thus, effectiveness is defined relatively, in the terms of those responsible for getting things done.

In the context of the individual learning enterprise, the onus is on the learner to define for himself that which he wishes to become. In this way learning purposes are

generated. And so with organisations: The attainable definitions of "success" or "effective" are those created by those who pursue those concepts. This realisation that one is both creator and solver of problems to be encountered in one's life is the corollary to the acceptance of the obligation to chart the direction of one's own life implicit in the concept of self-organisation.

### Behaviour versus outcome

In developing a relative definition of effectiveness, it nevertheless remains to determine the terms of that specification. Should the emphasis be on behaviour or outcomes? Behavioural training eschews consideration of the origins of behaviour. Instead it makes the basis of change that which can be reliably made explicit to the learner - his own actions.

This seems pessimistic and naive. It is pessimistic because it does not accept the learner as subject, capable of formulating his own intentions. And naive by virtue of expecting significant change to take place as a result of focussing on process. The colloquial adage: "It's not what you say. but the way that you say it!" is misleading. The actor must first have something to say before he can even begin to rehearse how to say it. There is thus a need to emphasise outcomes as well as process.

### Simple versus complex

Human behaviour is immensely complicated. Some attempt at accounting for it, however, must be made if one is to

gauge the efficacy of efforts at enabling people to acquire more personally satisfying ways of behaving. In turn this assessment can be either "simple" or "complex".

Approaches of the "simple" kind are reductionist in nature. They deal with short-term, concrete, measurable things. There is an emphasis on "before and after" data. Whilst measurement is desirable its absence should not render evaluatory observations obsolete. "Complex" approaches for assessing human endeavour extend the "simple" to include other perspectives on human phenomena. These include subjective, qualitative data, longer term considerations, and an active role for the participant in the social experiment.

And both kinds of approach are needed, ultimately, if a satisfactory explanation of organisational behaviour is to be found. And this would deal with ways of ensuring that: (i) The acquisition of abilities underwrites adequate performance of job roles; (ii) satisfactory occupation of roles produces results; and (iii) those results contribute to the desired performance of the organisation.

The studies thus highlighted the need for a sophisticated view of learning in organisations if education and training resources were to be effectively deployed. Sufficient progress had been made by virtue of these studies to consider it timely to embark upon a comprehensive and coherent proposal for management development using the above dimensions as guiding principles.

## 6.2 The management development survey

The climate of the Bank, therefore, appeared to have

changed. The time seemed ripe for attempting to develop a theoretical foundation on which might be built a system for: (i) Acquiring, improving and expanding the abilities of the top management team both as individuals and as a group; (ii) obtaining the development of branch managers and their assistants; (iii) monitoring and refining some aspects of the Bank's operation with a view to improving its procedural performance.

A proposal was therefore made. It dealt with: (i) An assessment of the principal problems, opportunities and issues facing the Bank; (ii) the basic principles on which the development of managerial abilities was to be based; (iii) a particular system for putting those principles to work; (iv) how that system might be implemented within the Bank. This was presented as a report to the Bank's Personnel and Training Committee entitled: "Management Development: A Practical Approach".

These recommendations, in essence, set out a three level framework for action and focussed on the role of the branch manager. It comprised: (i) Training Groups (these were groups led by senior managers with the task of identifying and selecting problems and ensuring collective and consistent action to solve those problems); (ii) Performance Reviews (as the vehicle for maintaining human resource development in a results-orientated framework); (iii) Self-Development (as the means of harnessing self-organisation of learning in the pursuit of excellence). There was also included a complete programme of work (see table overpage) the first item of which was a "present stage survey".



Management Development: Programme of Work

1. A present stage survey. To collect data describing current practice of branch managers.
2. Development of the evaluatory framework and influences on performance. This initiates Training Groups proper to produce:-

  - (a) an identification of situational factors
  - (b) an assessment of Bank performance determinants
  - (c) an assessment of the contribution to those determinants that a branch managers' efforts can make.
3. Description of an effective manager This would relate the results of the above components and allow a selection of a preferred mode of operation (described essentially in terms of outcomes) otherwise known as a effective manager.
4. Pre-training briefings and assessments and commencement of evaluatory instrument development These would introduce branch managers to the system, engage them in needs exploration as a start point for training and for evaluation, and a further contribution would be made by the managers to the development of the effectiveness model.

Management Development: Programme of Work (Cont'd)

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|--|--|
| 5. Confirmation of the effective manager model   | This would bring together data from the foregoing for its confirmation with senior management in terms of current policy/priorities.                                       |
| 6. Programme specification by reference to achievements or outcomes set for an effective manager | This would elaborate the tasks and skills required for successful achievement of branch management effectiveness together with guidelines on methods of training/learning. |
| 7. Operation of training programmes  | A development programme would be prepared by each manager against his own needs, the programme specification and the effectiveness model.                                  |
| 8. In-situ performance assessments   | Suitable data collecting arrangements would operate from Item 4 to gauge the effect of the management development.   |

This survey was to describe current practice of branch managers. The ultimate objective was to produce an effectiveness model of branch management. Approaching that through the analysis of current practices had four advantages: (i) The specification of an effectiveness model was much more likely if it could be seen to emerge from what was actually happening in the branches; (ii) it provided a starting point for evaluation of the proposed management

development activity; (iii) it assisted with gauging the extent of learning that would have to take place if the whole population had to meet the effectiveness criteria (and thus assist with planning the likely need of resources); (iv) an increased knowledge of current performance would help with the operation of the managerial appraisal scheme by increasing understanding of the obstacles that managers have to overcome. This present stage survey was known subsequently as the "Management Development Survey". What is reported in this chapter is how that survey was carried out and the ultimate fate of its findings.

It remained to determine how to carry out the survey. Four possibilities seemed most appropriate. Firstly, it might be done by discussion with general management supported by contributions from specialist departments. This had the advantage of actively involving the top management, but risked the production of an uneven description, by virtue of the fact that most of the participants had no recent branch management experience. Secondly, detailed descriptions could be produced by project teams of senior and branch managers. However, setting up representative groups was likely to be difficult. Branches had responded variously to the demands of change. Consequently, there was a variety of experience patterns to draw upon. There was also variety in the types of branch to be considered. In addition, whilst branch managers typically liaised closely with their neighbouring colleagues, they jealously guarded their ideas about effectiveness and it was felt that this would result in difficulties in reaching a consensus view. This approach also had the disadvantage of being dependent upon relatively small groups which could

lead to rejection of ideas by those who did not participate in the discussions.

In addition to the above objections the foregoing methods were considered likely to be ineffective in exposing some of the things that get in the way of managerial effectiveness. The Delphi Technique was created on the premise that critical evaluation of a phenomenon is less likely to occur if the evaluators are present. Similarly, it was hypothesised that some of the obstacles to effectiveness were organisationally produced - by maintenance of traditions, or preferences of certain key managers, or simply refusal to consider changing anything that seemed to work reasonably well - and that these would not be addressed by discussion groups composed of those who were not accustomed to making proposals that criticised the status quo.

What seemed much more encouraging were ideas for a survey across the whole of the manager group derived from Stewart (1976) and Stewart and Stewart (1978). Stewart (1976) dealt with the choices faced by the manager, the demands made upon him and the constraints within which he has to work, as the main determinants of performance and the way to fully understanding a job role. Choices represent those things which the manager can either do or not do. Constraints come from such as the market situation, the technology, organisational procedures, and the attitudes of the people with whom he works. The demands come from those things from which the manager cannot escape. The questionnaire that she painstakingly created by interview and group discussions with managers covered the following areas: (1) The nature of the relationships required by the

job; (ii) the work pattern; (iii) exposure - whether or not the individual could make identifiable mistakes; (iv) the demands the job made on private life; (v) uncertainties that affected the job.

With some alterations this approach offered a possible framework for a detailed exploration of the branch managers' job. In contrast, Stewart and Stewart (1978) dealt with an approach to appraisal. This was through the construction of a performance profile, created by the group to be appraised, from their own constructs about what represented effectiveness in the work. This ethnographically-related approach was appealing because: (i) It could lead to acceptance of the survey by participation of branch managers in the creation of the instrument for data collecting; (ii) it would improve credibility of the exercise by ensuring not only the acceptability of the wording but also the relevance of the issues to be dealt with; (iii) it used repertory grid to create scales for the performance specification used in their appraisal system, the data from which might collectively be useful in checking the validity of responses in the main survey.

It was agreed, therefore, with the General Manager to carry out a questionnaire-based survey involving every branch manager, and that the questionnaire would be designed and tested within the Bank, taking guidance from the above-mentioned sources.

### 6.3 Designing the questionnaire and collecting the data

The first part of the design exercise consisted of collecting constructs of effective branch management from

branch managers by repertory grid technique. Two groups of branch managers, of 12 and 14 respectively, participated on separate occasions. They were selected by the District Managers who each put forward five managers representing the full range of ability of their managers. The theme for elicitation of constructs was effectiveness in the management of a branch office. To ensure that attention was given to all kinds of branch management activities a set of 30 element categories were offered (set out fully in Appendix 4) of which the participants were instructed to select 15. A record of the actual events used by participants was not kept, but the element categories used by each manager were recorded. It was felt that these selections might reveal something about the values of this sample of managers and the pattern of work they experienced. From which it is interesting to note that planning, performance standards, and staff involvement were most frequently chosen. Policy, profit and items connected with criticism were least frequently selected.

Each participant was asked to select one pole of each construct which they associated most strongly with effective branch management. Often constructs were mixed. In these cases both poles could be selected. The selected poles were then categorised to represent the views expressed. This content structure is set out overleaf.

Working with these two groups of managers was a most rewarding experience. Whilst some of them expressed doubts about both the technique and the survey, there was considerable interest in the work, a vigorous participation, and a mood of optimism about the outcome. They were a sizable sample of the branch manager population (about 23

## CATEGORISATION OF CONSTRUCTS OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

### Relationship With The Customer

Type of Approach made to the Customer

Outcomes achieved

Image to be presented

### Profits and Growth in Business

Desire for New Business and Profitability

Methods of Maintaining and Obtaining Business

Ethical Aspects

### Criteria For Job Role and Branch Operation

Structure and Processes of Managing

Expectations

Delegation

Planning, Organising and Controlling

Decision-making

Staff Training

Efficiency and Smooth Running of the Branch

Standards and Personal Criteria for Working

General

Personal (beliefs, values and behaviour)

Customer Contact

### Communication with Staff

Awareness, Common Understanding and Common Method,

Consultation, Pooling of Ideas and Problem-Solving,

Motivation

Working with Individuals

### Miscellaneous

per cent) and representative of the range of ability in that group. This was very important with regard to the need to uncover issues from all sectors of the branch network, some of which might not have been articulated if the groups had consisted only of the most able.

When selecting elements for their grids, those categories dealing with criticism were chosen least frequently. This suggested that it had been right at the outset not to rely on project teams for specifying effectiveness, especially that part of the specification dealing with obstacles to achieving effectiveness.

The constructs themselves are largely at the descriptive level. There are some evaluative constructs, but hardly any to do with emotions and feelings. The detail within the representation of constructs varied considerably. The time available with each group (about two hours) left little opportunity for laddering and no further contact with them for this purpose was possible. In some cases participants may have taken the easy way out, eg by producing one-word constructs such as "practice", "sympathy". In others there seemed to be genuine difficulty in coping with the exercise, which might only have been resolved by a lengthier exploration than the time available allowed.

The range of concerns indicated by the grids was extremely valuable as a design tool. Particularly important was the realisation that many of the managers had difficulty in reconciling certain attitudes, the most prominent of which were: Being polite, friendly and of service to customers whilst seeking profit; being concerned about smooth running of the branch whilst having to leave it to go



outside for business; involving staff and pooling ideas whilst having to discipline individuals about performance problems; wanting productivity and efficiency whilst seeking to have a "happy and contented" staff.

In conclusion the exercise achieved: (i) Considerable data for detailed design of the questionnaire; (ii) a confirmation that the approach to the management development survey was alright; (iii) the support of the majority of the participants; (iv) a potentially valuable insight into how branch managers construe effective management which might be usefully developed later.

The final stage in the design of the questionnaire was the combination of the repertory grid data, the advice of Stewart (1976) and Stewart and Stewart (1978), and direct observation of what was of concern in the Bank. This was accomplished by the use of an input-process-output structure as indicated overleaf.

The resulting questionnaire was piloted with the six District Managers. They were asked to complete it as if they were branch managers and to suggest any amendments they felt appropriate. Their views were discussed with them afterwards and the final version of the questionnaire was then produced. It was at this time that the work was re-named "The Management Development Survey" in order to forge a better link between the survey and later stages of the Programme of Work. The General Manager announced the survey. This was followed quickly by the issue of the questionnaire under cover of a letter by the author explaining the background and purpose of the exercise. The announcement, covering letter and questionnaire are presented in Appendix 5.

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internal to the individual, eg values, feelings, perceptual framework.

and

perceived by the individual, eg demands, opportunities, constraints.

used by the Branch Manager in coming to conclusions about objectives, task content (what has to be done and how), standards.

from each manager, either working alone (inside or outside the branch) or working with others.

Design Model for the Management Development Survey

Questionnaire

#### 6.4 Presenting the results

One week was allowed for completion and return of the questionnaire, and, through illness, only two of the recipients were unable to reply. The results were compiled in the form of a written report for senior management, with the intention that in due course a summary of results would be made available to respondents. The report comprised a full discussion of the replies, conclusions and recommendations for future action.

The survey identified three main approaches to branch management. These were labelled "transitional", "integrated", and "retreating". The first of these relates in varying degrees to all of the managers. It thus represents core characteristics of branch management. The second and third approaches indicate the way certain managers differ from the core. The former was looking ahead whilst the latter was firmly rooted in the past. In outline the three approaches can be described as follows:

Transitional: Managers of this type are poised between the old and the new, wanting to step confidently forward, but not always sure about which step to take, or indeed, how to take it. Their approach is cautious, somewhat dependent, with some ambiguity that could affect decisiveness.

Integrated: These managers have resolved the doubts of the previous approach. They have been able to make a happy unification of the disparate elements of their work. There is a sense of harmony here suggesting an optimistic approach to the job.

Retreating: These managers have distinctly drawn-back from assuming responsibility. They are distant from their staff and refuse to identify with key business philosophy. These managers seem firmly locked in the past, having narrow views that probably stifle action, and decidedly "play safe" so as to avoid coming to senior management's attention.

In offering these descriptions, the Report recommended:

(i) That the results should form the basis of the production of an agreed effectiveness model for branch management; (ii) that the specification of that effectiveness model should include further investigation of influences (both individual and organisational) that inhibit current manager performance; (iii) that individualised programmes of training for experienced managers and standardised programmes for newcomers to supervisory and managerial positions should be devised by reference to the effectiveness model.

The results were presented in writing to senior management so that they could be carefully and accurately studied. A written report also had the advantage of being a source document for future working groups. Nor was it expected that a written record of responses and their interpretation would be an obstacle to movement to a different type of involvement with management. The first step was the presentation of the report to the Regional General Manager. The intention was to agree with him how the report should be acted upon. The proposed course of action had three elements: (i) The initiation of Training Groups by collecting responses to the report from Departmental Heads and District Managers prior to setting up a Training

Group specifically to define branch team working relationships and the role of the manager; (ii) issue of a summary of the Report to the participants together with an indication of how it was being acted upon; (iii) issue of the report to the Personnel and Training Committee with a note of the progress being made to implement its recommendations.

The initial response of the Regional General Manager was favourable. He was able to comment extensively and in detail about the contents, indicating he had read it carefully. He saw it dovetailing into a more comprehensive development plan, which he described as: (i) Getting the District Managers intensively trained after their functions and responsibilities had been properly clarified; (ii) completing the current exercise of reviewing the branch network in terms of number, location and type of branch required; (iii) acting upon the report's recommendations for manpower development in accordance with changing needs and evolving policy.

However, there were three indications of resistance to the findings. Firstly, he interpreted the report as urging that the behaviour of branch managers be standardised. Secondly, he cautioned the author about the dangers of attending too much to investigating as opposed to providing branch managers with practical training in banking skills. Thirdly, he saw the report as an indictment of the ineffectiveness of his District Managers. Notwithstanding these reservations, it was agreed that: (i) The report could be issued to Assistant General Managers, Departmental Heads and District Managers for comment; (ii) he would then call a meeting with the General Manager, Assistant General Managers

and the author to discuss the findings and the reactions to them and agree a course of action for implementation of management development.

#### 6.5 Resistance to the management development proposals

Whilst an agreement had been reached, the Regional General Manager took no further action, even leaving the briefing of the general management team to the author when circulating the reports. It is also significant that throughout this period the General Manager was absent from the Bank on a three-month secondment to Central Executive. The reports were duly circulated. Some of the Departmental Heads and District Managers did respond to their Assistant General Manager in writing. But at that point the initiative came to a halt. A stalemate had been reached: The Regional General Manager did not call the meeting agreed upon and the Assistant General Managers felt powerless to act in the absence of his direction.

At the outset it had seemed a relatively simple idea, that of working closely with the Bank's management in producing a manpower development plan. It was agreed that change was necessary. There had already been several mergers of banks in the Midlands since 1975. Customer contact arrangements were becoming more sophisticated, including a review of the branch network to seek the most optimum branch configuration for future needs. What was yet to be done was to make the staff aware of exactly what was expected of them and to help them acquire the necessary skills.

There was certainly no intention to straitjacket people within a behavioural specification that prescribed standard

responses for anticipated situations. What was sought was a clear definition of the outcomes to be achieved by branch managers using given resources. Managers were not going to be forced into ways of doing things that they found uncomfortable, unless, of course, they failed to meet minimal standards for branch working. Hopefully, as a result of the report, there would be an increase in the investment in staff development, at all levels of performance, and especially where the development of business coincided with the realisation of human potential. But the way in which the report was received varied considerably.

Some recipients welcomed the report. They saw it as a fundamental assessment of the Bank's manpower development needs and readily accepted its conclusions. Others assimilated it by declaring that it had confirmed what they already knew. Several charges were made that it was too theoretical. Some, although sympathetic, found its length exhausted their patience. Disturbingly, there was a declaration that the survey should not have been carried out at all because it had produced a result of little value, at great expense. But possibly of most concern was the response that the report's major recommendation was that branch managers should be made to behave in a standard way without any freedom of action borne of individual preference.

Naturally, an understanding was sought of the adverse reactions to the report. Informal conversations with some of the recipients of the report (and these included both those who reacted favourably as well as those who did not) revealed a range of issues illustrated by the following quotations:

"Management development will never yield benefits."

"Education and Training Department ought to concentrate its efforts on essential things and provide practical instruction."

"The report identifies some very uncomfortable truths which people don't want to face, which they would rather reject."

"What makes it worse is that you are not a banker and you have only been here a short time, but you have been able to put your finger exactly on what is wrong with the Bank."

"Training is providing courses for the things that have to be learned."

"The report is nevertheless valuable even when only confirming what one felt to be true anyway."

"Experience is the best teacher; I don't see why we need this at all."

"We should be looking to the future, we ought to have a broadly-based plan of action, so that we can go forward confidently."

"You are up against it because planning ahead in the way that you want to is just not done in the Bank."

"How can you teach us anything, you are not a banker."

"Education and Training Department does not achieve much; we are achieving less now than before we had an Education and Training Department."

"It's all very well, but you are too theoretical."

"What has Education and Training Department achieved anyway? The staff are not any better now, are they?"

"It would open your eyes to the practicalities if you spent a week in a branch."

"Education and Training Department should not waste its time researching and reporting, but instead get on with some training."

Clearly there was an acceptance of the need for "training". But the issues of central importance seemed to be: (i) The failure of most senior managers to recognise that for "training" to be effective there needed to be a mutually agreed definition of its functions, objectives and methods; and (ii) that Education and Training Department had an educational role in helping those senior managers



elucidate the alternatives from which those functions, objectives and methods could be selected.

There seemed to be an almost desperate desire to locate learning in experience, but without structure or pattern. It was enough for some simply to do things, to be in action, to experience! The exhortations for "practical" training were not elaborated: Presumably what was required was obvious, and did not need explanation. Which suggested that reasoning about learning was located in the assumption that its direction should be informed by an authoritative view to which all could subscribe. In turn, this would rest on the belief that there is a "best" way of working which trainer's can use as the basis of instruction to the uninitiated.

Evident also was a distinct discomfort. People were unhappy with the report, not just because of the content, but because of its underlying methodological principles. There was overall an insufficiency of scientific method in the audience: They preferred a "gut reaction", the spontaneous, intuitive solution. Largely, these managers appeared to occupy a world of the "obvious", where conclusions were reached quickly.

What was particularly disappointing was that those who were in favour of the report were powerless to promote it. The Regional General Manager's refusal to progress the initiative brought it to an end, despite promptings by the General Manager and the author (via the Bank's Personnel and Training Committee). This underlined forcibly the hypothesis that the introduction of new ways of organising work depends substantially upon a unanimity of view of the interventionist and all the key personalities in the power

structure. There was no doubt that there were two principal obstacles to progress: (i) The Regional General Manager's decision not to proceed; (ii) the refusal of those who supported the report to assist with challenging that decision. The nature of this reluctance on the part of senior managers was extremely interesting; indeed, one member of the management team felt strongly that such a challenge was an act of the gravest disloyalty. Thus it was that this project failed to create a learning environment for the senior management group, from which might have ensued changes in the environment of branch managers.

And so this initiative came to a halt. But yet several pointers had been given as to how it might be resurrected. These centred upon the need to examine and describe the main dimensions of resistance, especially those related to the ideas of "practicality" and "learning by experience".

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## CHAPTER 7

### EXAMINING THE RESISTANCE TO THE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

#### PROPOSALS

The faltering, and eventual collapse, of the management development initiative was indeed perplexing. There seemed to be a variety of possible explanations. Certainly, the Regional General Manager lacked conviction about the need to promote the findings. Moreover, his declaration that the report was an indictment of the ineffectiveness of the District Managers may have provoked their hostility to the report. It was possible that this resistance could have been overcome by firm direction from the Bank's Personnel and Training Committee; but they elected to ignore the matter. There was also the absence on secondment of the General Manager during this crucial period: Could his influence have turned the tide? Undeniably, there were other senior staff who supported the ideas, but they were reluctant to act. Would a different style of language, or timing of the investigation have increased the report's chance of success? Did the author fight sufficiently vigorously for the project's survival? Or was it simply that prejudice would have won the day regardless of how change was attempted? Indeed, do initiatives of this sort, inevitably fail if at the outset the backing of the Chief Executive has not been achieved?

The Management Development Survey was about the future and change. It sought direction and specific goals for manpower development. It demanded confidence to choose and offered a system for action. It was about making sense of the world and improving the probability of coping

effectively with the unknown. It was essentially about learning and learning to learn.

Learning is fundamental to coping with change. Moreover, the approach to learning indicates not only the extent of ability to cope with uncertainty, but also the kinds of problem the participant would have in responding to change. Whilst the variety of possible explanations for the failure to establish the management development programme might suggest an equal variety of investigations about the validity of those explanations, an examination of the learning preferences of the Bank's managers seemed the most promising route to a more fundamental understanding of why the initiative came to nothing.

Such a study could involve a complete cross-section of the Bank's management. It was a legitimate line of enquiry for an Education and Training Department and so might not arouse suspicions. It could be done in such a way as to avoid it being connected with the Management Development Survey. In addition, this kind of study could provide valuable data for the design of future training programmes, and would certainly be a rich contribution towards establishing an evaluatory framework for the Bank's learning activities. But where to start?

Russell (1967) gave a clue when he described "practical" men, saying: "We must free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called "practical" men." What learning "prejudices" did our managers display? They did seem uncomfortable with abstract concepts. And showed a decided preference for anything uncomplicated, regardless, it seemed, of any evaluation of utility. The common tendency was to treat things superficially, usually combined

with an inability to suspend judgment when alternatives were presented. "Learning by experience" was pre-eminent. Training was typically regarded as "theoretical", "remote from reality" or "something which does not get you to treat the learning opportunity seriously!" It seemed appropriate, therefore, to begin this examination of resistance to the management development proposals with an assessment of managers' learning styles. The only problem initially was that of how to make such an assessment.

### 7.1 Investigating learning styles

There have been many studies of cognitive and perceptual styles. Gardner et al (1959) looked at visual schematizing and categorised subjects by reference to their inclination to sharpen or level their perception of objects. Witkin et al (1954) tested subjects for their ability to extract information from a misleading context and proposed a cognitive control dimension of field dependence - field independence, later revised to field articulation. Jahoda and Thomas (1964) tested the hypothesis that the strategy of learning used by a subject will be partly dependent on his cognitive style, in particular on the cognitive control dimensions indicated above. They tentatively concluded that there may be no relationship between cognitive style and learning strategy, realising that the measures for cognitive control elicit a student's preferred perceptual behaviour in response to a standardised task. They argued: "Learning of intellectually complex subject matter, however, is an ongoing strategy in which the task varies continuously, and in which the student's perceptual response is influenced not

only by his preference, but also by the changing requirements of a task. This means that the assessment of the preferred cognitive style cannot be expected to correlate highly with learning behaviour, and that more sophisticated measures must be developed which ascertain, in addition to a preferred style, the student's capacity for ranging over other styles more suitable to the structure of the material with which he deals." They also indicated a third factor, namely the relationship between the teacher and the student, as having a bearing on the learning style adopted by the student.

There have been many other studies in this field, particularly oriented to devising better ways of teaching, (eg Bruner, Pask and Scott, Kagan and Hudson) and it is not the intention to review these here. What is intended is an indication of the complexity of the relationships between cognitive and perceptual preferences and learning style, and of the variety of styles or skills of learning that are used when dealing with complex tasks over a reasonable period of time. Particularly relevant to this is the work of Kolb and his colleagues and of Honey and Mumford.

Kolb et al (1971) and Kolb (1973) offered a learning style inventory and Kolb and Fry (1975) described an experiential learning cycle on which it had been based. They maintained that: "Each of us has, in a unique way, developed a learning style that has some weak and strong points. We have developed a simple self-description inventory that is designed to measure an individual's strengths and weaknesses as a learner." This assessment is made by dealing with the relative emphasis the learner gives to the competing poles of two dimensions underpinning the

experiential learning cycle, namely: Concrete experiences versus abstract conceptualisation and generalisation; active experimentation with hypotheses versus reflection and observation. By reference to these they isolated four statistically prevalent types: Converger (preferring abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation); diverger (preferring concrete experiences and reflection); assimilator (preferring abstract conceptualisation and reflection); accommodator (preferring active experimentation and concrete experiences) .

The argument offered is that the effective learner embodies all of these types of learning behaviour, selecting them accordingly and using them with facility. They assert that: "Experiential learning is not a molecular educational concept but rather is a molar concept describing the central process of human adaptation to the social and physical environment. It is a holistic concept much akin to the Jungian theory of psychological types in that it seeks to describe the emergence of basic life orientations as a function of dialectical tensions between basic modes of relating to the world". It follows that the abilities represented within the four types will be possessed, to varying extents, by everyone, and variously used by them, unskillfully or skillfully, in accordance with the demands of the learning task.

Honey and Mumford (1982) have developed a learning style questionnaire, based upon the Kolb and Fry experiential learning cycle, but which is specifically suited to their own observation and experience of managers in the United Kingdom. Firstly, they built their view of learning styles, and its associated questionnaire, around recognisable

statements of managerial behaviour supported by quite detailed descriptions of the styles of learning. Secondly, they wished to regard the responses to the questionnaire as a starting point and not a finishing point. Thirdly, their main concern was not academic respectability, but to produce something which will give detailed, practical guidance to those who are trying to help people to develop their abilities.

In this sense of providing an aid to thinking about how people learn, as opposed to a tool for fundamental description of the processes individuals engage in whilst learning, it seemed more appropriate to use the Honey and Mumford questionnaire to collect data about how managers in TSB Birmingham and the Midlands approached learning. In addition the American style of language of the Learning Style Inventory may have presented problems and it has been academically criticised by James (1981). The purposes in collecting data with the Learning Style Questionnaire were to: (i) Gain insight into resistance to learning ideology, and thereby better understand the learning culture of the organisation, by forming a view of how, as a group, managers saw themselves as learners; (ii) draw inferences about what they regarded as appropriate learning methods from their descriptions of themselves as learners; (iii) gauge learning to learn needs by comparison of the collective learning style description against anticipated, future learning tasks.

#### 7.1.1 The Learning Style Questionnaire and how it was used



The Learning Style Questionnaire consists of 80 statements describing items of managerial behaviour covering the four styles of learning to be investigated. The respondent indicates whether or not each statement applies to him. The four learning styles probed by the questionnaire are: Activist; Reflector; Theorist; Pragmatist. The questionnaire is scored by awarding one point for each item in the questionnaire with which the respondent agrees. These scores are then rearranged under each of the learning styles. Interpretation is against a norm table (derived from 1302 respondents from a variety of occupations) constructed by dividing preferences into the top 10 per cent, the next 20 per cent, the middle 40 per cent, the next 20 per cent and, finally, the bottom 10 per cent of the total group. Copies of the Learning Style Questionnaire and descriptions of the learning styles are given in Appendix 6.

62 branch managers completed questionnaires. They were asked to participate in the collection of data about how people learn so that future courses might be more effectively designed. Honey and Mumford recommended a brief introduction of the questionnaire, leaving a description of the styles till after its completion, and keeping theoretical explanation to a minimum, all of which was successfully followed. The age of respondents was recorded so that the sample ( $n = 62$ ) could be compared with the total population of branch managers. Only five respondents were female; whilst their scores have been included the number of females is too small to affect the result or for separate analysis. The age distribution of the sample closely matched that of the total population. It was felt that this enabled

a reliable extrapolation to the Bank. The means [modal values] and (standard deviations) for each style are compared below with those of Honey and Mumford's total and finance managers groups:-

Style	Birmingham		Honey/Mumford	
	(n = 62)		(n = 1302)	(n = 60 Finance Managers)
Activist	7.94	[9] (3.28)	9.3 (2.9)	7.0 (1.7)
Reflector	15.07	[14] (3.45)	13.6 (3.1)	14.9 (1.6)
Theorist	13.60	[13] (2.90)	12.5 (3.2)	14.5 (2.2)
Prag- matist	13.70	[16] (2.59)	13.7 (2.9)	15.3 (1.4)

From which can be seen that there is good correspondence between the Bank's managers and the Finance Managers group, although the Bank sample appears less homogeneous, as indicated by the larger standard deviations. Based upon mean scores for each style the Bank's managers in comparison with the norms offered (n = 1302) had a:

Strong preference for Reflector

a moderate to strong preference for Theorist

and a Moderate preference for Pragmatist and Activist

with Activist being much the weakest. This aspect is brought out clearly by plotting raw scores against the number of cases, from which the following table overpage was prepared. This shows that percentage of branch managers which equalled or exceeded that score which was equalled or exceeded by the top 10 per cent and the next 20 per cent,

respectively, of the norm group offered by Honey and Mumford.

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Learning Style	percentage of respondents who scored at the "very strong preference" level and the "strong preference level"	
Activist	6.5	11.7
Pragmatist	9.7	30.7
Reflector	21.0	61.3
Theorist	25.8	51.6
	very strong preference level (top 10% of norm group)	strong preference level (next 20% of norm group)

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From which it can be seen that for the activist style there are considerably fewer respondents scoring at the very strong preference level, whilst the reverse applies for Reflector/Theorist styles.

It is interesting to speculate about why there is such a strong "reflector" score and such a weak "activist" score. The statements eliciting responses are closely linked with the definitions of learning styles. The themes within each definition therefore explain the design of the questionnaire. Association with the statements of the questionnaire is assumed to follow only if the themes within the definitions are reflected by the respondent's preferences. In looking at the definitions the following observations seem particularly relevant:

Reflector emphasises reservation, thoroughness, carefulness, cautiousness and avoidance of mistakes;

Activist emphasises uninhibitedness, abandonment, carefreeness, exhibitionism and risk taking.

Whilst not presented by Honey and Mumford as opposite poles, they do appear to be directly in opposition rather than adjacent styles. It thus appears unsurprising that they represent the strong and weak styles in branch managers. The response pattern is further highlighted by considering the statements used for scoring these styles. Taking into account the values embodied in the profession of banking, eg integrity, reliability, accuracy, security, it perhaps is to be expected that the statements defining Reflector will be responded to affirmatively, and vice versa for those defining Activist.

This raises an interesting point, anticipated by Kolb and Fry (1975), namely, do people change as a result of the environment in which they work, or do they choose their working environment because of being the kind of people they are! The answer to this question is obviously of great importance in relation to the study of the development and display of learning styles. It also raises questions about what the Learning Style Questionnaire actually measures, eg does it deal with learning style or the perceptual and affective preferences inculcated by the requirements of one's professional activity?

The acceptance of one style and the rejection of another is seen clearly by correlating the scores for each

pair of styles. The figures in brackets are the results of Honey and Mumford.

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	Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist
Activist	-	-0.56 (-0.013)	-0.47 (0.097)	0.29 (0.299)
Reflector		-	0.58 (0.71)	-0.13 (0.42)
Theorist			-	0.23 (0.54)
Pragmatist				-

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Honey and Mumford found that Activist correlated weakly with Reflector and Theorist, but for the Bank's managers there is a strong, reverse correlation in each case. In both sets of data one can expect to find strong associations of Reflector and Theorist. The emphasis in the Theorist definition is on logic, pattern, rationality, perfectionism, objectivity and certainty make the remarks made above about the banking environment applicable here.

The design of the questionnaire must also be taken into account when interpreting the results. The definitions of the styles are not homogeneous and, therefore, it is not certain what is being measured. The statements require a "yes" or "no" answer about their applicability to the respondent without any allowance for the effect of circumstances on the behaviour or belief referred to by the statements. The briefing instructions refer to there being no time limit, but yet 10 to 15 minutes are suggested as the probable time the respondent will need. Completing the

questionnaire at this speed calls for accurate and comprehensive self-knowledge and considerable honesty to avoid self-deception. The underlying structure of the questionnaire is easily detected and any unresolved conflict between perceived and ideal self may lead to difficulty in choosing a response.

Honey and Mumford acknowledge there is little objective data on the validity of the questionnaire, but have found it consistent when respondents have been retested. Whilst further refinement of the questionnaire is needed, the results do suggest that useful indications about preferences can be obtained. One direction for these refinements might be to increase the distance between Activist and Pragmatist and between Reflector and Theorist. Whilst the questionnaire offers four separate styles, a content analysis of their descriptions suggests there is only one dimension in the questionnaire:

ACTION ————— versus ————— THOUGHT

(Activist/Pragmatist)

(Reflector/Theorist)

by virtue of these pairs of styles being insufficiently differentiated, a contention strongly supported by the high correlations between Reflector and Theorist scores.

Finally, regarding the reasons offered to the Bank for carrying out the study, the conclusions reached were that:

- (1) misgivings about the validity of the questionnaire puts extensive use of the results in doubt;

- (ii) the general trends indicated about learning preferences confirmed informal observation of approaches to learning by branch managers;
- (iii) the structure of learning beliefs of managers in the Bank should be further studied;
- (iv) the LSQ is a useful device for aiding thinking about the development of learning skills, and particularly about the development of training in the Bank;
- (v) that it would be unwise to draw other than tentative conclusions from the results about the future selection of training methods or about the diagnosis of learning to learn needs because of doubts about the precision of the instrument.

The use of the questionnaire had not provoked any adverse comment or reaction from participants. It was couched in language that was acceptable to them, although some statements dealt with behaviour not regularly found in the Bank. There seemed to be a lot of interest generated by its use, and it certainly enriched the author's view of managers' learning preferences. The learning styles study was a useful start to understanding how managers in the Bank approach learning. As far as the research objective of the study was concerned, the results suggested that the resistance to the management development report may have been inspired by cautiousness and a disinclination to take risks, borne out of a desire not to make mistakes. With this as a backcloth, it was possible to shape up a direct study with the actual recipients of the report - the Regional General Manager, General Manager, Assistant General Managers, Departmental Heads and District Managers - the 18 people comprising the top management of the Bank.

## 7.2 Managerial beliefs about learning

The design of this project was particularly influenced by some observations by Stewart and Marshall (1982) about managerial beliefs about managing and their implications for management education. They defined beliefs as the acceptance of something as true or real that is not a demonstrable fact, and argued that these should be taken into account by management teachers because the beliefs that managers hold about managing are likely to influence their reception of management training. Whilst Stewart and Marshall (1982) were not seeking to study beliefs, they were struck forcibly by the extent to which managers offered strongly held beliefs as the explanation, justification and motivation of their behaviour at work. Their open-ended interviews with managers (to investigate managerial perceptions of the opportunities for choice in their job) suggested that such beliefs structure managers' perceptions of their jobs and determine how they tackle them.

Nor was this sort of thinking restricted to the managerial arena. In the field of doctor-patient communication, King (1982) has indicated that the introduction of sociology into medicine has highlighted the important distinction between "disease" as a medical, and "illness" as a social, phenomenon. The implication being that the consultation should not be devoted simply to clinical management of disease, but should be seen also as a process of social influence in which the beliefs and attitudes of the patient are central. By taking into account the health beliefs of the patient the probability of obtaining compliance of the patient with the recommended



treatment is increased. The patient, therefore, comes to the consultation with specific explanations of the cause of his or her illness or symptoms. King (1982) suggests that the consultation is where the medical theories of aetiology of disease and lay theories of illness meet. For the consultation to be successful, the doctor's view of the disease must be reconciled with the patient's subjective view of his own illness. If the diagnosis and treatment do not make sense in terms of the patient's model of illness they will not be accepted. This conclusion can easily be translated to the world of training when recommendations for the design and management of learning opportunities are offered. If the identification of needs (diagnosis) and the training programme (treatment) do not make sense in terms of the manager's model of learning (illness) they will not be accepted.

So the objective for the study was to determine the models of learning held by the Bank's senior management. For the study to be successful in this, it would need to be: (i) Completed reasonably quickly and cheaply; (ii) carried out without arousing antipathy; (iii) done in such a way as to allow individual analysis of the data as well as its reduction to a collective interpretation; (iv) set up in such a way that a connection with the Management Development Survey was not made.

Coincidentally, the author was responsible for the introduction of the manager performance appraisal scheme. This work involved the training of District Managers in the purpose, processes and procedures of the appraisal scheme. During this training use was made of a technique called structuring of meanings devised by Thomas and Augstein at

the Centre for the Study of Human Learning. It is an alternative to formal repertory grid technique which enables participants to reveal constructs and to indicate the relationships between them. It was introduced to the District Managers to help them explore their ideas about managing. However, the exercise failed. It seemed as if they did not have a sufficiently elaborate model of managing and so could not: (i) Separate managing tasks from tasks carried out by a manager; or (ii) arrange the items of meaning they did produce into a coherent structure. Moreover, they refused to handover to the author the results of their work and insisted upon taking their structures away from the meeting room. It was felt that this experience demanded great care in selecting future data collecting methods.

In looking for alternatives four types of qualitative data collecting were suggested by Suttons (1980): (i) Clinical interview; (ii) word sorting and word association tasks; (iii) writing of definitions and selection of correct definitions from alternatives; (iv) repertory grid or semantic differential rating scales. The use of repertory grid with branch managers had not been easy, and some managers experienced considerable difficulty in understanding what was required. It was felt that this was also a distinct possibility with the senior management group. The writing of definitions seemed more appropriate to the examination of conceptual development, and word association and sorting seemed too closely associated with the classroom. The "clinical interview" type of data collection, therefore, seemed most promising.

This was envisaged as an informal and private conversation between the author and participant. The

respondent could be encouraged to talk freely and open-endedly, and at the same time probed for the grounds of his reasoning and assertions. This approach can be extremely open-ended, largely following the direction set by the participant, although the interviewer is able to intervene with questions. The amount of data generated by such conversations is usually large, which presents problems of analysis, but it was felt that the problems of analysis that this presents could be contained to manageable proportions by the use of the cognitive mapping technique offered by Smithin (1982).

#### 7.2.1 Setting up the conversations

The Management Development Survey report had aroused antipathy. In some cases this seemed to be directed not only at the results of the Education and Training Department's work, but also the methods by which those results were obtained. The study of learning styles had suggested that branch managers had little sympathy with new ideas and it was reasonable to suppose that this was reflected at more senior levels. The most pronounced learning style preference emphasised reservation, thoroughness, carefulness, cautiousness and avoidance of mistakes. In expressing their understanding of how people learn best at work, they had an almost religious faith in the power of "learning by experience", and were disinclined to consider anything outside of their "practical" view of the world. It appeared that learning was viewed as something that just happened, and after a certain age did not happen at all! The expectations of training were largely restricted to

instruction by an expert in the subject to be learned.

But there was a sincerely held concern about the staff's lack of competence and confidence. This was explained by reference to either an unwillingness to learn or an inadequate capacity for coping with the changes occurring in the Bank. Some District Managers tried to improve matters. Their attempts were informal and designed to deal with those things that the District Managers considered could only be learned outside of the classroom. They did not, therefore, seek help from the Education and Training Department. The implication of which was the need to pose the question: "What can realistically be expected of training?" Thus the opportunity was presented to set up a series of conversations intended to elicit a corporate definition of training.

#### 7.2.2 Briefing the participants

The object of the exercise was to identify the conclusions each person had come to about the best way to ensure that people at work learn to do that which is expected of them. Specifically, the conversations would explore their beliefs about: (i) How people function and what their capacity is for learning; (ii) how one identifies what is to be learned; (iii) how the conditions for learning are created and maintained.

The proposal to collect data by informal, private conversation from each member of the senior management group was put to that group by the Regional General Manager. They were told that the author would contact them to talk about what they thought about training, how it was organised and

how things ought to be in the future. They were encouraged to be frank. The reasons offered for carrying out the exercise were: (i) That better value for money would be obtained if there was a closer understanding between trainers and managers about the nature of training and how it can be of service to the Bank; and (ii) that the representation of a corporate view of training ought to be influential if an opportunity was given to comment on the national development of educational and training services which at that time were in embryo.

The people interviewed were the Deputy General Manager; the Assistant General Managers; the Department Heads; the District Managers. They numbered 17 in all. Each was asked to prepare by listing good and bad examples of training. It was indicated that about 2 hours would be involved and that the conversation would be tape-recorded, unless they objected. Of the 17 participants only three were tape-recorded, the majority of the remainder objecting to a permanent, verbatim record. Consequently, the interviews took longer than planned, the average being about three hours, so that the conversation could be reliably recorded.

The interview plan comprised three parts. The first would deal with the examples of training brought to the interview. In addition to good and bad examples of training, they were asked to include all forms of training that they considered important. The second part depended a great deal on the examples offered. Its purpose was to get the participant to expand on his initial views by dealing with such as a classification of the examples, extrapolation to include others, relating the examples in importance, and rating them in terms of effectiveness, so as to elicit

constructs of the learning process. The final part dealt with aspects not covered in the previous sections. A series of questions for this part were prepared in advance. They dealt with learning considered at the individual and organisational levels, respectively. The structure adopted for these conversations is presented in Appendix 7.

The whole of the interview was to be based upon the prepared questions if the participant did not present any material of his own, or found it difficult to respond without being prompted. The questions could also serve the purpose of standardising the interviews to ensure that all aspects were examined by each participant. However, they were not allowed to intrude on the structure and composition of the interview where this was being fluently created by the participant. In these cases, only some of the questions were asked, as supplementaries to those naturally generated throughout the interview.

### 7.2.3 Analysis of the conversations

The content of the interviews was extracted and set out as a collection of discrete items of meaning. These were then categorised and six major groupings emerged comprising observations about: (i) The Head of the Education and Training Department; (ii) the Education and Training Department itself; (iii) management problems in the Bank; (iv) aspects of organisational culture; (v) how learning ought to be organised; (vi) the way people learn. This process of analysis was continued within each of these six groups, but the results for groups (iv), (v) and (vi) only are reported here. The final stage of analysis was to

arrange the categories into sub-groups or clusters. These clusters were then arranged in what are considered to be natural sequences. In this way it was hoped to reveal the underlying structure of concerns and beliefs shared, to varying extents, by the interviewees. These sequences and a summary of the content they represent are given below.

### 7.2.3 (a) Aspects of organisational culture

For an overview of the content of this group see Figure 8. The following sections summarise the content of the components of that overview.

#### Overview of managerial culture

The need for change of the man at the top of the organisation. Failure to operate as a corporate management and to clarify what managers are to achieve. Over-reliance on fear as a motivator. Failure to get people to feel they "belong" to the organisation and to communicate a sense of purpose. Suggestions for improvements regarded as criticisms of management. Willingness of management to accept the indifference of staff. Money regarded as the prime motivator. Absence of training for newly appointed District Managers and failure of their superior to give them a sense of direction. Over-reliance on hectoring, admonishment and bullying as a management style-leading to the impression that District Managers are disciplinarians between staff and top management as opposed to being there to help staff understand what is going on. Segmented, narrow, un-curious approach of management resulting in

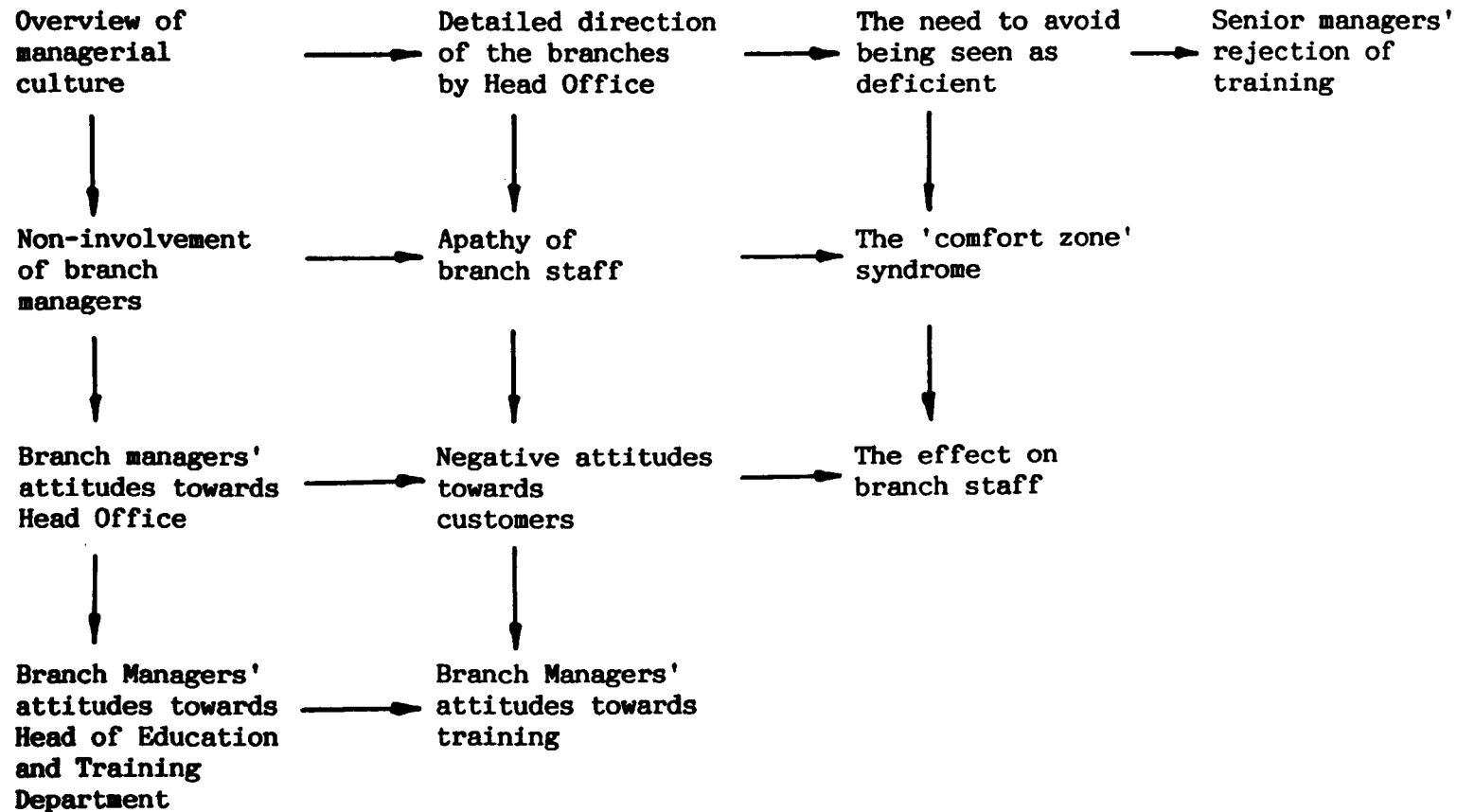


Fig 8: Overview of aspects of organisational culture



disinclination to find out what is being done by others. Tendency of branches to assume (when in ignorance) the worst, to judge quickly the relevance of events in personal terms. Expectation of being told rather than being consulted and to see things in the short-term. Traditionally, knowledge used as the basis of respect of people. Previously promotions made on seniority and absence of mistakes. Tendency to blame current problems on poor calibre of past recruitment.

#### Non-involvement of Branch Managers

Low morale borne of isolation and insecurity. Absence of opportunities for branch managers to contribute to policy discussions. Feelings of resignation created by disregard by management of suggestions, little prospect of advancement, and little hope of being involved in the management of the Bank.

#### Branch Managers' attitudes towards Head Office

A tendency to be critical of all Departments and District Managers because of a firm belief that they are out of touch with what goes on in a branch.

#### Attitudes towards the Head of Education and Training Department

Resistance invoked by virtue of being an "outsider". Resentment created because of perceived lavishness of Education and Training Department's accommodation and furnishing. Suspicions aroused by doing research, being

perceived as seeking personal gratification rather than being of value to Bank.

#### Detailed direction of the branches by Head Office

Unwillingness of management to trust staff, believing that people are unable to get on with work without close supervision, and that control is defining each step carefully. A tradition of preferring to enforce compliance through Head Office instructions as opposed to releasing innovative ability. Inability to break the cycle of self-fulfilling prophecy about branch staff attitudes and competence, despite awareness of the possibility of a causal relationship between repressive, close direction from Head Office and negative responses from the branches.

#### Apathy of branch staff

Belief that the management style of the Bank has created inertia within the body of the organisation. Contention that only about 20 per cent of branch managers are self-motivated and that management is incapable of motivating the rest. A feeling that complacency is prevalent, that there is a disregard for standards, coupled with many having an inflated sense of personal competence, and a general tendency to have low expectations too easily achieved. Withdrawal of branch staff from making an effort because of perception of limited prospects of furthering their career. An acceptance that managers in the past were not called upon to make much of an effort and that they are now no longer capable of doing so; satisfying the minimum

requirement, not enjoying the work, regarded as commonplace. A concern that fundamentally there is insufficient caring about people on the part of management, resulting in "switching-off" by the staff.

#### Negative attitudes towards customers

Concern that branches put customers' interests above the need to generate income for the Bank whilst meeting customers' needs. Apathy appearing to lead to an increase in the use of junior staff for dealing with customers; the disappearance of courtesy at the counter, and sometimes negative, hostile attitudes displayed to customers.

#### Branch Managers' attitudes to training

Branch Managers regarded as believing that they personally do not have the time to attend courses (ie "being trained") and that their manning levels are insufficient for the release of other grades. Training regarded as being outside of a manager's job and that it ought to be done somewhere other than in the branch.

#### The need to avoid being seen as deficient

A tendency of branches to avoid responsibility when possible, eg by referrals to Head Office, or by delegating work to junior staff. Rigid attention to procedures and regulations to avoid criticism about how work is done. Harsh treatment meted out when mistakes occur, resulting in attention being directed primarily at avoiding mistakes

("providing for the next inspection rather than concentrating on getting new business"). Fear of exposing deficiencies because of the belief that the information would be used by management to the disadvantage of staff. Disinclination to be involved with training for fear that it would be construed as being inadequate. Avoidance of any possibility of being regarded as lacking in knowledge.

#### The "comfort zone" syndrome

Easily achieving a grade at which one feels financially comfortable and satisfied. Being afraid of responsibility. A desire on the part of many branch managers for a "quiet life", or a "happy atmosphere" in the branch, leading to actions designed to please staff as opposed to meeting working requirements.

#### Effect of branch on junior staff

Belief that newcomers to the branch will take on the values and attitudes of existing staff because the majority of people considered to be incapable of remaining independent in their approach to work. The benefits of early training are eroded by people in the branches who have not attended the courses; a tendency for learning to be undermined on return to the branch because no one takes an interest in what trainees have done on the training course. Education and Training Department staff should identify the influences that branch staff have on newcomers and protect the latter from the worst of these.

## Senior Managers' rejection of training

Suspicion of the motives of the Head of Education and Training if he were to be instrumental in their training locally. Rejection of the idea that training assistance can be given by someone on the same level in the management hierarchy ("fear of empire-building"). Rejection of the idea of being in need of training, because of the strong association of training with classroom-instruction and the latter with the remedying of deficiencies. Resistance to being trained by someone who is not a banker (insistence on the "teacher" being an expert).

### 7.2.3 (b) How learning ought to be organised

For an overview of the content of this group see Figure 9. The following sections summarise the content of the components of that overview.

#### Definitions of education and training

Training is strongly associated with the class-room ("training equals the school-room"). It is more easily defined when considering techniques and procedures ("training at the cashier end is largely teaching techniques - the practical and technical side of banking"), but less so when considering more abstract aspects. Training is related specifically to being able to do jobs and there is an emphasis in knowledge and skills acquisition. Education is viewed as dealing with professional qualification and (sometimes) as something needed to support training. The

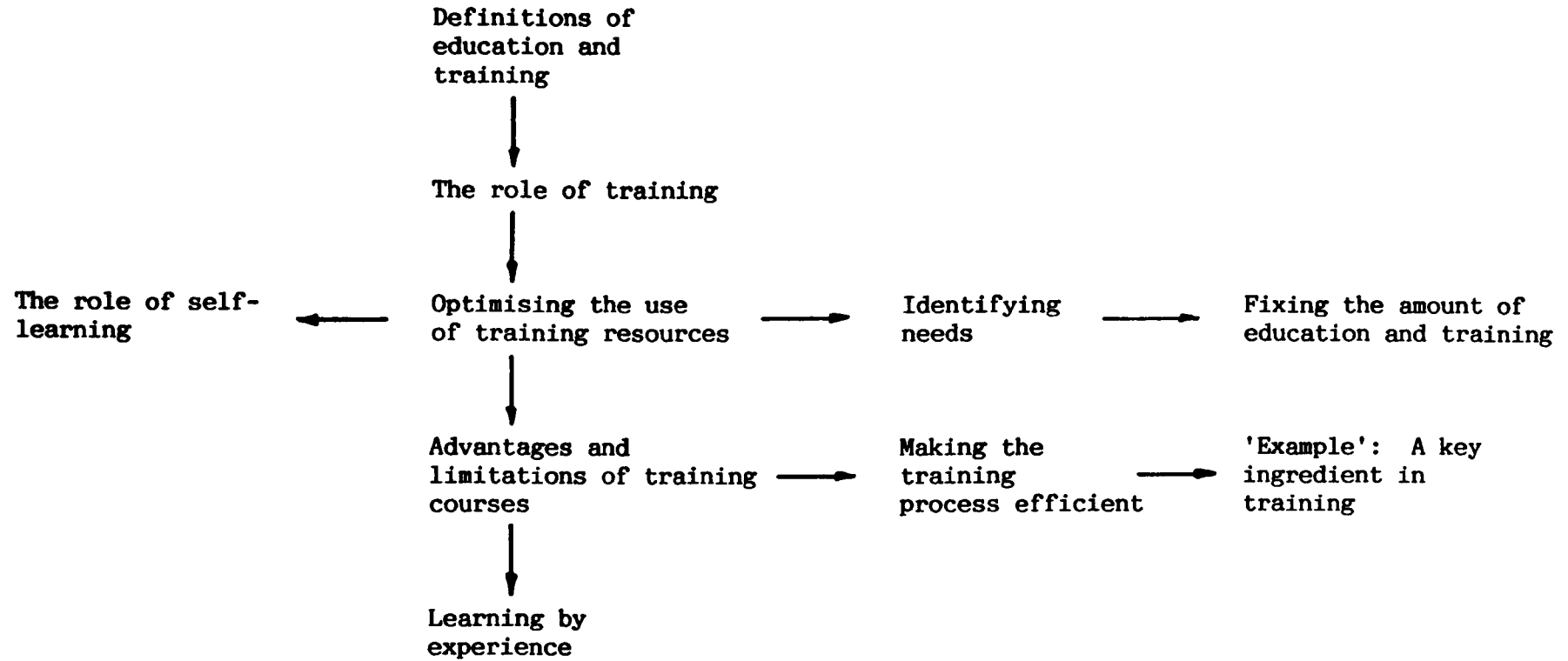


Fig 9: Overview of how learning ought to be organised

model of training is thus heavily biased towards instruction and a passive role for the learner.

### The role of training

Training must be inter-linked with a career programme. By linking training and promotion it is possible to create "carrot and stick" conditions for the motivation of people. Training should provide an automatic response whenever a job is defined. By structuring training, management can satisfy itself that it cannot be accused of not equipping people to do their jobs. The need for training to be organised centrally is to ensure good standards and that what is learned is actually put into practice. Centralised training can back-up in-branch learning by dealing with those things for which it is difficult to obtain practice in-branch. In this way, learning from experience can be accelerated and extended. Trainers should be experts in learning and in training others to be teachers; in this way difficult learners can be helped, a good start to the training process can be made, and the resources within the branch can be mobilised to extend the training provision that can be made.

### Optimising the use of training resources

Training is like production with learning the product. This can decay if learning is not "followed-up" after the course. The recognition of the need to practice what is dealt with on the course reinforces the view of training as a mechanistic process built around the expertise of the teacher being transmitted and maintained. After courses,

people have to be "caught quickly" otherwise they "cool visibly". To leave people alone after a course is regarded as foolish because people "would just shrug it off and go back to normal". Careful selection of those for training is regarded as a key ingredient in making training cost-effective ("it is a grave error to train all staff to a high level"). This leads to the idea of trying to meet individual needs by having many, one-day courses and to identifying those people who "cannot benefit from training", or those who are reluctant to deal with new aspects of the Bank's work. It is even suggested that it might be cheaper to "get rid of someone" instead of spending money on developing them to what the Bank wants. Conversely, cost-effectiveness is seen by some as providing courses only when there are "large numbers" of people with the same need, it being uneconomic to provide a one-off course for a small group. Varying the method of training is suggested, but the suggestions all relate to the teaching process (passing on knowledge via bulletins, secondments, coaching).

### The role of self-learning

There is a growing awareness that people can teach themselves. But predominantly, whilst the view is that training cannot do it all, and therefore self-learning is inevitable, the latter is generally regarded as unsupervised working in accordance with a teacher's directions.

### Identifying needs

There are mixed views about who should do this,



covering the trainer, trainers in consultation with management, by reference to job content, by reference to expert occupants of jobs. It is also suggested that identification of needs is ultimately dependent upon the view of management about how they want things to be.

#### Fixing the amount of education and training

The amount of training has to be controlled (eg training should not be offered when people believe something is "beyond them"; should be restricted to knowledge they are going to have to use; be related only to their present grade; restricted to banking).

#### Advantages and limitations of training courses

Classroom learning is proposed as the best form of training reinforcing the strong association between courses and training. Despite some awareness that courses can deal with emotional and perceptual learning as well as cognitive processes, there is a pronounced emphasis on the exclusion of non-cognitive aspects as beyond the scope of courses, which seems to reinforce the idea that training courses are most effective when dealing with quantitative aspects (techniques and procedures particularly) which are predictable. There is a variety of views about how to get the process of the course right - "games" and "exercises" ought to be removed, the course should be like "real life", case histories are good, role playing can have a powerful effect, etc.

## Making the training process efficient

Training efficiency is achieved by making the method of learning suit the individual - but the method of learning is still largely viewed as being taught. Maintaining attention and interest are the teacher's responsibility, and part of the credentials of a good teacher are to do with this and efficient classroom management. Teachers must meet certain criteria (have had practical experience, be able to "get inside" each person and make sure they do not "switch-off", be good at the task being taught). Trainees must be tested to ensure that they "have assimilated the information" and to give an opportunity to let the trainee "know the consequences" of not using the learning opportunity provided.

### "Examples": A key ingredient in training

There is considerable support for the idea that central to good training is the provision of an example, a representation or display of the ideal, which can be copied.

### Learning by experience

This approach to learning is strongly supported and from a variety of viewpoints: "practice is better than theory"; "practical experience is available for recall almost indefinitely"; "the best way to learn how to do a job is to do the job"; "learning is best when you can do it"; "its only by doing a job that people become more skilled in applying the theories". The features of learning by

experience that make it valuable are that people are "faced with reality", that it has to be taken seriously when it is "being done for real", that mistakes occur and people learn "when it hurts, when things go wrong". There is some recognition of drawbacks to learning by experience: It calls for persistence which some people do not have; it is unreliable and needs broadening; it is dependent upon the environment; opportunities for learning can be missed; the same mistake is sometimes made many times; the opportunity is there to learn "their own attitudes"; mistakes do occur and sometimes they are expensive; the pressure at the place of work can be high and thus unduly distracting.

### 7.2.3 (c) The way people learn

For an overview of the content of this group see Figure 10. The following sections summarise the content of the components of that overview.

#### Personality and character

When describing people there is a widespread tendency to resort to the contrast between "personality" and "character". The former is ill-defined, but tends to be associated with outward behaviour and regarded as changeable. The latter is closely associated with loyalty, conscientiousness, honesty, being trustworthy, worthy of respect, knowing right from wrong and is generally regarded as unchangeable. But the respondents are not consistent, in isolated cases regarding character in the way that others

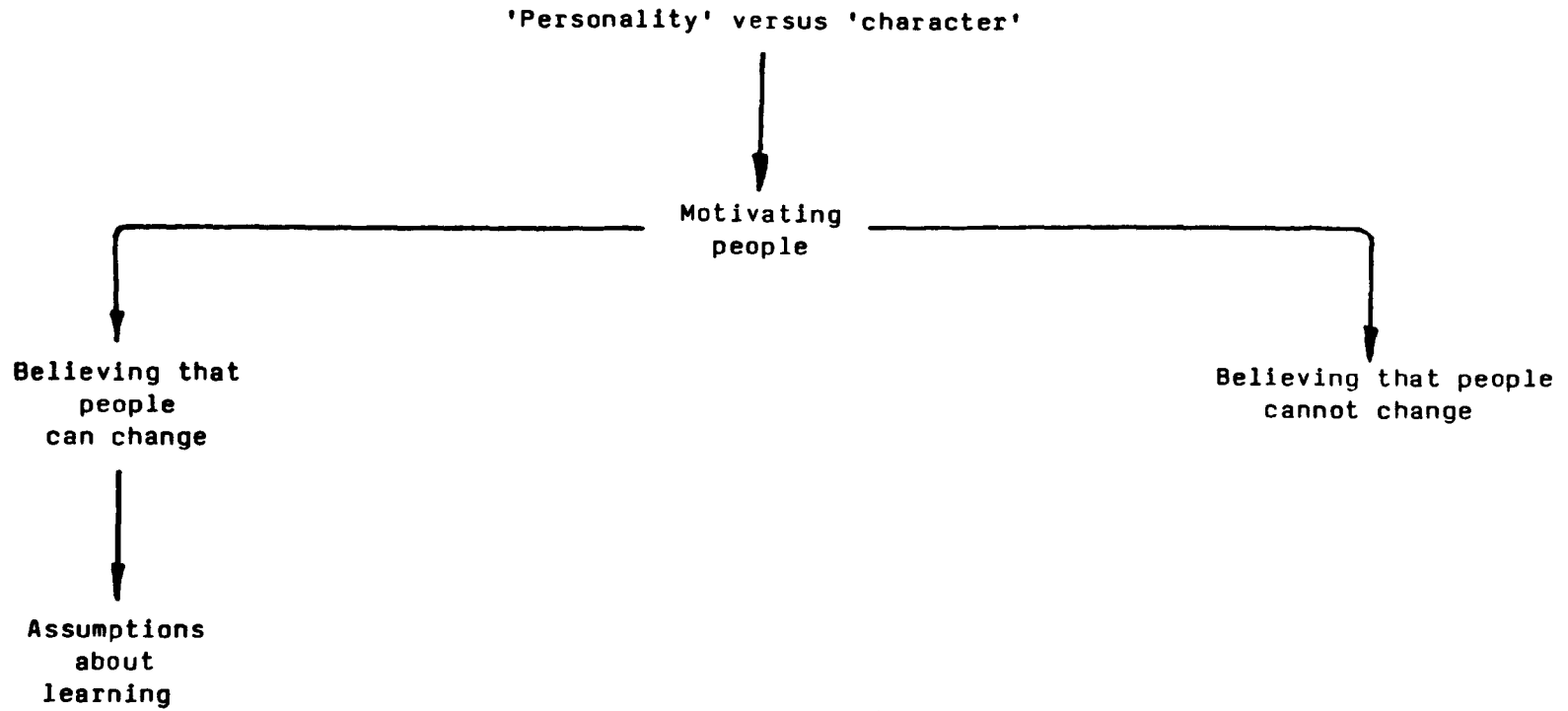


Fig 10: Overview of the way people learn

consider personality, and vice versa.

### Motivating people

Optimistic respondents believe that most people have good qualities and respond positively when they are managed by competent, caring people. They recognise that motivating people by fear is counter-productive and realise instead that various ways of motivating have to be used, according to circumstances and the person concerned. There is a preference for motivation by leadership, being supportive of people and being prepared to recognise their efforts.

Pessimistic respondents consider that people need to be regularly encouraged, "continuously prodded", to be "switched-on" by someone. It is unrealistic to expect all to aspire to higher positions. People have to be monitored closely because otherwise they will take the easy way out or even "fail to get on with it if left to their own devices". An extreme subset of pessimistic respondents are those who believe that the only incentive for people is money: "The way to give people an incentive to learn is to reward them financially", or, "you can only bring out the good in people by dangling financial incentives in front of them."

### Believing that people can change

This point of view can be summed up as: "Everything about a person is changeable, but not all things can be changed to the same extent." The conditions for change to come about are various: "You have to get people to realise it's not so difficult"; "I have not got the "knack" has to

be regarded as invalid;" "People have to be persuaded first that something ought to be done about their shortcomings". Whilst there is support for the view that change can come about there are limited views about change methods, with reliance on training courses/teaching being preferred.

### Believing that people cannot change

On a theoretical level change in some things is deemed possible, but in practice is considered unlikely to come about. There is a conviction that "we have, all of us, things inside us that cannot be changed, things so deeply ingrained that you just cannot get at them. The unchangeable things within a person are thought to have been there since birth or that people are "just not equipped to make changes in themselves so certain faculties are endowed at birth, and if not so, it is impossible to acquire them (eg, confidence, speaking in public, ability to cope with change, ability with languages, ability to withstand pressure). In considering difficulties with personal change, the concept of attitude is prominent, and usually regarded as being outside of the learning process, ie utterly resistant to change.

### Assumptions about learning

Finding one's way of learning and becoming good at it is a natural reflection of the recognition of the differences between people. A minority view is that efficient learning begins with having a good team spirit, involving the willingness to talk through problems.

Largely, it is viewed as being attributable to a person's temperament, and in one case, to be genetically derived. Learning is generally regarded as a knowledge-absorption process - with "information being thrown at people" - and not associated with life outside of the classroom (in the sense of being deliberate, organised; learning by experience, in contrast, just happens naturally and is outside of conscious control). Views about the effect of age on learning are varied, but all agree that learning ability and willingness to learn does diminish as one gets older (because gaps in learning activity then occur more frequently, because the method of learning is more often disputed, it becomes harder to "digest a lot of facts", because the routineness of the job fails to provide a stimulus to learning, etc).

#### 7.2.4 An Interpretation of the Results of the Conversations

The content of the conversations comprise a number of inter-related components and a deeper consideration of these reveals three major themes covering: (i) Problems arising in the Bank by virtue of the style adopted by the top management; (ii) inertia towards training-stimulated change borne of a mixture of fear of making a mistake coupled with powerful notions about what learning and training really meant to the managers; (iii) the need for pragmatism in devising training interventions in a culture such as that expressed within the Bank; a more detailed explanation of which follows.

It is clear that the Bank's management were disinclined

to take risks, being characterised by a high degree of cautiousness. They lacked a clear sense of purpose which presumably undermined any attempt to embrace the management development initiative. This is reinforced by the many indications given of the tendency to ignore the human factors of management. The culture expressed by these conversations can only be described as repressive, highly rule-governed, and hostile to new ideas.

To press for change was to risk adverse reaction. There was active discouragement of innovation. It was considered (largely) that people were motivated only by financial incentives. This seemed to be coupled with an acceptance of the way in which work was organised, as if it was unchangeable, despite some views being expressed that individuals were capable of change.

Interestingly, senior management seemed resigned to the inevitability of this inertia. They seemed to accept that they were powerless to change things, which may explain their reluctance to recruit fully the services of the Education and Training Department. But yet, training was part of management's strategy, albeit to a limited degree when viewed from a perspective of management change. The established way of thinking about achieving productivity was to develop procedures (for the design of work and the deployment of resources) which were then supported by the provision of training. This kind of training was seen as a component in management's communication with staff directed at the successful installation of those procedures. And thus in contrast to the ideas for developing staff potential offered by the work upon which this research was based.

Overwhelmingly, the conversations describe apathy and



withdrawal. There is emphatic assertion that people avoid responsibility. Morale is described as being at "rock-bottom". As one interviewee points out: "There is a terrible inertia about this organisation that undermines a willingness to learn; and what Education and Training Department can do about that, I do not know?" Which raises an important question about the future of training and development: Where should its attention be directed?

The response of the Bank's management (in the main) was that it should be remedial, at the expense of the developmental role. The conversations point to a profound reluctance to be entrepreneurial because of the fear of making a mistake and what that entailed. This naturally reinforced the idea of "training as remedy", explaining exactly why managers (generally speaking) were resistant to training initiatives. People were afraid. They were afraid that their honest disclosures of learning needs would be used against them by the management. Similarly, they eschewed any comment that might be construed as critical of management for fear of consequences for their futures or even current well-being.

Resistance to training is also found in the expression of the view that attitudes cannot be changed; the corollary of which is that "some things can be taught and other things cannot". Which, of course, is derived from the firmly held view that training is synonymous with instruction. This mutually-restricting cycle raises questions about what might be termed the "legitimate domain" for the trainer. What exactly should his territory be?

All of which relates to the great emphasis in the conversations given to the dimension "theoretical versus

practical" when considering what can be done to help people learn. Training courses were deemed to be capable of dealing with a specific range of human activity - that which could be quantified or prescribed in terms readily intelligible and acceptable to ordinary people. Beyond that people "learned by experience". This process was not necessarily articulated nor put under close scrutiny by the interviewees. But, nevertheless, it was deemed to be personally relevant and the best means of invoking the commitment of the learner. For the trainer to enter this world of "learning by experience" he had to be capable of offering an exemplar from his own re-gurgitated experience.

The role of examples in learning was very important. If a trainer was seen to lack experience (ie being limited in his power to provide examples) he was regarded as being of limited value. The need for a trainer to prescribe the content of learning was felt very strongly. Whilst there was much in the conversations about the need to personalise training, what was meant was that there was a need to find efficient ways of imparting knowledge in accordance with the learner's circumstances.

Fundamentally, resistance to new ideas about training always seemed to return to the conviction that "training is courses". So much so that any argument or proposal from the Education and Training Department about new ways of approaching learning were seen as being attempts to establish new courses. Alongside of this was the insistence that "learning by experience" was best anyway. Management was prepared to offer up for training those people it considered were in need of improvement, but this was training of the "remedy" or "treatment" kind. People were

to be "moulded" by the training system and returned to the workplace with their deficiencies rectified. In short, senior managers were unadventurousness in their handling of ideas. They were used to doing things in the same way. They were uncomfortable with scientific method and intellectual enquiry, which they saw as properly belonging only to the academic world. They preferred the concrete to the abstract, the "practical" to the "theoretical", the specific to the general, and the short-term to the longer-term view.

At the outset the top management's decision to increase its training and education resources had not been widely accepted in the Bank. Particularly, bestowing status on the new Department equal to that of the Bank's other Departments was especially objectionable. Prior to this decision education and training activity had been of low status, operating in a subordinate role within the Personnel Department. The decision to create an independent Education and Training Department alongside that of Personnel had not been communicated to all of the Bank's senior managers. They were thus left to look for their own explanation as to why it was necessary to do this. They lacked a sophisticated frame of reference about the ways in which managers and staff worked together. It was thus extremely difficult for them to accept new ideas about developing people and the groups in which they worked. Managers were surprised, therefore, when the newly established Education and Training Department attempted to encourage them to confront their own behaviour as a start towards new styles of manager-subordinate relationships.

Finally, there is a profound impression from the

conversations of managerial powerlessness. In some quarters progressive views were held about the need to get people to face themselves and their circumstances if progress with competence was to be made. But yet there was a failure to harness these views in support of the offered learning ideology. Senior managers were caught between the insistence of the top management on stability and compliance and the urging of the Head of Education and Training for a more radical approach to management of people and performance improvement. All of which was compounded by those senior managers being in doubt about what was expected of them in terms of achievement and the definition of responsibilities and authority.

Perhaps change in a culture of the kind expressed by these conversations is unrealistically expected without some enlightenment, at the top of the organisation, about the possibilities for new ways of organising and managing work? And, perhaps most importantly, it is unrealistic to expect change to occur in the absence of optimistic and encouraging values and beliefs about human nature. Whilst the analysis and interpretation of these conversations was brought to a premature end, nevertheless they seem to point strongly to these two findings as being essential pre-requisites to the promotion of new ideas about learning in an institution.

As the conversations concluded, it was hoped that the work could be continued. The intention was to reduce their content to a set of bi-polar statements. These would then have been rated by the interviewees to get a measure of the varying commitment of the group to the various constructs expressed. Eventually, the constructs would have been validated by a larger group of similar managers so that an

instrument might emerge for profiling managerial beliefs about learning in an organisational setting. This work, however, had to be abandoned, being overtaken by events. When further reorganisation of the Banks in England and Wales was announced, it was impossible to maintain commitment to those stages of further analysis and development.

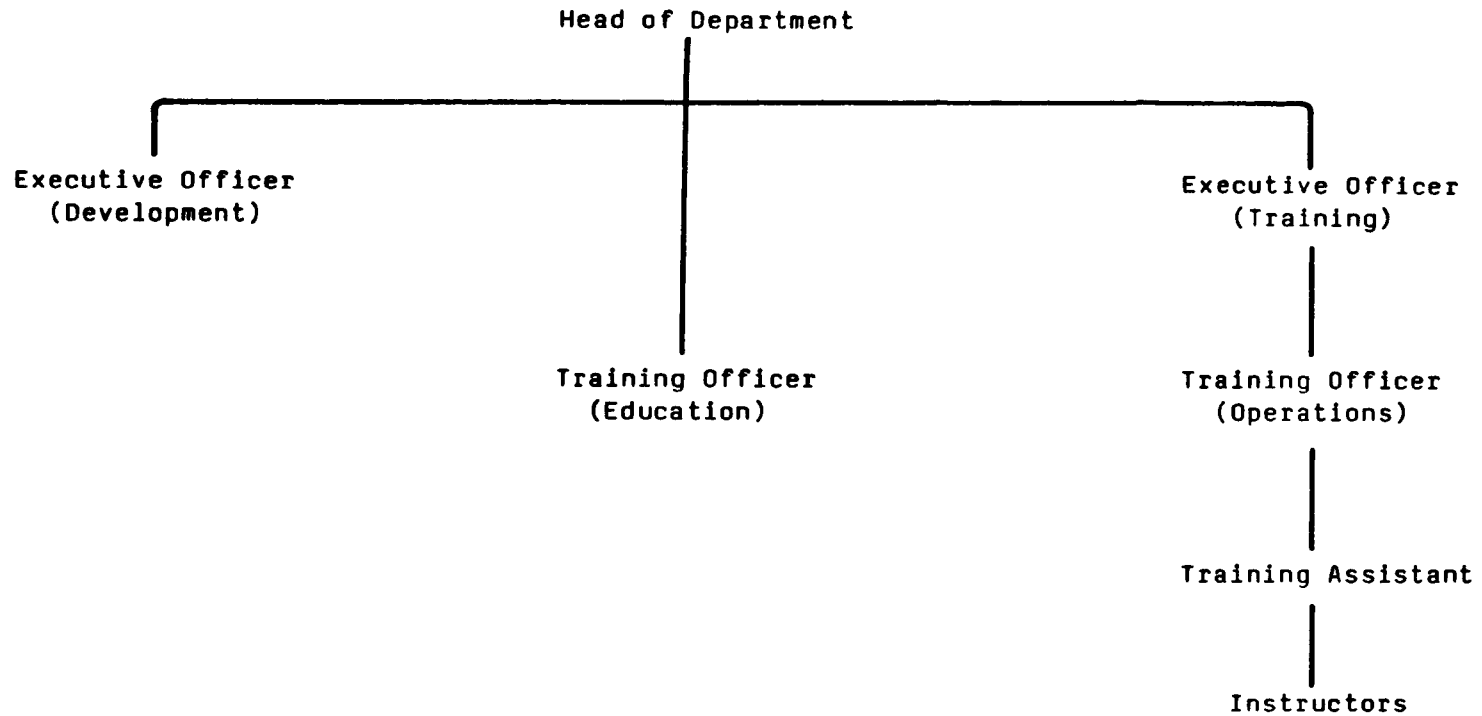
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## CHAPTER 8

### THE APPROACH TO WORKING WITH SUBORDINATES TO DEVELOP LEARNING COMPETENCE

Chapter 1 set out the background to the establishment of the Education and Training Department of the TSB of Birmingham and the Midlands. What this meant, initially, in terms of organisation of work is shown in Fig 11. The Department was directed by a Head of Department supported by two Executive Officers. Their collective managerial task was to set objectives, assign responsibilities, monitor performance, control expenditure, etc. The work of the Department was divided into three parts: Development (research, planning, monitoring of training performance, appraisals scheme, on-the-job tuition); Training (analysis of needs, design of programmes, course operation, evaluation); Education (enrolments, liaison with Colleges and the Institute of Bankers, monitoring and support of students, records, financial control).

The Department began formally in July 1979 with the recruitment of staff. All except one of those recruits had no previous experience of education, training and development and so acquiring competence in their new jobs was an urgent task if the Department was to be useful to the Bank. The first aim, therefore, was to achieve as quickly as possible the capability of responding fully and professionally to the demands created by management's expectations for the Department. To this end five key performance objectives were identified: (i) Sound management of the Department; (ii) effective acquisition of competence in accordance with job roles and priorities;



(Note: Secretarial and clerical support services omitted)

Fig 11: The organisation chart for the Education and Training Department

(iii) flexibility in deployment of resources to meet changing circumstances whilst maintaining standards; (iv) a working atmosphere that people found satisfying; (v) broad-based development through vocational education and professional qualification either to maintain a banking career or promote a new one in the personnel function.

In these circumstances there was a tremendous emphasis on learning and an opportunity to study that process intensively. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is not to describe the totality of the establishment of the Department and the expansion subsequently of its operations. Its purpose is to focus on the way in which a learning environment was created and maintained and, within which, how people were encouraged and aided to learn how to learn as the process whereby their capacity for self-organisation of learning might be increased. The chapter is in two parts: Firstly, an introduction to the learning environment via its main parameters; secondly, a more detailed description of how it was operationalised through the definition and management of specific situational influences.

### 8.1 Setting up the learning environment: Main parameters

The Department began in newly-rented accommodation. It was purpose-built and appeared more luxurious than accommodation elsewhere in the Bank. The physical environment was comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. It was much different from what the Department's recruits had so far experienced in the Bank. The constituent Banks had little by way of training history and tradition. Professional education was established as a requirement for



a managerial career and was financially supported: Otherwise it was very much on a self-help basis. Training had been restricted to junior staff attending off-the-job courses about the procedures and technicalities of their jobs.

The staff joining the Department, therefore, brought little with them by way of awareness of what was involved in training and development or of capability for immediately contributing to it. The one member of the group who was experienced had been an instructor for several years. In addition to this lack of training and development experience, all of the staff had been employed since school in the Banks of Birmingham or the Midlands. The world of work that they had built was from interaction only with the norms and values of those two employers. As a group they were somewhat reserved and respectful, a little formal and largely expecting to be told what to do.

#### 8.1.1 The relativity of rules for social conduct

It was, therefore, important at the outset that a view of group behaviour be established to increase their awareness of the processes of interaction as a basis for finding alternative ways of working together. The notion of socially-invented rules by which conduct is guided seemed useful. The following model was used for discussions with the new group about the role of rules in group interactions:

- (i) Rules derive from the creation of meanings;
- (ii) meanings are built out of contrasts observable in the world;
- (iii) a fundamental contrast is to decide whether to stand out as an individual or to be part of a group;
- (iv) the

dilemma for most is resolved by electing to collaborate with others, presumably as a means of increasing the probability of species survival; (v) an inevitable concern of the group is order, rules are needed for conduct that deal with relationships (and within which the exercise of power and authority are notable); (vi) rules are gradually adapted, renegotiated, if the group is to remain viable, because of changes induced by man's intellectual energy and curiosity; (vii) control, and therefore direction of the evolution of groups, comes from identifying and using mechanisms for rule-changing, both smoothly and discontinuously.

The staff had not worked together before. They were a new group. In some cases individuals had been promoted on joining the Department and were managing others for the first time. The new jobs were perceived as demanding. The Department was highly visible with a lot of people interested to see what it would do. The staff would be observed by many in their new role of "public speakers" and this absorbed a considerable amount of their attention. They were aware intellectually of the content of their jobs. And in one important respect they were united: They did not know what to expect. The Head of Department was regarded as unconventional, being outside their experience of other managers.

There was thus a need to deal explicitly with rules and the way whereby they could be changed. It was likely that they had brought with them predispositions which were counter-productive to effective working, eg an expectation that the "boss" would provide all the ideas. The group needed to consider its conceptions of effective working and establish methods it considered appropriate. This would

come from an examination of its own processes, which in itself was novel for the group, it being unusual at that time even for staff meetings to take place for routine communication purposes.

### 8.1.2 People versus profit

But what were the "rules" to be about? The group was being constituted for commercial purposes, to play its part in making profits. But is profit making enough? Is it desirable to subordinate human needs to this motive? Their experience of organisational life was that people were subordinated to the task. Specification of procedures, product information sheets, Operational System Advices and General Circulars had dominated their working lives. If meetings had taken place they were largely for imparting information. Critical comment, even if intended to improve things, was frowned upon. Work was defined closely and people were expected to occupy their places in that definition.

So this idea of regarding people as important permeated the whole of the approach to the group, under-pinning all decisions to do with managerial and personal development commitments. As Goldsmith and Clutterbuck (1984) point out, profit and productivity are closely inter-twined with people, their needs and how they are encouraged to respond to maximising that "bottom-line". They say of today: ".... What we are witnessing is a social change within British Companies, where the profit-motive is being re-asserted with greater strength than has been the case since Victorian times and yet where the human values of work are also being

strengthened - for those who have jobs at least - as part of the realisation that, in the end, productivity and profit come more from making the most of people in an organisation than from any other resource."

Interestingly, Naisbitt (1984), in describing directions that are transforming our lives, says that: "... whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counter balancing human response - that is, high touch - or the technology is rejected. The more high tech, the more high touch," echoing the drive for profit and cost control with a "high tech" parallel.

More recently Harvey-Jones (1985) has more forcibly put the point, and presses for the pendulum in organisational affairs to swing more in favour of employees. Addressing his remarks to employers, he says: "People are not machines and the use and organisation of people in ways which do not recognise their own abilities and even more firmly their wishes, inevitably will operate at considerably below optimum efficiency. In the past most industrial organisation theory has expected individuals to conform to the wishes of the organisation. I believe for the future the organisation will have to conform more to the wishes of its members, and indeed one can already see the beginnings of this trend in the increasing moves towards participative management." So this was the most fundamental point of all, in setting-up an environment for achievement: People are more important than things or ideas. And the above quotations illustrate the philosophy adopted.

### 8.1.3 The purpose of the learning environment

But what was being aimed at? What was the purpose of this learning environment? It was to establish the conditions for maximising the probability of members of the Department reaching what Augstein and Thomas (1975) have called self-organised learner status. The organising idea underlying this purpose is the desire to help people capture the essence of that mode of learning which is in contrast to submitting to being taught. In this way the learner is encouraged to enter the teaching-learning dialogue as an equal partner, emerging from it with, at the very least, greater insight about himself and his approach to the learning task.

So we were involved in an experiment in change. The extent of this can be indicated by illustrating aspects of the environment from which they had just emerged. Learning in the Bank was associated with qualifying as a banker - "getting the Diploma" - not with life and competence at work. Some managers considered, moreover, that students should not be helped either; study was regarded (almost) as part of an assessment process - "the cream will rise to the top!". Furthermore, if students were having difficulty with passing examinations, it was because they "were not working hard enough". So it seemed sensible to find a way of looking at change that would not only help with managing it, but would also help those involved in it by virtue of providing a means of articulating it to themselves.

#### 8.1.4 A strategy for change

The author's experience and observations of those coping with new situations suggested three, principal

dimensions for characterising the change taking place. Firstly, was the change occurring gradually and smoothly or was it abrupt and discontinuous? Secondly, did the change demand a new way of psychologically operating or were existing ways of functioning being confirmed? Thirdly, was the change eliciting those new responses within the established context or ground-rules or was there a need for new rules to be invented? From a learning to learn viewpoint the second of these involves four stages or phases of development:

### I - Developing commitment

Releasing energy, creating context for setting directions, generating commitment. It involves trusting people and granting them freedom to experiment and demands a high toleration of mistakes.

### II - Raising awareness

This works to remove constraints on learner effectiveness by confronting the learner's prior knowledge of himself and the world around him. Ultimately, it seeks to establish a new philosophy of knowledge and how it is constructed and to develop the individual's view of his potential for self-organised learning.

### III - Re-construction

It begins with acquiring the ability to model that which is to be learned, from which specific learning

purposes can be generated. All relevant areas of skill are explored and the learning to learn paradigm is established. The foundation for self-organised learning is created.

#### IV - Independence

Becoming able to continue unaided is the culmination of the final stage. Here the person sets his own directions, exploits opportunities for learning in his circumstances and has no limits on his endeavours. He has learned how to converse with himself about his own learning. He is in control and is mindful of the need to guard against the forgetfulness of which Gurdjieff spoke. He is able to successively redefine himself as he progressively expands his capacity for self-organisation of learning.

Using the framework offered by Thomas (1984) these four stages can be labelled factual, internally coherent, externally validated and creative, respectively. This emphasises movement to independence, a standing-outness from established, externally-derived frames of reference.

This progress towards independence is echoed by Dale and Payne (1976). They sought to clarify the concepts of "growth" and "development" so as to better understand intervention. Their framework provides an alternative but complementary way of considering the stages of development. They suggest a three-component, three-layered framework, illustrated in the table overpage. In this, awareness is both apprehension and comprehension of the world, resources are the skills and abilities required to operate at the various levels of competence, and will is the creator of

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Level	Components		
	"Awareness"	"Resources"	"Will"
1	Poorly developed self-concepts; at the direction of others.	Unskilled, deliberate, clumsy.	Reluctant to act, hangs back.
2	Behaviour dominated by need to relate to others; seeks to maintain social order, set a good example.	Accomplished in recognised techniques.	Acts reasonably effectively, finds something to believe in.
3	Able to think abstractly, accepts relativity social meaning, becomes a rule-maker as opposed to a rule recogniser.	"Master Craftsman" creative and able to develop new modes of expression	Able to act with own frame of reference of without need to see if others are doing the same as oneself.

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Growth and Development - Dale and Payne (1976)

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goals and the driving-force towards them. For Dale and Payne a complete development is movement to level 3 on all of the components. The model is considered to apply to all settings.

In the context of learning, the central question seems to be: "Does the learner's mythology inhibit or enhance his learning ability?" And the progression to independence and creativity is illustrated by questions such as: Do I have the power to change my life and my circumstances? What are my beliefs and values about the nature of learning? Can I sort out what needs to be learned or must I remain in need of guidance from others? What are the possibilities for how I might function? In working towards self-organisation these ideas not only provided a means of progress but did so whilst embracing its essential spirit.

#### 8.1.5 Summary

In summary, then, there are five managerial value positions which under-pin and predetermine the shape and content of manager and subordinate interaction which are directed at increasing learning. In essence, they are about accepting the need for: (i) Defining and periodically assessing the maturity of the group; (ii) accepting that the rules of group behaviour are social inventions and therefore consciously can be changed; (iii) a positive choice in favour of profit through people at the expense of the pursuit of profit regardless of the needs of people; (iv) making known as clearly and fully as possible what is intended as the learning outcomes being sought; (v) having a way of helping people articulate their progress towards

competence and independence.

This is not to say that these statements are all that need to be stated about preparing for managerial success. Rather they are one attempt at describing fundamentally a position that all managers must make choices about, as a pre-requisite to setting up the detailed arrangements for carrying out the tasks demanded by a pursuit of increased learning competence. What follows is a description of those arrangements made by the Head of Department expressly for the purpose of eliciting from his staff both commitment and willingness to learn and for aiding their acquisition of greater learning competence.

## 8.2 Operationalising the learning environment through situational influences

This section sets out in detail the operational implications of the main parameters of the learning environment. Essentially, these can best be referred to as situational influences, those conditions that arise when people work together and which have both positive and negative consequences for accomplishment. They are created both accidentally and as a result of intentions deliberately thought about. In the latter cases, they are directed at eliciting responses that managements desire of their staff. Taken together they can be considered as expressions of idiosyncratic theories of human behaviour at work. In other words, a physical acting out of a particular metaphor of man, whether chosen consciously or not, incorporating the ways in which people are considered to interact optimally for common purposes. It is proposed that people at work act

largely in accordance with the conclusions they reach as a result of their assessment of the situational influences that surround them.

The situational influences that operated in the Education and Training Department, insofar as the Head of Department could delineate them, are described below under the headings: (i) Physical surroundings (the provision of workplaces); (ii) structure (the design of jobs and the relationship between them); (iii) context (the establishment of frames of reference within which personal meaning can be created about working and learning); (iv) processes (beliefs, values and human relationships at work). These four areas of consideration express a set of beliefs about how to get the best out of people for learning and development purposes. These beliefs are based on the premise that truly successful working can only come from a merging of the generation of commitment, willingness to learn, learning how to learn and a desire for high standards. This premise derives from the fundamental idea that any approach to people must embrace a coordinated involvement of all aspects of the person that respects the uniqueness of each individual.

#### 8.2.1 Physical surroundings: The provision of work places

It seems logical to begin with physical surroundings. Before the staff could assemble as an operating unit they needed a place of work. The horticultural analogy of carefully preparing the ground before sowing is apt: Without the correct mixture of nutrients, soil condition and

support even the best of plants will fail. It was, therefore, important to consider the effect on successful working of physical surroundings. A great deal of our lives is spent at work. It is important to us that we can derive satisfaction from that experience. The physical environment must, therefore, be considered the bedrock on which a foundation can be built to support the variety and complexity of interpersonal contact that moulds people into an effective working group.

In general recognition of this idea is the variety of legislation which sets out how workplaces ought to be. But yet, by concentrating upon the minimum requirements for avoiding hazards to health, they have a negative orientation. They fall short of positively promoting well-being at work through configuration, texture and colour of workingspace and equipment. In the Education and Training Department four requirements were used to guide the design of the facilities: Equity regarding space allocation; privacy and freedom from distraction; comfort; aesthetic appeal. It is outside the scope of this research to detail all of the aspects of design and construction of the Training Centre. The Head of Department, however, was very closely involved with the Architect to ensure the incorporation of ideas about the interplay between the physical environment and people.

With regard to the allocation of space, priority was given to the Department's customers - the trainees - so that a functional layout was achieved for both classrooms and reception. In allocating the remaining space to staff, it was not the intention that everyone would be given the same area. On the contrary, the allocation was made in

accordance with job needs.

In designing offices a close comparison of open-plan versus closed areas for individuals was made. The latter was selected on the grounds that avoidance of distractions was of over-riding importance in seeking uninterrupted working of staff. This was in contrast to the norm in other departments. For the most part these were open-plan, with separate offices reserved only for senior staff. Comfort was taken care of by using good quality furniture, individualised lighting and temperature controls, and provision for making meals.

The aesthetic aspects were initiated by a functionally pleasing layout complemented by good use of natural light, colour and texture of fabrics. The design incorporated plentiful filing and storage space to avoid untidiness. The only omission under the aesthetic heading was the hanging of pictures, but approval for this expenditure was denied.

The same standards were used for trainees and staff. This met with some opposition. It was a commonly-held view that seats in classrooms should be uncomfortable, the explanation, paradoxically, being that in this way a student's concentration would be assisted!

This description deals only in outline with the very detailed attention given to the design of the physical environment. The objective here is not to reproduce an architectural specification, but to deal with the essentials that illustrate the tangible way a management can and ought to display its concern for people, to under-line, as opposed to substituting for, a genuine regard for and attention to human needs at work.

### 8.2.2 Structure: The design of jobs and the relationship between them

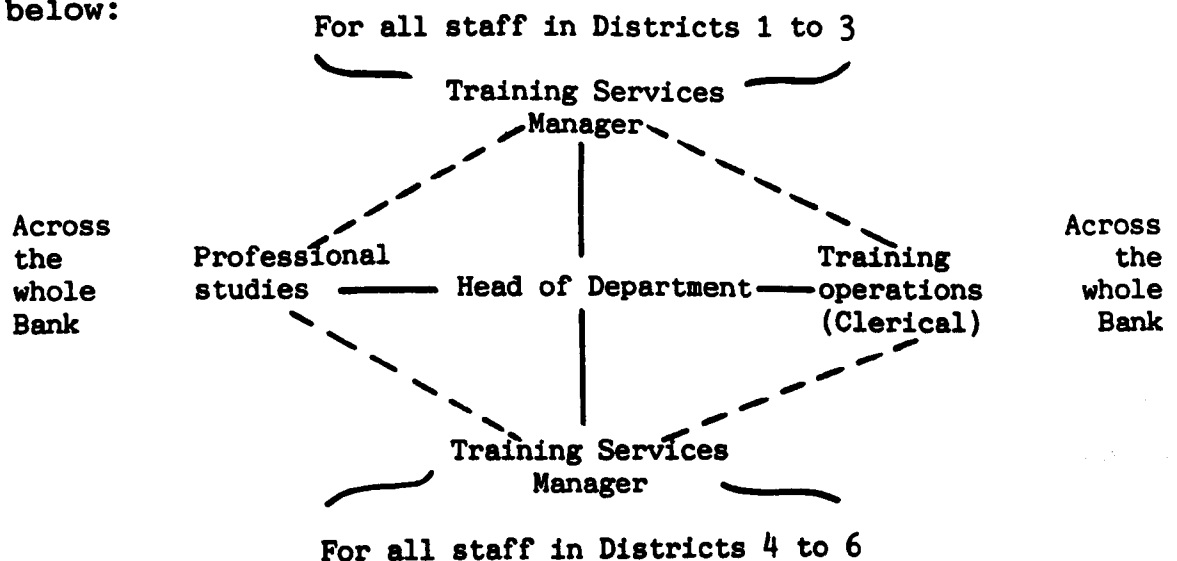
The Department's provision of training services to the Bank varied over time. Firstly, the staff's ability to contribute was limited because of their newness to the work. Secondly, the ways in which education, training and development needs were defined became more sophisticated. Thirdly, what was considered legitimate for the Department to deal with gradually altered. All of these resulted in increased demands on the Department - both as a result of the Department's developing ability to intervene in the organisation and the changing responses from within the Bank. Initially, the Department's output was concentrated upon a narrow front, but by the end of its life it was quite sophisticated and extensive in its operations.

Within the Department itself, work was organised in the belief that productivity came not just from effort and competence, but also from how individual jobs were designed and from the way these jobs related to each other. This specification of jobs derived from an assessment of the capacity of the staff to identify needs and match them with appropriate work outcomes because the amount and nature of work that could be carried out was a function of that capacity. The expansion of this inter-relationship of capability to act and identification of needs rested ultimately on the competence of each individual.

The main considerations were manning levels, a willingness to develop the job infrastructure as abilities developed, and selection of the right people. The Department had to be started with some idea of what was

required to operate it. Great care was taken at the outset to ensure that there was a sufficiency of human and financial resources. A great deal was to be demanded of each member of staff, but there is a limit to what each person can do. If the Department was to contribute in the way anticipated satisfactory conclusions had to be reached at the outset about expected workload and the number and type of staff required to carry it out.

The organisation structure in the early stages reflected initial concerns and has been described at the start of this chapter. Newly appointed staff had to begin with what they could do, and then develop other abilities. It was necessary to quickly be of service as a Department, but at the same time prepare for the future. Initially, the Department was divided into two main areas: Planning and training development; training operations for clerical jobs. The next phase of the Department's development was to get Executive Officers dealing with manager and supervisory training. Shortly after this the addition of professional studies supervision was made. In the end phase of the development, the job category basis of organising was dropped in favour of a matrix-like management, as indicated below:



The people who previously looked after manager and supervisor training and training operations for clerical staff, now provided a complete range of training services for a group of districts in the Bank, which also included the usage of courses at the Central Executive Training College.

Thus the work of the Department gradually expanded as agreements were made and revised about what needed educational and training attention. But the ability of the Department to honor (as opposed to reach) such agreements depended fundamentally upon the knowledge of key members of staff coupled with the opportunity to practically use those ideas in service to the Bank. This made the pursuit of greater learning competence a practical necessity as well as being ideologically imperative. Each member of staff was called upon to work in ways different to those previously experienced in the Bank, and was expected to be active about his/her learning whilst coping with high demands and producing good quality work. There was thus a need to obtain people of the requisite calibre.

Accordingly, the selection of staff was given great care and attention. It was a surprise to some that selection interviewing took what they regarded as an excessive amount of time. Typically, interviews in the Bank, regardless of grade of appointment, were completed within 30 minutes. This was attributed either to "knowing how to pick "em" (at senior levels) or that "they do not know how to talk in interviews" (at junior levels). The Education and Training Department preferred the view of Brown and Jaques (1965) that it is better to spend several hours making an appointment than it is to spend hundreds of



hours sorting out the problems caused by a bad appointment. It was also considered, for practical purposes, that there are finite limits to the changes that people can make to the way they operate in jobs. A positive decision was made at the outset to appoint people who were assessed to have the characteristics required by the work, so that the developmental task was realising potential rather than forging preferences about how to be in the world. The environment that was to be built around them was unconventional by their standards. Foremost of the selection considerations was the judgment about their propensity for adapting to and growing with it.

Where possible staff were involved in appointment decisions, the objective being to underwrite the success of the "joining-up" process of the newcomer. Promotions also received very careful attention. When possible these were always from within. This meant providing opportunities for staff to gain experience of working at the level above their own job. It was not always possible to satisfy aspirations. In those cases their career was actively promoted by assisting their return to main-line banking. Sometimes people did not make the transfer to education and training work; they were then allowed to return to their original jobs without "loss of face". Conversely, those that did well in their new jobs in Education and Training Department were not held back if they wanted to move on to other spheres. This was the first time that the Bank had had an Education and Training Department of equal status to the other departments of the Bank. To join it was, therefore, a career step into the unknown. Having made that decision there was then the major task of acquiring competence

quickly in a new arena under the attentive gaze of the rest of the Bank.

The conclusions made at the outset about working arrangements were regarded as temporary. For it was necessary to embrace the prospect of fairly rapid change because of the almost unique position that human resource development occupies in the managerial orbit. It cannot be underlined too strongly that working arrangements within an Education and Training Department must inevitably change. Educational processes are involved both in maintaining the status quo (in the sense of responding to changes occurring within business operations) and challenging it (in the sense that part of the task is to persuade management to examine the appropriateness of ways of working and then to assist in processes of change that follow a commitment to new ways of doing things). It was thus operationally necessary to adopt flexibility of approach, which then yields the opportunity to create a vehicle for self-development, more fully described in later sections. The use of this vehicle, the operationalising of intellectual experience, soon leads to the realisation that to concentrate on finding the right working arrangements is relatively unimportant; much better to concentrate on getting right the use of whatever job framework was felt to be appropriate to the demands being made at the time.

8.2.3 Context: The establishment of frames of reference within which personal meaning can be created about working and learning

One of the concepts of central importance to this

research is that living in contact with others, learning and becoming a person are necessarily bound up with each other. Within which a personal metaphor of man was chosen to underpin relationships with subordinates for the purposes of their development and the Department's productivity. This, coupled with the belief that people do have the power to change themselves, provided the starting point for creating context for learning and performance and from which a framework for manager-subordinate communication evolved.

The intention was to give opportunities to each member of staff that would enable them to explore personal meaning and which would encourage and support them in developing their own theories, hypotheses and experiments both as learners and trainers to the Bank, eg great emphasis was given to encouraging people to express their ideas in meetings. The basis for this endeavour was the acceptance of the need to integrate: (i) Their necessity for coming to personally satisfying conclusions about their employment; (ii) the achievement of results; and (iii) organising attempts to help staff with their learning. Effective learning at work, therefore, comes from harmonising these three, inter-connected systems: Managerial, individual; tutorial. Each of these systems seeks to fulfill its own specification. When compared they are found to be in conflict as well as complementary. It is thus necessary to reduce conflict and enhance complementariness, if learning and productivity are to be combined optimally.

The application of the Head of Department's personal theory about how these three systems can be brought together produced the context within which staff could participate in setting departmental and job objectives and could define

their own purposes for effective and satisfying working and learning. In the way that Kelly eschewed learning as a concept, so managing cannot be divorced from the choices people make in maintaining mental and physical equilibrium, or indeed from the organised attempts occasionally needed to help them learn to do that which is expected of them. By attempting to keep the three areas (ie managerial, individual and tutorial) of working life apart we subscribe to an impersonal view of man which holds that things can be done to people rather than with them. As Kelly integrated cognition, perception and affect, the Head of Department sought to reconcile his situation as manager with those of his staff as individual persons such that productivity and learning were accomplished effectively. The key to successful working lay in obtaining personally effective learning for each member of the group, not by resorting to the use of externally offered training and development activities, but instead by seeking to generate a training and development system within each person.

A manager and his staff are united in the pursuit of results as their contribution to the organisation's business plan. Occasionally, the tutorial system (coaching by the manager, attending a training course, reading books) is required as part of a subordinate's development plan in seeking to acquire the performances required of him. The occupant of the managerial position is both manager and individual (ie ordinarily he is subordinate to another manager) and for the purpose of analysing the three systems he is considered only in his role as manager. As such his prime concern is to act as orchestrator of resources to ensure he and his staff produce the results expected of

them. The emphasis of his attention is therefore results. He must set objectives, adjudicate on priorities, assign resources, and initiate corrective measures if progress is inadequate. But in an integrated system productivity and learning are in harmony so that the emphasis on results must be balanced by a real concern for his staff as people.

In the Education and Training Department this concern for people was expressed by involving subordinates in such a way that they felt: (i) Part of a whole, that they could see where they fitted in the scheme of things and in understanding the totality of the operation were equipped to work in isolation from time to time; (ii) that what they were doing was worthwhile, and was leading to a useful conclusion, however small that contribution was to the whole operation; (iii) that they were led by someone competent in that task; (iv) that they were fully employed, that their talents were exploited, including the opportunity to voice opinions about what work should be done and how it should be organised, and that they were adequately recompensed for what they did; (v) they were treated in a way that did not undermine their sense of personal dignity; (vi) that they were adequately recognised for their efforts and achievements; (vii) free to make their own choices when faced with learning things that potentially threatened their personal value system; (viii) able to take charge of what happened within their jobs; (ix) they could influence the course of their career by the quality of what they did; (x) a sense of camaraderie and esprit with their fellow workers.

Not that it is intended to suggest that all of those items applied equally all of the time, or applied equally to a given person at any one time. What is proposed is that

the above dimensions constitute the key aspects of personal existence at work, which, if dealt with sensitively, provide powerful incentives for most people to respond fully to their managers. The integrated manager will seek to establish such a motivational framework so as to create in his staff the overriding desire to do well, to care about the work and to match management's concern for them as individuals with a total commitment to the organisation. In this way, the enlightened manager ensures the achievement of his ultimate concern - the acquisition of results.

From time to time, in pursuit of the required performance, staff will need help in acquiring the required competence. In this respect there is a comprehensive, sometimes over-powering, availability of education, training and development resources. But these representatives of the tutorial system seem to operate as if they are intent on satisfying their own code of conduct instead of meeting the needs of their users. The tutorial system when operated on traditional lines derives its inspiration from the idea of transmitting organised knowledge. Subject experts abound. They codify knowledge and communicate it intensively. Despite attempts to relate training to jobs, or the workplace in general, it often remains difficult for the learner to transfer what has been learned to his own circumstances. This kind of knowledge is polished, pre-digested, and powerful, in the sense that learners are presented with its variety and range in a relatively short period of time. Its presentation is guided by a desire for being systematic and efficient: Needs are carefully identified; technology is used to increase the impact of oral communication; people are released for short periods of time from their work, or

not at all; the learning experience is carefully worked out as a series of inter-related sequences; rational, logical explanations are emphasised; effects are evaluated and adjustments made for successive attempts at fostering learning. For many, confronting such representations of knowledge is an over-whelming experience, only coped with by allowing its immediate effects to decay. For effective learning at work the tutorial system has to be subsumed within the circumstances of the workplace and of the individual. The concentratedness and intensity of the training event has to be moderated. This is done first of all by the manager ensuring that training is offered as an extension of his performance development dialogue with the staff member concerned. Secondly, it is achieved by the learner incorporating the tutorial activity into a larger, personally directed learning strategy.

In organising work in the Department, and in pressing for adequate performance of that work, learning conversations between the Head of Department and his subordinates emphasised three key steps. The first of these is the isolation of a demand which the subordinate wishes to satisfy for which he or she has either no response or can only respond imperfectly. This must be followed by the formulation of a plan of action that embraces the whole of the learning task (behavioural and experiential, process and content) whilst allowing segments of the plan to be dealt with sequentially without sacrificing the integrity of the whole. Finally, there is the need to identify and remove obstacles to efficient deployment of physical and mental energy and to the use of resources by appropriate re-conceptualisation of: (i) That which is to be learned; (ii)

personal processes, beliefs and assumptions about learning; (iii) the method of learning and the relationship of learner and teacher; (iv) generation and maintenance of commitment, direction and action. In this way subordinates were encouraged to create a coherent learning strategy based upon purposes derived from work requirements, self-understanding and personal preferences.

To reinforce the pre-eminence of the individual in learning, staff were offered a classification of learning by reference to how knowledge is organised and to whether or not it is related to actual or simulated work, as in Fig 12. The intention being to ensure that the integrity of their personal learning enterprise was supported, as opposed to being submerged, by the concentratedness, the orderliness, the comprehensiveness, the intellectual power of formalised learning opportunities, whether at the workplace or elsewhere.

All of which was further supported by the Head of Department providing an overview of expectations that helped to shape the direction of learning. This took the form of regular performance development conversations as indicated in Fig 13. All formalised learning opportunities were preceded by a detailed briefing. Subsequently, a wider frame of reference was offered to enable different perspectives to be placed on the learning. These conversations (B, C and D) ultimately merge into Type A briefings of succeeding learning opportunities.

In conclusion, it can be said that context is about setting up a framework of relationships through which information is made available such that people can create personal meanings about the worthwhileness of what they do.



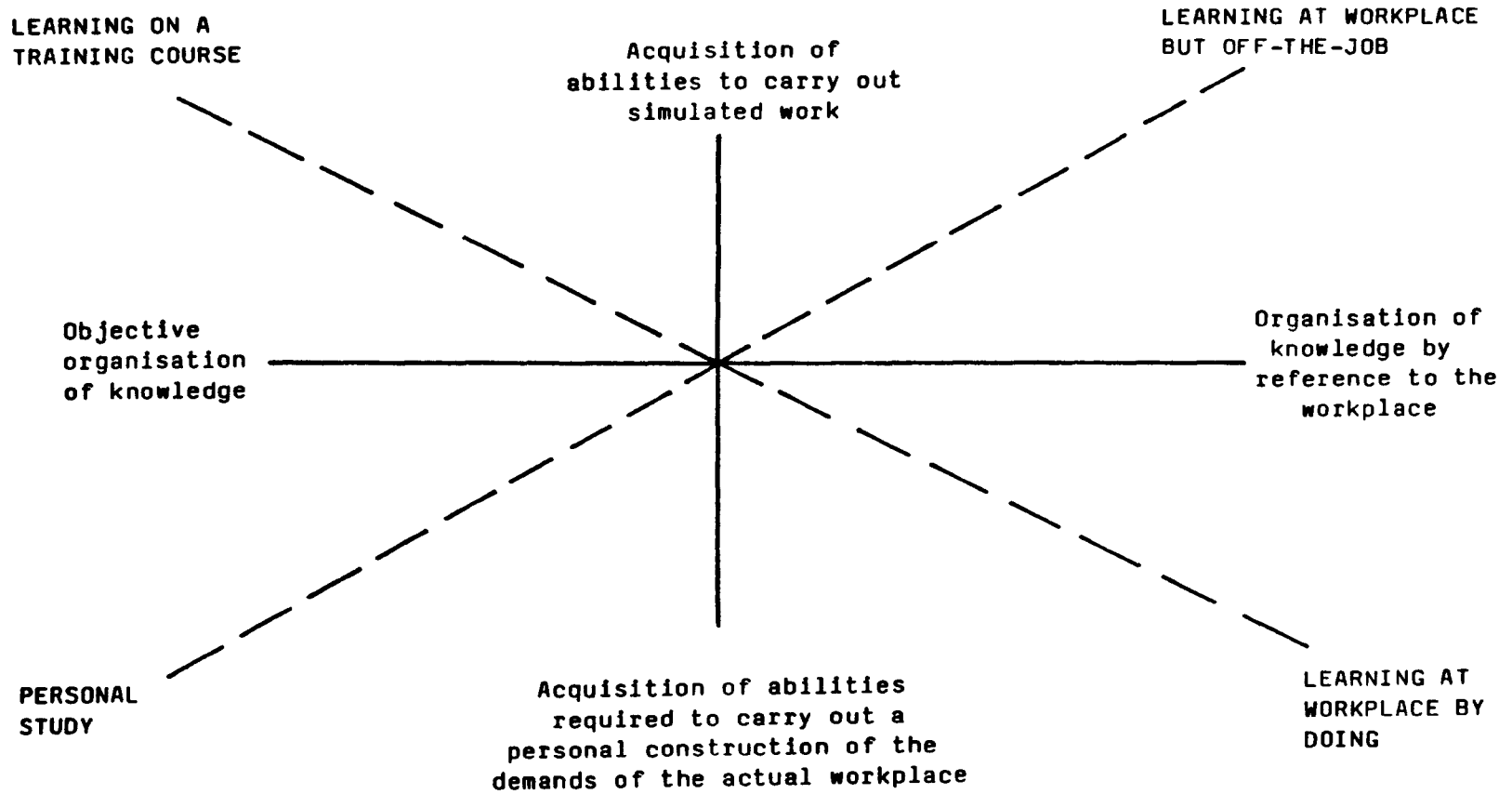


Fig 12: A training typology

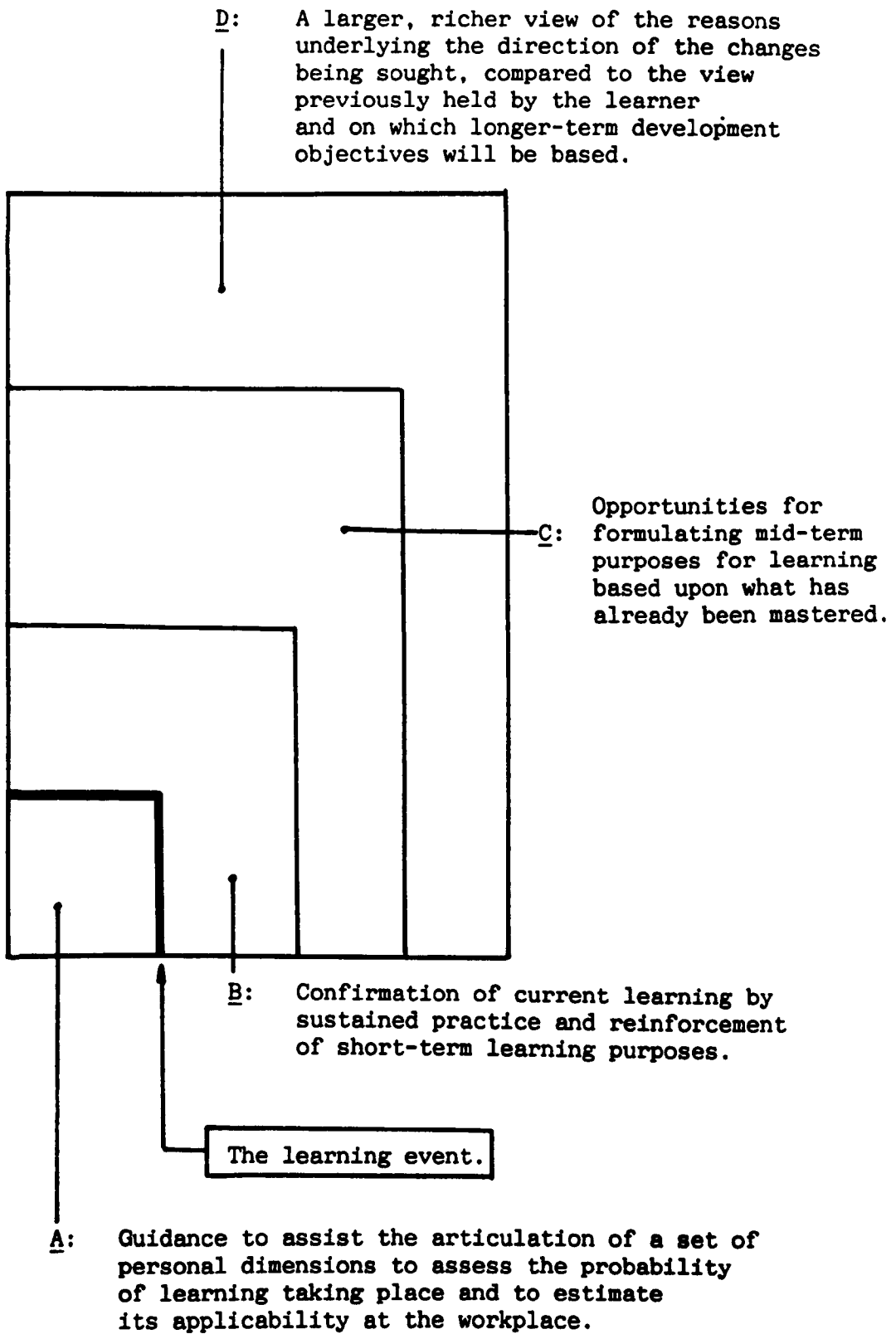


Fig 13: Performance development dialogue

This framework is built up by a careful integration of doing things, learning to do things and learning how to learn. It thus means forging special understandings within the three systems, ie between the manager and his subordinates as individuals, the manager and the tutorial system, individual subordinates and the tutorial system. All of which take into account the understandings entered into between a managerial group (ie the three systems as a whole) and the organisation at large. Ideally, these understandings result in an operation possessed of a relatedness between its component parts and between those parts and their surrounding environment that is both functional and personally satisfying. The manager, ultimately, has responsibility for the success of the enterprise. He is both master and servant of the group with which he works. Using a mechanical analogy, his role is to lubricate the component parts of the function he controls: His lubricant is human relationships. His emphasis on human resource development is inspired by a desire to elicit from his staff high-quality performances efficaciously directed at the achievement of those goals for which he is responsible. But not mechanically, insincerely, in a manipulative way. His involvement must be a genuine one if the required response of his staff is to be sustained. His own sense of personal adequacy must be sufficient to allow him to enter into a partnership with his staff, indeed a conspiracy, designed to procure whatever solution is appropriate for removing the problems that he and his staff face. The remaining part of this chapter deals with the strategy adopted in the Education and Training Department to accomplish this aim.

#### 8.2.4 Processes: Beliefs, values and human relationships

It has been said that "knowledge is power". However, in the context of secretiveness, it is power directed at manipulation and the maintenance of vested interests. Truly, knowledge is power, when it is shared and when it adds to our understanding of ourselves and when it helps us shape our perception of reality. Particularly, it is power when it invests the group with an increased ability to control events for the good of all. Which is to be more able to articulate our aims, to ourselves and to others, to be more imaginative in their pursuit, more accepting of their relativity and more prepared to review and adapt them, not only in the light of our observation of our endeavours, but also as part of a cooperative effort with others.

Overall the intention was to create in the Education and Training Department an environment that maximised the probability of learning taking place naturally. This means that it would be entered into pleasurably, carried out relatively unaided, but competently, whether judged by others or the learner. Learning strategies would be appropriate to the learner's purposes and unhindered by uneven preferences on the part of the learner. In short, learning would be regarded as unexceptional, regularly associated with doing one's job, and not simply entered into periodically. The release of information, the exchange of ideas, the pursuit of knowledge in the traditional sense, were seen as necessary pre-requisites to such an endeavour. This called for an appropriate style of managing, within which were created sufficient opportunities for

communication with staff. To illustrate the managing framework employed by the Head of Department a structure of his meanings of managing, elicited in 1980, is shown in Fig 14. The technique of structuring items of meanings for designated domains of activity was developed in the CSHL. It is a technique that uses events from the participant's experience to generate coordinated descriptions of the subject being considered. It thus represents a physically based definition, an operational understanding and application of knowledge.

But it must be emphasised at this point that in seeking to create a learning environment, supported by appropriate managing and communicating styles, the Head of Department did not lose sight of the fact that, as a manager, productivity was his main purpose in life. As Hayes et al (1984) have pointed out, a successful enterprise cannot be built on vocational education and training alone. So there can be no compromise on the manager's need to achieve results. However, the way of working towards that end can be different; in this respect variety and tactical manoeuvre are almost inevitable to suit different people and circumstances, and because they can exist without jeopardising the accomplishment of the manager's goals.

But in seeking high productivity, it is not enough to provide resources to employees and then simply ask for results. One day, perhaps, each individual will give of his/her utmost simply because it is right so to do, without recourse to the need to derive something from a relationship with others as a pre-condition of giving commitment. But today it seems inevitable that this need must be satisfied. So managers must act as well as talk about what is wanted.

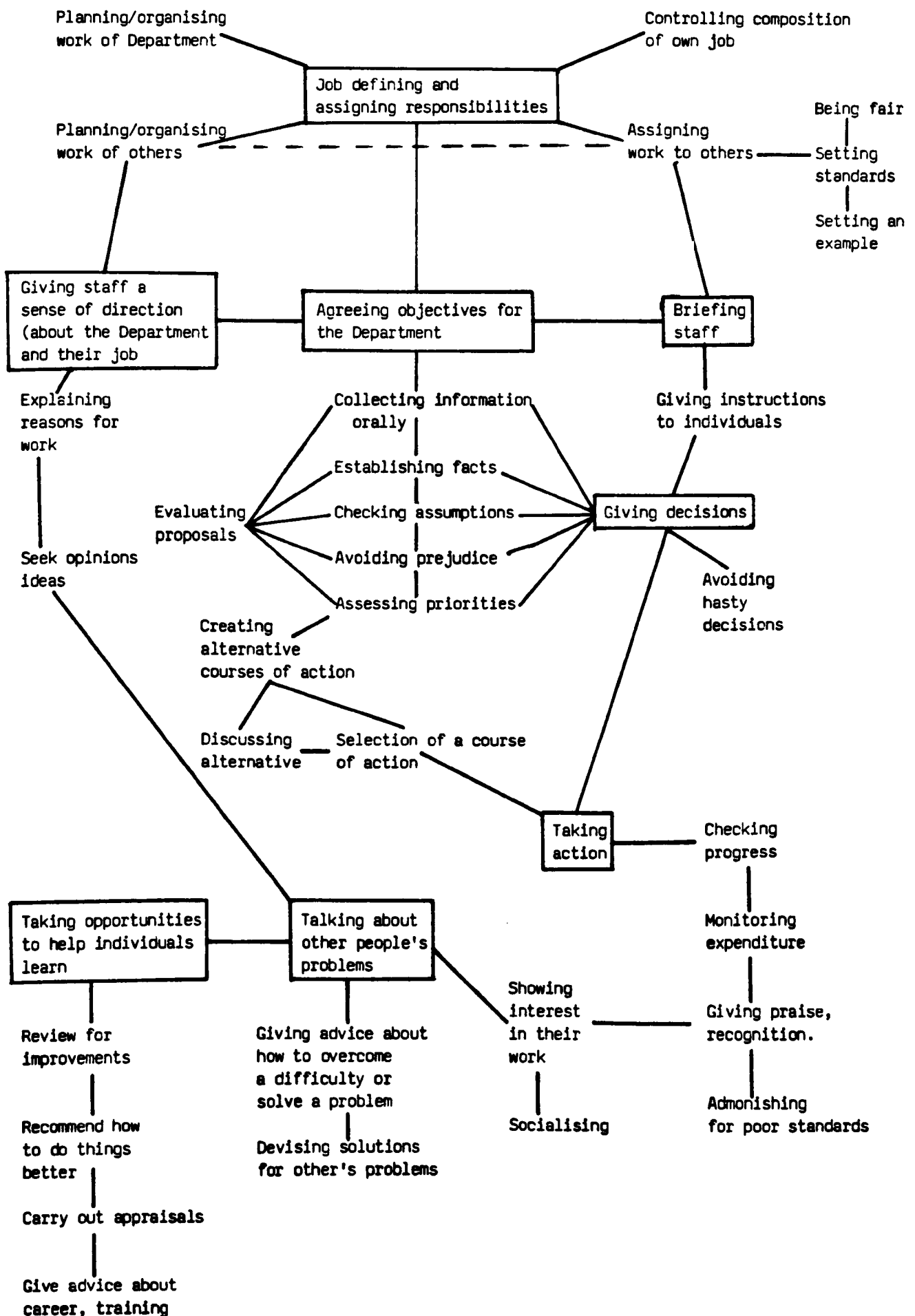


Fig 14: Structure of Meanings of Managing

And to recognise also that to be successful in achieving the desired level of productivity, it may be necessary to explore all available avenues, including confronting and removing his own shortcomings if necessary. All managers will know that, by definition, his results come through the work of others. It is, therefore, axiomatic that the relationship between the manager and his staff is a powerful mechanism for achieving managerial goals.

But what are these human relational components of his objectives? Fig 14 has indicated the emphasis given by the Head of Department in communicating with staff. Specifically what was aimed at by these communications were that each member of staff: (i) Understood clearly the Bank's priorities and objectives and how these related to those of the Department; (ii) knew in what way his/her work output contributed to achieving business success in the Bank; (iii) acted effectively in making his/her contribution to the business; (iv) had no doubts about what was allowed as appropriate behaviour; (v) was satisfied in his/her work such that there was a preparedness to work as hard as he/she could. So these objectives were designed to contribute to successful working and to the creation of a learning environment; and as the learning environment itself was established it acted back on the achievement of the objectives so that they were mutually enhancing.

The Education and Training Department was thus operated with a philosophy of open management with confidentiality restrictions kept to a minimum. People were encouraged to find out as well as being given information. Not that this meant that everybody was to be informed about everything; that was impractical and it was agreed that sensibly there

were limits to the usefulness of giving information to people about things outside of their immediate needs for doing their jobs. It was essential, on a practical level, to keep people informed about objectives, priorities, tactics, methods and techniques as they were in use from time to time. In this way a sense of mission about their jobs and the Department, both in the immediate future and beyond, might be created.

On a philosophical level, knowledge, in the widest sense, was seen as the foundation of being. It was supposed that we can only become something when we have been given opportunities to create meanings. We can only develop those meanings by immersion in circumstances that enable us to generate alternative viewpoints. Openness with information was therefore encouraged. It meant sharing what an individual had learned; free access to the library (deliberately sited in the middle of the Centre); stimulation of debate about issues in learning so that people could have opportunities to hear alternative views and to test their conclusions, however tentatively formed; and organised channels of staff communication about projects in hand. The intention was to create open communication systems directed at: (i) Stimulating an interest in ideas, knowledge, alternative techniques, etc; (ii) ensuring that people did not spend their time wondering about what was going on around them; (iii) debating ideas, beliefs and values, developing proposals, building-up conclusions about how work, learning and jobs ought to be; (iv) keeping people informed so that they could cover for others when needed; (v) helping people become more open to how they might be, how they might relate to other people, things and



ideas; as well as being directed at the immediate concerns of getting the work done.

But there had to be safeguards too. There had to be a correct balance between thought and action and an appropriate variation in the proportions of time given to each. Ultimately, the Department could not afford for people to spend time with information at the expense of producing the necessary work output. There were no hard and fast rules about this. On some occasions the importance of the task warranted lengthy deliberation. In emergencies decisions naturally were taken quickly. But it was recognised that because of their newness to the work the staff needed time to learn. So where possible time at work was built-in for this. Nevertheless, the necessity for results meant that on occasions compromises on precision and certainty of knowledge were made in favour of progress with projects. But progress was not always what was expected. Open management must therefore include a willingness to confront failure to meet agreed schedules. Being open in communications with staff has the advantage of making it easier to diagnose the cause of such deficiencies - which are not always the fault of subordinates.

Fundamental to the philosophy of open management is the willingness of the manager to trust his staff. The issue cannot be ignored: Are people trustworthy or not? Each manager can only find an answer to this question by reference to his personal metaphor of man. But there can be no doubt about the central importance of this concept to open management. This thesis argues that self-organised learning can only be achieved with such a management style. Whichever choice the manager makes he must satisfy himself

about his ability to handle the consequences of the decision he has made. A manager who decides that people are trustworthy until they show otherwise opens up possibilities of great variety and satisfaction in human affairs. The dichotomy so elegantly described by McGregor (1964) is still valid today and can be used by managers as a guide to clarify their position. But if opting for a cynical view of man they must not pretend they believe otherwise. To bestow trust is not to display gullibility and naivete, but to exercise judgment in the conduct of human affairs. Nor is it, in this context, an advocacy that everyone should be privy to the confidential information inevitably involved in running a significant function of a modern business. It is to do with placing one's reliance on the supposed worthiness of people and their desire to be usefully employed.

Being trusted had a powerful effect on motivation. People were expected to do well, and they appreciated and responded positively to it. They felt good about being highly regarded, having it assumed, until they showed otherwise, that they would do their utmost, and in so doing produce good work. The Head of Department's displayed belief that his staff could do more than they themselves thought they were capable of provided them with the inspiration to reach for high standards and created an atmosphere in which staff strove to avoid disappointing someone who believed in them. This was a natural foundation for trusting and for preceding delegation.

Delegation in this management system was not merely the referral to others of tasks the manager did not want to do. Delegation was approached positively as a means of: (i) Manifesting the Head of Department's belief in people; (ii)

creating opportunities for eliciting motivated behaviour; (iii) strategically establishing the foundation for learning to learn. It was inspired by a desire to carry out more work than otherwise would be the case and operated by a staged transfer of authority to act independently. The two main factors taken into account in this process were: (i) The ability to do what was required unsupervised; and (ii) successive agreement about the main thrust and immediate objectives of their job as the context in which they were operating changed.

In using delegation for learning to learn purposes, the idea was to involve the person as fully as possible in detailed understanding of the essence of his job as well as the operation of each part of it. Acquiring such deep, personal understanding was itself a learning process directed at a special learning outcome. It thus provided an opportunity to learn about learning, at two levels: (i) By dealing with the totality of the job; (ii) using that progressively to produce specific learning purposes. Staff began with a written description of their jobs and initially understood it intellectually, comprehending literally the requirements that it set out. In addition to reading about what was expected, it was also presented to them orally. In this way they heard how others interpreted, the main emphases of the job and of how the various parts fitted together. But their task then was to translate those understandings, both written and interpreted into a personal, dynamic, actionable whole. They had to fashion within themselves a structure of meanings that embraced: (i) What the job was designed to do; (ii) how that changed over time; (iii) what the boundaries with other jobs were;

(iv) what needed to be learned as well as what was to be done; (v) the opportunities that could be identified for learning purposes by virtue of the definition prescribed by their meanings; (vi) the day-to-day and immediate future tasks that had to be carried out.

The process and outcome at this first level of consideration, the totality of the job, can be represented diagrammatically as shown in Fig 15. A1 to A5 represent performance built from an evolving personal construction of what is required. Performances, initially, are shown as a rounded, regular figure to indicate the neatness of the predominant intellectualised description. They are performances based upon limited, imperfect understanding of what is really required, indeed what is possible. They tend to reflect a pronounced emphasis on what ought to be done, what is ideal, rather than what is feasible. As time goes by the job occupant interacts with people, books and other resources, and also generates insight by meeting the demands of his tasks. He reflects upon and reformulates his construction of what is required, what is appropriate to him and his circumstances. His capability gradually expands. Performances are then represented irregularly, as they become increasingly personalised by successive reconstruction of experiences. In the later stages, understanding is complete and the person deals effectively with practicalities.

In the initial phase of this sequence the jobholder's questions are: (i) What is it I am supposed to do? (ii) Where do I begin? (iii) In what order do I proceed? The person must therefore obtain knowledge of: (i) The components of what he is to do; (ii) how these are related

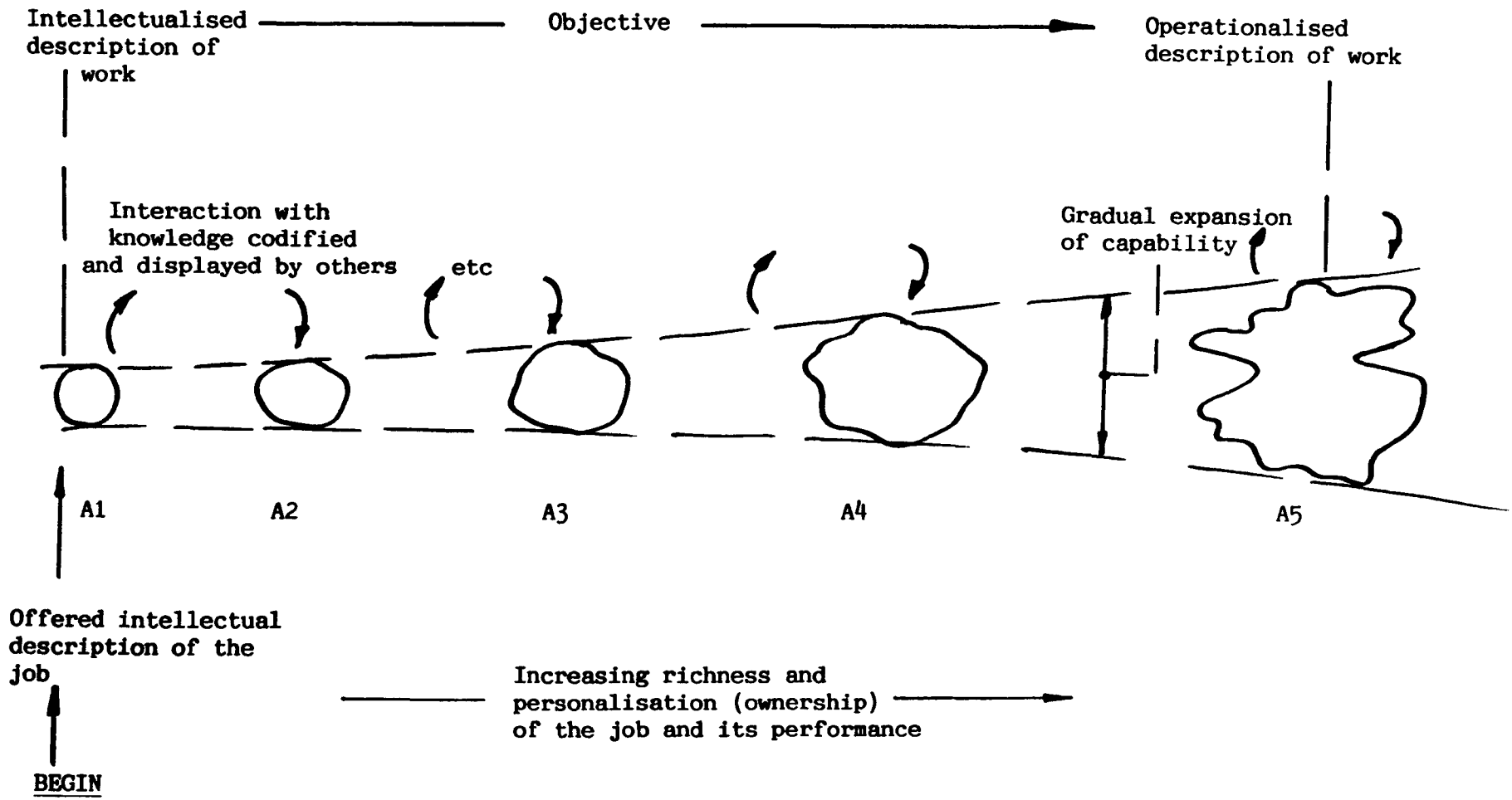


Fig 15: Creating a personal understanding of one's job

together so that they become a functional whole; and (iii) what the standards of acceptable performance are. These then need to be assembled into an internal, organic representation of others' knowledge, in other words, a personal model of reality by which one can act. The object of this process of learning is the creation of personal meanings that have utility in the context which inspired their creation. These personal meanings are referred to in the diagram as a operationalised description of the work. They are internal representations of knowledge that guide action in a personally satisfying way. They can be made available to others, probably incompletely, by giving opportunities for inferences to be drawn by observation of this knowledge in action.

The idea of creating a personal model (in this case to represent a person's work functions) is proposed as the basic learning process on which other learning processes are based. This must be so because at each stage in the person's progress from an intellectualised to an operationalised emphasis in his actions, the model is the originator of learning purposes. Ideally, a start is made with a clear conception of the totality of what is aimed at. Action then creates experience which leads to a reformulation of the model by construing that experience. In so doing, subsequent action is altered and the operationalisation of a part of the model is confirmed, albeit (possibly) temporarily. The person thus successively tries out new knowledge and confirms, rejects or amends it, in accordance with the extent and kind of emotional involvement it generates.

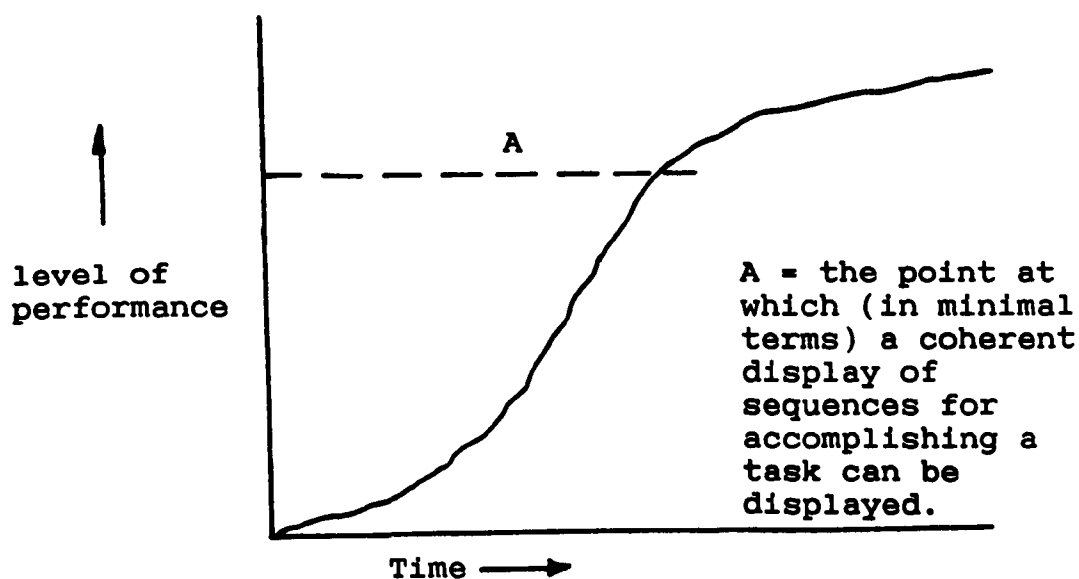
With seeking to inculcate personal ownership of jobs

in this way the person is given an opportunity to acquire a strategic learning skill which can be used in any sphere. By using the person's own definition of his job as the source of opportunities for exploring learning process we automatically are provided with regular opportunities for that purpose. The experience of P illustrates the process. He came to the Department as an experienced banker. He was new to training and to TSB banking. He had only a little experience of supervision. He was briefed fully at the outset, but then given three weeks to interview everyone in the Department, to read documents, and to visit arranged contacts external to the Department. He then reported on how he saw the operation of the Department, precisely what contribution it was making to the Bank's needs, what the essentials of his own job were, and what he should be doing over the next few weeks. He then began work and after a short period the process of reviewing his understanding was repeated. And this continued - briefing, action, reviewing, briefing, action, etc - until he became expert about his own job, confident enough about its essentials (objectives and methods) to direct himself.

The second level of consideration, the identification of specific learning purposes, was dealt with from two viewpoints. Firstly, attention was directed at the elaboration of the structure within the model. In this way the person understood in detail the component parts of his job and how they related to each other. It was assumed that work is structured hierarchically. At each level in the hierarchy competence is achieved by aggregating the competences acquired at lower levels in the hierarchy. Each

level of the hierarchy represents a desired outcome, which relate either to a substantial component of the job or a particular task. These forays into detailed acquisition of competences occur regularly along the "intellectualised - operationalised" spectrum. In theory they can go on forever. It is conceivable that searches for greater quality of performance can continue indefinitely. In practice, it is likely that a pursuit of competence would be limited by agreement about acceptable standards and by the need for productivity coupled with opening up further areas of work.

Standards are extremely important and are the second of the viewpoints referred to in the preceding paragraph. Standards are that which describes the level of work performance desired; work performance is the execution of all the sequences involved in the task to produce an acceptable output. Diagrammatically we have:



From point A the task can be carried out reasonably consistently and by further repetition the level of



performance increases. A standard is then brought into play to fix when performance improvements are no longer desired. As the standard is raised the learning cycle continues whilst the learner is able to continue to find alternative, better ways of doing the task. A standard, therefore, is a cluster of measures which describe performance conditions which determine a task's sufficiency.

The measures are both quantitative and qualitative, according to the task being performed. Sometimes, it will be very difficult to set precise standards, nevertheless they are attempts at representing an effectiveness model. Sometimes this is built up primarily by the manager because of his familiarity with the work; at other times by the subordinate because of his special talent for the work. This is a decided advantage of operationalising job definitions in the way described. In the latter case, the subordinate is pursuing his own model of effectiveness, putting aside that previously offered as adequate for his purposes. From this point the level of performance is raised and maintained by the subordinate, who may indeed become the arbiter of what is right and proper in the matter at hand, and to whom others refer for guidance, including the manager.

In these ways the staff were encouraged to take control of the direction of their work lives, as far as it was possible for them so to do. They were pushed to build their personal model of what they wanted to become, in the context of, and constrained by, what had to be accomplished by the Department. In being introduced to ideas about the self-organisation of learning, this process of structuring and personally identifying standards of competence was regarded as fundamental. It was the beginning of the learning

process and provided the basic input to learning to learn conversations (dealt with later). They thus knew what they wanted to achieve. They were committed to action and high standards. They were free to choose strategies that best suited them as learners and which were appropriate to their task. The dialogue with the Head of Department provided context and support both from managerial and learning viewpoints. Responsibility for achievement always remained with the Head of Department. But each person became competent and free to operate in the area for which they were accountable. Naturally, training in the traditional sense was provided, from time to time, to help with special skills. A great deal of time was invested in performance development conversations with each subordinate. There was always clarity as to who was responsible for carrying out each part of the work. Progress reporting arrangements were always included in work planning. They were then left to achieve that which had been agreed with them.

Delegating important and substantial areas of work was necessarily a lengthy process. Initially the Head of Department directed all the work very closely because of the inexperience of the staff. During this gradual acquisition of competence, decisions were jointly made. Firstly, for the Head of Department to be satisfied about the course the work was taking. Secondly, to provide opportunities for learning to learn. Thirdly, to provide opportunities for using subordinates' ideas so as to underwrite their ownership of the work and increase their commitment to it. At the end of the operation of the Education and Training Department only a few, key decisions were made by the Head of Department. Staff were expected to make proposals about

what work should be carried out, how it should be done, and what the possible implications might be of the course of action chosen.

The Head of Department, whenever possible, withheld answers to questions. It was most important to avoid reinforcing passivity and dependency. As their manager, it was very easy to assume the role of teacher, and very tempting at times because progress would, on occasions, have been much quicker. But if circumstances permitted it, the choice was always in favour of forcing the staff to take an active stance and to think deeply about problems. As Revans (1982) so aptly puts it: "But the point that one is supposed to learn the really important things when one is up against it, with nobody to help, is most clearly spelled out by the adage: "Necessity is the mother of invention"; it is also implicit in the fact so well known to school-masters that their charges learn only when they want to learn, when there is a call from within themselves ..... My thesis runs that true learning, that which produces changes in observable behaviour, is the product of concentrating the attention upon troubles about which something needs to be done; it involves not only intelligence but also emotion, not only logical exposition but also successful application."

So staff were pushed into thinking carefully about what they were doing. They were questioned in detail so that they had to present a well-reasoned argument. They were never given answers to their problems if they could be withheld without serious detriment to the progress of work. A dialectic was established in the manner of the two-factor theory of learning described by Smith (1980) in which

confrontation of the learner is counter-balanced by support. This dual view of communication, when delegating and seeking joint-decisions, took into account for learning purposes: (i) A theoretical framework centred upon the self-organised learner; (ii) confrontation of what Thomas (1985) calls learners' myths; (iii) detailed guidance of the learner about learning process. The theoretical framework for guiding conversation with staff is shown in Fig 5 which owes much to the work of the CSHL at Brunel.

Thomas (1985) has drawn attention to what he calls personal myths about learning and to the need to put them at the centre of attempts to enhance learning competence. In seeking to increase a person's capacity for learning we have to take account of the learner's view of himself as a learner. It follows that this view can be either an obstacle or of assistance to the learner. So the objective becomes one of getting the learner to confront his myths about learning and rearrange them so as to increase his effectiveness in the learning task. In the simplest sense, myths are statements the learner makes about himself which he/she holds to be true. They are therefore an over-stabilised set of beliefs about oneself. Alternative labels for these are "legend" or "paradigm". The CSHL's typology, or classificatory framework, for the content and process of conversation (factual, ritualistic/internally coherent/externally referent/creative) is useful for thinking about myths. If myths operate at each of the levels of conversation described by the CSHL, it may be that some myths at a given level are relevant to some parts of the person, whereas other aspects of the person are related to myths at other levels. It is suggested by the CSHL that

most people's myths are skewed towards the factual level. If this is so, then increasing learner competence is a matter of altering this distribution towards the creative level.

The negative aspects of myths can be likened to the Rogerian metaphor of "stunted" or "crippled" psychological growth. Which leads to the idea that the object of learning to learn conversations is to help the learner review his mythology about learning. This begins by seeking his recognition that he is held captive by his beliefs, and that he can reinvent himself by changing them. It needs to be made clear, however, that challenging and changing myths usually takes a long time. This raises an ethical question: Should one enter paradigm-changing conversations only if there is enough time to ensure they come to a conclusion. Which leads to a practical problem at work: It is not known how long people will remain as close working colleagues. The conclusion reached in this research was that one must be prepared to work with probabilities about how long people are likely to stay working together.

In seeking a joint exploration with the learner of his learning process, the conversational framework derives from the work of Augstein and Thomas (1975). Firstly, it deals with an overview of needs and considers the learner from three viewpoints: (i) His aims and overall direction in life providing the reasons under-pinning what he is doing (a life conversation); (ii) his needs derived from interaction with his learning resources, perhaps difficulties of comprehension, or of making satisfactory applications of ideas at work (a tutorial conversation); (iii) his needs derived from how he learns, obstacles of any kind to his

progress as a learner (a learning to learn conversation). In the last of these, the focus of the conversation is the reflection of process, its mirroring to the learner, to develop heightened awareness through which skill can be explored in pursuit of greater competence and creativity.

In further describing such conversations, Augstein and Thomas (1975) argue for three forms of dialogue: A commentary on learning process; support during the uncertainties of reflection; a development of referents for reviewing learning competence. Central to these conversations are the relationships between purpose, strategy, outcome and review. This was adopted in the Education and Training Department, primarily as the mechanism for determining what might be termed "rules of evidence". This was a way of getting valid data that would enable judgments to be made about achievement and efficacy of working methods. Staff were introduced to this via the reviewing process. This examination of what had happened, and why, and whether or not improvements could be made, was structurally built-in to the work of the Department. Great emphasis was given to the idea that improvements could always be found, that there is always an alternative way of doing things. Not that this meant excessive introspection or lengthy post-mortems when things went wrong. It was to do with emphasising the importance of awareness as the starting-point for change. In beginning a journey, one needs to know where one is as well as where one is going. Until we know what we do, we cannot begin to think about whether or not it is appropriate to do it.

It was very relevant to operate this way because staff had a great deal to learn at the outset. They were unsure of

themselves in their new area of work, and naturally were anxious to see how they had done. There was also the task of getting used to a new "boss". And getting used to the idea that a review of performance, which resulted in proposals for change, could include recommendations for change in the behaviour of the Head of Department: What was referred to earlier as encouraging a conspiracy to find solutions wherever they lay! But in considering effectiveness, the association of purpose, strategy and outcome made it clear that all that we do should be guided by clearly articulated purposes.

In pressing for this kind of confidence of the subordinate there is a need to refuse whenever possible the typical role of teacher. Augstein and Thomas (1975) refer to the management of this freedom-structure dimension and suggest that it involves moving between directive, guided and discovery modes of communicating with the learner. In the terminology of the commercial world, these would seem to equate with instructing, coaching and counselling, respectively. The decision to adopt one or other of these modes of communicating depends upon a judgment about the needs of the job, the person's situation and the time available. Inevitably, some inconsistency arises and the decision-making is essentially intuitive.

The relationship between the Head of Department and his subordinates provided the means of pre-empting frustration, certainly defusing it when it arose, and of maintaining a productive exchange by explanation and clarification of what was going on. In exploring new ways of doing things, people become anxious about the wisdom of what they are attempting. Initially, they may experience a period during which their

performance is worse than when the search for improvements began. Tolerance of mistakes is crucially important here. On no account must people be encouraged to explore their understanding and skills and then be punished if they do not get it right first time.

In building this relationship, manager and subordinate experiment with the development of mutual trust. Notable in this development is the need for the manager to demonstrate convincingly by his concern not only for productivity, but also the well-being of his subordinates. It must be established that the intentions of each party to the other are honourable. There has to be a mutual regard to enable such experiments with behaviour to be undertaken. In this way they can be supported long enough for them to be successfully concluded. This aspect, perhaps more than any other, underlines the need for a total approach to the individual and the environment, both physical and social, that surrounds him or her.

The satisfactoriness of the endeavour is determined by referents - sources of data that enable judgments to be made that a satisfactory outcome has been established. This is an extremely difficult area. The main emphasis in the Education and Training Department was on developing acceptance of oneself as the major referent, followed by the group in the Department. The tendency at the outset was for people to assume that someone else's view was automatically better than their own. In much of what was being done there were no suitable external referents and great attention was given to negotiating standards for guidance of the work. These learning conversations and the difficulty experienced in seeking increased learning competence have been related



diagrammatically by Thomas (1984) and this is reproduced in Fig 16 by way of summary.

In conclusion, a specific problem needs to be emphasised. In working in the way described the facilitator (the Head of Department) necessarily withholds information so that the learner is pushed towards an independent mode of thinking. This can result in him appearing to the learner as someone who: (i) Is cold and remote; (ii) seemingly does not understand his/her difficulties; (iii) is overly critical, in the indirect sense of apparently never being satisfied; (iv) is too concerned about standards and not enough concerned about people; (v) is unsympathetic and uninvolved emotionally with what they are doing; (vi) puts too much pressure on them by seeking explanations which they find difficult to provide; (vii) does not give credit for their actions and results; (viii) undermines their feelings of self-worth. At all costs these effects must be avoided. Positive reinforcement is a powerful concept for producing motivated responses. Praise and recognition is always appreciated. From a managerial viewpoint such rewards must be given when appropriate. But care must be taken to ensure too great a reliance on this is not created, as this would certainly undermine efforts to encourage independence.

But the manager's behaviour is even more important when used as an example to subordinates. It is incontrovertible that the manager's behaviour is enormously influential in eliciting responses from staff, both desired and unintended. The foregoing has warned against unwittingly using a negative behavioural repertoire. More important than this, however, is for the manager to display positively that which he desires in his subordinates. It is an essential part of

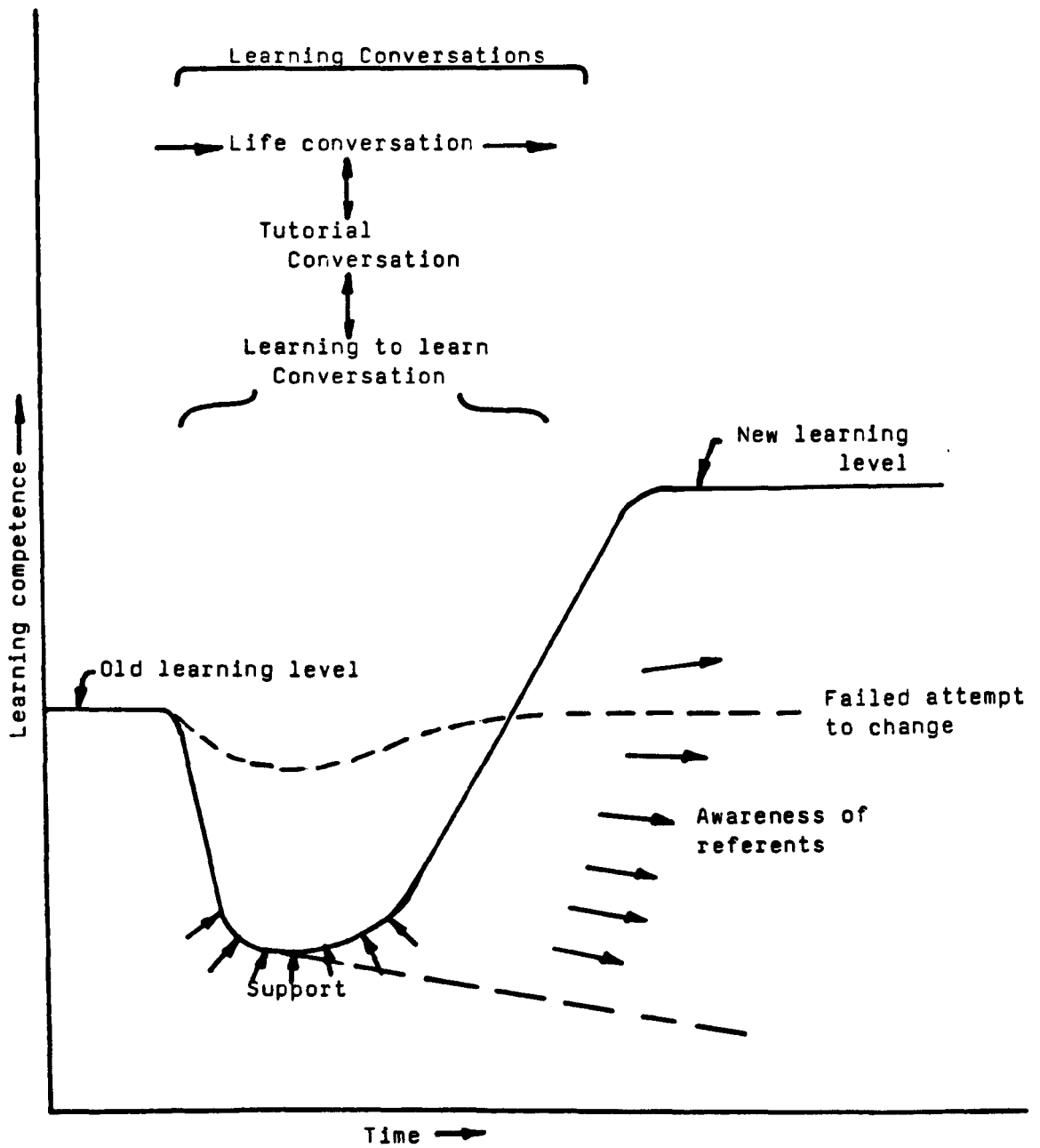


Fig 16: Learning conversations and the learning trough

good managerial practice to match words and actions. Consistent congruence of thought and deed is needed and its importance cannot be over-stressed. Subordinates are not fooled by words, however seductively they are uttered. They will look to be impressed by what the manager does, and this is especially the case with his immediate subordinates. Revans (1982) points this out forcibly when he says: "The Chief Executive must place high in his responsibilities that for developing the enterprise as a learning system and to seek this through his personal relations with his immediate subordinates, since the conduct of one level of a system to a level below is powerfully influenced by the perception that the higher level has of its own treatment from above".

The example offered by the manager must not be limited to prescribing basic requirements. On the contrary, the preparedness of the manager to reach for the highest standards in what he does can be a persuasive source of inspiration to his subordinates. In the field of learning, there is also a practical necessity to provide an example of what is required. There is no doubt that many people do respond positively when the atmosphere around them encourages them to do so. But insofar as learning is concerned the problem is one of finding referents for the self-organisation of learning, for they occur naturally only occasionally. It is unlikely that an exemplar of learning will be found amongst one's colleagues. It thus becomes the duty of the manager to provide that model. He is the person who is instrumental in creating the environment that enables the group to operate as a learning system in which individual learning competence is promoted. If he seeks productivity through people, and wishes to build this

largely on the ability of staff to teach themselves, he must face the realisation that his staff will look to him to demonstrate what is required.

This is not to argue that in learning we necessarily depend upon an example on which we can base our actions. A learner can create his own internal representation of what he wants to become. But to do this in isolation from an external referent seems rare indeed. For practical purposes, progress is so much easier if one can have a concrete illustration of what is required. But the availability of everyday examples on which one can base one's behaviour varies widely, eg to what extent are good examples made public of effective father, son or lover as opposed to actor, sportsman or conversationalist? There is in all these cases, of course, something publically shared, albeit to varying degrees. But what about examples of effective learner, where do we find those? At school? Amongst our friends when they pursue hobbies or pastimes? Or from our colleagues at work?

We have all grown up under the influence of others in authority. We are used to taking orders. As far as education is concerned, we have learned to be taught and, ironically, continue to have faith in that competence, often throughout our entire adult lives. In all spheres of human endeavour, there is only a minority in each who can stand outside of current knowledge and practice by creating new standards to which others in due course turn. The sphere of learning is no exception insofar as the appearance of these radicals, visionaries and paradigm changers is concerned. Where it differs from other aspect of life is in the

difficulty these people have in conveying their message and creating a direction which others follow.

As far as self-organised learning is concerned, this difficulty in communication seems to derive from two sources. Firstly, learning is an intrinsic part of living. Learning to be a learner is little different from learning to be a human-being. Consequently, people reject the idea of someone purporting to show them how they might conduct themselves in life. And anyone who has attempted to offer study advice will testify to that sad fact. As a species, we do seem to be afraid of learning from each other about how to live our lives. Secondly, those who have approached mastery of the skill of learning seem powerless to convey their wisdom in words, for to explain it renders the listener incapable of acquiring what it is that is described. A description of learning necessarily involves abstract concepts which are difficult for most people to comprehend. There is then that almost insurmountable obstacle created by virtue of a verbal description resurrecting that mode of response that inhibits the release of learning capacity.

For these reasons, and no matter what the difficulty, the manager must be what he desires others to become. He must display his learning competence, and from his own example seek to encourage his subordinates. The work reported here has shown that the way to do this most effectively is for the manager to join with his staff in exploring learning processes as equal partners and that this can be done without relinquishing any of his managerial prerogatives. As George Kelly advocated to researchers of the human experiment that they invite their subjects to join

them as co-researchers, so the manager can ally himself with his staff in the pursuit of productivity through learning with and from each other.

The environment of the Education and Training Department enacted the belief that the foundation for creating the conditions for high performance at working and learning lay ultimately in empowering individuals to reach for the full realisation of their potential by helping them redefine themselves psychologically. And in so doing, the uniqueness of each individual was cherished, not as a goal in itself, but as a means of enabling the group to reach for what it valued, and having grasped it, to hold on to it firmly. Ward (1974) has spoken of "the way in which a tradition may grow from some perception of the sacred, and become sanctified by the lives of generations of believers, until it offers an acceptable way of holiness, by sincere obedience to which one can mark oneself off from the world and find union with the sacred for oneself". The Head of Department's philosophy of work, within which self-organisation was centrally embedded, was inspired by the idea that all the paths we take in life, including that through employment, can, and ought to be, a contribution to that "union with the sacred for oneself".

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CHAPTER 9  
THE EFFECTS OF THE APPROACH TO FACILITATION  
OF SELF-ORGANISATION IN THE EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT

Chapter 8 set out the approach used by the Head of Department to help his subordinates achieve greater learning competence. This chapter deals with some of the experiences of those subordinates. Naturally, the Head of the Department was concerned to achieve maximum output for any given deployment of resources. The principal process used to achieve this objective was the creation and maintenance of a learning environment. This was designed to harmonise learning and productivity, refine priority and objective clarification and selection, and successively expand output.

In dealing with the effects of actions taken, one is inevitably involved with evaluation, if only in the sense of attempting to describe the repercussions of those actions. But evaluation usually is taken to represent an orientation of some sort to phenomena, an interest, a special concern or reason, to do with enquiring into something. And in making such enquiries, Bramley and Newby (1984) draw attention to the need to distinguish between evaluating to improve as opposed to disapprove, and strongly recommend the former as the context for evaluation. In seeking to guide evaluators, they offered three key questions around which to build an investigation: (i) What purpose is the evaluation study intended to serve? (ii) Which aspects of the learning process does the evaluator wish to focus upon? (iii) What techniques for data collecting are appropriate to the chosen focus?

It seems inevitable that there has to be specific interests at the beginning of an investigation and a framework for defining the variables of that which is being studied. Unavoidably, there is also the practical problem of making the task manageable. The experiment reported was conducted in conjunction with the operation of a department. It was not a laboratory exercise, where full attention could be directed to observation, recording and analysis. There was also the ideological problem of not knowing, precisely for each individual, what was to be observed. What exactly can one see when self-organisation of learning is exercised? What is the specification against which the performance might be compared? How does one adjudicate between what person A considers important and substantial as opposed to person B?

But in concluding that evaluatory interests, of a specific kind, were necessary at the outset, the approach to their satisfaction can be open, in the sense that the participants can be invited to provide the data. As Kelly has argued, if you want to know something about someone, ask, he or she pay just tell you! But nevertheless the question remains - what is that something that one wants to know about?

The core of the project was the facilitation of self-organisation. Accordingly, a key interest must be an assessment of the response of subordinates to this learning opportunity. The important elements of their response seemed to be: (i) The form that change took in the learner as his/her learning competence increased; and (ii) the learner's ability to continue operating as a self-organised learner after assistance with learning to learn was

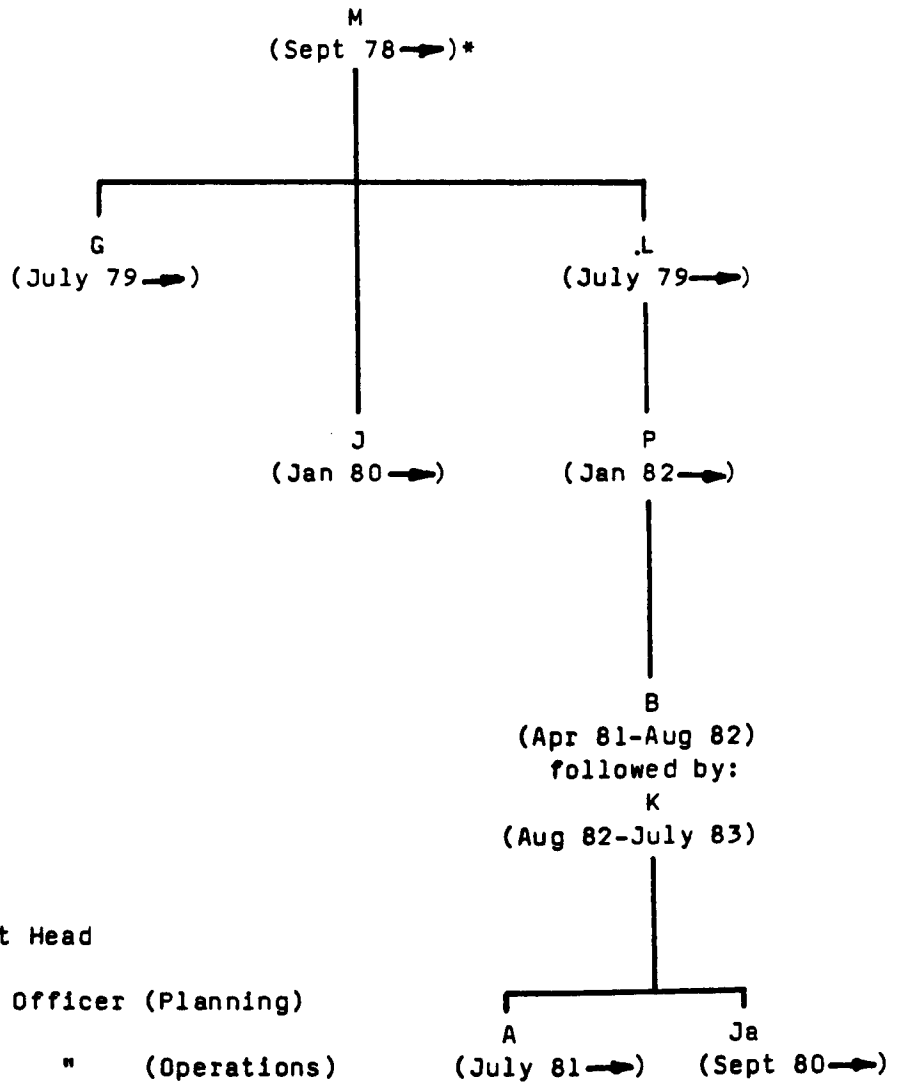


withdrawn. This dealt with the learners viewpoint, but what of the facilitator? The Head of Department as manager and researcher occupied many roles. Managing people is not an easy option. It becomes harder if one is prepared to share uncertainty with one's subordinates in a partnership pursuing excellence. If others are to be encouraged to take up this task of fostering enhanced learning ability, then a detailed understanding of the implications of taking this step is needed.

The overall purpose of the evaluation was oriented towards both research and intervention, in the terms of Bramly and Newby (1984), and specifically directed at answering: (i) What do people come to understand about the method used to facilitate self-organisation, and thereby what constitutes self-organisation itself? (ii) What kind of changes do people record about themselves as learners as a result of seeking greater self-organisation? (iii) What demands does working with subordinates, for the purpose of their acquiring self-organisation of learning, place upon the leader of those subordinates?

These three studies are presented in the following sections of this chapter. By way of introduction to them, however, the position and date of joining the Department of people who participated in the research are indicated in Fig 17. A fuller description of the Department's organisational arrangements was given in Chapter 8.

The Department began on a small scale and gradually expanded its operations. This expansion was a combination of planned progression and opportunity. The chronology of the research studies is given in Fig 2. These were incorporated within the Department's workload which ranged



KEY TO JOBS

- M = Department Head
- G = Executive Officer (Planning)
- L = " " (Operations)
- J = Training Officer (Education)
- P = " " (Operations)
- B, K = Training Assistant
- A, Ja = Instructor

(\* → indicates remaining in the Department until its dissolution in November 1983)

Fig 17: Staff positions and dates of joining the Education and Training Department

over such as the development of a new clerical staff training programme, helping Business Development staff acquire sales skills, establishing a professional studies scheme for banking students, training of experienced banker recruits, commercial lending courses, supervising the introduction of a managerial performance appraisal scheme, etc.

In all of this, M and G tended to deal with management training and development. J after a year of general duties with clerical staff training then specialised in education and ran the Professional Studies Scheme. L, P, B, K and Ja were responsible for clerical staff training and related technical and procedural training. G and L, in equal proportions, supported M with the management of the Department. The approach to working with subordinates to develop their learning competence was developed throughout 1980 and 1981. The studies of the effects of that approach were carried out between mid-1982 and early 1983. These began with a study of the changes in the staff's understanding of the method used to facilitate self-organisation and which is reported in the next section.

#### 9.1 Subordinates' understanding of the method used to facilitate self-organisation

All the Department's staff met regularly to discuss ideas about learning, training and related matters. These seminars were occasions when individuals were invited to make presentations or chair discussions. They were opportunities for the Head of Department and his staff to learn from one another and for an interest in learning to be

encouraged. They also provided the Head of Department with additional data to gauge how the staff were responding to their experience in the Department.

At an early meeting in this series, G (one of the two Executive Officers reporting directly to the Head of Department) led discussions about what the group considered learning to be. The Head of Department did not attend, deliberately, so as to avoid unduly influencing the expression of views. The result of the discussion was recorded for subsequent distribution to participants. It represented a snapshot of the collective view about learning at an early stage in the history of the Department.

#### 9.1.1 Initial views of the staff about learning

After an initial examination of the subject the group posed three questions as representative of the key issues: (i) What principles of learning do we know? (ii) What are the requirements for self-directed learning? (iii) What are "opportunities for learning"? A summary of the points that emerged from a discussion of these is given below.

As to the principles of learning, they began by citing the need for self-appraisal and the motivation to learn. The sources of the latter are varied, eg including financial reward, desire to increase self-esteem and interest in a subject. The rest of the discussion, however, dealt with an instructional strategy needed to promote learning, eg awareness of a trainee's existing knowledge, recognising a trainee's achievements, appropriate choice of teaching method, etc. A number of things are seen to inhibit learning. Naturally, poor instruction and course design are

considered relevant. But also included are factors about the learner: Nervousness; previous experience; unwillingness to learn.

Self directed learning is seen in terms of what stimulates and encourages this process. Notable is a considerable listing of how people like to learn which not only includes the obvious ("being taught in a practical way"), but also the more unusual ("considering implications of actions as opposed to being impulsive"). Interestingly, reading comes at the top of the list, ahead of experience and trial and error, which may be the influence of early experience of the Department when positive attempts were made to reverse a pronounced reluctance to learn from written materials. The fundamental point made is that the learner must accept at the outset that there is a need for something to be learned. This can arise from a variety of sources such as seeking a challenge, getting help/feedback from other people, proving to oneself that something perceived as difficult can be accomplished, or setting personal standards and striving to achieve them.

Similarly, opportunities for learning brought forth a mixture of prosaic and insightful comment, eg "taking over a new course", "making mistakes", "talking to people and listening actively", "observing others", "being prepared to try out a new approach".

Clearly, the influence of the Head of Department had begun to show itself by the time these views were collected. However, they do represent a starting-point in considering how staff views evolved and, particularly by virtue of their emphasis on instruction, they provide a contrast with the

views below about the approach to facilitation of self-organisation.

9.1.2 Descriptions of the method collected from subordinates

This then represented how, at the outset, the staff in the Department regarded learning. These views had been expressed in December 1979 - just five months after the team had been assembled. From this point, as people continued to settle into their new jobs, and as contact with the Head of Department increased, there began to appear references to the "Head of Department's method", his "way of doing things" and what he was "trying to achieve" with his staff. Accordingly, about two years after the initial discussions about learning, their descriptions of how they had come to regard the "method" (for facilitating self-organisation) were recorded by them. This data collection was again carried out by G. The Head of Department described to him what was required, a summary of which was used subsequently when briefing each member of staff about what was required. In addition to providing his own statement, G acted as go-between, either collecting a written response or recording the result of an interview. Practically, all the Department contributed. In this way a full cross-section of views was obtained, ie from those who worked closely with the Head of Department as well as from those who did not.

9.1.2 (a) "G" - Executive Officer (Planning)

"G" produced his view in writing and this is

reproduced in full below:

"Offers comprehensive insights into a topic. May give lengthy descriptions of a topic/concept whilst showing different ways of looking at it. This removes the shutters - opens up thoughts on the topic to a vast area to explore. Adopts and encourages a reflective approach. Has often said - "I have been reflecting on what we said". This means that nothing is final, in an absolute sense, even though something may have been published, declared to the public, it can still be reflected upon and areas identified that could be improved. Pursues excellence and encourages this in others. This is done via sharing ideas, responding to work done, and may be in the form of a conversation during which penetrating questions are asked or different views are offered or by written comments on work produced. Uses your ideas which provides satisfaction, reassurance, encouragement, a feeling of worth. Sometimes this is done quite obviously, but at other times it is done very subtly and the originator of the idea may not notice in which case some of the benefits may be lost - this is only a minor consideration though. Occasionally "reads into" things said, or expressions used, ie tries to get behind the surface comments, actions or facial expressions. To me this is a difficult area because, if it deals with negative things about the individual it may either be correct, in which case the person feels pinned down and uncomfortable, or it may be incorrect, in which case the person may feel wrongly accused. In either case, it threatens the individual's "private space". Whilst encouraging openness (above), if it is apparent that a person is in difficulty, either emotionally or intellectually, will treat them with sensitivity by transferring the focus of discussion to self and/or providing information, explaining, etc. Encourages independence. Does this by not giving specific instructions about what to learn and how to learn it, but by providing cues or pointers about things that could be pursued; by encouraging individuals to consider and act upon their own training needs; by being amenable, pleased and positive when individuals suggest things they would like to do. Also gives indications about the kind of resources that are available (including himself); passes on books, articles, information that might be useful. Provides and allows individuals to capitalise on opportunities and is prepared to step back from the limelight himself in doing so. It seems that after an assessment of the ability of the individual he will vest a great deal of responsibility in them. Allows realistic timescales for person to orientate themselves to tasks, eg on joining department - to get "on board" or prepare for, say, commercial lending course. At the same time encourages planning ahead for them - not only for the preparatory tasks that have to be carried out but also the learning required. Does not make a fuss over mistakes, but rather encourages analysis of what went wrong so that one can learn for next time round. Is prepared to relax and celebrate other's achievements. This provides a welcome release of tension and is refreshing before the next bout of work. Uses diagrams to explain his thoughts. This suggests a structure to a subject and encourages the learner

to use a framework and approach the topic to be learned in a systematic way."

9.1.2 (b) "L" - Executive Officer (Operations)

"

"L" also produced a view in writing the whole of which is reproduced below:

"I see this as one based upon raising awareness in the individual by means of feedback about one's behaviour and performance, focussing attention on how one can improve. The feedback varies from the explicit to the implicit, but largely favours the implicit, ie explicit - being told that something is not up to standard; implicit - by suggestions put forward as to alternative ways of doing things, thinking about things eg "have you considered ....?" "What if ....?" The intention seems to be to stretch and extend a person's abilities beyond what he/she would normally operate within, ie to utilise their potential to the full. Very few answers are given in respect of right/wrong - relying very much on the perception of the learner to determine what is expected, required, etc. This demands a lot of responsibility from the learner to think clearly and "requires different levels of thinking to be employed to respond effectively. It gets the individual to look inwards on themselves, to question their own assumptions, values and resultant behaviours and actions, in terms of why certain decisions were made and specific courses of action taken. To establish, the method requires patience on both sides and a great deal of support from the "teacher". The teacher acts as a mirror for the learner, reflecting back the level of performance reached and in so doing provides the feedback. This needs to be done in such a way as to be non-threatening and without appearing to attack the learner. The teacher then guides and steers the learner into areas, as appropriate, whilst encouraging and motivating further effort. Rewards are earned and recognisable as such. At first sight, the method is not clear, particularly if one is used to other things. It appears vague, confusing and somewhat frustrating. Eventually it dawns on you and it is then easy to see how it makes a person grow. It almost forces the change to happen. My impressions of it are that people either see this - gain insight or they become more bewildered by it, there does not seem to be an intermediate result although I think there is a transitional stage. It involves a great deal of interaction between the teacher and the learner and both give a lot of themselves emotionally to it. The teacher consciously, the learner without at first understanding what is going on. It questions the makeup of the individual, the accepted ways of doing things. I see the approach being one of counselling and coaching running in tandem with a process of analytical thinking."

9.1.2 (c) "P" - Training Officer (Operations)



"P" articulated his views in an interview, the questions of which are also included.

"Firstly, it (ie the "method") has presented me with opportunities to: (a) Gain a wider perspective of the organisation and (b) to deal with significant people, people in positions of power/influence, and I have come to feel that I can approach them about various training matters.

And what is specific to this Department in all this?

"Well, I agree that part of what I am saying applies to working in any department. But I feel that a lot of the contact with people could be, ordinarily might be, done by the Departmental Head, or his immediate subordinates. So its different in that respect. I have been trusted to do it, and offered guidance when needed, to enable me to develop in that area. And not only contact by telephone, but also directly in meetings, and here I am thinking especially about the autoteller meetings which involved "AGMs and DHs. It was difficult, initially, and I needed support, and later was able to solve problems and get what I wanted. I think it has made me wiser. I am now able to spot people who are influential and to be able to identify the various points of view and react to people accordingly.

Anything else?

"Well, the next thing is difficult to get hold of .... somewhat intangible. It concerns freedom to suggest alternatives and to be allowed to work relatively undisturbed. There needs to be monitoring, of course, but there is a sense of freedom here. Alongside of which exists a feeling of responsibility. Its difficult to express, it might be a personal attitude, for example, because at work I want to have responsibility, be accountable. I do not want you to be in the position of having to account for me and my actions. Therefore, I am the person who is accountable to the organisation for what I do, and the atmosphere here encourages that. Freedom and responsibility seems to be important to the Department. A job is given and people are left to get on with it. I am left to sort out how to do things. And hand-in-hand with that is the fact that, at the end, things have to work. Therefore, there is a responsibility. And so I am talking about trust in a big way, and such trust increases the weight of the responsibility, I feel. The experience of the Department has also been fulfilling, in that what I have done I have been pleased with. And this satisfaction also relates to freedom.

"I would conclude, in fact, that satisfaction is a product of freedom and trust. In addition, one is involved in a creative process - in achieving something and in getting around obstacles in achieving something.

But the last point is not specific to the Department, is it?

"No, but its greater here. A lot of store is laid by people

using their imagination and thinking of things a fresh. That is more prominent here. When looking at projects, ideas are sought, and considered, and accepted when possible.

Are there any other aspects of "fulfilled"?

"Well, I would identify fulfilling things as things that arise out of challenges within specific projects. For example. the Autoteller programme presented a particular challenge which was met. And what I am trying to say is that what is specific to the Department is that one is made to feel that its a personal thing. That its mine, the project, I have to see it to the end. So I see the whole thing as well - from beginning to end of the sequence, eg from announcement of the work, to data collection, running a course, getting responses from people. Changeover training is a good example of this.

"But it has not been like this all the time; there have been some low points. A couple of occasions have been disappointing. Borne out of confusion, really, wondering at the time what was happening, and not being sure. At Christmas I felt in real doubt, even to the extent that I was beginning to think I could not string two sentences together. My memos were being checked and annihilated. But I was not getting constructive criticism. And felt, how on earth could I constructively criticise my subordinates when I get no experience of it from my superior. (In P's case that was "L".) So I was in a trough at the turn of the year. I was not sure about things, did not grasp what the problem was, and just could not make progress. What helped me out of that hole, in fact, was the Eileen Evans letter I brought to you, which you did not criticise, but merely suggested a diagram to help clarify and a few alternatives to phrases. Before, I was getting chunks of my memos taken out and which were then replaced by a set of words which said the same as what I had written. But with you, you improved the parts you referred to and helped make it a better letter. But the important thing was that you accepted the letter as okay - and it was that that helped me to pick up.

"There has also been a lot of reaction from the girls. They have commented adversely, negatively about the workload and the pressure. At first, I assumed it was all my responsibility. But that was a mistake. It is not always entirely one's own fault - I have learned that. I felt I knew what I was doing and was doing it correctly, but yet it turned out wrong. Then I felt bad about that. It created self-doubt. The team means a lot to me and it was, therefore, very serious, important to me, when we experienced problems. It caused damage.

Damage?

"Well, in relation to the girls, what can be expected of them was in doubt, and that was part of the problem. The way they tackled their work needed to be looked at. Perhaps there was a weakness there. But in finding out about it, getting the girls to give me information, added to the workload overall. That took time to sort out, and it slowed

things down a bit. That is what I meant by damaging. In addition to this, there has been recently the discussions with Ja and A that L has had. I worried about that. I could see the reason for it. But I felt let down. I was not happy about that. (This was the task I gave L of finding out about the allegations made by K about the way P worked with the girls). There has been aggravation at times. I accept the idea of the need to look at performance, to use feedback from others to improve what one does. And often its helpful, but sometimes the feedback is overstated - which might then cause a problem. As an example, there was that meeting I had with J and G, which was not a very successful one. Now I was blamed for the downfall of the meeting and I do not think that is right. It turned out that their view of the purpose of the meeting was different to mine and because we had different views of what we were trying to achieve, it led to difficulties. But the point I am making is that we have to be right about the data about an individual's performance if we are giving feedback about that individual's performance. If information is passed for developmental purposes it must be accurate.

But having said all that I can say overall that it has been a good experience, an enjoyable one. There is a happiness inherent in the freedom to explore things, new ideas, alternative methods, which I like very much.

Finally, what would you say characterised the "method"?

"Getting people to go out and sort things out for themselves. That is not unique to the Head of Department; its just that others here have not experienced a similar approach before. The Head of Department has decided to let things take longer (the period taken to become competent in a job) but the pay-off is that the individual thinks about things, can get more involved with people, sort out his own timetable, make own choices. Getting me (P) to think it through myself, which was useful in the end. People having to be active in obtaining what they want; they must be prepared to try several, different methods to do something. People: (i) having to realise that they have to be active in activity and understanding, and not just acting; (ii) possessing certain qualities if they are to be capable of responding to it, eg confident enough to overcome resistances, self-assured, interested in learning, active and not prepared to accept other people pouring out facts, determined to keep striving if initial resources not sufficient; it is easier for someone with those qualities than for someone who is shy and retiring."

#### 9.1.2 (d) "J" - Training Officer Education

"J" found it easier to be interviewed than to write her views; the following is the record made by G.

"It is a reflective approach. It is difficult if you are

not experienced in the reflective way of learning. It is easier for those people who have more contact with the Head of Department, they are more aware of the approach and comfortable with it. I used to think that I was inferior to his level (the Head of Department), because he has already explored it all, and feel threatened and a bit of a "twerp". But more exposure to the method has enabled me to be more trusting, to feel less threatened and therefore prepared to risk more. I feel now I am gradually understanding what he is trying to do. I wondered at one stage if I was being manipulated, experimented with and "laughed at. But it's a "catch 22" really. If I feel anxious about it, I will avoid contact and involvement; if I do not get involved I will be unable to trust him and so will continue to feel threatened. I think past experience plays an important part, especially regarding feelings about authority - parents, teachers, boss at work. I think because of experiences with previous bosses people can be reluctant to come forward for fear of being rebuffed. There is also the related idea, that the boss' time is valuable. And, in any case, he is clever and experienced and it's easy to think that because of that he will have thought already about the ideas I might come up with. His reputation has preceded him (the Head of Department), you know, his readiness to jump on every word, wanting an explanation for every "if" and "but"; conversations with him were "difficult" for me because of that, therefore I was tempted to avoid them, especially if I also felt that my ideas were not significant anyway. You therefore need to prepare very thoroughly for conversations with him, to have thought things through very carefully. I think it is a creative approach. I feel I am more willing now than before to suggest things. In the past I would evaluate more and do so less frequently now. In the early stages of knowing the Head of Department, one may place too much emphasis on the aspect of feeling threatened, or wondering if what one has to say is worth listening to, which leads to not being prepared to say: "I do not know", for example. In my observation, the Head of Department is regarded as an "expert". His values are different to ours. This leads to people not being prepared to try and improve because they feel in no way can they be an expert like him, therefore why try at all? He seems to be different to us. We are more emotional, social. He is rational, scientific, academic and has had a lot of experience. His vocabulary can be inhibiting, because he uses words whose meaning we do not know."

#### 9.1.2 (e)"K" - Training Assistant

In response to a request from the Head of Department, K submitted the following account.

"It took a little while to settle in. I was confronted with what I was, my way of doing things, and challenged about the ideas I held. I found it difficult, initially, to admit that I had not thought through things properly. It

made me come to terms with the way I had kidded myself about my performance in the past. I came to terms with me as a person and admitted to myself that it was my fault that I had recently failed exams and that I was mistaken in blaming others for my failure. I examined my own motivation. I was not shown in detail how to do things, but left to sort things out for myself. The emphasis in the way of working is to set deadlines and leave people to get "on with it (which is a difference to what she had been used to). The atmosphere was motivating, and encouraged one to want to do well. It was clear that people were interested in wanting me to develop, and time was allowed me for that purpose. It was not regarded as wasting time to sit and read journals (not generally seen that way in the Bank). P was not so sure about time spent on reading, he was more oriented to working, and sometimes queried use of time. I clashed personally with P. I settled down alright with everyone else. We both tried hard to get on with each other. I do not know why we did not. It was getting better. It was important to work well with P and I consciously worked at improving our working relationship - which was a compromise really between us. Discovered, particularly via self-organised learning experiment, and through the way things are done here, that there are many more considerations involved in the decisions about training work. The Department wanted to suit other people and always tried to give a good service to others, even if it did not suit ourselves. (Not always like that elsewhere). Enjoyed instructing and the cash difference investigations. They helped me become more objective, more able to stand back from things and look at the facts, and then to make recommendations. It made me better as a supervisor (ie the investigations). The instructing made me keyed up although I was alright in the room. I got on well with the trainees, on an informal level with them. There was a good response, including thanks from them. It was a good feeling seeing the result of one's work. I had the satisfaction of seeing people acquire knowledge and skills. I also felt very pleased when we had to reschedule a set of changeover courses. A lot of pressure created by that. It was pleasing to cope with it. It was hard at the time to get it done, but pleasing afterwards when looking back on it. I felt I gave more in E/T than in Business Development Department (BDD), in terms of applying myself mentally. I had to think more. More was expected of me, and I was able to give more than in BDD. A feeling expressed by others rather than the way I felt was that any sort of comment could be picked up and acted upon. Even a flippant remark could lead to a lot being made of it, out of all proportion really. For example, one of the girls said she had made a comment and then a lot of work had resulted from it, and afterwards she had wished she had not spoken. But its better to have things taken up rather than be ignored. I was surprised by P being worried about not having a staff meeting. There was a feeling that we should come up with ideas. It seemed sad. I feel better as a result of the experience. I am more appreciative of the wholeness of things, that there are different aspects to be considered, that other people are involved too, not just me. When I started in BDD, I was working for me. After working in E/T, I am more appreciative of the need for working for a team, in which there was help from others when needed. If you

were stuck, others pitched in. There were no demarcations in an emergency. We pulled together. There was a good team feeling, and people did not go their "own way. The whole thing counted, not just my part in it. There was a good attitude. Everybody helped each other out. And when I became able to, I reciprocated and played my part. People were observant of each other, and saw when help was needed. In BDD you were just left alone, and people pulled in their own direction. It was pulling itself apart. There were unpleasant things, too. At first I worried about meeting deadlines. It got to me; was stressful. Afterwards I could keep things in perspective. I was able to sort things out better. I was able to cope better later. It was hard-going. But I realised that you had to sort out priorities. It was important; although unpleasant to experience, good came out of it in the end. The differences with P taught me about how to work with others. I had not had such a personality clash as that before. I reacted emotionally. But I learned to control that - which is a good skill for me to have. Its not an easy thing for me to do. I gained an appreciation of cost-effectiveness through setting up and running courses. For example, in preparing teaching aids it is easy to decide to have a dozen viewfoils for a particular session, but then one has to think about how effective that might be, and also about what they cost. There is also the time involved in preparing them. So one got used to decided on whether or not ideas were worthwhile. Before I used to take things for granted, did not think about presentation. If one was going off to do a talk, if there were some folders for leaflets that was fine, if there were not any, that was fine also, you just took the leaflet's and did not think at all about what it looked like. Having the extra responsibility in this job was good for me. I had never been responsible for things or other people before. Some problems arose with communications. It was difficult not getting together with L and P. L saw P who then saw us. There were problems about the transfer of information from P. But we overcame that in the end. P wanted us to do more than had been asked for, "just in case its needed". He wanted something in reserve. So we had to check carefully what was wanted, to ensure it all was absolutely necessary. There were no barriers to approaching people here in E/T. Communication with other departments was always very courteous. We always informed or consulted with all participants. The protocol was always observed. We endeavoured to go about things in the right way. Particularly, we always respected the position of the District Manager, and never undermined them. We always referred to them and never by-passed them. I had my efforts recognised. People were interested in what I did. And they were pleased when I did well. The feedback about performance was helpful. And the examination of what went wrong was constructive and non-threatening. You could admit that one had done something without fear of reprisal. The recognition of one's efforts was about right. Too much and it become false. Compliments from the top were always passed on. There was nothing negative; even the disciplining, as it were, was constructive and positive. The people were good to work with. Everyone worked hard, "pulled their weight. They could be relied upon. They were enthusiastic and concerned for each other. It was a very supportive environment; genuine; sincere. There was no

back-biting or bickering or "who shall we pick on today?". I felt I was working with and not for people. The hours were too long that I had to put in, that I felt I ought to put in. This was when I felt pressurised, when settling in. It was demanding mentally. I had no energy left at the end of the day. One had to concentrate all day, it was hard compared with BDD. It was different from elsewhere in the Bank. I think that is because its you running it. These things I have mentioned do not come from the people alone - they stem from the top of the Department. It could all change if a new person came in. Of course, the nature of the work is such that the Head of Department can have a freehand, and you encourage others to be like that. You do not accept things and one can speak your mind to you. Some bosses will not tolerate criticism. So what the Department is comes from the top - in relation to creativity, enthusiasm. Ambition can either be encouraged or squashed. You encourage all these things, and which is backed up by the nature of the work calling for experimentation. The Department's standards are high. Decisions are made very carefully before any changes are carried out. Care is taken that any change results in things being better. There is no change just for the sake of doing things differently. The emphasis is on improvement. The atmosphere set was that people sought to achieve high standards. In Business Development they did not really care. You went out and did your job. No one talked to you about that. There was a monitoring system for how many calls you made, and sales you got, but there was never any feedback of the information collected from the girls. You were just left alone and no one bothered to find out what you actually did. But it is not a soft option here. I worked very hard. And found it tiring. Which is part of looking for high standards. Others outside the Department, especially in the branches, don't realise what its like here, the effort involved, the work you have to do. Its like that with all the departments, of course. You do not appreciate what is done until you get involved with it. People in branches have said to me: "When are you coming back to the real world, then?" I think there will always be an "us and them" . People in the branches think that if you are not dealing with customers you are having an easy time of it. It was demanding working here. But now I could not easily settle for anything mundane. After pushing oneself its harder to maintain job satisfaction. You get a lower tolerance of mundane things. When you have been stimulated its hard to go back to clerical routine, etc."

#### 9.1.2 (f) "Ja"-Instructor

Ja was briefed by G and she produced the following statement.

"The first question I asked myself was "Do I learn from M? And my first reaction was "No", not in the terms of imparting knowledge and skills. M's "approach" I feel is that of facilitator, encouraging, suggesting options or

possibilities and stimulating thought and awareness about oneself or the situation. The "approach" or "way of doing things" can best be described as person-centred learning with the individual motivating themselves, creating within themselves the desire to learn, and choosing how to get there. This does raise problems in people's minds, because this concept is not usually used in schools, colleges or organisations. People expect there to be an "expert" who imparts knowledge necessary to carry out the task or pass the exam. They feel that in order to succeed the knowledge imparted must be understood, but they do not analyse how they learn, or which is the best method for them personally. I think it is very important that the ground rules/expectations are clearly defined at the outset to avoid confusion or misunderstanding, of what is expected or intended by either party."

### 9.1.3 Conclusions

There is throughout the responses a definite indication that their authors are much better informed about the learning process than they were when they began work in the Department. At the outset, the emphasis in their collective view of learning was tutorial, with a lot of attention given to finding ways of making teaching efficient. There were, of course, references also to the learner. But without affording the learner the centrality to be found prominently in the developed views. At the later stage, there is decidedly a clear understanding of the role of the learner, especially regarding the need for an active response to learning opportunities.

Naturally, there is variation in the views expressed. This would arise, firstly, because some of the respondents worked very closely with the author, and, inevitably, had many opportunities for discussion. This difference would also affect the amount of time each staff member actually experienced directly what was to be called "the method". There is also the effect of individual values and needs on what is deemed to be important in the approach they



experienced. This shows particularly when comparing the views of L and J. The former are almost impersonal, an objective attempt to give a rigorous account of what it all meant. The latter, however, are idiosyncratic, an almost intimate observation of certain aspects of the working relationship with M. The research was not able to pursue the origins of these variations. This would be an interesting area for further study in relation to improving the approach adopted to facilitation.

All of the respondents indicate a grasp of the main principles. Some are more comprehending than others, for the reasons indicated above. But it is important to recognise the need to understand this variation in reception. This sets the kind of expectation it is realistic to have about the degree of attainment of self-organisation to be gained from exchanges of the sort described here. For it seems that, if the essentials of learning to learn methodology are not understood by the learner, the probability of the development of learning competence will be small. If the essentials are grasped, there is an accelerating of movement to independence, to the adoption by the learner of a fuller, more informed part in the learning enterprise. So in this respect, the experiment was a success. All of the participants, admittedly to varying extents, clearly understood the main messages of the approach to facilitation of their capacity for self-organisation.

There are also several references to the environment within the Department being different to that experienced elsewhere in the Bank. The objective of work reported elsewhere in this thesis was to reduce that difference.

That it was so great possibly underlines why such difficulties were experienced with the Management Development Survey.

Some respondents referred to significant increases in job satisfaction and motivation which are strongly associated with the learning environment. These testimonies affirm the view that one can be optimistic about the ability of people to respond positively and effectively to such a demanding environment - demanding because it expected a lot both in development of learning competence and productivity. This is particularly illustrated by K who successfully made the transfer from a low-achieving climate of Business Development to that of the Education and Training Department.

But the understanding of the method of facilitation is merely the foundation for attempts at changing the ability to learn and it is these changes that the next section of this Chapter considers.

## 9.2 Subordinates' descriptions of themselves as learners seeking greater self-organisation

The previous section dealt with how subordinates in the Department responded to what they regarded as a "method" used by the Head of Department, ie what they understood to be the process that had been offered them as a means of inducing greater capacity for self-organisation. It was thus natural to follow that with an investigation of the effect of that "method". Five case histories are reported in this section involving B, K, P, G and L (see Fig 17).

### 9.2.1 "B" - Training Assistant

The details were elicited from B as he left the Department to return to branch banking. He was posed a series of questions to which he responded in writing. This was followed by an interview when supplementary questions were answered, derived directly from B's written response. B was given the questions in advance so that he could prepare for the interview. In presenting the data, answers to the supplementary questions have been inserted into the earlier written response, as if it was a continuous conversation, as follows.

What changes have taken place in how you think and feel about learning and about yourself as a learner?

"I think the major change in the way I think about learning is that I now try to be an active learner as opposed to a passive learner. I feel that we are all encouraged, from the day we start school, to sit back and listen to what the teacher has to say. This seems to go against the grain - from 0-5 years we must learn much about the world by "discovery" learning. So it is not surprising that people of my age (and younger) sit back and expect to be taught. When I say that I have become more active as a learner. I am attempting to convey the idea that I am no longer content to sit down with one study book and use it as my sole means of passing an examination. I now give much more consideration to how I am going to tackle my studies - I would say that I think about what I am going to do before I do it. I also use many more resources than I used to. As I have said to you before in the "Learning to Learn" interviews I now use many information sources in my studies - TV, radio, newspapers, text books and other people. I now also feel able to draw up my own programme of studies. I decided about a year ago to sit one exam every six months. I felt that because everyone else sat three exams a year (in the hope of passing two) this was not a good reason for me doing the exams. My plan seems to be working. When I am talking about it to others I am very careful to say that it works for me and may not be the best course of action for others. When I told you what I was planning to do I remember you responded critically to it. That surprised me - I thought that with your own strong views on learning it was strange that you felt I should take a more "normal" course of action.

This active approach to learning has also helped to prepare me for branch working again. There was a time when I would have just sat back and waited for the move to take place. Around Christmas-time, however, when I saw there was no place for me in the Department I decided to prepare myself for the move back to the branch. This entailed only simple things like reading branch procedures and talking to friends - the branches about the changes that had taken place in my absence, but it did help.

As to the learning to learn course, I do not feel that I have gained a lot from it. I think that, in a way, it has made me a more active learner, but I do not use the techniques discussed (PSOR etc) in the way the course advocated. I would say that most people do take stock of the way they learn, even if not to such an extent as the "learning to learn" course advocates.

Can you put your finger on what you did gain from the learning to learn course? What do you mean by "in a way"?

"It is to do with the concept of passive learner. It is possible to change if we want to. In changing one needs to make use of all resources available. It made me realise all this, made it clear, made one recognise that most people are passive in learning anything (ie whether it be in Branch or studying). I feel that I was passive in the past, but now I want to grab hold of it and beat it, rather than have it beat me. I search out more for resources, especially books, but I also use the TV, radio, other people, newspapers. I am a more organised learner now - I use time better, but also the way I go about reading books, I do not just read from cover to cover. Before I used to learn fact A in order to learn fact B, then I put A and B together before I learned fact C, and so on. Now I take a more global view, eg if using a book I scan through it all first - skip reading - not feeling compelled to read it all. I'm much more selective, I search out for relevance now. I find I read differently too, when dealing, say, with a selected section. I scan it first, getting the feel of it all, and if I do not understand it I get help with it, which I did not do before. I had the idea before that I could only go on if I understood all of it - but now I am able to move on, leaving on one side those parts I do not understand, to be dealt with later. I do not use the techniques, eg PSOR, I do not think about the purpose of reading, in the way advocated on the course.

Which aspects of learning and of being an effective learner did you find difficult to grasp?

"I do not think I had too many problems grasping the ideas of "Learning to Learn", but found it difficult to accept the fact that I, as a learner, have an opportunity to enter into a learning contract with the teacher. I also find it difficult to believe that any bank employee is going to get the support required if they try some learning to learn techniques. "Learning to Learn" may be fine in the university environment, but I do not think too many bank staff are going to be keen on the ideas."

Clearly, B became more active in his approach to learning. He was thinking more about what to do, used a greater variety of resources and information sources, and deliberately chose a plan of study that suited him. His decision to take the initiative and prepare for his transfer back to branch work was highly significant for him; similarly the change in his reading behaviour. But yet, he did not embrace all the techniques offered to him on the learning to learn course - feeling them more suited to a university environment than a Bank. But his observations do illustrate that, however limited they appear to a third-party, the personal relevance of the changes made in learning behaviour is strong.

#### 9.2.2 "P" - Training Officer (Operations)

"P" was seen regularly by the Head of Department as part of a learning experiment. The meetings were expressly to talk about learning. The conversations were directed at offering whatever help was felt to be needed to assist his progress towards greater learning competence. They occurred every three or four weeks, approximately, throughout a year.

The information from P was recorded during an interview with him at the end of his series of meetings with the Head of Department. He was given some notice of the interview and asked to come along prepared to talk about the ways in which he was different as a learner. He began as follows:

"The first and perhaps most important difference concerns PSOR. I am now more conscious of setting purposes - really doing it, even to the extent of writing it down to make it absolutely clear and precise. Similarly, I spend more time now looking at strategy, and checking the various ways there are for doing things. So PSOR has been especially

influential. I am not saying that it is completely new to me. Before, in my previous job, I was achieving things, meeting my targets, so I must have been doing something similar, but I was not aware of it. Often, of course, the objectives were laid down for me by my superior, so the purpose was fixed by him. Very often the way of doing it was also laid down."

So we can say that a major difference is:

Now  
More aware of  
and using PSOR

In doing this what  
advantages are there for  
you?

"I can consider alternatives and identify short-cuts. It creates extra ideas by looking at strategy, again which might lead to short-cuts. It ensures that other interests in the work are not ignored (eg consultation with computers, personnel). It helps me to avoid putting my foot in it. Reviewing helps me personally and the Department, by helping me do things better, to improve and refine things - I felt more professional that way. Reviewing increases the chances of satisfaction being derived from the work. It helps to ensure that we have less problems in the future - because work becomes smoother, faster. - the speed of response is increased, I am keen on that. Reviewing in itself is a satisfying activity. A greater feeling of control comes from using PSOR."

Can you think of any  
disadvantages in this?

"No, not really. I certainly cannot think of any occasion when I would not use it."

Before  
Not aware and  
responding to "method  
of others  
What was  
disadvantageous for  
you in this?

"Nothing that I can think of, really .... I suppose it did not prepare me for .... but no problems were caused by it."

Were there any  
advantages in it for  
you?

"No, I can not think of any. Of course, it needs to be said that whilst explicitly purpose and strategy were not there, reviewing was. We did review for better performance."

So, let us go on to other differences that you can mention

"Well, the awareness of the need to model the job. In looking at hierarchy (the exercise recently carried out) it creates a context, for each item of work that you are involved with. That exercise certainly made me see that the modelling process could be accelerated."

Tell me a little bit more about what you mean by "modelling" and how its useful to you

"Its useful to me because it highlights areas where I need to go - it selects the areas to focus on. It gives learning purposes. It enables you to get outside the job, to look at it as a whole .... it creates perspective .... but I do not know whether or not I am answering your question."

No, that is okay, but if you could go into a bit more detail about what modelling is?

"Modelling brings together all the demands upon you that might be made. Its then a matter of taking those demands and creating something .... seeing how they come together to form a job."

But what is this "something" that you refer to?

"It is that which you are trying to achieve. The model that you construct of the job is the highest level purpose for that particular job. In other words, the highest level purpose is "I want to do this job"."

And what you are trying to achieve is the satisfaction of demands on you now and in the future?

"And modelling is also answering the question: "Why?", at each level within the job description. The model enables you to take action, eg you have to know whether or not you can make a decision - both in doing the job and in learning to do the job. It ensures, then, that learning action is effective because it is directed by purpose, and because it allows it to take place sooner than it otherwise would. For example, if you wait for someone to direct you it is slower than being able to anticipate what is required and doing it. Quicker action; less time."

So modelling enables you to think in terms of where you are going and why? Anything else?

"I am now more conscious of feelings about learning methods. When I started my exams in the Bank I was not keen on going to College - day release and evening classes. I did not have control over the content. I was not keen on that. And that feeling spread over into learning in groups generally, which I also started not to like - except when there was a competitive element present. The first grid made this explicit and I realised that what you have to do in such as a College stituation is maximise the interaction - get the best out of what is available, to ask questions, get the lecturer to elaborate on points if needed, press for more information, and try and influence what is going on. And I realised that I had to stop the spread of that negative

feeling about learning in groups - which was also particularly helped by the sort of buzz-group type of working that goes on the Department."

And why do you think this change is useful to you?

"It enabled me to approach those kinds of situations so as to get benefit from them, rather than avoid them. It is really an awareness things. It increased my awareness of learning methods and caused me to re-examine my approach to them."

And why is that advantageous to you?

"I am better prepared now to use resources, by considering several methods of learning and not just some methods. I can now evaluate methods objectively, so as to determine which one, or a combination, to use."

So you became more versatile in your learning?

"Yes. By increasing my awareness of the limitations of training/learning methods. Also, I have realised that in all areas of my life I should not judge things on the basis of a few experiences. I realised that whilst in some things I do not make generalisations out of one or two experiences, I was making generalisations about such as College Courses. It occurred to me that whilst I did not enjoy one particular experience of a College that all other Colleges might be different, and I would not know until I experienced them. I just had not reflected on this before. I simply had dismissed College Courses and become a personal study student. And I preferred personal study. I did not like being taught. I do not like to rely completely on a teacher. You see, when I was studying and going to the College, I read widely, I tried to cover everything, tried to go deeply into the subject - I just did not want to rely upon the teacher. So when I went to College, I often felt it was a waste of time. When I attended the lectures, I learned little, because I had already covered it. I had read ahead, so that the lecturer added only a little to what I already knew. Thus the benefit of going was quite small - I was, by and large doing it myself. I had read widely, I had anticipated the things to be covered - I had got ahead of the lecturer."

Clearly, P was more conscious than B of setting purposes - Purpose-Strategy-Outcome-Review (PSOR) was firmly accepted and used. He was able to explain fully what the value to him was of reaching an increased awareness and use of PSOR. He was able to create context for deriving learning purposes, by considering the whole task and the demands it posed for him. Importantly, he was much more aware of his feelings in making decisions about learning



methods and accepted the need to attempt to overcome these when negative feelings presented obstacles to his efficiency as a learner, and this for him, arguably, was the most important change of all.

### 9.2.3 "K" - Training Assistant

"Like "P", "K" also was seen regularly by the Head of Department as part of a learning experiment, which in her case lasted about six months. At the end of this period, she was asked to set out her views about how she had developed as a learner, and then, with this as a preparation, was interviewed by the Head of Department.

"I think I am now more aware of what I am doing and why. I am much more active as a learner than I used to be. I feel I take proper responsibility for my development now, and use PSOR (ie Purpose-Strategy-Outcome-Review); I had never before heard of, or even considered, these with regard to learning. I think I am more analytical, with regard to outcomes and reviewing. I am more assertive and inclined now to question purpose and strategy. Finally, I am now more likely to help myself with learning difficulties, ie before asking other people for answers, I will endeavour to find out for myself."

First of all, then, can you tell me what you mean by

"learning processes"?

"The whole thing: From the time when a decision is made about what you need to know, how you should go about it, actually acquiring knowledge and skill, analysing what you did, seeking improvements, and using the result of that in the future."

In describing changes in you as a learner there seems a lot of overlap; can you describe the relationship between them?

"Well, they are all alike, and part of the same thing, but they are not the same. I think that: (i) being analytical leads to being more aware; (ii) the desire to help yourself leads to being active, responsible and assertive."

Let us turn to the desire to help oneself. What is

it that you do that allows you to say that you have helped

yourself?

"An example would be learning to use the video equipment. I would determine what resources (people, books, etc) are available to help me learn about it, in other words, find out about how to find out. I would then use the resources unaided and learn how to operate the video. But by that, I do not mean without reference to other people, but rather I, unaided, would determine how to go about things."

Doing things unaided is important for you?

"Only in the sense I have described. I am not suggesting that I am always independent of others, but it is important to be able to work unaided."

Are there other ways of describing "helping myself"?

"Another example would be developing my skill as a supervisor. I now decide on what I need to know. I do not wait for others to say what the need is, or whether there is a need that has to be satisfied. I decide. I might decide to use the library, or observe others, or talk with people, get feedback, practice ways of supervising, requesting to go on a course."

So how does one become able to make the decision that one

needs to help oneself?

"By looking at present performance, by being more aware; by analysis."

So is the relationship between the key items as follows:

being analytical —————> being more aware —————> deciding

to do something about the result of awareness (ie helping

oneself)?

"Yes."

What made you more analytical?

"A desire to improve. Wanting to do things better. Striving for perfection. Continuing one's development on a broad basis rather than being narrow."

And is that you, which was then brought out more by

working here, or is it that you accepted that way of

thinking as a result of working here?

"Before I came here, if I had been presented with the idea of improving, I would have said: "Yes, that is important." But I would not have done anything more constructive than that. I might, at that time, have looked at job enrichment, but would not have been precise. Before I did not have a purpose, I was more haphazard. I did not think things through. Now I can see things more clearly and tend to think things through."

So you prefer to improve, seek perfection, to be broad and not narrow (let us call that pole A)?

"Yes."

And what would be the opposite of pole A, which we will call pole B?

"Just plodding along, I suppose. No clear direction. No pursuit of higher standards. Not developing as a person, or within a job. Just getting on with it and thinking: "If the superior does not shout at me, then it must be OK."

Why is pole A valuable to you, what advantages to you are there in it?

"It increases job satisfaction and personal satisfaction. I would be unhappy if I was at a dead-end. I like challenge, it increases interest, makes things seem more worthwhile. It improves the chances of getting on in the Bank. It is positive. It is a drive for movement forward. It helps to fulfil one's ambition. It helps me to be recognised as a person suitable for higher things. It shows that you are not just a production line worker - it shows you can rise above the plodders. It is not enough for me to stick in a narrow confine. I do not want to be pinned down to one thing. There is more to things than that - that is boring; I do not want to be restricted to a few things, when there is a lot of things to be involved with. Sometimes one's superiors are narrow in approach. That makes it difficult. And it may not make any difference being assertive in that situation, but I now believe that it can still be done, despite that obstacle. I believe now that my development does not depend upon on the whims of a superior. If you want it badly enough, you can get it. I have always felt this last part, but believing that you do not need to be encouraged by your superiors to get on is new, since being here, and is an important change in me. Before, if a BM said no to me about my development, I would have delayed dealing with it. I would have taken his lead and backed down in the face of that opposition. Therefore, I would say that, as a result of being here, my positiveness has increased in relation to what I want and why I want it."

And have you always been ambitious?

"Yes. But I am now more aware of the difference between being a cashier and being a supervisor. I am more aware of what skills are required in management. Being a G3 in BDD and then becoming a G3 here was a big jump for me. There I did not have any subordinates. Therefore, I did not have any supervisory experience. Also there was no incentive to do better, to do more than merely doing the job, trying to improve. So I became dissatisfied. There was no motivation. I was not working for anyone who could motivate people."

Why is ambition important to you?

"It is just me; part of my personality. It comes from parental influence also. I have always been competitive and I have always been encouraged to do well, and it is encouraging to realise that you can do it, that you do have the ability. Whenever promise has showed - being top of the class for example - you get an impression about yourself. You realise that you have potential. And in passing exams, there is a public recognition of that, too. You realise that you can go for more. So you want to realise your potential. And you learn that there are no limits, that you do not have to confine yourself. If you are prepared to apply yourself, there are no limits. Limits are things you make for yourself."

And have you always felt this way about "limits"?

"No. That came from here. Before I assumed there would be a stop, a plateau. I said things like: "I can't do that". And so I did not do it. But not now. Here, its a case of saying: "It is difficult, but I will have a go."

And why do you prefer to open things up, to remove the limits?

"I do not know if I can tell you why? Probably because I do not like the alternative."

What is the alternative?

"The "just plodding"."

Let us turn to the "just plodding": What disadvantages are there for you in that?

"It is confining. It narrows you down. If you start out on a narrow front it gets narrower and narrower, and you can never break out of that."

Why might that be wrong for you?

"It would make me unhappy. I dread the thought of being confined to one thing. The idea of doing the same thing for a long time is scaring. Also I do not always like to do what others want me to do; I want to be able to choose. Doing one thing is not enough. I want to do a lot. For example, at school I wanted 10 'O' levels - not just the minimum required for university entrance - because I knew I was capable of getting them. That is part of my bargain with life; what I want to get out of it."

Why do you prefer that sort of bargain, what do you get out of it?

"A sense of achievement. The satisfaction of fully using my brains, rather than not bothering. After school I was eager to keep thinking, to avoid sliding; it seemed a shame to let it go."

What disadvantages are there for you in that?

"It can be frustrating at times, because of not being able to get to where you want to be, being blocked. Or perhaps you cannot come to terms with what you want to know. For example, take the TA job. Initially, I could list what was involved in it, but I could not say what it really was about. That is unsettling, when you are still looking for a purpose."

The lack of clarity about purpose was threatening?

"Yes. And undermining. There is no doubt that the importance of purpose was thrust upon me here.

What is the advantage for you in having a purpose?

"It removes frustration. It helps you to know clearly in your own mind what you have to come to terms with, rather than have that given to you by somebody else. And that way of thinking was formed here and links to being active and more responsible."

Are there any other disadvantages in pole A?

"You sometimes set your own sights too high and fail. You do not achieve the target you have set yourself - but it is not easy to come to terms with that. There can be a sense of failure, a disappointment in the unrealistic setting of targets. But I feel that as a result of being here I am better at doing that. Take studying for example. Before I had not really explored purpose. I did not think through properly why I was doing what I was doing. Also if I failed, whilst it was disappointing, I shrugged it off and said: "Better luck next time". I did not review things properly. But now, reviewing helps me to see things more clearly. Before I did not examine what I was doing, where I might have gone wrong. I was too accepting. Now I do not accept things quite so readily. Before I did not question things. I just took it that I had done it alright. Now I examine critically what I have done. For example, with Nature of Management, I used to trust the lecturer. I did not attempt to understand it really. I just learned the notes. But now I approach it differently. This time, unlike before when I concentrated on the theory questions, I went for the practical questions. I felt more confident about that having had some experience of being responsible for subordinates. And I spent more time with exam papers, trying to get on the wavelength of the Examiner, not trying to spot likely questions. And I thought about the work I did here, analysing my own experiences. And I tried to be more systematic about the examination - how the marks are given and what the Examiner is after."

In a lot of what you have said there has been reference to emotions - how you feel, stress, unsettled, etc - are these things important to you, and if they are, why?

"Yes, they are important; I am quite an emotional person really. I do not always control my feelings. If I am upset I am open with it; I cannot stifle it; I cannot pretend its OK - if I am concerned. I am getting better at controlling

my emotions. I suppose taking pride, having a sense of achievement, seeking satisfaction are emotional things I value. And by "emotional person", I mean that I evaluate things in those terms. For example, if I had a telling off, I would be really upset. If I was wrong, I would own up. But if I was satisfied that what I had done was right and was still being told off, I would be distressed by that; I would want to get it right. I think some other people would not be bothered at all by that kind of thing."

Have you changed regarding your emotions as a result of working here?

"Yes, I control temper better now. I am more selective about letting go. Sometimes its destructive to lose one's temper. I try to recognise those occasions now. Sometimes nothing is achieved so control is the answer."

In what way has working in the Department helped in that respect?

"People here seem to be in control. There are no tantrums. It is a more objective atmosphere. It helped me to come to terms with the fact that losing one's temper is not an answer for anything. It does not solve anything. Which means that the problems take longer to sort out."

Can you recall the time when you started to get to grips with controlling loss of temper?

"It occurred last November. One instructor was ill. I had to stand-in at short notice. I was under pressure. I did not want to let the trainees down. I had not had much experience of instructing at that time. It seemed that every time I came out of the classroom there was P wanting something from me, pushing me into other things which to me did not seem that important, they were so far off from the immediate future. I finally lost my temper with him. It did not do any good, P was just the same. And it did not help me to do the course any better. Either I had to ask him to see me later or settle the query there and then. I allowed myself to be harassed. P then saw L and she talked to me. The way she put it, it seemed a reasonable request. I was upset at having lost my temper and we discussed it. We agreed to queries needed answering right away not a week later. I learned from that and it has helped me since."

K draws attention particularly to being more aware of her learning process, taking responsibility for her own development, using PSOR, being more assertive, more analytical and generally more prepared to help herself. The assertiveness/helping of herself was particularly prominent and seemed to be of great significance to her. Compared to

her start in the Department, she was extremely fluent when talking about learning and changes in her approach to learning suggesting substantial internalisation of the learning philosophy which had been offered to her. It seemed particularly to her that a considerable shift towards activeness about her own development had taken place, especially evidenced by her reference to her realisation that she did not need to be encouraged by her superior to get on. She also seemed much more deliberate and analytical and less prepared to be resigned about failure. K was intent, as a result of this learning experience, to be more in control of her feelings, and had learned to recognise opportunities for confronting this aspect of her personality.

#### 9.2.4 "G" - Executive Officer (Development)

G was employed in the Department throughout its existence. He was immersed in the day-to-day running of it. He shared the thinking of the Head of Department on many occasions when theoretical and practical issues were discussed. He was closely involved in the strategic development of the Department, specific management training and development projects, and problem areas of various kinds.

In offering data, G described first how he had come to think about learning as a result of being in the Department. Specific questions were then developed from this initial statement.

"For me learning is very much about emotional things. I would, therefore, consider it to be about the following aspects:

(i) First of all, there has to be a coming-to-terms with one's self, in relation to things around you, eg what do you have to do to feel comfortable as a person? One finds that things come to one's attention, about one's self, others and the environment, that are disturbing. And then there is the task of reconciling oneself to these, in other words, being able to accept them or change them.

(ii) When learning one has to overcome setbacks - disappointment, failure, embarrassment - and pick one's self up and start again.

(iii) Building on success is very important. At the point of feeling good about something, one must analyse what happened that brought it about.

(iv) In order to learn one must overcome fear of such as speaking out about ideas, putting new ideas into practice in public, failure and self-exposure.

(v) This is very much related to (iv). Being able to cope with other people who can do things well, eg putting aside feelings of embarrassment as might occur if learning to swim in a pool of good swimmers.

(vi) Learning must involve being able to find enjoyment, excitement in what you are doing, and to be able to believe in what you are doing, feel it is worthwhile. Complementary to this is my belief that learning involves developing a sense of self-worth.

(vii) Finally, I would say learning means seeking out a purpose and working towards it, with discipline, eg studying when you do not feel like it."

Whilst you said that learning is about emotional things,  
nevertheless there is a strong sense of coherence, can  
you say more about that?

"Learning is to set aims for oneself; collect information relevant to achieving aims, devising a strategy, moulding performance, and reviewing against preset criteria - amending as necessary. Treating learning as a task - this made sense - ie something to be managed. I think the most straightforward example was repeating General Personnel Management after having failed the first time. I gathered information (Examiners' reports, recollection of my performance, resources, eg ACOJ, Trades Union Books, papers, journals, etc). I reviewed the information I already had - notes for the course and other sources and reflected on these. I assessed what I had to do to pass. I planned how I would do it, and what would tell me if I was being successful. I changed my plans when I met a lecturer at Brooklyn Technical College whom I treated as another resource, and carried out the revised plan."

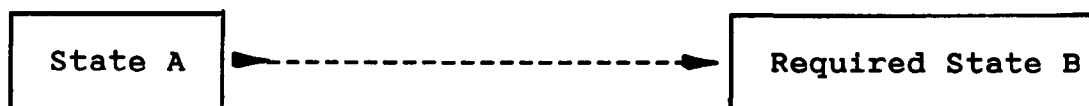
And apart from emotions, what else has learning to do with?



"Well, there are four things:-

(1)

Wanting to do something



The process of preparing oneself for State B and knowing when ready.

"(2) Taking things in from around oneself eg, ideas; visual impressions

Sifting, categorising, finding relationships and applications

Output - making use of them in practice - making a contribution

"(3) Acquiring information and making decisions - about what to achieve, own past and present performance, resources

experimentation

action

seeking and taking opportunities

Goal

"(4) Undergoing an experience, sometimes voluntarily and in control, sometimes not, and changing how one sees things, eg self, other people, values."

And what particularly has influenced your approach to learning?

"In your statement about training philosophy you have said that everyone must learn in order to live. This, to me, places, great emphasis on learning as being the main activity - which I do not feel I had attached as much importance to before - seeing learning as something separate to be done for set tasks or to study for exams. Similarly, I attribute to a very large extent, the atmosphere and philosophy of the Department to you. I say to a very large extent, and not completely, because I feel the atmosphere still needs feeding and supporting by the team, and that you have taken up ideas and suggestions by others that have also influenced it, eg content of staff meetings. However, as we have discussed previously, the team leader has, by his authority, a great deal of power to influence the style of his department/branch, hence if it is one of openness, as here, enabling full contributions from subordinates, it fundamentally is because of the stance the leader has taken."

And what about the changes in you as a learner?

"There are many ways in which I feel I am different in my

approach to learning. In particular, I would say that now I: (i) spend more time assessing the requirements of the thing to be learned; (ii) have more confidence that I can achieve what I want to achieve; (iii) am more fully engrossed in learning and my job; (iv) am more systematic about how I learn and treat learning more as a task; (v) can recognise more readily the significance of wrongly used resources and am aware of a wider range of resources; (vi) think through purpose more clearly; (vii) am more prepared to admit I do not know something and accept that this is legitimate; (viii) associate learning and job role more closely; (ix) am more able to sort out what I have to do to learn; (x) reflect much more on my performance; (xi) more evaluative of what I read/other people's views; (xii) am more interested in my performance; (xiii) face up to my power to influence my learning effectiveness."

G presents a very rich and comprehensive view of learning. Significantly, it now occupied a prominent position in his life. Whilst accepting the validity of emotionality, he sought to be systematic. His view of learning is pronouncedly practical, with emphasis given to purpose and output. This is closely linked to being more aware of the need to review the process of learning. The changes cited by G show clearly that he was importantly different both as a person and a learner as a result of his experience in the Education and Training Department.

#### 9.2.5 "L" - Executive Officer (Operations)

What was said earlier, when introducing G, applies to L also. She was on the same managerial level and reported directly to the Head of Department. The same method of data collecting was also used, beginning with her opening statement.

"The most significant change that has occurred is an increase in my awareness-of-learning, particularly in terms of the stages and process I go through to learn, the preferences I have for learning and how I set about tackling new material and overcoming difficulties. I am more conscious of my actions and tend to evaluate my performance

more frequently than ever before. In thinking about learning, I became aware of never having considered it seriously before, in any depth. It was simply a product of being taught, whether one taught oneself or a teacher was involved. My previous experience in training never expanded this. Training was always synonymous to teaching something to others. Emphasis was given to what the teacher was doing rather than what was happening to the trainee. The responsibility for the learning was firmly embedded with the teacher. Any problems were seen to be faults with presentation of the material rather than a lack of motivation in the learner or incompatibility of the method. I now recognise the simplicity of this view and the complexity of what has to be achieved within the learner. For myself, I have learned to think clearer and deeper - to stop and question assumptions I and others make, and to think in different ways. I feel this has developed as a natural extension of the rise in awareness. I feel I am more analytical in making decisions and reflective of my actions as well as more critical. These changes have occurred largely because of feedback that has been given to me (mainly by yourself) since joining the Department and my own desire to improve.

In taking feedback, it is necessary to be aware of one's feelings and to be able to manage them in a positive way. This is equally true with good as well as bad results. It

"would be easy to settle back once a good result has been achieved and level off at that point and not strive to improve further. I feel I have been helped in dealing with any bad feelings - frustration, rejection, resentment, etc by my experience on the "Managing Effective Relationships" course which I attended three years ago. I have been able to draw on these skills in support of my emotions and apply them in a positive manner. The conscious awareness of this has helped me feel more in control and has given me insight into the sort of person I am, the value structure I hold and a greater understanding of myself generally.

My experiences in the Department have helped me recognise and appreciate the value and power of learning. I see it as a fundamental of being alive. There are so many things to learn and so many opportunities that need to be recognised and taken up. This in itself makes the responsibility heavy for the learner and inevitable choices have to be made. It is he/she who is manager to a large extent of their own destiny. The learning cannot be done by anyone other than the learner; others can only help the change to come about. The learner determines the outcome which is dependent upon personal abilities and optimum potential. To reach optimum performance, it is necessary to be receptive to feedback, to be able to evaluate performance for oneself, to make conscious efforts to change and to accept the consequences of one's actions.

In reflecting on my experience at school, and the education system as a whole, I feel a disservice is done to many youngsters. The methods used encourage a reliance on the teacher - out of balance with what will be expected in the real world. It conditions individuals to expect a certain type of treatment and is misguided in not preparing them to

deal with the unplanned. Very little attempt, if any, is made to get youngsters to think for themselves and utilise their potential to the full.

I first became aware of a "process" going on after two to three months in the Department. I was not used to the way things were being managed - it was a new experience for me. I felt bewildered and confused as to whether I was doing right or wrong. I was unable to understand what was expected of me. I had to test the water. This was risky because I did not want to appear foolish and I sincerely believed I had certain things to offer, but yet I was hesitant, and I could not get to grips with this system of working. No-one seemed to be directing me, or at least not in the way that I had become used to. It soon became apparent that I was being guided by not being told what was wanted. This was deliberate and I was expected to put forward my thoughts and ideas. Sometimes I was expected to work with sparse information and create something out of it. Feedback was given to me in the form of suggestions, alternative ways of doing and thinking. I soon found I was able to channel my thoughts differently to before. I found myself evaluating the "accepted", and, in some instances, "replacing it totally by a more considered view. This has stayed with me since, and now cuts across a number of directions of my work.

The most difficult part of learning is the demands it makes on one to change existing ways of behaving. The "known" is comfortable, regardless of its faults. The unknown requires effort, it brings both mental and emotional pressure to bear and is uncomfortable, and, at times, even painful to cope with. The pressures are particularly prominent in a working environment where output has to be maintained whilst learning; in addition, shortfalls could be interpreted as being inadequacies, which, in themselves, add to the pressure of wanting to do well.

An explanation of the method used within the Department would have been useful at the beginning. I feel this would have helped my understanding in the early days and perhaps helped me to respond easier. On the other hand, such an explanation may undermine the effectiveness of the approach, in that whether or not the person "sees" the method is, in itself, a test of their awareness."

Why is your increase of awareness of learning so significant?

"It is clearly evident to me that to improve capability/performance, it is first necessary to become aware of one's current performance so as to see where improvement can be made. I feel more alert to situations when I am learning and these I attempt to tune into to optimise on their effect."

What are the stages of learning?

"Taking in data, so as to develop a basic understanding of whatever is under discussion and obtain a general grounding.

Assimilation and making connections between points and going over the previous stage to elicit connections also. This is trying to elaborate the principles more and determine the reasoning behind them.

Assimilation, connections between points and relationship to things I already know and perhaps the creation of memory aids to connect key points to memory and interpret in the context of previous knowledge.

The speed with which I go through each of these depends on the degree of difficulty I experience with the subject and its similarity to previous experiences. First, I am able to recognise if I am struggling. I then, attempt to isolate the difficulty and establish its cause. I have often found this to be: no natural interest in the subject - nothing excites me about it to want to learn about it - "boredom with it; I do not value the subject sufficiently in terms of what it demands of me to learn about it - motivation is low, concentration is lacking; no common ground with the subject, ie beyond any of my previous experiences - I need to work through all of these things and establish a new framework for myself. In doing this, I am reasoning with incoming data in terms of checking out its credibility and logically trying to make sense of it. If it does not "add up" then I go back and try again and call up assistance if required. I may persevere for sometime depending on the pleasure - sense of achievement that I get out the learning - and pleasure can be simply to prove to myself that I can understand it - that it will not beat me. This is a sense of determination and belief that if I continue, eventually it will all fall into place.

The next stage usually comes almost by itself. This is when the "penny drops" (insight materialises). The whole thing suddenly makes sense. Often only a small thing has sparked this off. I then get a feeling of leaping forward, and revived enthusiasm to carry on. On the occasion that this has occurred I have tried to retrace my steps to see if I can identify why I did not see the point before. I have often found something like the use of one word, or the fact that I failed to recognise the significance of a certain point earlier, to have thrown me off-track. Doing this type of analysis I find helps reduce repeating the same type of mistake with the resource by making the mind keener to the style and idiosyncracies of the person or machine with which I am interacting. This stage motivates me to go on to the next and strengthens my belief in overcoming any difficulties that arise."

What do you mean by process?

"This is the term that I have given to the thinking that I do alongside learning. It is a conscious reflection and recognition of those parts of me that are involved and an attempt to identify my feelings throughout. It is akin to "talking" to oneself - the spurring, motivating, admonishing and disciplining of oneself to proceed. As more skills are acquired so greater horizons can be reached for, but at any one time the individual is prevented from stretching himself too far by the limit of his knowledge at that point, ie as competence increases so limitations are reduced."

How do you describe your preferences?

"I find I can learn from virtually any resource, but once I have a framework of the subject and its boundaries, I find it quicker to learn from talking informally with others and reading books. This is particularly so with technical subjects. I find books give me the flexibility and pace that I need to learn facts thoroughly. The opportunity to talk these over with specialists helps me to apply and relate my knowledge to everyday situations. For the more "interactive subjects, ie behavioural, people-based, then I find it useful to supplement theories learned from books through experience where feedback can be given. I find courses particularly helpful in this respect and discussions with yourself.

What do you do when you tackle new material?

I generally enjoy learning new things - I get a sense of freedom, optimism out of new experiences. In tackling new material, I feel it is important to have a positive outlook towards being able to understand it and I often look forward to getting started. The stages I follow are as described above. At the first stage, I do not expect too much of myself, ie I do not expect to understand every point so long as I have gained a rough understanding of what it is all about. (This varies depending on the "newness" of the subject and its complexity.) Once the initial foundation has been laid then I would automatically increase my expectations to being able to understand and make connections immediately. I would also be interacting with the media more in terms of adding my opinions, discussing certain points, arguing and hypothesising various issues and generally adding in my thoughts to elaborate and broaden my perspective of the subject.

What is now different about "difficulties"?

The way I consider difficulties is different from before. I spend longer in determining the real difficulty and in probing out its cause. Often, the problem is a symptom of something else and by rooting out its cause, I hopefully, can avoid it reoccurring, or alternatively, at least have a better understanding of why. For example, some types of reading material I have found hard going. I have identified this problem as lack of familiarity with the style and choice of words, caused by a limited exposure to styles of writing generally and a need to expand my command of vocabulary. This has been incorporated into my development plan. The development of diagnostic skills I feel has helped me to learn by improving my ability to remove obstacles for myself. These I have learned initially from yourself in seeing how you go about breaking down information. Of late, I have increased my understanding of this area as part of the development of my managerial skills generally and my personal development plan. The discussions with yourself in the context of SOL and my career aspirations have also confirmed the importance of these skills."

And what changes have occurred in you?

"The changes I have noticed in myself are: (i) an extension of my ability to exploit learning opportunities when they arise; (ii) an increase in my thinking skills generally, but specifically in clarifying purposes, analysing situations, diagnosing problems, thinking at different levels; (iii) an increase in my confidence in my own ability and potential to improve; (iv) an increase of my skills to manage my own learning and development; a greater knowledge of how I learn; the significance and influence that others, events, experience, can have and my responsibility for their developments."

Does your earlier reference to "conscious of my actions"

and "evaluate my performance" relate to all kinds of

learning action and learning performance?

"Yes - all kinds. I have extended the principles of SOL to look at all aspects where improvement might be made, ie my work and relationships with others generally.

Can you describe how you now evaluate?

"To evaluate I try to relive the event and pick out those things that went well; those that could have been better; what I learned from the experience and my feelings about it; those areas that I need to learn more about/develop or handle differently next time. I look closely at each of these to see why they went the way they did and to identify any influencing factors or deviations from the intended. I will then make a point of following up on what I learn in terms of repeating it, if shown to be useful, or changing my approach, reading more about it, asking others etc, for use next time."

What do you think has made you more conscious of your

actions?

"Primarily, I feel this has been yourself in pointing things out to me and in asking probing questions to get me to explore my thinking. I have now taken this process over for myself to clarify things. As for aids to this I make mental notes of general points to avoid repeating and about areas to give more attention to the next time a similar situation arises. I also update my personal development plan if appropriate by adding in any areas that I need to improve competence in or wish to learn more about. Every two to three months I check over these to ensure none are being forgotten and to assess the progress I am making. I also add in references I have collected and make personal notes of key points to remember."

You have referred to being "more critical".

Can you expand on this, and illustrate what has

promoted this?

"I am less accepting of my current performance and strive to improve the standards I reach. In so doing my model

"changes and inevitably becomes more sophisticated because of increased competence and the higher expectations I then set for myself. This is an ongoing refinement between current model → expectations → achievement → revised model (now becomes current model) and so on.

I have always tended to be critical of my work, sometimes, I fear, to the extent of doing myself a disservice. It is important to me that what I produce is done to the best of my ability (at the time) - I cannot easily accept "half-measures". In working with others then one makes comparisons between standards and adjusts accordingly. The standards set by yourself and expectations of individuals (as I have said on previous occasions) are higher than any I have come into contact with within the bank. This, I feel, is to my good fortune as it has meant that I have had to stretch myself that much more and as a result have had to learn to cope with increased pressures. This experience I feel will stand me in good stead for coping with the demands of a more senior management position later. At times the continuous scrutiny of work by myself and continuous reappraisal of standards has undermined temporarily my confidence in areas that I previously felt reasonably sound in. I have felt anxious and frustrated that my efforts did not seem to be improving the quality of my work. Sometimes it seemed that I was going backwards. I have now learned to recognise these feelings building up and seek out ways of overcoming them by learning to relax more. I recognise that by nature I am an active person and always on the "go". Sometimes it is more helpful to stop and leave whatever it is and return to it later. I find this break helps to reduce the anxiety, clears my mind and often produces new ideas which I would never have thought of if I had attempted to continue."

As to feedback, can you give me some examples of the content of feedback, and describe how it was given to you, and how you reacted to it?

"I have received feedback from yourself which has focussed very much on specific events and actions taken. It has been stating the facts and not evaluative in the sense of judging right or wrong; comprised normally of exploratory questions such as "why did you ....?" "Did you consider doing it ....?" etc. Almost always it is given close to the event and if not an explanation offered as to why the delay in bringing it up (if a delay has occurred). It is always given in private and not emotionally fired. I have come to see this as a reflective technique aimed at getting me to think about the event and discuss specific courses of action as a means of rousing my awareness of certain issues, ways, skills, etc. Initially, my reaction was one of surprise and to a certain extent uncomfortableness at having to analyse my thoughts so deeply. It was something I had not been expected to do before. At times I have felt "deflated and annoyed with myself for not having done better. I became more determined to improve my efforts by paying attention to the areas mentioned. I have found this method of giving feedback to be generally non-threatening at a personal level, objective and clear in terms of where improvement can



be made. In contrast, feedback received previously (prior to this Department) such as it was, tended to be vague and very subjective. I was often left uncertain as to what it was about; on occasions, did not agree with the other person's assessment of the situation; and felt sometimes it was given in an area which I had no authority or power to control.

Where did your feelings of "frustration" and "rejection" come from?

"These feelings came from my disappointment with myself. They were a mixture of wanting to succeed and hopelessness in seeing one's efforts miss their mark; a recognition of the need to raise oneself to an even better performance and the inner struggle, feelings of inadequacy, inability to do it."

Taking into account such references as: "manager... of their own destiny", "the learner determines the outcome...."; can you illustrate how your view of learning and learner role have changed?

"My experience in the Department has made me aware of the significance of learning towards increasing the quality of life and the responsibility it places on the learner who wants to take full advantage of every opportunity. I am being somewhat philosophical here to express my belief in learning as a fundamental of being alive. An individual who has limited knowledge and experience, works within its confines and gets value of life within that range. The more one knows, things one tries, experiences one has, the more fulfilled, awakened one is to things around one and the choices open to one."

I want you now to refer to the difficulties you had when you first joined the Department - to do with not being "used to the way things were being managed" - and to explain your reference to "no-one" directing you.

"The section does refer to yourself. I have used the word "no-one", as in colloquialism, to illustrate that you were not directing me in the way I had come to expect of my superiors, and to this extent I felt "all at sea". I had certain expectations of a superior (whether I was aware of these at the time it is difficult to say) and these were not being met. The links between managing and development as a learner are now more evident - partly because of the time that has elapsed and partly as a result of my development as a learner and an increase in my awareness of things happening around and to me. With each piece of feedback, primarily given by yourself, I have come to see a method of helping one to grow which enabled me to: (i) make my own decisions and not have them made for me; (ii) learn by my mistakes and be aware of these; (iii) work with my ability

and to increase and develop my potential to the full; (iv) become autonomous and self-sufficient as a learner as a means of taking charge of my future development for myself.

The main conclusion I have drawn from the experience is that people learn more effectively from experiences they encounter than from someone telling them but that this is dependent on the individual's awareness of the experience and his/her ability to reflect and willingness to learn from it. I also feel it is crucial to be given feedback throughout the process until such time as the individual is able to analyse and provide this for themselves."

In referring to "the most difficult part of learning" as being "to change past behaviours", you mention the unknown leading to "mental and emotional pressures", to being "uncomfortable", and "painful"; and I wondered what you did to deal with these and also the part others played in helping you deal with them?

"By "mental" pressure I mean trying to stretch the mind to greater limits - the perseverance and effort required mentally to break new ground and create a more comprehensive model. This is demanding and physically tiring. It feels unstable and creates doubts about what was believed before. A process of challenging is going on to the extent of removing everything (almost) that was held and valued before and rebuilding afresh. "Emotionally", I found it a difficult phase and to a certain extent distressing. I felt lacking in ability and went from peaks to troughs of despair. It can be stressful at times and also exhilarating when a break-through is made.

"Uncomfortable" - in that the experience was not always pleasant because of the pressure it caused mentally and emotionally. Also the recognition of the need to sacrifice things one enjoyed doing to give time to and attention to the development of abilities. "Painful" - metaphorically speaking, in that it is a casting away of the old, the known, the comfortable and a replenishing with the new, the untested perhaps, and a recognition of one's inadequacies of before. It can also be a struggle in that it is not always easy to push oneself that bit more, to muster up the enthusiasm to try again.

To cope, it is first necessary to acknowledge having the feelings and then to see why, and whether anything can be done to relieve them. I tended to look at how I was going about the learning, the time I gave to it and whether any choices were available in this, in terms of time of day, how long, etc, and also introducing periods of relaxation to break away completely. I found the reassurance I got from yourself very encouraging and helpful in enabling me to maintain my progress. The guidance in pointing out to me that perhaps I was trying to move too quickly to a finished result, ie in producing finished documents, was particularly useful in helping me see a number of stages in between and

breaking down the development of my abilities into manageable "chunks". I felt this support and the recognition when progress was made helped me cope with the difficulties of a new experience."

I would very much appreciate it, if you could explore your feelings (at the time) during assessments (by you) of such as need for progress, learning whilst doing, wondering if you will be assessed as inadequate, wanting to do well and how you coped with this, and especially if you consciously used ideas, techniques, etc, that worked well for you during these periods? (What I am getting at here is that perhaps the desire to do well, to be seen to be coping, to be making progress, "gets in the way" of efforts to help people learn how to learn)

"My feelings were often mixed. I wanted to do well - this was always with me as a keen driving force. It mattered that I did a good job, in my own terms. If it fell short of what was required, then I could accept this, providing I knew I had done my best. I was conscious of stretching myself, on some occasions, and whilst I sometimes had misgiving about the end-result I often could see I was moving forward and this helped spur me on. Progress is a strong motivational force and so long as I could see some improvement, no matter how slight, it gave me the confidence and determination to persevere. If I became despondent about the progress I was making, I would (and still do) try to think back to a similar experience and see the end-result there - this generally helped me to cope with any anxieties. I also tried to rationalise any feelings I may have had in terms of what I could do to learn to cope better and whether it was reasonable to have the feelings. I have found this approach very useful in getting to grips with difficulties when learning and revealing in learning more about myself. Again, it is something I have learned to do."

And how would you evaluate the experience of the last three years in relation to its effectiveness as a means of enhancing your skill as a learner?

"I would evaluate the experience as beneficial and very productive in breaking the mould, conditioning, to which I had become accustomed. I now feel: much freer, less constrained by traditional expectations and more able to comment objectively when I do not do, or choose to follow, the normal pattern of things; I feel more confidence in myself and feel stronger in putting my own thoughts across. I also have found a greater affinity with the feelings of others and more able to provide support for their anxieties and difficulties without seeming superior. The only changes

I would suggest are: an explanation that the means of learning is experiential and, in that respect, it may be stressful whilst awareness is being awakened and moulds are being broken; some description perhaps of the phases of the awakening process - to relate to as supports in going through the cycle. Having said this, I recognise that words may not convey the true picture of the process, and it is only by experiencing an experiential learning event that one can fully appreciate its significance and the traumas attached to it via this process, path it follows."

L's final view about learning and how she had changed as a learner was probably the most comprehensive. She had had prior experience of training, had worked very closely with the Head of Department, and, particularly, had been involved with the learning to learn experiment with young managers. Her heightened awareness of her learning process is detailed, which is all the more significant because she discloses that previously she had not "considered it seriously in any depth". Fundamentally, she acknowledges the movement away from a heavy reliance on teaching to realising that the important process is learning. Her response is a rich and complex one, indicating a comprehensive grasping of the ideology offered to her. As with all of the revelations reported here, she especially gives emphasis to the fact that, prior to being introduced to self-organised learning, she was not aware of what she was doing as a learner and, indeed, unconcerned about the purpose of actions taken. L was particularly sensitive to feedback in her development of performance and in acquiring greater competence as a learner. By virtue of this, she realised the importance of being able to be the provider of one's own feedback, if self-organisation is to have any meaning at all. L's response to the opportunity to describe herself as a learner was fully taken; a lively, invigorated exposition was given, seemingly symptomatic of

the joy of the revelation to herself about her learning process that experience in the Department had given. One gets the impression that the effect of it will be life-long for her.

#### 9.2.6 Conclusions

A summary was given in Chapter 3 of the movement to more effective teacher-learner dialogue. Particularly, a set of dimensions were given to indicate the changes in emphasis that are needed if organised, formal, classroom-based learning is to be successful. These dimensions are relevant here. They stress personal meaning, experience as well as behaviour, the primacy of the learner within processes of planning, deciding and experimenting in pursuit of competence with its inevitable implications for a changed role of the teacher. Taking these as a template for gauging the changes observed leads to the conclusion that the experiment was a resounding success. Every participant responded positively and vigorously, suggesting the possibility of widespread appeal of learning environments and self-organisation.

How each individual responded varied considerably, but despite these differences, each member of staff (in their own terms) felt more able to learn. The reports make their own statements which do not allow of summary here; they are moving and deeply meaningful to each person concerned. The most comprehensive, rigorous statements came from those subordinates who reported directly to the Head of Department. It is clear from what they record that they experienced significant changes in the way they viewed

themselves and learning. The reports of L and G suggest a life-long commitment to altered ways of learning and are a vivid testimony of the power of the environment they experienced.

Creating such a learning environment, and sustaining it over a substantial period, involved a considerable commitment of time, skill and energy of all concerned. One aspect of this demand on the leader of the group is examined in the next section. The intensity of the influence of that environment would seem to wane in proportion to the distance from the originator and prime-mover within that environment. Subordinates distant from the Head of Department (in the managerial sense) experienced less richly differentiated changes in learning skill. The concepts and practice of learning to learn are abstract and somewhat intangible. Time to offer ideas and opportunities to nurture their reception is thus an essential ingredient in this learning strategy. This spectrum of varying degrees of response also underlines the necessity of a facilitator if progress towards self-organisation is to be made.

Notwithstanding variety of response, one thing is common to all the participants. Whatever is reported as an effect of the experience of the learning environment, however insignificant it may seem to a third-party, carries great power and importance for the person concerned. There is a fervour, in some cases almost a passion within the reports. What was gained from the experience was more than merely the acquisition of a technique, or a changed understanding about a particular topic. The changes were intensely significant, a change in the very being of the person concerned. Two consequences arise from this

observation. Firstly, such changes cannot be quantified or measured according to widely shared frames of reference. "Cause and effect" may be a useful way of beginning to think about how these phenomena might be evaluated, but, ultimately, the concept becomes irrelevant, except as a means of crudely defining a relationship of intensions and outcomes. Secondly, the utility of the practice of learning to learn is not restricted to the world of work. The relationships experienced in the Education and Training Department were such as to influence permanently the way of thinking and feeling of the participant with the possibility of far-reaching implications in some cases. The potential of such self-redefining is of great importance and further research is needed to clarify as precisely as possible what is involved. This is not to suggest that the workplace should be the arena for exploring the therapeutic implications of the above observation. Rather the workplace should give more attention to the processes of growth, enhancement, elaboration and elucidation of human functioning, than it gives to processes of control, regimentation, regulation and prescription of human behaviour.

The power of the learning environment was evidenced by the reports conveying a sense of usefulness, of practical advantage, being gained from it. All of the respondents illustrated the empowering potential of the learning environment. Decidedly there is a revelation of increased confidence. The participants present a newly-found conviction that they can achieve the purposes they set themselves. This taking charge of oneself is an important aspect of self-organisation and a pre-requisite of self-

fulfillment. Resignation and acceptance of failure have been banished by the participants. Purpose-setting is confident, prominent in their thinking and analytically based. The reports exude the adoption of self-help almost as a creed. The learning environment stimulated the respondents about ideas and there was increased use of written materials, as sources of inspiration and for development of training practice. The role of feelings in personal decision-making is recognised clearly, accepted and dealt with constructively.

Nevertheless, there is also a dysfunctional, potentially disabling, aspect of the learning environment, indicated particularly by one respondent. This has to do with the uncertainty and anxiety caused by offering an alien approach to managing. Within this there was no mention (directly, explicitly) of the use of a "method" to achieve specific objectives describing an anticipated mode of response of subordinates to situations. Developing insight about the method of interaction between manager and subordinates was regarded as an essential component to the development of learning competence. But this meant a difficult transition period for the subordinates. They were taking up new jobs, a stranger (relatively) to banking was to direct them, achievement expectations of others were high and, in addition, they had to cope with a way of being managed that, initially, they found perplexing. They were moving from a learner status that can only be described as primitive. Prior to the experiment, learning was viewed by them as a mechanical process, restricted in application to knowledge acquisition for the purpose of passing examinations. From this restricted view of learning they



were being pushed into acquiring a rich and sophisticated comprehension of its potential and practice. It is not surprising that it was stressful and this aspect is worthy of further study.

What is also of significance in relation to the experiencing of stress is that it occurred in an education and training enterprise. This straightaway suggests two possibilities. Firstly, that more was achieved by virtue of the "built-in" interest in the learning process than would be the case otherwise. Secondly, in non-training functions, perhaps the stress would be worse? Both of these factors need careful study. There is also the need to consider the effect of the culture of the organisation. Was the unease experienced by individuals primarily to do with their personality, or was it explained more by the contrast they experienced between the culture of the Education and Training Department and that of the rest of the Bank? An indicator of the way forward may be found in L's views. She subscribes, albeit inadvertently, to the basic tenets of action learning, namely, that learning from experience is the key to qualitative changes in psychological processes, especially when self-esteem is risked. But also adds that this is so, only when people are sensitised to the possibilities and processes of learning from experience. In view of the fact that all participants began with an impoverished view of learning, then great care is needed in the initial phases of interaction which takes account of the need to allow for a very basic starting-point, and to do so in a non-threatening way. These early stages of interaction with learners can have both positive and negative consequences and would benefit from further investigation.

### 9.3 Subordinates' leadership expectations

As the learning environment was gradually established, the Head of Department's model of leadership within that environment was increasingly observed and experienced directly by the staff. As they participated more fully in the learning enterprise, their expectations of the leader increased in accordance with their involvement in the Department's operations and in pursuit of greater learning competence. This study examined the leadership model internalised by subordinates as a direct result of their experience of the learning environment. Its objectives were to provide information about: (i) The demands by staff on the manager of the learning environment; and (ii) the extent of adoption and use by staff of the ideas on which the creation and maintenance of the learning environment are based.

Reference has already been made to the holding of regular staff meetings for educational purposes. At one of these, leadership was discussed in the context of Departmental management, and, particularly, with reference to the experience of subordinates when in direct contact with the Head of Department. This feedback about the Head of Department's impact on subordinates would be useful in this early, critical period in the establishment of the learning environment by indicating the staff's initial leadership expectations. It was decided that it would be easier for staff to comment in the absence of the Head of Department. Accordingly, G led the discussion, the results of which were recorded as follows.

### 9.3.1 An early discussion of leadership expectations

All the staff attended the meeting. The key points of discussion are given by a series of quotations which capture feelings/observations about the Head of Department shared by all, or most, of the staff. These are followed by interpretive comments from G.

"The atmosphere is informal and he encourages personal development, interests and abilities, but I feel confused sometimes when with him and find him difficult to understand, because he uses too many words and goes about the point in a roundabout way, in an effort to be clear, and clouds the issue sometimes."

"I feel sometimes that you have a clear picture in your mind of what you are explaining and can move from one section of the picture to the next until either getting to the central point or completing the whole. If the listener forgets a previously described section of the picture it can cause confusion. Something that I have found useful, that you have done when explaining things to me, is that you actually draw the picture as you talk, to illustrate relationships and components, etc."

"He can be uncomfortable to be with because he is cleverer than me. He appears completely capable (no achilles heel) and I am afraid of appearing foolish. You certainly need to prepare thoroughly before seeing him."

"Seems to link with the openness and confrontation section of Building Blocks Questionnaire, ie the fear of appearing foolish should be removed in order to encourage ideas, participation, etc. In this case, of course, there is no attempt to make people feel foolish, but the comparison of self with a highly efficient and capable boss seems to cause

self-consciousness and reticence, rather like the poor when in the company of the very rich or plain with the beautiful, etc.

"Overall I think we put up barriers and we have to work at removing them."

"There does not appear to be an easy solution to this delicate situation. I can only say that two things helped me: (i) Seeing my own ideas taken up by you gave me confidence; (ii) reviewing meetings with J soon broke down barriers - but there is no guarantee it would work with other people. The other point is : Is it a problem? It seems to be a healthy situation if a Head of Department can keep his staff concerned with high standards and valuable contributions, providing there is an outlet for ideas, etc, elsewhere (which leads me to mention that, not surprisingly, they do not feel that way with me)."

"He lectures to you and is difficult to interrupt, often saying : 'let me finish'."

"I have to agree that you do not respond to fairly strong cues to speak."

"He is fair, honest and does not hold grudges, not on a personal level."

During the first, few months of operation the Head of Department often took the roles of coach, mentor or instructor, because of the inexperience of the staff and the need to continue, on-the-job, their initial training. It was salutary, however, for him to realise that more care was needed to avoid these sessions being confusing and

uncomfortable for the staff. Nevertheless, there was encouragement, in the recognition of staff that they could do a great deal to ameliorate communication problems, to continue with the principles set for developing working relationships as an integral part of the learning environment.

### 9.3.2 Expectations of a Team Leader

This initial exercise was repeated about two years later. Again the Head of Department used a surrogate - G - for collecting the data. But the object this time was to obtain a collective description of the group's expectations of the leader.

The data were collected in two parts. Firstly, personal statements were prepared by G and L. They were regularly involved with the management of the Department. The Head of Department believed that each of them had formed a rich view of leadership and wanted to see how these compared with his ideas because of the important position they occupied in the communication of ideas throughout the Department. It was thus not only a data collection exercise, but also an important part of the continuing implementation of the learning environment.

Secondly, G briefed each of the remaining staff about presenting views to him in writing. This material was then elaborated in an interview with each respondent. These data were then assembled as a structured representation of their views. This method enabled a very detailed presentation of opinions to be made without anyone feeling uncomfortable and with maximum clarity of exposition.

### 9.3.2(a) Personal statement from G

"When considering the expectations I have of a team leader, two areas of thought emerge. One is telling me that there is a wide range of things that a leader should do, that have been dealt with in text books and are the more objective, "theoretical", result-of-empirical research aspects, which I acknowledge, and many of which I agree with. The other area is more to do with how I feel - the ideas that come to me spontaneously and which I, therefore, assume are more important to me personally. The two areas are not mutually exclusive. Things that are important to me are not original, they overlap with the ideas I have come across in textbooks; and I consider many of these ideas in textbooks to be important to team leader effectiveness, eg Henry Mintzberg's analysis; McGregor; Maslow; Coverdale; Tannenbaum; Hersey; even though they do not stand out in importance to me personally as a team member. Therefore, I have concentrated on the second area of thought, ie the subjective, spontaneous, personally important aspects, because I feel they are more meaningful to you in responding/relating to me. I should add that I have not evaluated or dwelt upon in any real depth (therefore I do not rule out variations/changes in importance, if I apply logical thought to them, and to ideas elsewhere) but the impression I have gained is that two major elements are independence and being able to contribute to major developments/decisions.

My feelings are, therefore, that a leader should : (i) look ahead, formulate long-term goals and identify influences on these goals from cues within the organisation; (ii) keep me informed of direction however tentative this might be; (iii) alter course quickly if circumstances change, ie does not stick rigidly to pre-set patterns; (iv) pay attention to my career, ie help me to decide what I want and formulate a strategy for achieving it; (v) provide opportunities for learning, eg by discussion and by guiding me into projects that extend my range of abilities and create new demands, challenges; (vi) come to the rescue if difficulty in coping is being experienced, ie sensitive to cries that difficulty is being experienced; (vii) give reasons for actions, proposals, requests and encourages the questioning of reasons and is prepared to take action as a result of team members proposals; (viii) be prepared to experiment and learn from mistakes; (ix) step back, pass work on that he may normally be expected to do and let me have a go, even though some risk may be involved in this; (x) allow me some freedom to think about things for myself, even though this may not be immediately productive; (xi) allow growth in a way that is unique to the individual and respects their personal identity, ie does not try to make everyone alike; (xii) pay attention to the team, ie not only be concerned with the relationship between boss-team member, but also the relationship between team member and team member so that these relationships can develop to bring out effectiveness and productivity; (xiii) put my job in context; (xiv) encourage specialisms which helps the individual feel unique and valued; (xv) be friendly; (xvi) involve me in decisions significant to the Department; (xvii) allow adequate preparation time for

projects; (xviii) be ambitious about what the Department and team members can achieve."

9.3.2 (b) Personal Statement from L.

"The leader should : (i) Promote a framework within which individual team members can work and develop within their job and as people; (ii) encourage initiative whilst maintaining a balance between this and control of operations; (iii) set examples for the team in terms of standards of work, behaviour, volume of output; (iv) keep informed those staff who need to know of certain developments from a planning viewpoint; (v) be open to ideas, suggestions and innovations from team members; (vi) act as a spokesperson for the Department in dealings with senior management, external and internal bodies; (vii) keep abreast of developments at senior management level, organisational level and in the financial sector generally; (viii) act in the best interests of the Department first and individuals in the Department next; (ix) keep senior management informed of the Department's progress and seek to influence the operations of the bank; (x) operate with integrity and fairness and be trustworthy, to keep his word; (xi) be flexible and adaptable to change as and when required by the Department's work and the demands of the organisation; (xii) be respected by peers and senior management for his expertise and specialist contributions; (xiii) be approachable on all matters; (xiv) be professionally competent and to keep up-to-date within developments within his area; (xv) oversee and control expenditure of the Department; (xvi) be aware of personal weaknesses and endeavour to overcome them; (xvii) provide emotional support as required to individual team members when undertaking work and to lesser extent on a personal level; (xviii) hold a positive outlook on life and people in general and to the Department's work as a whole; (xix) set objectives (short and long-term) and determine priorities for the Department and issue directives to the team; (xx) be organised and systematic within his own work routine; (xxi) initiate and support opportunities for team members to develop and progress with their careers.

9.3.2 (c) Collective statement from P, J, B, A  
and Ja

G briefed each member of this group and then collected written views from them. These data were then elaborated during an interview with each person. The collective view of the expectations they had of the team leader had five components: (i) Relating to people and events outside the

Department; (ii) coordinating activities; (iii) getting the tasks carried out; (iv) dealing with the person in accomplishing the tasks; (v) the desired personal characteristics of the leader; each of which are described below.

(i) Relationships

When relating to people and events outside the Department, the leader should : Be "tuned-in" to the organisation; give information to management to increase their awareness of learning; act as an ambassador of the team; provide an image of the Department most likely to assist in achieving objectives; have good relationships with other departments and outside organisations; avoid sacrificing ideals for popularity, but be flexible enough to accept less initially to gain some ground later; further his knowledge of external demands and events; not disown team member if a mistake occurs as a result of vague instructions; defend his staff against people outside of the Department by not assuming that they are responsible for repeated mistakes; defend staff when they are unable to reply to criticisms of them; retain responsibility for delegated work.

(ii) Coordination

When coordinating the activities of the team, the leader should : Give overall direction; be able to see a situation in total and put it into context to formulate objectives and make plans; make connections between areas of



work; give clear guidelines for areas of work leading to important decisions or results; plan and organise work when team members are to work jointly on projects; assess priorities and inform the team about these; seek opinions and information from team members when making decisions; collect and sift information to determine key areas needing action; be able to determine the reliability of information; always be aware of what is going on in the Department.

(iii) Task accomplishment

In getting work done, the leader should : Retain the right to make the final decision; delegate to get the work done; be clear about his expectations; explain carefully his requests to staff to take part in activities; give appropriate information to enable work to be carried out; discuss responsibilities with team members; encourage a free flow of ideas; allow team members to make some decisions; allow staff to get on with their work freely; vary the degree of supervision according to individual abilities; check regularly with individuals who may be unsure of expectations; consult with team members; take an interest in the work of each team member by knowing what each person is doing and checking frequently how he/she is getting on; give instructions clearly and check that they have been interpreted correctly; be available to discuss work problems.

(iv) Personal relationships

When dealing with the person for the purpose of

carrying out work, the leader should : Avoid being remote from subordinates whilst maintaining a certain distance (by ensuring that he does not try to be the same as team members); explain his style of leadership to prevent staff becoming confused; inform subordinates of what is expected of them; explain about the importance of areas of work (relative) so as not to overburden the subordinate at any, one time; delegate to develop the abilities of the individuals; encourage team members to develop themselves; give information in a reflective as opposed to directive way, to develop staff; display empathy, but not to attempt to remove or take over problems, rather make suggestions as to how they might be solved; give information to subordinates to stimulate their interest in work; provide appropriate encouragement and support to staff, especially during new or difficult work; trust and respect his staff; give praise for work done well; take an interest in you as a person to develop a sense of responsibility to each other (eg engaging in socialising and conversing in an informal manner); provide feedback about how each person is getting on; criticise constructively by indicating how improvements might be made; always explain if he is unhappy about a team member's performance.

(v) Personal characteristics

The leader should be the sort of person who : Has the best interests of the Department always in mind; has the best interests of staff always in mind ( from a career development point of view); is fair and honest when judging a person's performance; does not misuse confidential

information about people; does not act in underhand ways for personal gain; is accessible to his staff, approachable and friendly, without being too "matey".

### 9.3.3 Conclusions

The early definition of leadership emphasises personal, emotional aspects of working in a group, with people feeling their way into new jobs. There is an impression of limited confidence, particularly in the references to the Head of Department's intellectual capability. This perception of capability was closely associated with self-consciousness and an inward-preoccupation when considering the Head of Department's leadership behaviour. In contrast, the statements provided by G and L are balanced, mixing observations about processes designed to elicit ideas and high quality work with a concern for individuals. There is a reflection of the parameters of the learning environment so that the impression is created of the learning environment becoming self-sustaining by virtue of the leader's values being internalised by his immediate subordinates.

This sense of context, structure and personal processes being directed at productivity through personal involvement is continued in the description collected from the rest of the staff. There is less certainty, however, in the section dealing with the personal aspects of the definition. The staff most distant from the Head of the department had a less sure grasp of the processes and values being employed, resulting in a continued expression of anxiety, related to a need for recognition, reassurance and encouragement.

It would seem that whilst overall there was a firm establishment of ideas about the structural aspects of leadership, the emotional, individualised aspects were less adequately transferred to staff removed from the Head of the Department by two or more levels in the hierarchy.

Clearly, the attention given by the Head of Department to processes of human interaction, when setting up and nurturing the learning environment, inculcated a rich view of leadership. This behaviour was directed at creating independent (self-organised) performances in pursuit of common goals incorporating agreed standards of working. This perpetuated itself as a rationale, supported by all, which informed group behaviour with consequent demands upon the Head of Department to maintain his dual role of educator and manager.

The values expressed in the collective definition are not merely a reflection of those offered by the Head of Department; many others were added by the staff themselves. These aligned neatly with the parameters and values of the offered framework for creating the learning environment. The description of leadership offered by staff is comprehensive and reinforced the view that a balance between pursuit of results and dealing with people individually and with sensitivity is essential to achieving harmony between production, emotional satisfaction and the pursuit of the development of self-organisation.

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## CHAPTER 10

### COMMENTARY

The influences on the approach to the process of this research were set out in Chapter 4. Clearly, this has not been a piece of pure research, attempting to isolate variables, within a carefully defined set of hypotheses, the whole attempting to uncover universally applicable theories or principles about social phenomena. Nor has it been wholly applied in orientation, in the sense that it has not sought to develop practice out of a range of cases, in the way that, for example, Hendry (1985) did, when he studied the process of consulting in organisations. It is, in fact, a case study of an action-research based attempt to influence the quality of educational and training decision - making in a particular organisation. It is a detailed explication of an attempt to influence the directionality of thinking of selected groups of people, which comprised a coordinated exposition of selected points of views about learning in an organisational setting.

This coordinated view of organisational learning has dealt, essentially, with two themes. Firstly, the capacity of the individual for self-determination and the form that this takes when exercised. Secondly, the need to take into account the uniqueness and complexity of situations when individuals are being helped to learn to do that which the organisation expects of them. In so doing, the researcher has implied that a particular model of man is more fruitful than others for learning purposes and, moreover, that it is necessary to be quite clear about this if one is to be at all successful in influencing what people do at work.

Specifically, the research intention was the creation of a learning environment in the Bank such that human satisfaction and potential as well as organisational productivity were increased.

As to the purpose and organisation of this Chapter, the intention has been to review the work and findings of the research programme, indicate where things should have been done differently, offer a possible explanation for the failure of the management development proposals and to make some suggestions for further research. It is divided into four parts: (i) An overview of the work that has been carried out (by way of review of foregoing chapters and of introduction to what follows); (ii) the key points to emerge from the research (which do not repeat conclusions given earlier, but highlights those things seen to have utility elsewhere); (iii) a personal account of the failure to complete the management studies; (iv) suggestions for further research.

### 10.1 Overview of the work carried out

This has been more fully described in Chapter 1. The purpose here is to reacquaint the reader with the work by providing a brief outline of the content. The context for this research was the need to achieve cost-effective deployment of resources for learning. In working towards this objective a basic condition that has to be fulfilled was the establishment of a dialogue between trainers and management which focussed conversation on understanding learning in organisational settings. A series of studies

were carried out to facilitate these conversations which involved various sections of the Bank's management.

The first parts of the work were called "management studies", the initial phase of which were directed at establishing the basic agreements through which education and training work would be understood by management. These early studies are reported in Chapter 5. The research began with a study designed to undermine the way the Bank's management thought about learning. It did this by challenging the view that the most appropriate response to a perceived performance deficiency was the provision of a training course.

This was followed by an evaluation of the use of a series of courses at the TSB Staff College. It was felt that working towards a clarification of the responsibilities involved in using a training course was a natural development of the first study. Specifically, the evaluation was to be used to influence how District Managers thought about staff development. The object was to get them to subordinate formalised learning opportunities to a contingent view of performance improvement, in which the importance of the individual and the need to link learning with achievement of business results were paramount.

By this stage in the work, a more open climate was established, such that an experiment could be mounted with an alternative approach to learning at work. This study was a considerable departure from the Bank's previous experience of training methods and investigations. It brought together all the considerations dealt with by the previous two studies and its results presented a powerful argument for change of training conception and practice. It sought to

challenge further the reliance of managers on conventional training courses. It made the nature of the learning process more accessible and emphasised the contingent aspect of learning. It took the organisation of learning away from the classroom and paved the way for dealing explicitly with the individual's role in learning.

The alternative approach had prepared the way for a more detailed examination of the learning process. This was undertaken in a project to help young managers to learn how to learn. This firmly put the learner at the centre of considerations, and for the first time in the Bank, attention was directed at improving how people learn as opposed to increasing the amount of their learning. To this end, both a coherent theoretical framework and an intense learning experience were offered, the consequences of which were traced in a series of post-course interviews. This study completed the initial involvement with management.

In the studies referred to above, no attempt had been made to refute that the role of training was to provide management with what it wanted. In addition, there was an increased acceptance that part of training's role was to help management determine what it wanted. The preparatory studies had demonstrated convincingly the importance of the concept of job role. It had also been decided that the priority job for further investigation was that of the Branch Manager. Accordingly, proposals were made for : (i) A method for identifying the future role of branch managers; and (ii) a training system for helping people take up this role. These proposals and the results of the survey they instigated are reported in Chapter 6.



The recommendations about management development were directed at achieving a clearer definition of what branch managers were expected to accomplish. When presented they were supported by only a minority of the Bank's senior management. Most of the objectors felt that learning by experience was preferable to a carefully thought about system for helping people to learn. Whilst the Regional General Manager did not raise any serious objections, he declined to publically support the initiative. And so this phase of the work came to a halt. It remained to examine ways of overcoming this setback and two studies of the resistance to management development were carried out. They are reported in Chapter 7. They dealt with the learning preferences of the branch managers and the models of learning held by senior management. This examination of the resistance to management development concluded the management studies of the research programme.

In support of the work with the Bank's manager population, the Head of Education and Training Department experimented with his own style of managing and its implications for promoting self-organisation amongst his subordinates. This led to developing in detail a particular approach to working with subordinates to increase their learning competence. This approach is described in Chapter 8. The results of that involvement with subordinates are reported in Chapter 9. These cover : (i) The extent to which they understood the method of change that had been offered to them; (ii) the kinds of change they had experienced as learners; and (iii) the demands upon the leader of the group generated by such changes. This concluded the research programme. Whilst the work in the

Education and Training Department produced viable methods that could have been used elsewhere in the Bank, there was not the opportunity to promulgate them. The management studies were coming to an end and the demise of the bank was only a short time away.

## 10.2 Key points to emerge from the research

These are presented under two headings : The learning process; aspects of interacting with management.

### 10.2.1 The learning process

#### The need for a psychology of the individual case

All of the studies reported here were part of a comprehensive design. Each study was the product of intensive theoretical and practical preparation. Sometimes large numbers of people were involved. Always the needs of the organisation were the mainspring to planning manpower development. But throughout the work the importance and uniqueness of the individual was evident. This assertion became a testimony almost to the need for a psychology of the individual case as indicated by Chapman (1974) and Smail (1978). There was thus a need to consider each participant in their own terms, always avoiding the pitfalls of either a standardised approach to a person or an overconsideration of the complexities of the situation at the expense of the individual. What was important to one person was not so to another. Thus the means of making progress with personal development lay with detailed conversations about where the

person was, where he/she wanted to be, and what was important to him/her in closing that gap.

#### A method for developing self-organisation

The work with subordinates demonstrated the efficacy of the method used for stimulating self-organisation. This method was built upon the identification of key performance objectives for the group, the elaboration of basic managerial actions, and a structure and process of managing that enabled those values to be consistently and continuously expressed. The method worked best with those who worked closely with the Head of Department. The greatest impact of the method was when it was incorporated into normal working contact with staff. More junior staff, who were more distant from the Head of Department, by reference to lines of communication, were not always happy with the method. A refinement of the method would be to work deliberately to offset this sense of isolation that was sometimes experienced. The sense of isolation arose by virtue of an expectation that their involvement would be stimulated directly by the Head of Department, and not directly through his immediate subordinates. This raises an important question : To what extent can such emotional needs be met without unduly diluting the philosophy of self-organisation? And it is suggested that it is important to the future application of self-organised learning that it be answered.

## A way of overcoming resistance to training

Resistance to training came from many directions. There were those who claimed it was "too theoretical", and that learning by experience was best. Others felt that it was viable only if the trainer (teacher) was an expert. Generally, there was a reluctance by virtue of training being strongly associated with either having made a mistake or, for some other reason, being in need of remedial treatment. The alternative approach to training developed from Pendleton (1981), dispelled these arguments. It did so by proving that fears about its suitability were unfounded, particularly by showing that actual work performances could be filmed for training purposes without loss of professional, banking standards, and by enabling experienced, highly competent managers to find ways of improving their ability to conduct learning interviews, even to their own surprise. This was extremely important. Whilst training was associated with being deficient at one's job, it had no future. Once that could be put aside, the way was clear for establishing training as part of a pursuit of excellence which, ultimately, had implications for changing the way work was organised. Overcoming the view that training could be provided only by experts was particularly important, for two reasons. Firstly, because the Education and Training Department had limited banking expertise and its demonstrated ability to vicariously employ expertise removed an obstacle to further activities. Secondly, it undermined the reliance of the Bank's managers on courses being the only form of training, further opening

up the possibility of more varied opportunities for learning being taken.

### Some ideas for offering learning to learn

If learning is to be viable in organisations it must move towards a philosophy of self-organisation of learning. During the management studies several dimensions were elucidated as the means for identifying a sound base for learning at work. The preferred pole of these dimensions capture the essence of self-organisation, namely, a focus on learning, activity, incorporation, contingency, outcomes and complexity, and thus present a powerful argument in its favour. In offering learning to learn one is faced with a choice about how to do this. Whether to use a course or not; whether to incorporate it with the work being done or not. The results of this research suggest that an alternative to a course ought to be found and that it should be offered as part of normal work. If it can be presented only by using the medium of a course, then it is recommended that the method adopted in this research be used. This means carefully specifying objectives, preserving the integrity of the philosophy of self-organisation by faithfully subscribing to pre-determined criteria governing the conduct of the course presenter, and, finally, maintaining clarity of conception of the issues that must be dealt with whatever the structure and content adopted for the course. The choice of initial, target audience for learning how to learn is critical. In this research, it was a mistake to introduce it as part of a strategy to improved examination success rate. This was an example of being too

cautious. The Chartered Institute of Bankers' Diploma is an essential qualification for management. The Bank was very concerned about the rate of examination passes. It was thus an easy opportunity to introduce learning to learn in this way. But, unfortunately, it had the drawback of offering an association of learning to learn with the classroom, teaching and the young and inexperienced. It is likely that a more profitable involvement would have been with experienced, capable managers, as a follow-up to the experiment with an alternative approach to training.

### 10.2.2 Aspects of interacting with management

#### The need to secure management commitment

A variety of methods are available for the development of human resources. But it did not seem to matter which of these were chosen, provided, of course, the selected method was plausible and, therefore, deemed appropriate. What did matter was that it was necessary to develop conviction that action should be taken, in the way reported by Hayes (1983). This was recognised and dealt with effectively in the lending interviewing project. Unfortunately, this objective was not secured in the final stages of the series of management studies. Two things, therefore, should have been done differently. Firstly, the Head of Department reported directly to the General Manager and only occasionally had access to the Regional General Manager (the key figure in the Bank's management). This remoteness from the most senior manager should have been remedied. It was felt that this difficulty could be overcome by working through the

Bank's Personnel and Training Committee, but this was not so. In persevering with the Committee, there was also a failure to notice the absence of signs of commitment from the top, of the kind indicated by Silverfarb (1985), so that alternative courses of action were not generated. Secondly, the report of the management development proposals was not prepared quickly enough. It was also too wordy. There should have been at this stage less attention to thoroughness of reporting and more emphasis given to presentation of information simply and quickly.

#### Using learning to improve productivity

Employee performance is obviously subject to many influences, as Sutermeister (1969) has vividly described. But it was as if the use of training courses was perceived by senior managers as a relatively simple affair. They expected their staff to attend courses, learn things and then be more competent in their jobs. Manifestly, it was not such a straightforward matter. Securing productivity gains by the use of learning technology is more complicated than that. The involvement of the manager of the learner is a crucially important element in the process. Through him context for the training is created from which learning purposes are derived. In addition, obstacles are presented by both learners and their managers by virtue of their personal theories, definitions and beliefs about how learning should be organised, whether or not such-and-such could, indeed, be learned, or the likely utility of such-and-such a training method, etc. These were elicited from a wide range of conversations with managers in the Bank, but

particularly from its senior managers during a series of semi-structured interviews. These views strongly influenced individuals, predisposing them either favourably or unfavourably towards training initiatives. This confirms the view expressed by Stewart and Marshall (1982) that effective use of learning opportunities, especially training courses, depends ultimately on a clear understanding of these beliefs. As far as this research is concerned, it would have been improved if the learning beliefs of the senior managers had been confronted earlier and more energetically. The evaluation of courses at the Staff College did result in District Managers revising their understanding of their role in learning, but this progress was accepted, mistakenly, so that other insights gained from evaluation about the possibilities for improved managerial effectiveness were not pursued.

#### The importance of role definition

The management studies underlined the importance of role and also how difficult it is to establish its definition unambiguously. Senior managers, at the outset, assumed that it was unnecessary to clarify roles further. A great deal had already been written about what was expected of branch managers. They also relied heavily on the assertion that branch managers were mature, experienced people who did not need to be told again what they had to achieve. But it was otherwise. The Management Development Survey proved conclusively that there was confusion and uncertainty about role and that it was essential for productivity improvement as well as training design



purposes, to clear this up. The survey questionnaire identified discrete managing types which made it easier to make decisions about what manager roles were required in the future. The survey's results were particularly useful for training purposes. Whilst the questionnaire was directed at a job category, the results were not expressed in conventional terms emphasising responsibilities and tasks. They focussed instead on outcomes and set those in the midst of the relationships surrounding the branch manager.

#### The effectiveness of survey-based data feedback

Bowers (1973) surveyed organisational development techniques and found survey-based data feedback most efficacious. This research showed that gathering data from employees is a viable process. There was considerable support from those invited to participate in the investigations and people gave willingly of their time and ideas. The experiment with an alternative approach to learning was a particularly good example of how effective feedback can be. Senior management had firm beliefs about what was important to the Bank's customers which were successfully replaced as a result of evidence scientifically collected at the workplace. Feedback was also effective with small as well as large projects. The branch marketing survey was small-scale, but made a substantial contribution to opening up possibilities for further work, by developing shared understandings about the various contributions needed if performance improvement is to be obtained. The feedback process does not always run smoothly, however, and the investigator must understand fully that sometimes data can

be poorly received by some people whilst favourably received by others. The feedback process must be handled delicately to minimise dysfunctional effects. This was not done well in the case of the branch marketing survey where important gains in one sector were offset by hurt feelings in another, as a result of the report being interpreted as highly critical of the work of the Business Development Department. It is necessary, therefore to think very carefully about all the possible responses before activating the feedback cycle.

### 10.3 A possible explanation for the failure to satisfactorily conclude the management development initiative

Throughout this research there were a number of missed opportunities, notably during the management studies. The analysis of the learning beliefs of the Bank's senior managers, begun in Chapter 7 and extended here, describes these opportunities as well as revealing the basis of the resistance to the management development proposals. The analysis of the content of the conversations highlighted views about : (i) Aspects of organisational culture; (ii) how learning ought to be organised; (iii) the way people learn; from which three themes have been developed as a possible explanation of the failure of the project together with an indication of how things might have been done differently. The three themes described below are : (i) The Bank's management style and its effect on managers and staff; (ii) inertia in the organisation; (iii) the need for pragmatism in the devising of training interventions.

### 10.3.1 The Bank's management style and its effect on managers and staff

The Bank's structure was highly departmentalised. There was a lack of collaborative behaviour and seemingly, sometimes, an intention to be divisive. This showed itself, particularly, in management's failure to convey a sense of purpose to its staff. So in the sense of Kanter (1985) and Burns (1978), the foundation for creating meaning as a driving force for the organisation did not exist. Clearly, there was a failure to deal with the human factors of management. Managerial behaviour expressed a very pessimistic view of man which acted almost as a prescription for apathy. There was little enthusiasm for ideas about people. The culture can only be described as repressive, highly rule-governed and resistant to new thinking. This can be illustrated by the fact that some managers felt that to suggest improvement was tantamount to being critical of management. To press for change, therefore, was to risk adverse reaction; thus it could be argued that in these circumstances the training initiative was well mounted in that it did make some progress in challenging the status quo, and did so whilst maintaining good relationships. But particularly the absence of trusting people presented a grave problem. Trusting people played a key part in the management philosophy of the Head of Education and Training. On this was built a desire for performance improvement as the very basis of working. By this means is learning a vital ingredient in achieving high standards and substantial accomplishment. But it was in contrast to what happened elsewhere in the bank, where people were actively

discouraged from being innovative. The Bank's management strongly believed that people were only interested in money, and were sceptical, therefore, of seeking, with staff, to enhance performance through successive refinement of procedures. They doubted the wisdom of giving such an idea serious consideration. But this, nevertheless, was regarded as the correct starting point: Manager-subordinate relationships.

Throughout the Bank there was considerable managerial resignation, an acceptance of how things are, almost as if it was inevitable and unchangeable. In the past, many branch staff had been appointed when it was very difficult to attract good calibre candidates who, subsequently, had enjoyed promotion on seniority rather than merit. In these circumstances, little or no effort beyond compliance with procedures was required. This led to many currently resisting demands for increased efforts (as the need for more business increased). It was, therefore, not surprising that there was also a rejection of training's role as a means of helping them find improvements in performance. To do otherwise would have meant confronting their own vulnerability, their unease at examining their own shortcomings, as the beginning of increasing work standards. And senior management seemed resigned to this. They asked: "What could be done about it?" They were convinced, largely, that the response of branch managers was fixed, finite, and pre-ordained by past events. They seemed powerless to influence their own subordinates and could see little point in embracing the offered training ideology. It was "unrealistic" to them to expect any more from the branch manager. So attempting to change things was regarded by

them as futile. They saw themselves as being unable to bring about the changes in behaviour that the evolving business demanded, and so gave little recognition to the idea that they could profitably recruit training's services in this respect. It was a defeatist view. And in its failure to generate alternatives, perhaps one of intellectual and creative impoverishment.

Or was it that they were unwittingly caught in a vicious circle? Were they entrapped by the pygmalion effect described by Sterling Livingstone (1980). Their model of man led to actions the results of which were interpreted as reinforcing the expectations contained within their model. This cycle of activity was fuelled by a disinclination to reflect on their behaviour or to gather evidence to test hypotheses. This pattern, repeated over years, left very little sympathy for someone who came along and questioned it. They "knew" that human nature was actually as they experienced it. Kelly (1977) asked : "Where is the truth - in the past or the future?" And for them it was in the past, in the depths of their own experience and observations.

So what were the implications of management's motivational model? Responsiveness and behaviour change seemed to be predicated on financial incentives. Therefore, what use is training, other than to provide instruction when specific things have to be learned as a result of banking activity changing? Certainly, there was no link between training and promotion (that was taken care of by educational qualifications). Why should a manager bother with training for himself if there was no "pay-off"? There was always an interest in training for others to achieve

performance changes, when other attempts to solve the performance problem had failed (eg affect someone's attitude, help clear up a tendency to make mistakes, provide ideas about encouraging someone to greater efforts, etc).

And this model of man seems to point to a particular way of using training. A comment made by one interviewee illustrates the point : "Management has to choose now between either ignoring innovative ability in favour of enforcing compliance, or vice versa....and so far it's definitely been the former". Naturally, training was part of that strategy for management. The way for them of achieving productivity was to develop procedures (the design of work and deployment of resources) and then install training as part of the communication system for conveying and enforcing those procedures. Branch managers, in many cases, believed that their job was only as set down in the manuals of instructions. If they followed these fully, management would not be able to find fault with them. But, ironically, the more they relied upon that approach, the more dissatisfied management became.

The Bank's management displayed a paradox. Whilst enforcing strict compliance with procedures they spoke about the need for managers to use their initiative, be creative, occasionally bend the rules, be more aggressive in selling and business-getting and so on. And yet these senior managers were unaware that their behaviour prevented the appearance of the very things they desired. What was particularly surprising was that management were surprised when branch managers did not behave in accordance with their aspirations, eg by refusing to make decisions.

How does one explain the disinclination of the Bank's management to deal directly with this state of affairs? Were they unable to understand what was happening? Or if they did, were they afraid of what action, on their part, the way out of the dilemma implied. Perhaps this is the key area of study - the fears that management have about changes they would like to make in themselves? Perhaps they were too afraid to be bold with training? Or with changes in their conception of human beings? Or with ways of managing? Perhaps these things were just too risky to be embraced? Or was it that the Head of Education and Training was insufficiently imaginative in finding ways of helping senior managers develop these insights? Of course, a major obstacle to managerial change is the fear that it will be construed by others as being an admission of having been wrong. It would be too embarrassing if that happened. The Bank's management were largely in their 50's. How could they now make changes in the way they operated with people? It would be confusing, to say the least, if these changes were sudden and substantial. But, fundamentally, making a change in managerial behaviour is about being willing to learn and to expose uncertainty. Perhaps expressing a willingness to learn was for them tantamount to declaring themselves a failure. Had they not got it right so far? Otherwise, they argued, they would not have got to the positions they were in. They thus remained in their established mode, reinforcing and repeating what had gone before.

Finally, in this section, one is left with the most fundamental consideration of all : Where should training have its emphasis? Overwhelmingly, the interviews with

senior managers describe apathy and withdrawal. Various explanations are offered, but all are agreed that morale is at "rock-bottom". One interviewee asserts "there is a terrible inertia about this organisation that undermines a willingness to learn, and what education and training can do about that, I do not know....." The point seems to be that attempts at building up the training enterprise ought not to be grounded in the technology and practice of training, or about demonstrating how people can use new ideas, or giving assistance with solving problems, or even helping people with helping themselves to be more effective as a person. Training's attention ought to be given to what precursus interest in these - the mechanisms whereby energy might be released, attention redirected, and the sources of human creativity and endeavour tapped. The context for action, the infrastructure that elicits new meanings oriented towards effort, accomplishment and quality, these seem to be the things that are the essence of training intervention.

But what is the way of entering the very process whereby meanings are formed? Presumably the process is one of re-evaluating one's transactions with the environment, coupled with a re-interpretation of self and the new directions that that revision suggests. From this new life emerges - but what should be training's role in facilitating its birth, and how might it be installed if management is unmindful of it? This is beyond the scope of this research. But perhaps a greater realisation of this inter-dependence - between the release of energy and the techniques to direct its flow - should have emerged during this study? Perhaps too much emphasis was given to establishing "facts", developing the methodology, and providing opportunities for



developing new initiatives, and not enough developing new perspectives about generating a sense of involvement of all.

### 10.3.2 Inertia in the organisation

The first aspect of this was widespread apathy of staff. There is an emphatic assertion in the conversations that, generally speaking, branch managers too often seek to avoid responsibility and to refer decisions to their superiors whenever possible. This immediately presents a serious problem to the trainer, in that it automatically reduces training, in the eyes of apathetic staff, to remedy. It denies the possibility of a developmental role for training, because that involves caring about people, standards, performance and direction of effort. But apathy says: "Who cares?". Training as a remedial process is not something desired, but accepted as inevitable, almost as an "evil" that has to be tolerated. And this is so because training as remedy is associated with discomfort and, for experienced staff, with loss of face, which is acutely undesirable because of its association with mistakes.

The senior managers considered that their branch colleagues were reluctant to be entrepreneurial because they were afraid of making a mistake, which in the past had been consistently punished. This reluctance to take risks affected many. This naturally undermined a positive response to a training initiative because training (learning) means often stepping into the unknown, trying something without being too sure how it might turn out. All of which was risky, and it was safer not to be involved at all. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to influencing thinking

about training was the fear of taking a chance on someone, letting them have their head, in case problems arose. Some managers were capable of letting their staff pursue their talents and inclinations, but for most it was too risky, it was safer to "keep people down"; better, perhaps, to focus on the rules and prepare for the next inspection. Also, on a personal level, many branch managers were afraid of disclosing concerns to someone in authority; similarly, of losing the respect of their peers, if they revealed that they needed training. This was especially true of senior managers who were intensely reluctant to disclose any shortcomings.

But there was also another kind of fear, one that paralysed rational action and resisted logical argument or persuasion. Perhaps what most evocatively illustrates the kind of fear referred to was the comment made by one senior manager who refused to have his interview tape-recorded: "...it's not a mistrust of you (the researcher). It's because we mistrust the Administration so much, and because we are fearful as to how it (the tape recording) might be used, perhaps out of context, if it got into the wrong hands...". And no amount of assuring could convince that person that the tapes would remain only in the hands of the interviewer. Similarly, another senior manager referred to the undesirability of the Head of Education and Training being involved in senior manager training: "...pecking order is significant. At a senior level, people are more secretive about their relative positions, they see others as rivals. If a fellow Departmental Head was brought in to help with learning, they would see that person as someone

acquiring an importance greater than that to which he was entitled - he would be too close to the seat of power!"

Strangely, the proficiency of the Education and Training Department seemed to promote this negative response, particularly through the Head of Education and Training indirectly presenting a threat to senior managers views on managing. The high quality of the management of the Education and Training Department was freely acknowledged. It was closely associated with the high level of morale and motivation of its staff. The Head of Department's managerial credentials were thus established. But despite credibility on this dimension, to allow the Head of Department a role in helping senior managers become more effective at managing was, to them, inconceivable. It would have been an admission of deficiency and, therefore, emphatically counter-cultural. The fear of being associated with a "need for training" was too strong. Also the Head of Department could not be allowed (in the case of the District Managers) this role because it would have put him "above them", which to them was totally unacceptable. So training ideas were not resisted on merit, but rejected because they could not be assimilated into culturally determined definitions about what was appropriate to working relationships and status.

The idea of Education and Training Department's professionalism creating problems with senior managers extended to branch staff. Branch managers often resented the amount of knowledge a trainee cashier could acquire by undertaking the new Branch Staff Clerical Training Scheme. This scheme was alleged to be "too good". It was claimed that junior staff gained knowledge that they did not need,

despite the Scheme being designed after consultations with substantial cross-sections of the Bank's management. These branch managers seemed to be under attack, from two directions. Firstly, they did not possess sufficient knowledge to meet the demands of their current job. Secondly, the Training Scheme (in giving young cashiers appropriate knowledge for their job) took the trainees beyond what their managers (and sometimes the supervising staff, too) knew. Traditionally, status had been conferred by knowledge of banking. By reference to this maxim the branch manager ought to know more than the cashier. The branch manager's solution was not to re-examine this value, or to seek more knowledge for himself, but to seek to suppress access to knowledge by the cashier. This meant attacking the Education and Training Department, to somehow invalidate its training of cashiers. During this period the Education and Training Department gained more allies than foes in this contest. But in winning, the Department reinforced this kind of discomfort for many managers. A discomfort which some managers continued to alleviate by denying training as part of their role. It was an external threat and was disposed of for fear it undermined their authority.

Other forms of resistance or inertia were to do with what were believed to be limitations of the training process. A common assertion was that attitudes cannot be changed. Moreover, once people are set (it was often alleged) on a particular path, a way of viewing the world, they will not change, nor can they be changed. From which derives the idea that some things can be taught and other things not. That only a limited range of behaviour,

feelings and understandings are within the province of learning assisted by others. Outside of this realm, learning arises from individual action which is beyond the assistance of how managers typically defined training. Thus there is a "territory" for the trainer beyond which he must not stray, unless the original boundary-making definitions are broken down and reassembled. This position seems to arise from the view that training equals instruction. And what can be considered as instructable fixes the definition of what comes within the purview of training. Why a broader definition of training was not established, such that trainers could be involved in the alleged "non-instructable domain", was not resolved satisfactorily.

A possible explanation has to do with the managers contrasting the validity and power of learning by experience with the perceived limitations of the training course. The latter was deemed "theoretical" and by this was meant "artificial". It was not "real". It had no consequences for not being taken seriously. Also it could only deal with certain parts of human behaviour, those that the managers find easy to articulate, to abstract from the process they engage in everyday. Learning by experience, on the other hand, was "genuine". It provided examples, mistakes, and had to be taken seriously. And this process was beyond managerial articulation, removed from intellectual scrutiny. It was something that happened and was personally satisfying, dealing with those things of importance to the individual and his perception of his circumstances.

The trainers involvement in this area depends upon the learner accepting the notion of "process" and being willing to seek to identify it in his own actions, and from this

point personally demonstrating the utility of the process of reflecting upon "process". But this presented a serious obstacle which was not surmounted. To explain intellectually that there is such a thing as a process of human performance, and that awareness of it can be increased, seemed to be an impossibility.

But yet there was an opportunity, sadly missed, that could have been developed from the experiment with an alternative approach to learning. The essence of this project was a focus on process. By the force of its practicality it had been a considerable success, applauded by all, especially the participants on the pilot course. The work could have been quickly extended to include other groups of managers. If they had responded equally enthusiastically, and there was no reason to doubt that they would, a substantial uplift in interviewing skills and interest in learning could have developed. Around this, further changes might have ensued : In the role of the Education and Training Department; the deployment of resources for learning; and, not least important, in the way in which management thought about learning itself. But it was not to be. There was too great a desire to refine the approach to management development, to complete it theoretically, and to operating in an orderly, systematic manner. A more rough-and-tumble, ad hoc approach just might have been more productive.

This failure to make this managerial theory of learning (by experience) explicit, to examine its merits and shortcomings, to elaborate it by comparison with alternatives, to find ways of developing its power, explains why little progress was made in getting training accepted as a

legitimate part of the world of doing, of "practical" men, of that rationale or explanation of how things get done in the "real" world. In addition, the trainers were seen as lacking an important qualification for entering this world. The need for examples, within the framework of learning by experience, was very important, in fact an essential prerequisite. The trainers were seen to lack experience of banking (the Head of Department by being a non-banker, his staff by virtue of their youth). How, therefore, could they provide examples for the instruction of others? Because the example was only valuable if offered from personal experience.

So training moved beyond the schoolroom slowly because of a failure to raise managerial considerations about learning-teaching above the most basic level of "teacher as expert" as set out Burgoyne and Cunningham (1980). As one senior manager said : "If you had qualified as a banker, it would have made people feel that if they had a problem they might be able to get some help from you". They remained dependent on an expert offering solutions. To make training a legitimate part of the managerial enterprise seemed to call for an establishment of understandings about the nature of the process of human learning. But the need for the prescription of content was strong : "Someone who has done it knows. They are worth listening to. Managers will learn from those who have experienced what it is that has to be learned. They need detailed help. They want to know the mechanisms, what to say, how to say it, how to open a conversation...". This dependence on the presence, or at least the influence, of a teacher seemed to be the principal obstacle to progress in understanding process, and it was

not seriously dented. Even learning by example can be construed as having a teacher in disguise, or at least, one operating vicariously.

There was thus a complete reliance on content in their learning conversations. Whilst they talked about training having to be personalised, or individualised, they were really talking about the teacher finding efficient ways of imparting knowledge (content), of maintaining interest so that receptivity to tuition continued, of understanding the learner's circumstances so that relevance could be emphasised to maximise the transfer of information. There seemed to be a tacit denial of the capacity of the individual, even with guidance, for discovering truths about himself that would allow him to optimise his capacities for setting directions, using resources, fixing standards, and seeking help when needed. Added to which is the paradox pointed to by Revans (1982) when talking about action-learning, that the more one talks about these concepts the more it seems they lie beyond understanding. So there was a failure to capitalise fully on the realisation that the key to establishing a definition of education and training, broader than that with which the Head of Education and Training was first confronted, was in persuading the management that the release of human potential, fundamentally, depended upon a rich understanding of the learning process.

### 10.3.3 The need for pragmatism in the devising of training interventions

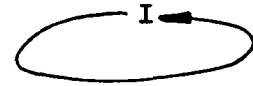
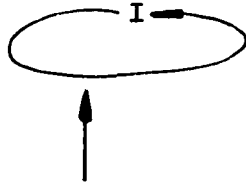
To open up a richer understanding of the learning



process, and to explore the implications and opportunities of that revised viewpoint, meant a need for versatility in obtaining training's involvement in the business of the Bank. And in promoting their involvement, it became clear, eventually, that success depended upon an accurate understanding in detail of the resistance offered to training ideas. Centrally, resistance was built around the idea that training equals courses, therefore any proposal from Education and Training Department was seen as an argument in favour of having more courses. There was a failure to identify this so that alternative approaches to management to dispel that notion were not made. On resisting further inroads of training into management activity, the reliance on the power of learning by experience was very strong. But their position was poorly articulated; conversely, the Head of Education and Training, in attacking reliance on experience, was unfortunately dealing with the wrong issue. By failing to see that as the offered arguments were demolished, about the value of experience as the ideal way of learning, withdrawal behind that concept was increased. Whilst the Head of Department took it for granted that learning by experience was a necessary component in any learning strategy, presumably the message was accidentally conveyed that it was unnecessary. The only replacement, in the manager's eyes, was the provision of courses. Diagrammatically, the situation was as shown over page.

Whilst making limited progress with promoting the need for increased learning competence, there was a proposal from some senior managers that the way forward was teaching managers to be trainers. Unfortunately, this opportunity

Intention in research:  
Uprate quality of  
learning activity so that  
individual efficiency  
increased and trial/error element  
removed.



Individual caught in  
a cycle of unreflected  
upon experience, caught  
in a dependence on mistakes  
and examples.

Perception of  
managers:  
Trainer's  
intention being  
to remove  
individual into  
programmed  
course-based  
learning.

was not taken. Such an intervention had the merit of flexibility and pragmatism, but was directly contrary to the philosophy of learning that was being pursued. This suggests a possible weakness in intervention style, because it appeared that insistence on attempting to offer a whole solution, as opposed to being prepared to progress in a piecemeal, opportunistic way, was counter-productive. Rather than accept the opportunity to help managers become "trainers", in the hope that it might lead to other forms of interaction, a preference for philosophical integrity pushed for the more significant opportunity of helping individuals develop their skill at learning. From this the implications for managerial culture might be confronted with the prospect that that offered for change regarding the relationship between learning and productivity. Some progress was made. Self-directed learning projects (not part of this research

however) were mounted in two districts of the Bank, but reorganisation came before they could be consolidated.

Another aspect of the resistance to training was that some managers viewed training as a process of the "treatment" kind. They wanted to give staff up to the Education and Training Department and have them "different" on return to them. For example, if not enough products were being sold it was always suggested that staff needed more training in selling skills. Challenging this assumption often led to being charged with being too "introspective", "analytical", "theoretical" or "academic". Carefully considered explanations and rigorous refutation of simple solutions seemed to be too threatening. However parochial, anecdotal, or derived from concrete example, sooner or later one's approach had to move to a more abstract, explanatory framework (whatever its origin or however imperfect) that enabled expenditure of time and effort to be justified. At this point, too often, well-rehearsed arguments appeared, reinforced by a tendency to a narrowness of view, that insisted on a return to a more superficial explanation. The Bank's managers were unadventurous in their handling of ideas. They were used to doing things the same way, the culture did not allow it to be otherwise.. They eschewed scientific method and intellectual enquiry. They preferred the concrete to the abstract, the superficial to the deep, the simple to the complex, the "practical" to the "theoretical". An understanding of this came too late for the development of varied interventions, and perhaps too much reliance was placed on rational argument and insufficient appeal made to the emotional dimensions of thinking.

The final aspect of not clearly understanding the resistance to ideas was to do with the level of resourcing of the new Education and Training Department. The view of education and training in the Bank, prior to the external appointment of the Head of Department, was that it was for :

(i) Helping people gain the Banking Diploma; and (ii) training new entrants. The Bank's staff had difficulty in understanding training once it moved beyond the tangible (techniques and procedures of banking) and upwards to include other than junior staff. Training was previously a low-status activity. But suddenly it had been uprated to equal status with all the other departments of the Bank - and without any explanation to the existing staff. It was natural, therefore, that they questioned this increased investment and the need for an external appointment (and thus the rejection of who seemed to be a satisfactory internal candidate). But the Head of Department was not aware of, nor did he recognise in the early stages, this hostility to an external appointment being made. Initially, a coolness in working relations was interpreted as objections to the appointment of a non-banker. It was believed that these objections could be surmounted by friendliness, camaraderie, a sense of esprit borne of working together. As to the feeling that an insider should have been promoted, it was felt that the professionalism of the newcomer would make apparent why that would have not been the best course of action. But these strategems failed to recognise that the origin of resistance to the new training venture was the rejection of the arguments in favour of the need to enlarge the education and training enterprise. It is likely that the critics of the expansion

of resources remained unconvinced of the wisdom of this course of action, despite the evident achievement of the new Department.

An important aspect of working with the Bank's management was the exploration of concepts underlying their action . An interesting example of this was an attempt to help them define managing itself. The conversations with the senior management team have shown that they were unsure of what they were trying to achieve, seemingly pushed along by the force of events. An exercise, in the training of District Managers in appraisal, designed to elucidate what they considered to be a viable system of managing, revealed that they were unable to distinguish a managing task from tasks a manager elected to carry out. The survey of branch management showed quite clearly that the management role was imperfectly established. Certainly, there was a need for change in management style if training was truly to be effective. But the difficulty was in how to confront that constructively.

Such a confrontation was not part of the brief. Management considered that it was the Education and Training Department's job to ensure that staff were equipped to do their jobs. But there was no realisation on the part of the management that "their jobs" were determined not only by how they were described in writing, but also by how senior management actually behaved and by the expectations they directly and indirectly expressed. So how could a change in management style be incorporated into the trainer's brief without raising (negatively) the need for it to be part of the trainer's brief. This dilemma, unfortunately, was not resolved - and perhaps because it was not really accepted by

the Head of Department as a viable task? It was dealt with indirectly, by feedback of survey data and involvement in training projects, by gentle, painstaking persuasion, rather than by frontal assault. But the forum for debate was never fully established. A "grand design" was attributed to the Head of Department, but yet it was never discussed, never brought out into the open. So the foundation for relocated, re-ordered concepts of education and training was never amended significantly. Consistently, management saw the Head of Department as simply an overseer of the provision of education and training services. But these services did not include changing management. Managing the Education and Training Department provided a variety of foci in management-trainer dialogue, but the real possibilities for influencing the way management thought and felt about its task were little. Perhaps, therefore, the attempt to redefine education and training was doomed to failure by virtue of this? Certainly, management were often surprised when attempts were made at confronting management about its behaviour.

But coping with the world means making sense of it. Roles adopted by the Head of Education and Training were, to most staff, most of the time, quite perplexing. Their model of training did not allow of an easy assimilation of new concepts. Their kind of trainer was a teacher! A teacher must be an expert. Expertise comes from experience of that to be taught. So the managers were puzzled indeed when they were consulted about training design : "Why ask us, it's you who should be telling us?". Is it possible to expect such wide adjustments in thinking to be made? Or is it simply a matter of technique on the part of the trainer?

Some progress, of course, was made, but yet still accompanied with a debilitating sense of powerlessness. How does one empower people in the circumstances of the Bank? The signs of progress were various : "The role of training is to get management to consider itself and decide its own style of doing things and the sort of contribution it wants from others..."; or: "The way to help people with their learning is to talk them through the "problem". One has to confront one's own ability. Are we good or not? Could we be better? You have then to get together and work out how to achieve the change required...."; or: "Training programmes can only be related to the workplace if their composition is compatible with the views of the management...". These views represent people progressive in their ideas about training. But yet it was not possible to use them as champions of educational ideas, to gain support from others and thereby create pockets of revolution. A way was not found to mobilise fully their support. Were the opportunities pursued with insufficient vigour? Were these managers reluctant to take on this role? Or was it tacitly agreed that, despite intellectually grasping what was required, there was an intuitive accepting of the futility of asserting those ideas? Perhaps too strongly the view was held that change was impossible without the removal of the "man at the top"?

This apparent helplessness of key figures in the management team also applied to the District managers. Additionally, they reported to a superior who was a reflective, philosophical, indecisive man who believed firmly in loyalty to his superior (and presumably expected the same of his subordinates) and regarded any act of

criticism or suggestion for improvement as disloyal. There was thus an in-built rigidity against change. This was reinforced by an absence of clarification of the role of the District Manager, and the uncertainty this produced was sometimes counter-productive to training initiatives. So the District Managers were caught between the insistence of management on stability and compliance and pressure from the Head of Education and Training for a more radical approach to people and improved performance. They were in doubt about what was expected of them. They were aware of being criticised for not "doing their job" properly. There was some suggestion that they might be replaced. They wanted to do well, and despite having unclear ideas about how to manage effectively, they rejected the idea that they needed to learn how to be District Managers.

A possibility for examining management methods did arise later, but unfortunately, other priorities forced it to one side. Some District Managers did come to consider that there was a benefit in getting small groups of branch managers together to look at specific problems. There were practical difficulties, time was short, and other commitments had to be met by branch managers (eg attending courses at the college about commercial lending). Perhaps if more of these self-help groups had occurred relationships might have developed such that managerial problems (including the place of training in the pursuit of increased productivity) might have been discussed more regularly. This would have allowed Education and Training Department to participate without being obtrusive, so that the "training view" would not have been perceived as being forced upon



them. But these "seminars" or "workshops" were not sustained and the opportunity was lost.

There was also the question as to how close the trainer should be to business decision - making ? In regard to which the Head of Education and Training failed to establish himself as a viable member of operational groups dealing with business. He was not perceived as being able to contribute to specific aspects of, say, business development, or property management. Perhaps gaining the Banking Diploma would have helped. In that way a greater involvement might have come with banking practice, from which opportunities could have been pursued for developing arguments about the role of human resource development in sustaining business results. The trainer, therefore, does need to play a strong part in the content of the business and not just in its processes, a point of view that was insufficiently accepted at the time. Too much emphasis was given to being a facilitator, somewhat detached from the actuality of business operations. Perhaps the researcher was too fearful of being drawn into detailed operational discussions for fear of losing sight of training objectives. It was anticipated that influence would be greater by standing back from operations. It was hoped that being an observer, dealing with processes, applying logic, collecting data and giving feedback, using their experiences and setting them in a theoretical framework, would allow the gaining of that acceptance needed for a full development of the training enterprise. Some ground was gained. The "door" was completely closed at first, but gradually it was opened. How far it would have been opened is unknown. There was such belief in the need for banking expertise: "If

you had been an experienced banker of 55, who had done it, then it might have been different...". But this is outside the scope of the research. It presents a research area in itself, as Hendry (1985) has shown in dealing with consulting models.

But is it better, in these kinds of circumstances, to accept the status quo? The negative, pessimistic views held by the Bank's management about people at work were so entrenched, supported by such extensive procedures, enforcements and punishments, that perhaps there was no alternative to a training course operation. This type of objectives-driven training operation is entirely in keeping with such a repressive culture. "If there are no courses, is it possible for people to learn?" they would ask. Perhaps all was in vain. Was the progress made, however insubstantial by the author's yardstick, all that could reasonably be expected? Perhaps it is foolish to believe that change in organisations of this kind is possible without some enlightenment at the top of the organisation, some optimism about human nature, and about possibilities for new ways of organising and managing.

#### 10.4 Suggestions for further research

Amongst the findings of this research programme is the identification of five subjects which are recommended for further investigation. They all concern ways in which people might interact with each other for the purpose of releasing potential - either from within an individual or out of a situation. These subjects are described below under the following headings : (i) Understanding managerial

beliefs about learning; (ii) finding alternative ways of offering learning to learn; (iii) seeking the right degree of self-organisation; (iv) making the right intervention decisions; (v) understanding performance and productivity.

#### 10.4.1 Understanding managerial beliefs about learning

In a series of semi-structured interviews senior managers expressed a variety of beliefs about learning and how best it can be facilitated in an organisation. It was quite clear that the "theory" represented by some of those beliefs constituted a major barrier to the development of organised attempts to help people learn to do that expected of them. This was especially so when views were expressed about the importance of learning by experience. It was considered that when learning by experience people were "faced with reality", when the learning activity "has to be taken seriously", because it is being "done for real". Learning by experience is regarded as powerful because it is then that mistakes occur and people learn best "when it hurts, when things go wrong". These, and other revelations were gleaned from conversations directed at finding the "best arrangements for training". Perhaps richer data would arise from studies more directly constituted. Also, the study started in this research was not completed. It is strongly recommended that this kind of work be repeated and extended, perhaps on a larger scale than that envisaged here and using different methods. For example, it is appealing to think in terms of a large-scale factor analytic study. This could test the permeability across British industry and commerce of such concepts as "learning by experience".

Alternatively, comparisons of views of managers in different sectors might be made. Certainly, the peculiarity and idiosyncrasy of personal learning paradigms need to be challenged and understood in depth if the designs of offered-opportunities for learning are to make any lasting sense to those invited to learn.

#### 10.4.2 Finding alternative ways of offering learning to learn

In this research, learning to learn opportunities were made available through the medium of the course. In relation to this a number of observations can be made tentatively. None of the participants experienced a major change in learning style. There appeared to be no serious breakdown of prior conceptions of learning and teaching. All participants experienced difficulty intellectually with the way the course was presented. The course affected feelings rather than thoughts about learning, and all the participants retained an impersonal model of human functioning, especially regarding motivation. From which three, fundamental questions arise. Firstly, are some people more suited temperamentally than others for embracing the philosophy of self-organisation? Secondly, is a short, non-residential course the most appropriate way for offering concepts about self-organisation? Thirdly, is the process of learning to learn better located within the learning of a task other than learning? These questions should be researched. Increasingly, people are engaging in some form of self-organised learning ("autonomous", "independent", "self-directed", "self-development", etc) the vast majority

of whom require help with achieving the necessary competence. In providing such help the challenge would seem to be the need to avoid the learner experiencing undue intellectual difficulty whilst at the same time preserving the integrity of the learning to learn paradigm.

#### 10.4.3 Seeking the right degree of self-organisation

The evidence of this research points to the conclusion that the culture of the Bank was such that there was little, or no, chance of self-organisation being successfully introduced. The question that naturally follows from this is : What are the norms and values within an organisation that spell success for a learning to learn initiative? Are certain cultures inimical to self-organisation? If there are, what changes in those cultures would be necessary, as a pre-requisite, before self-organisation could begin? Is self-organisation needed by all organisations or should there be a means of determining that need? Is self-organisation inappropriate to some organisations (regardless of whether or not there would be difficulty in its introduction)? Should self-organisation be applied only to some sectors of the work place as opposed to all employees? Is it possible to correlate types of need with varying degrees of intensity of self-organisation? These would seem to be questions that must be answered if a technology is to emerge for introducing self-organisation extensively.

#### 10.4.4 Making the right intervention decisions

At several points in this research, alternative

directions were available for the dialogue with management. It has been discussed earlier that, with hindsight, perhaps the wrong decision was made in some of these cases. If situations are considered as a set of demands, opportunities and obstacles, what assistance is available for helping with the adjudication of the possible responses to them, for a given set of intervention objectives? How does one determine when the mixture of caution, investigation, proposal and action is correct? More specifically, is there such a thing as an appropriate amount of theoretical exposition for a given managerial climate? It would seem, for internal consultants working without explicit terms of reference, that it would be most useful if guidelines could be produced for not only the formulation of intervention strategies, but also for decision-making during the implementation of those strategies.

#### 10.4.5 Understanding performance and productivity

As the research progressed it became increasingly clear that the work output from individuals and groups was the result of the interaction of such things as job design, resources and technology available, skills and efforts in their use, systems and procedures, etc. In relation to this complexity, management would sometimes consider that an increase in productivity would arise if training were provided, at other times dismissing training as inconsequential to decisions about performance improvement. No attempt was made in this research to develop a model for performance/productivity analysis which would show precisely what effect an increase in skill would have for a given

situation. But it was felt that such a model would have been extremely useful. A particular example can be taken from the lending interviewing study. Would it have been worthwhile to have extended the factor study of customer satisfaction with lending interviews so as to have developed a composite view of what gives satisfaction to customers at the branch level? The answer to which is that we can only properly answer this question if we know what part "service" (ie the collective presentation to customers that results in high levels of satisfaction) plays in developing a branch's business. The same reasoning applies if someone were to ask : Should we train our people to improve our service to our customers? It is therefore strongly recommended that a means of diagnosing the components, and their interrelationships, of productivity, capable of use in any sphere, be developed.

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## APPENDIX 1

### MARKETING SURVEY ; STRUCTURE OF INTERVIEWS

#### A : "SUPERVISING STAFF"

##### MARKETING POTENTIAL

1. Indicate the size of your branch by reference to funds held, number of accounts, loans and staff.
2. How are the funds distributed between accounts?
3. Do you consider the branch to be growing, declining or in a steady-state?
4. Do you have any queueing difficulties and what is the maximum rate at which customers enter the branch?
5. What areas of business are targeted and who set those targets?
6. How do you monitor the progress towards achievement of targets?
7. Ignoring inflation, what do you think is the ceiling for your branch's business?
8. What effect does competition have in this area?
9. Which are the most profitable of our services and products?
10. Why do you think people bank here?
11. What type of person banks here?
12. Describe your catchment area.
13. What outside contacts do you have?

##### MARKETING : POLICY, ORGANISATION AND CONCEPTS

1. What is the main function of a branch?
2. What is meant by "marketing", in the context of a branch? How did you arrive at this?

3. So, What marketing activities are available to the Bank and which of these are particularly helpful to the branch?
4. How have you organised your marketing here, including the role of the Trust Company Representative?
5. How do you feel about having a Representative in your branch?
6. Does having a Representative create any problems for you?
7. Are there any marketing activities that you would like to do, but do not? If so, what are they, and why do you not do them?
8. What Sort of Working relationship do you have with Business Development Department?
9. Have you been involved in any projects with them to increase sales?
10. Does the Bank's marketing policy help or hinder you?
11. Do the results of marketing work at Central Board help you?
12. What do you think the Bank is trying to achieve over the next three to five years, and how do you see the relationship of the current policy to these aims?
13. Do you see any dilemmas, conflicts or incompatibilities in our aims or methods of working?
14. What do you think are Bank's key objectives? (prompts : Increase in funds? Diversification of business? Extension of customer base? Increase in reserves? Increase in profits? Increase in profitability?)

#### MARKETING PERFORMANCE

1. How did you perform against last year's targets?
2. What was the explanation for that?
3. What are the implications of that explanation for what you are doing this year?

4. How do you monitor your marketing efforts for the effect that they have?
5. What do you think influences your performance? (prompts : Potential of the area? Appearance/location of the branch? Quality of service? The product range? Trust Company Representatives? Ability of the staff? Direction/help from management?)
6. How would you rank their importance?
7. What motivates you to make a marketing effort?
8. Could more be done to motivate you?
9. How do you motivate your staff?
10. How far are you prepared to go to make a sale, bearing in mind high interest rates elsewhere?

B : "CASHIERS"

1. How is marketing work organised in the branch?
2. What do you do?
3. What kind of selling opportunities arise for you?
4. Is it sometimes difficult for you to talk to customers when these selling opportunities arise?
5. When you are talking to customers, what difficulties do you have?
6. What is the most important factor in branch marketing? (prompts : Quality of service? Appearance or location of the branch? The product range? Ability of the staff to sell?).
7. How do you go about attracting new business?
8. How do you feel about selling?
9. Do you feel that you lack skill or knowledge at selling?
10. Could more help be given to you in doing your job?



11. What motivates you?
12. Are you satisfied with your performance at selling?
13. How do you know it is good enough?
14. Are there any ways in which you could improve at selling?
15. What changes in the branch's way of working would you make, if you were free to change things?
16. Would anyone notice if you did not sell vigorously?
17. What do you think is the potential here for increasing funds?  
Adding new accounts?
18. Do you have any doubts about what is expected of you in your marketing role?

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APPENDIX 2

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY ; QUESTIONNAIRE

A : INSTRUCTIONS

The Bank is interested in maintaining and, where possible, improving its standards of customer service, and we would like you to help us by completing the attached questionnaire. The Manager knows about the Survey and is happy about us collecting this information. He will not see your replies and how you answer will not effect your future dealings with the Bank.

The statements on the left of the questionnaire refer to the interview you have just had. To respond to each statement please put a circle around those words on the right which best show how you feel about the statement.

For example:

The Manager listened carefully to what I said.      Strongly Disagree      Slightly Disagree      Neutral      Slightly Agree      **Strongly Agree**

This would mean that you felt very much that the Manager did listen carefully. On the other hand if you felt very much that he did not listen carefully, then you would have to put a circle around either "Strongly disagree" or "Slightly disagree". If you were unsure you would have to put a circle around "Neutral".

PLEASE ANSWER IN RELATION TO THE INTERVIEW YOU HAVE JUST HAD.  
Respond to all the statements and circle only one on each scale. Remember there are no right or wrong answers - it is your opinion we would like. BE SURE TO READ THE STATEMENTS AND THE SCALES CAREFULLY AS SOMETIMES WE HAVE HAD TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF THE WORDS.

When you have finished seal the questionnaire in the envelope provided and hand it to one of the cashiers on your way out. They will see that it comes directly to me, and I assure you the information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you very much for your help.

M. Randall,  
Departmental Head  
Education and Training

B : STATEMENTS TO BE COMPLETED AFTER  
THE INTERVIEW

- |    |  |                   |                   |         |                |                |
|----|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | I did not mind having to make an appointment | Strongly Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 2. | The manager made me feel welcome             | Strongly Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neutral | Slightly Agree | Strongly Agree |

3.	The manager did not make me feel at ease	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
4.	The manager was friendly	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
5.	The manager was able to ask questions without causing offence	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
6.	The manager did not seem to understand my situation	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
7.	The manager was open with me	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
8.	The manager seemed keen to help me	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
9.	I would have preferred to fill in the forms myself	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
10.	I did not think all of the questions were relevant	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
11.	The manager was too formal	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
12.	The manager came across as the sort of person who is not easily fooled	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
13.	The manager seemed very honest	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
14.	The manager seemed to know what he was doing	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
15.	The manager was not easy to talk to	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
16.	The manager was someone I would trust	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
17.	The manager did not treat me with enough respect	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

18.	I did not like answering some of the questions	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
19.	I was able to say what I wanted to say	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
20.	The manager was fair with me	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
21.	The manager helped me to think clearly about what is involved in having a bank loan	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
22.	I did not mind the manager suggesting other banking services to me	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
23.	The manager explained things to me fully	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
24.	The manager was able to give me helpful advice	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
25.	There are still things I do not understand	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
26.	I was satisfied with the decision that was made	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
27.	I fully understand the arrangements for my loan	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
28.	I feel that if I got into difficulties with the repayments, I could come back and discuss it	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
29.	I felt I was given enough time in the interview	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
30.	Overall, how satisfied were you with the interview?	Extremely Dissatisfied	A little Dissatisfied		A little Satisfied	Very Satisfied

31. How could your interview have been better?

.....  
.....  
.....

32. What sex are you? \_\_\_\_\_

33. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOUR REQUEST FOR A LOAN WAS REFUSED, PLEASE ANSWER THESE LAST TWO QUESTIONS

34. When my request was turned down I was advised about other possibilities	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
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35. I now accept that a loan could not be given to me at the moment	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

### APPENDIX 3

#### LEARNING TO LEARN : STRUCTURE OF POST-COURSE INTERVIEWS

##### A : FIRST INTERVIEW

Explain purpose : Learning to learn has never been used before. Before extending it to others I want to be sure that it is worthwhile. Hence, assess in detail the effect of this approach. Focus of evaluation is the learner. What changes in learning skill take place? What benefits are gained? What helps or hinders the application of that learned on the course? How can we improve it next time?

The concerns of this interview are to : (i) Recap briefly on your reaction to the course so as to identify key items; (ii) assess what you have retained from the course and what you are doing with that; (iii) try to help you with the next step.

Method : (i) Overall to see you twice more for conversations similar to this and then just after the examination.

(ii) In this interview I will prompt you with a series of open and direct questions, and discuss issues as appropriate.

(iii) To tape record (if agreed) to supplement what I can note down - to serve as a check on accuracy of the record.

##### PART 1

Let us start with how you now describe your reaction to the course, what it now means to you as an event, and in terms of how it effects your thinking about, and approach to, learning. (The use of the following prompts depended upon the response of the interviewee) .

1. What was the course about?
2. What were its main themes?
3. What were the main components of the course?
4. In what order were they presented?
5. Which part of the course had most impact?
6. Which part do you recall most clearly?
7. Which part did you : Like best? Find easiest? Dislike?
8. How would you now describe : Learning; the self-organised learner; the whole learning task?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

##### PART II

Let us turn to what you are actually doing now, that can be related to attending the course.

1. Have you changed your learning contract?
2. In what way?
3. Why did you do that?
4. How far have you put it into practice?
5. What has gone : Well? Badly?

6. How do you see things developing from here?

### PART III

Let us shift emphasis now to things other than examinations.

1. Are you now doing anything differently in the way you approach your job?
2. What about your relationships with family and friends?
3. What about any changes in you as a person?  
Option : For use if responses are negative, vague or otherwise indicating no change.
4. Why do you think the course did not help you?
5. Has anything stopped you from trying new things?
6. Why do you think you have remained the same?
7. Is there anything at all you would like to add?

### B : SECOND INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about how you have got on since last time.
  - (a) Use information from interview 1 as appropriate.
  - (b) Confirm those things that have been added, refined dropped or remained the same.
  - (c) Establish what helped things go well or badly and what methods (if any) were used to overcome obstacles.
2. How would you now rate your performance as a learner?
3. What preparations have you made this time for the examinations?
4. Has there been any other benefits?

### C : THIRD INTERVIEW

1. Did you feel you were well prepared this time?
2. Did the examination go well?
3. What do you think helped you particularly?
4. How would you summarise the contribution that the learning to learn course made to your examination performance?
5. Any other observations?

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## APPENDIX 4

### ELEMENT CATEGORIES FOR BRANCH MANAGEMENT GRIDS

After an explanation about the procedure for completing a repertory grid, the participants were asked to recall an actual event for each of the following categories of grid element, and then to select 15 for use in preparation of the grid.

Think of a time when you :

1. Made what you considered to be an important decision.
2. Held a meeting with all (or most) of your staff.
3. Checked on progress with some work you had asked to be done.
4. Gave some technical advice to a member of staff about how to solve a banking problem.
5. Had to make a decision quickly in response to a request from one of your staff.
6. Saw a customer in your office.
7. Worked at the enquiry desk.
8. Felt that Bank policy clashed with what you wanted to do.
9. Wanted to work in your office and you arranged not to be interrupted.
10. Described or clarified the responsibilities of one of your staff.
11. Set, clarified or insisted upon a certain standard of working.
12. Sought opinions, ideas, etc, from your staff.
13. Pre-determined how you would spend your day or week.
14. Explained the reasons for some work to be carried out.
15. Assigned work to a member of staff.
16. Had to evaluate alternatives and select a course of action.
17. Had a discussion with either a superior or peer about the nature of your responsibilities.
18. Had a conversation with a member of staff about a welfare problem
19. Changed the way something is done in your branch.
20. Saw a customer at home.
21. Talked with a member of staff about how they were getting on with their work.
22. Dealt with a grievance held by one of your staff.
23. Disciplined one of your staff about unsatisfactory behavior or attitude.
24. Went outside of the branch to seek extra business.
25. Publically criticised the Bank's policy.
26. Put the need of the customer second to the Bank's need for profit.
27. Demonstrated a high level of professional competence.
28. Felt that either your superior or peers had harshly or unfairly judged you.
29. Deliberately planned how you intended to meet your branch targets.
30. Participated in helping someone learn to do their job better.

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## APPENDIX 5

### MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SURVEY ; ANNOUNCEMENT, COVERING LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

#### A : ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SURVEY BY THE GENERAL MANAGER

The following General Advice was issued by the General Manager shortly before the issue of the questionnaire under a covering letter from the Head of the Education and Training Department.

#### MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

At the Branch Manager's Conference, I mentioned that the principles of a management development system had been agreed, and that the first priority was to be given to branch manager training. The starting point for the Education and Training Department in setting up and operating such a system, is to carry out a survey designed to :

- (a) describe current operational practice of branch managers;
- (b) assess the determinants of bank performance, and isolate those particularly attributable to managers' efforts;
- (c) identify influences, at both organisational and individual levels, on branch manager performance;
- (d) specify the constituents of effective branch manager action and indicate the extent of the difference between that specification and current practice;

which in due course will involve administrative departments, district and branch managements. The first part of the survey will be to collect information about current work of branch managers. There are various ways of carrying out such an exercise, but it has been decided that the best method is to use a questionnaire. This will be sent to each branch manager on the 6th January, 1981 to be completed and returned by the 13th January, 1981.

The questionnaire will be issued under a covering letter from the Head of Education and Training which will explain more fully the nature of the questionnaire, why the information is required, and the use that will be made of the data.

#### B : THE COVERING LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Each questionnaire, issued shortly after the General Manager's announcement, was sent with the following letter:

#### MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SURVEY : Branch Manager Questionnaire.

Dear

A little while ago you were advised by the General Manager of the

Bank's intention to launch a management development survey. The first and major part of this survey is the completion by every branch manager of the attached questionnaire. This has been designed in this department, tested fully by the District Managers, and asks questions about how you do your job. The questionnaire is comprehensive and deals with not only activities you engage in, but also with what influences those activities. It should not be difficult to complete, nor will it take up a lot of your time.

The components of the management development survey were listed in the Advice from the General Manager. They serve two purposes : (a) To specify in bank terms what is considered to be effective action, and identify the skills required so that learning resources can be organised; (b) to establish a framework within which management development activity can be evaluated. The contribution of the questionnaire results to these purposes is in answering the question : What do branch managers currently consider to be effective action? In other words, what is the way (or are the ways) of working that branch managers select so as to achieve what they consider to be an optimum performance.

This sort of survey has not been done before; it is an essential first step in the production, operation and evaluation of management development programmes. Inevitably, a questionnaire of this kind raises some sensitive issues which may cause some respondents to be cautious with their replies. To extract full benefit from the exercise calls for honest and open responses, and the widest use of the results in discussion with senior management. To ensure that there is no obstacle, neither to responding forthrightly and accurately, nor to the application of data in reports to management, it has been decided to make the questionnaire anonymous. However, this does raise a problem in that when exploring ways of working, it is generally accepted that branch size is a significant consideration, and often suggested that age also plays an important part.

Consequently, the questionnaire invites you to indicate your age and branch grade. Whilst this is not a mandatory requirement, I am sure you will agree that its omission seriously detracts from the usefulness of the results. I hope you will provide these data, it will enable important conclusions to be made when analysing the replies. I would also like to give you a personal assurance that no one will make any attempt to identify recipients on the basis of these responses, and that the General Manager and I are in complete agreement on this point.

To help you complete the questionnaire, which should be returned to me personally by the 13th January, 1981, instructions are given on its inside page. Please answer carefully; the validity of this exercise depends upon the accuracy of the information you provide.

I believe this to be an important project and that you will want to give it the serious attention it deserves. If you would like to discuss any aspect raised in this letter, or in the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to give me a ring.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

C : THE QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTES  
ABOUT THE COMPLETION AND  
RETURN OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. The questions are set out in four colour-coded sections : Pattern of work (blue); management (pink); business maintenance and development (yellow); and policy and information (green). They are designed to obtain information about the way you currently do your job. Please complete the questionnaire alone; do not consult with your colleagues as this will undermine the value of the results.
2. Answer as honestly and as fully as you can. The questions are not intended to test or judge you - there are no right or wrong answers - but to record information about what you actually believe and do. Do not take too long to answer, be reasonably spontaneous and relaxed in your replies; as a guide in this respect, it should take you about 75 minutes to complete. Please record the actual time taken and enter this in the space provided at the end of this questionnaire.
3. The questionnaire is to be returned anonymously; please do not sign it even though you may wish to do so. Solely for the purpose of enhancing the value of the results provided, you are invited to indicate your age and branch size. You will appreciate that such correlations are potentially of great significance in a questionnaire of this kind. No attempt will be made to use this data to identify recipients. Place a tick in the appropriate box in each scale :

Age	25 -30	31 -35	36 -40	41 -45	46 -50	51 -55	56 -60	61 -65	GRADE	1 -2	3 -4	5 -7
-----	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-------	---------	---------	---------

4. Each question has explicit instructions on how to answer. Please read these carefully. Example answers are sometimes given when a new type of question is introduced, but you may deal with the sections of the questionnaire in whatever order you prefer, answering the questions in the given order as you work through the section. Please answer every question. If you make a mistake identify the erroneous response by either drawing a line through it, or adding the words : "Disregard the reply".
5. Please return the completed questionnaire by .....  
to :-

Maurice Randall  
Head of Education and Training Department  
3rd Floor Stanier House  
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6. If you have any difficulties or want any further information, you can ring Maurice Randall in strict confidence on 021-643-3836/7.

SECTION ONE - PATTERN OF WORK

A: EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME

The following list consists of activities that could be engaged in by Branch Managers. Please indicate the extent to which each activity constitutes an effective use of your own time by ticking the appropriate box in the scale of importance.

EXAMPLE

If you consider attending professional meetings to be an extremely effective use of your time your answer will be as follows :

Attending professional meetings

Of no importance	1	2	3	4	5	of very great importance
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Delete any items that you do not engage in. Add if there are any things omitted.

Of no importance	1	2	3	4	5	of very great importance
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

- (a) General checking of work done by subordinates including spot checks
- (b) Planning ahead
- (c) Giving talks, film shows outside the branch
- (d) Lending interviews
- (e) Dealing with correspondence, telephone calls
- (f) Working at an enquiry counter
- (g) Attending to faults, problems priorities, etc
- (h) Seeing customers at their home
- (i) Keeping your knowledge up to date.
- (j) Briefing staff about changes in working routines
- (k) Meeting customers informally in Banking Hall


	1	2	3	4	5
(l) Helping subordinates learn about their job					
(m) Working at a till					
(n) Interviews with customers arranged to increase business					
(o) Lunching with professional contacts					
(p) Interpreting, issuing H.O. Advices and Procedures					
(q) Attending professional meetings					
(r) Interviews with existing customers relating to account maintenance, but not to increasing business					
(s) Visiting existing and prospective business clients					
(t) Preparation for interviews and visits					
(u) Attending meetings with the District Manager					

**B: ALLOCATION OF TIME**

The following descriptions are ways in which Branch Managers' activities can be categorised :

- (a) Working alone, for example :-
  - (i) preparing for various activities such as customer interviews, marketing events, staff interviews or discussions;
  - (ii) analysing data in connection with branch performance;
  - (iii) writing letters and completing documentation;
  - (iv) reading and thinking.
- (b) Managing, ie spending time with staff in connection with branch work, for example :-
  - (i) planning branch work;
  - (ii) briefing staff;
  - (iii) monitoring progress of jobs;
  - (iv) checking that standards are being maintained.

- (c) Seeing customers inside the branch, for whatever reason, and whether in the office, in the Banking Hall, at the customer or enquiry desk.
- (d) Working outside the branch, for whatever reason and at various locations

2 With these descriptions of the categories as a guide, please indicate the approximate allocation of your time amongst the following activities during a typical month; marking the box following the examples :

EXAMPLE

If you allocated your time equally amongst working alone; managing; seeing customers inside the branch; and working outside the branch; you would answer as follows :-

	%
(a) Working alone	25
(b) Managing	25
(c) Seeing customers inside the branch	25
(d) Working outside the branch	25
	100
(a) Working alone	
(b) Managing	
(c) Seeing customers inside the branch	
(d) Working outside the branch	

3 If this allocation differs from time to time, what causes it to change? Please omit changes due to staff shortages caused by holidays or sickness and peak periods of business caused by Bank Holidays.

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4 (i) To what extent is the allocation of time, that you stated in question 2, imposed on you by circumstances in your branch as opposed to an allocation that you personally would choose if you were free to do so? Please tick the appropriate box.

- (a) Not at all imposed
- (b) Imposed to some extent


- (c) Imposed to a great extent
- (d) Imposed to a very great extent


(ii) If the allocation of time imposed on you, ie your answer to question 4 (i) was either (b), (c) or (d), please state the allocation you would prefer if you had a free choice :-

- (a) Working alone
- (b) Managing
- (c) Seeing customers inside the branch
- (d) Working outside the branch


C: DELEGATION

5 Indicate the influences on how you delegate to your ABM and other staff by ticking the appropriate point on each of the following scales :

EXAMPLE

The following answer would indicate that mistakes hardly occur at your branch.

- |   |                        |  |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Mistakes are regularly made                                 | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Mistakes never occur                                 |
|   |                        |  |
| (a) My staff are fully competent                            | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | My staff lack competence                             |
| (b) There is reluctance to accept responsibility            | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | There is willingness to accept responsibility        |
| (c) Mistakes are regularly made                             | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Mistakes never occur                                 |
| (d) My staff have adequate knowledge                        | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | My staff have inadequate knowledge                   |
| (e) Staff cannot be relied upon to work without supervision | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Staff can be relied upon to work without supervision |

(f)	I believe that the Branch Manager should always be available to see customers immediately they request it	<u>I I I I I I I I</u>	I believe that the Branch Manger should never be available to see customers immediatley they request it
(g)	My staff seek clarification if they do not understand instructions	<u>I I I I I I I I</u>	My staff do not seek clarification if they do not understand instructions
(h)	My staff need detailed instructions to do jobs	<u>I I I I I I I I</u>	My staff do not need detailed instructions to do jobs
(i)	My ABM is aware of the standards expected	<u>I I I I I I I I</u>	My ABM is unaware of the standards expected

SECTION TWO - MANAGEMENT

A: RESPONSIBILITIES

The running of a branch can be looked at in different ways. For the purpose of this questionnaire it is considered to be in two parts :-

- (i) Operational routine;
- (ii) Performance.

These can be defined as :-

- (i) Operational routine - the day to day activities, for example, the submission of required returns and the application of routine procedures;
- (ii) Performance - the results of the bank in terms of meeting its objectives, maintaining, improving and expanding business.

In the questions that follow, operational routine and performance are to be considered as so defined.

- 6 (i) To what extent do you personally become involved in carrying out routine tasks relating to the operational routine of your branch? (Ignoring your designated activities such as interviewing customers) Please tick the appropriate box.



- (a) Not at all involved
- (b) Involved to some extent
- (c) Involved to a great extent
- (d) Involved to a very great extent


(ii) What is the extent of your responsibility for the operational routine of your branch

EXAMPLES

If you felt that you were not fully responsible for the operational routine of your branch and shared the responsibility with someone, but were mainly responsible, the following would be an appropriate answer :

- (a) Complete
- (b) Part (Indicate proportion 85%)
- (c) None

✓

If you felt that you were not at all responsible for the operational routine of your branch, your answer would be as follows :

- (a) Complete
- (b) Part (Indicate proportion.....%)
- (c) None

✓

- (a) Complete
- (b) Part (Indicate proportion...)
- (c) None


(iii) If you answered Part (b) please state the title of the officer(s) with whom you share responsibility

(iv) If you answered "None" please state the title of the officer(s) responsible

7 (i) To what extent do you personally become involved in carrying out the tasks related to the performance of you branch? Please tick the appropriate box.

- (a) Not at all involved
- (b) Involved to some extent
- (c) Involved to a great extent


(d) Involved to a very great extent

(ii) What is the extent of your responsibility for the performance at your branch?

(a) Complete

(b) Part (Indicate proportion.....%)

(c) None


(ii) If you answered Part (b) please state the title of the officer(s) with whom you share responsibility.

(iv) If you answered "None" please state the title of the officer(s) responsible.

B: MANAGERIAL VALUES

8 Place a tick at the point on each scale which you consider best represents your actual approach to managing your branch

- |  |                        |  |
|--|------------------------|--|
| (a) I prefer to work with individuals  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I prefer to work with groups   |
| (b) I prefer standards to be set for me  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I prefer to set my own standards                                       |
| (c) I am prepared to change my mind once I've made a decision                  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I never change my mind once I've made a decision                       |
| (d) I regularly talk to my staff about how they are getting on with their work | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I never talk to my staff about how they are getting on with their work |
| (e) I feel it is realistic to accept situations as they are                    | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I feel it is unrealistic to accept situations as they are              |
| (f) I always discipline staff when needed                                      | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I never discipline staff at any time                                   |
| (g) I let all my staff know the branch's objectives                            | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I do not let my staff know the branch's objectives                     |

- |     |   |                        |   |
|-----|---|------------------------|---|
| (h) | I never bend the rules even though I feel it necessary                  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I always bend the rules when I feel it necessary  |
| (i) | After giving instructions I never check that they have been carried out | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | After giving instructions I always check that they have been carried out                      |
| (j) | I personally like to take care of my staff's welfare                    | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I prefer others to take care of my staff's welfare  |
| (k) | I prefer to in direct contact with all my staff                         | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I prefer to be in direct contact with my ABM only and for him to relay my wishes to the staff |
| (l) | I make all the decisions without consulting those who will be affected  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I make decisions in consultation with those who will be affected                              |
| (m) | When giving instructions I always explain why the work is necessary     | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | When giving instructions I never explain why the work is necessary                            |
| (n) | Staff training is not a manager's responsibility                        | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Staff training is an important manager responsibility   |
| (p) | There are many incentives that motivate my staff                        | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | My staff are motivated only by money  |
| (q) | I always try to improve on the way things are done                      | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I never try to improve on the way things are done   |

C: PLANNING

9 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement by ticking the appropriate box.

"The nature of branch banking makes it difficult to plan ahead"

(a) Strongly agree

- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


10 Indicate the form that planning takes at your branch by ticking the box against the statement that best describes your situation

- (a) I only include in my plans a restricted number of aspects of branch work over varying timescales
- (b) I do not make plans at my branch
- (c) I prefer long-term plans (up to a year) about major aspects of branch work
- (d) I try and cover everything in my plan, but plan only for short periods
- (e) I plan for all aspects of my work, over varying timescales, and review and modify my plan periodically


11 If you ticked statement (a), (c), (d) or (e), please indicate how you actually make plans by ticking the box against one statement that best describes what you do.

- (a) I consult my staff and use their ideas when appropriate
- (b) I seek direction from senior staff, prepare my plans and then inform my staff
- (c) I do not consult anyone when planning, and then inform the staff.
- (d) I plan ahead with my assistant and either he or I inform the staff accordingly, and ask for comments
- (e) I prepare a draft plan and consult with my staff before finalising it


D: COMMUNICATION

12 Describe how you communicate with your staff by ticking the appropriate box in the scale of frequency, eg the order of frequency can be indicated by : rarely - less than once a month; occasionally - once a month; frequently - 1 or 2 a week; very frequently - more than 1 or 2 a week.

	Never	Rarely	Occas- ionally	Freq- uently	Very Frequently
a) Encouraging staff to do better					
b) Interpreting/ explaining advice					
c) Checking understanding of delegation arrangements					
d) Giving educational information/ advices					
e) Admonishing staff when standards are not obtained					
f) Solving technical or procedural problems					
g) Seeking ideas and/ or opinions from staff					
h) Giving instructions					
i) Dealing with grievances					
j) Discussing job definition and key activities of jobs					
k) Defining standards of performance of staff					
l) Teaching (coaching explaining, demonstrating)					
m) Disseminating the Bank's policy					
n) Resolving interpersonal staff problems					
o) Giving career information/ advice					

	Never	Rarely	Occas- ionally	Freq- uently	Very Frequently
p) Monitoring the progress made with the training of junior staff by discussion with those involved					
q) Handling welfare matters					
r) Discussing ways of improving the way the branch operates					
s) Describing plans for branch work					
t) Collecting information about progress towards branch targets					
u) Identifying training needs					
v) Defining standards of behaviour and dress					

13 Indicate how often (as described above) you engage in the following kinds of meetings with staff by ticking the appropriate box

	Never	Rarely	Occas- ionally	Freq- uently	Very Frequently
a) Staff meetings with all staff present					
b) Staff meetings with selected groups					
c) Meetings with individual members of staff					
d) Meetings with Assistant Branch Manager					

E: PRIORITIES

14 Please rank in descending order the following statements according to the extent to which they will influence your judgement when assessing priorities. The most influential statement will therefore be ranked 1 and the least influential 7.

EXAMPLE

If you felt that (c) was the most influential you would mark 1 in the box next to (c); if you felt (e) was the second most influential you would mark 2 in the box next to (e), etc.

- (c) The extent and type of effect or impression on customers must be controlled
- (e) Activities must be directed towards the achievement of branch upgrading

1
2

- (a) The branch must meet its targets
- (b) Enquiries from other Banks must be answered
- (c) The extent and type of effect or impression on customers must be controlled
- (d) The demands on staff for extra effort must be avoided
- (e) Activities must be directed towards the achievement of branch upgrading
- (f) Requests from Head Office must be dealt with promptly
- (g) The demands on staff for longer hours of working must be avoided


SECTION THREE - BUSINESS MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Business maintenance and development can be described as :-

- (a) formulating marketing approaches in accordance with policy, liaising with the appropriate departments, and briefing staff;
- (b) seeing customers inside the branch to promote business and sell services;
- (c) developing and maintaining external contacts;
- (d) working alone and analysing data and preparing for interviews and visits;

and the emphasis given in these areas depends on many factors.

15 Indicate what particularly influences your approach to business maintenance and development by ticking each of the following scales to represent the situation at your branch or your opinions on the nature of branch banking as appropriate.

- |  |                        |   |
|--|------------------------|---|
| (a) I always approach customers at this branch about selling                         | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I never approach customers about selling at this branch                                 |
| (b) There are a large number of external contacts here                               | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | There are no external contacts at this branch   |
| (c) I do not need to assist my staff at the enquiry counter                          | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I have to assist my staff at the enquiry counter  |
| (d) There is no data here about our customers which is useful for selling purposes   | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | There is a lot of data here about our customers which is useful for selling purposes    |
| (e) The professional banker should carry out external business developing activities | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | The professional banker should be available at all times to see customers at the branch |
| (f) Business at this branch tends to be very difficult to attract                    | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Business at this branch tends to be very easy to attract                                |
| (g) The range and quality of accounts here are satisfactory                          | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | The range and quality of accounts here are satisfactory                                 |
| (h) Customers here are very resistant to having selling approaches made              | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Customers here are very amenable to having selling approaches made                      |



- |   |                        |  |
|---|------------------------|--|
| (i) It is easy to develop outside contacts here   | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | It is difficult to develop outside contacts here   |
| (j) Selling and marketing are incompatible with professional banking  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Selling and marketing are very compatible with professional banking  |
| (k) This branch's business is growing   | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | This branch's business is declining  |
| (l) I enjoy working outside the branch  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I dislike working outside the branch   |
| (m) Local competition for funds is very high  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Local competition for funds is very low  |
| (n) Customer/contact information for selling purposes is difficult to obtain                                  | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Customer/contact information for selling purposes is easy to obtain  |
| (o) It is worthwhile spending time in the local community   | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | It is unproductive spending time in the local community  |
| (p) I experience no difficulty in reconciling the Bank's need for profits with meeting the needs of customers | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | I experience great difficulty in reconciling the Bank's need for profits with meeting the needs of customers |

16 When working outside the branch, what sort of activities do you engage in? Please indicate the approximate number of times you have carried out the following activities over the last twelve months, marking each item even if nil, and noting who instigated the activity by entering the number in the appropriate column.

EXAMPLE

If you had given four speeches to members of the public, such as members of a Woman's Institute, one of which you arranged yourself, one of which your District Manager instigated, and two of which were organised by Business Development Department, your answer would be as follows:-

Instigated by :					
Number	You	Other Mgr.	Dist. Mgr.	BDD	Customer
(a) Giving a speech to members of the public					

Instigated by :-						
Average number per branch per year :	Number	You	Other Mgr.	Dist. Mgr.	BDD	Customer
(a) Giving a speech to members of the public						
(b) Arranging a sponsorship						
(c) Sitting on a committee						
(d) Attending a luncheon club						
(e) Attending other clubs, eg Rotary						
(f) Meeting professional contacts, eg solicitor						
(g) Business entertaining						
(h) Attending information stands						
(i) Visiting schools						
(j) Other (please specify)						

TOTAL

- 17 (i) If you do not take part in the activities listed in question 16 please give reasons :-

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- (ii) If you do not take part in as many of the activities listed in question 16 as you would like, what prevents you from doing so?

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SECTION FOUR - POLICY AND INFORMATION

- 18 Please indicate your attitude to the Bank's policy by ticking one of the spaces on each of the following scales :

(a) Policy can always be followed in this branch I I I I I I I I I Advisedly, policy has to be disregarded here quite often

(b) The policy document is unclear and difficult to understand I I I I I I I I I The policy document is clear and easy to understand

(c) The document is a complete statement of business policy I I I I I I I I I The document is an incomplete statement of business policy

(d) Policy is not universally applicable throughout the branch network I I I I I I I I I Policy is universally applicable throughout the branch network

(e) I strongly agree with its intentions      I I I I I I I I      I strongly disagree with its intentions

19 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box:-

(i) "Advices and Procedures from Head Office are unco-ordinated"

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


(ii) "A helping and friendly service is sufficient for the maintenance and development of business"

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


(iii) "Advices and Procedures from Head Office create conflicting demands on branch staff"

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


(iv) "The bank's most important need is for Branch Managers to maintain and improve the quality of business by being profit conscious"

- (a) Strongly Agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain


- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


(v) "All Advices and Procedures should be read on arrival by the Branch Manager before being communicated by him (when needed) to his staff"

- (a) Strongly agree
- (b) Agree
- (c) Uncertain
- (d) Disagree
- (e) Strongly disagree


20 The information (of any kind) that you find helpful in doing your job, and which you receive informally from others, is :- (Please tick the box opposite the most appropriate statement)

- (a) mainly sought from others by you
- (b) mainly received by you uninvited
- (c) negligible (whether requested or not)


21 Whenever you do seek information from others to help you with your job, whom do you find most useful? Tick the box next to the statement of your choice

- (a) Your subordinates
- (b) Your superior
- (c) Your peers
- (d) Head Office personnel
- (e) Contacts in other organisations


22 When seeking information and help from your peers, do you find they tend to regard you as a competitor, or do they behave in a supportive manner towards you? Please tick the appropriate box.

- (a) Competitive
- (b) Supportive


23 In relation to seeking improvement in the way your branch operates (including the way you do your job) indicate the conditions you feel exist in the bank by placing a tick in one of the boxes of the following scales

- |   |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| (a) Managers are encouraged to present their ideas                      | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Managers are not encouraged to present their ideas                    |
| (b) Adequate opportunities are given to managers to express their views | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Inadequate opportunities are given to managers to express their views |
| (c) Managers' opinions are listened to, but then not generally used     | <u>I I I I I I I I</u> | Managers' opinions are listened to, and used whenever possible        |

24 Please rank in descending order the following statements according to the extent to which you feel they represent the way Branch Managers gain promotion in this bank. Enter the appropriate number in the box alongside each statement, ie 1 for the most representative statement, 7 for the least representative statement, etc.

- (a) By working hard and maintaining good standards
- (b) By achieving good results irrespective of the method used
- (c) By ensuring that you come to people's notice
- (d) By being good at selection interviews
- (e) By "keeping your nose clean"
- (f) By showing that you are reliable
- (g) By demonstrating an ability to develop yourself and your staff


25 To what extent do you think your superiors use the following factors when rating your performance in the branch? Please tick the box most appropriate

	Not at all used	Used to some extent	Used to a great extent	Used to a very great extent
(a) Extent of your banking, financial and legal knowledge.				
(b) The rate and growth of your funds				

	Not at all used	Used to some extent	Used to a great extent	Used to a very great extent
(c) The extent and quality of your lending				
(d) The type of accounts you have at your branch				
(e) The number of mistakes you make				
(f) The appearance of your branch				
(g) The type of comment that your customers make about you and/or your branch				
(h) Your ability to keep on top of your work				
(i) The rate at which you have so far achieved promotion				
(j) The type of comment made about you by your subordinates				
(k) The nature of your personality				
(l) Your origins and social background				
(m) The appearance of your staff				

26 If you could make changes in the bank that would enable you to do your job better, what would they be?

27 If there is anything else you would like to add, please  
comment below :

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

TIME TAKEN  
.....MIN

--o0o--



## APPENDIX 6

### HONEY AND MUMFORD LEARNING STYLES : DESCRIPTION AND QUESTIONNAIRE

#### A : DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING STYLES

##### ACTIVISTS

Activists involve themselves fully without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is : 'I'll try anything once'. They dash in where angels fear to tread. They tend to throw caution to the wind. Their days are filled with activity. They revel in short-term crisis fire-fighting. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer-term consolidation. They are gregarious people, constantly involving themselves with others, but in doing so, they hog the limelight. They are the life and soul of the party and seek to centre all activities around themselves.

##### REFLECTORS

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first-hand and from others, and prefer to chew it over thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious, to leave no stone un-turned. "Look before you leap", "Sleep on it". They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, unruffled air about them. When they act it is as part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

##### THEORISTS

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step by step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into their rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. "If it's logical, it's good". Questions they frequently ask are : "Does it make sense?" "How does this fit with that?" "What are the basic assumptions?" They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their 'mental set' and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

## PRAGMATISTS

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They don't like 'beating around the bush' and tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities "as a challenge" Their philosophy is "There is always a better way" and "If it works, it's good".

### B : THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to find out your preferred learning style(s). Over the years you have probably developed learning 'habits' that help you benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably unaware of this, this questionnaire will help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your style.

There is no time limit to this questionnaire. It will probably take you 10-15 minutes. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you can be. There are no right or wrong answers. If you agree more than you disagree with a statement put a tick by it ( ). If you disagree more than you agree put a cross by it (x). Be sure to mark each item with either a tick or a cross.

1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.
2. I often 'throw caution to the winds'.
3. I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach, avoiding any 'flight of fancy'.
4. I believe that formal procedures and policies cramp peoples style.
5. I have a reputation for having a no-nonsense, 'call a spade a spade' style.
6. I often find that actions based on 'gut feel' are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis.
7. I like to do the sort of work where I have time 'to leave no stone unturned'.
8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions.
9. What matters most is whether something works in practice
10. I actively seek out new experiences.
11. When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice.

12. I am keen on self-discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.
13. I take pride in doing a thorough job.
14. I get on best with logical, analytical people and less with spontaneous, 'irrational' people.
15. I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions.
16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives.
17. I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than practical ones.
18. I don't like 'loose ends' and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern.
19. I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done.
20. I like to relate my actions to a general principle.
21. In discussions I like to get straight to the point.
22. I tend to have distant, rather than formal relationships with people at work.
23. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different.
24. I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people.
25. I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion.
26. I find it difficult to come up with wild, off-the-top-of-the-head ideas.
27. I don't believe in wasting time by 'beating around the bush'
28. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly.
29. I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to mull over the better.
30. Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me.
31. I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward.
32. I tend to be open about how I'm feeling
33. In discussions I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants.
34. I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance.

35. I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programmes, contingency planning, etc.
36. It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline.
37. I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits.
38. Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy.
39. I often get irritated by people who want to rush headlong into things.
40. It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future.
41. I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition.
42. I tend to be a perfectionist.
43. In discussions I usually pitch in with lots of off-the-top-of-the-head ideas.
44. In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas.
45. More often than not, rules are there to be broken.
46. I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives.
47. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments.
48. On balance I talk more than I listen.
49. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done.
50. I think written reports should be short, punchy and to the point.
51. I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day.
52. I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in 'small talk'.
53. I like people who have both feet firmly on the ground.
54. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and 'red herrings'.
55. If I have a report to write, I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version.
56. I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice.
57. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach.
58. I enjoy being the one who talks a lot.

59. In discussions I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding 'cloud nine' speculations.
60. I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind
61. In discussions with people I often find that I am the most dispassionate and objective.
62. In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a 'low profile' than to take the lead and do most of the talking.
63. I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture.
64. When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and 'put it down to experience".
65. I tend to reject wild, off-the-top-of-the-head ideas as being impractical.
66. It's best to 'look before you leap'.
67. On balance I do the listening rather than the talking.
68. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to find a logical approach.
69. Most times I believe that the end justifies the means.
70. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done.
71. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling.
72. I'm usually the 'life and soul' of the party.
73. I do whatever is expedient to get the job done.
74. I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work.
75. I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions , principles and theories underpinning things and events.
76. I'm always interested to find out what other people think.
77. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda, etc.
78. I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics.
79. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation.
80. People often find me insensitive to their feelings

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## APPENDIX 7

### MANAGERIAL BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING : STRUCTURE OF CONVERSATIONS

Each interview was prefaced by the following introduction :  
"There are two reasons for collecting this information : (i) Firstly, we need to be in a position to put a view forward during the development of the Group's education and training policy which takes into account a broad assessment of what needs to be considered when arranging resources to help people learn; (ii) Secondly, it will help with the evaluation of what we have done so far in the Bank.

"The method I propose to use is to get you, essentially, to answer the question : 'What do you take into account to ensure that people acquire the abilities that their job requires them to have?'

"I suggest that the way that we handle the conversation is to have first an open part - for you to set out what you consider training to be - followed by questions about : (i) The individual's willingness and capability for learning; and (ii) about how to get right both training design and operation.

#### Part 1

The interviewee was encouraged to present his view of training by reference to what he considered to be both good and bad examples of training. Some, or all, of the following questions were used as prompts, according to how the interviewee responded at the outset of the meeting :

(a) If no examples were offered, the interviewee was questioned about learning from experience as follows :

1. What are the merits of learning by experience?
2. And the drawbacks?
3. How can learning by experience be made more productive?
4. Can we rely entirely upon learning by experience?
5. How does learning by experience actually work?
6. Or, is learning by experience just another way of describing learning by doing.

(b) If some examples were offered, further conversation was prompted by the following questions before dealing with learning by experience.

1. Are some of the methods/examples you have offered more alike than others?
2. If yes, why? If no, why is that?
3. Do any of them stand out as being especially different?
4. Of the various examples you have offered, which do you associate with : (a) Ease of operating; (b) difficulty, (c) enjoyment on the part of the trainee; (d) risk or unpleasantness?

#### Part 2

The interview then moved into considering learning at an individual level in response to the following questions :

1. What do you think are the important considerations here?
2. Do you think on the whole, people are cynical about

- 'training', and if so, why?
3. What particularly influences a person's willingness to learn?
  4. Does everyone learn in the same way?
  5. What are the various ways in which we learn?
  6. How do we choose the way we are going to learn something?
  7. can people teach themselves?
  8. Are some people better at this than others? Why?
  9. Are people able to accurately assess how well they are doing a job?
  10. Are experienced staff wary of 'training' because it might be felt that they are not good at their job?
  11. Does the ability to learn vary with age?
  12. Are there ideal conditions for learning and do they vary with the type of thing to be learned?
  13. What kind of things do people find: (i) Easy to learn; (ii) difficult to learn?
  14. To what extent are abilities instinctive?
  15. Is ther anything about a person's nature that cannot be be changed?
  16. So which things are best learned on training courses?
  17. Are there things you would not expect training to be involved with?
  18. Does learning tend to stop after being in a given job :  
(i) For a few years; (ii) after a certain age?
  19. Does the individual have any responsibility for his learning or is it sufficient for him to respond to management demands?

### Part 3

This part of the conversation was about what senior management needs to take into account when considering learning - at an organisational level:

1. What do you consider are the important considerations here?
2. What should the Bank do to ensure that staff are willing to learn?
3. What kind of learning does the action of the senior management of the Bank induce?
4. What kind of involvement should the Education and Training Department have with senior managers?
5. What should happen if a training course is to be beneficial?
6. What ought to be done to make the Education and Training Department more worthwhile??

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