

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
STRATEGICALLY ORIENTATED
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES FOR PUBLIC SERVICES**

BY

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
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ABSTRACT

The research seeks to determine the features of a strategically orientated management development programme through reviewing the human resource management and management development literature. It also explores the particular conditions of public service management and draws on a range of cases from the working experience of the writer designing and delivering management development programmes to public services.

The parameters identified are used to design and deliver a strategically orientated programme to the first line managers of a social services department. This action research project, that ran from 1999 until 2003, constitutes the core of the research.

The research concludes that there is an absence of proven practitioner tools and models that might encourage the delivery of strategically orientated programmes. This combined with the complexity and cost of such programmes, limitations in organisational capability and the turbulence experienced by many public services, means that future provision is likely to be limited. Rather than strategic management development as such, comprehensive programmes sustained in the long term, will constitute a considerable achievement.

CONTENTS

Abstract		i
List of Contents		ii-iii
List of Illustrations		iv-vi
Acknowledgements		vii
<u>Chapters</u>		<u>Page</u>
Chapter One	Introduction	1-16
Chapter Two	Literature review - Public Services Management and Strategic Human Resource Management	17-69
Chapter Three	Literature review – Management Development	70-119
Chapter Four	Methodology	120-144
Chapter Five	Case examples	145-165
Chapter Six	Action research	166-204
Chapter Seven	Conclusion	205-235
References		235-246
 Appendices		
Appendix One	- Commissioning Meeting	
Appendix Two	- Development Planning Meeting 7/02/00	
Appendix Three	- Specification for the Programme	
Appendix Four	- Presentation	
Appendix Five	- Preliminary Design Features of the Programme	

Appendix Six	-	Partnership Proposal
Appendix Seven	-	Introductory Day
Appendix Eight	-	Evaluations
Appendix Nine	-	Review/Evaluation 30/10/01
Appendix Ten	-	Development Options
Appendix Eleven	-	Feedback from Commissioning Manager

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES	Page	
Figure 1.1	The Research Sequence	2
Figure 1.2	Key Drivers of the Research Question	8
Figure 2.1	The Contending Perspectives on Public Management	28
Figure 2.2	The Human Resource Cycle	48
Figure 2.3	Strategic Management and Environmental Pressures	48
Figure 2.4	The Harvard Framework for Human Resource Management	50
Figure 2.5	A Theory of HRM	52
Figure 2.6	A Model of Strategic Change and Human Management	53
Figure 2.7	Integrative Framework for Understanding HRM in Context	55
Figure 2.8	Potential relationships between Organisational Strategy and Human Resource Strategy	63
Figure 2.9	Key Stages in Improving HR services	64
Figure 3.1	Training and Management Development	72
Figure 3.2	Middle Management Education Programmes	75
Figure 3.3	Old and New Approaches to Management Training	81
Figure 3.4	Effective Management of a Programme	87
Figure 3.5	Attaining Competency	93
Figure 3.6	The Development Circle	112
Figure 3.7	Training for Impact	113

			Page
Figure	3.8	Easterby Smith's Model of Evaluation for Management Education	115
Figure	4.1	Modes of Enquiry	121
Figure	4.2	Alternative Modes of Enquiry	126
Figure	4.3	The Cyclical Process of Action Research	134
Figure	6.1	Levels of Reflection and Analysis	193
Figure	6.2	Programme Design – Strategic Linkage	196
Figure	6.3	Level of Stakeholder Interest in The Project Lifecycle	197
Figure	6.4	Power and Psychological Discomfort for a Specialist	198
Figure	6.5	Key Dimensions of a Strategically Orientated Programme	203
Figure	7.1	The Research Process	220
 TABLES			 Page
Table	2.1	Paradox in Public Services Management	26
Table	2.2	Key Features of HRM	37
Table	2.3	Personnel Roles in Human Resources Strategy	59
Table	2.4	Business Strategies, and Associated Employee Role Behaviour	62
Table	3.1	Types of Management Development Activity	83
Table	3.2	Growth Phase and Management Development Activity	84
Table	3.3	Management Training Methods	86
Table	3.4	The Ashridge Model	107
Table	3.5	Levels of Maturity of Organisational Management Development	109

			Page
Table	4.1	Comparison Between the Positivistic and Hermeneutic Paradigms	122
Table	6.1	Phases, Stages and Steps in the Project Lifecycle	168
Table	6.2	Schedule of Key Events	170
Table	6.3	Strategic Outcomes and Management Development	204

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Management development provision that is linked to organisational strategy is rare. This thesis seeks to identify the essential features of strategic management development, establish the reasons for its very limited application in the public services and outline some options that might encourage its practice. Using case examples and action research and set in the wider debate of the viability of strategic human resource management, it is a study orientated towards practical solutions and is embedded in the social complexity of programme delivery within a public service organisation.

Based on practical examples in the design and delivery of management development programmes in the public services, it also seeks to develop a closer relationship between consultancy, programme delivery and academic research. That is, some of the problems in developing strategic management development are seen as lying in the infrastructure of management education and only resolvable if there is a change in practitioner behaviour.

Whilst its focus is management development and strategy, as the research progresses events and the action research team's responses to their impact, raise other issues that could be seen as secondary but seem too pertinent to leave unexplored. Therefore there may be insights for the reader into project management, the management of change, organisational politics, cultural change, action research and organisational learning.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

There is some consensus that research must be based on a clear research question. For instance Sarantakos (1998, p.119) argues:

“One of the first steps the investigator has to take is to choose the research question; this is a methodological necessity: no research can be undertaken unless the research question is chosen and accurately and clearly defined – it deserves serious consideration.”

Echoing this view Gill and Johnson (1997, p. 3) present a depiction of the research sequence that allows for a gradual clarification of the research question, following the identification of a broad area of exploration (see Figure 1.1).

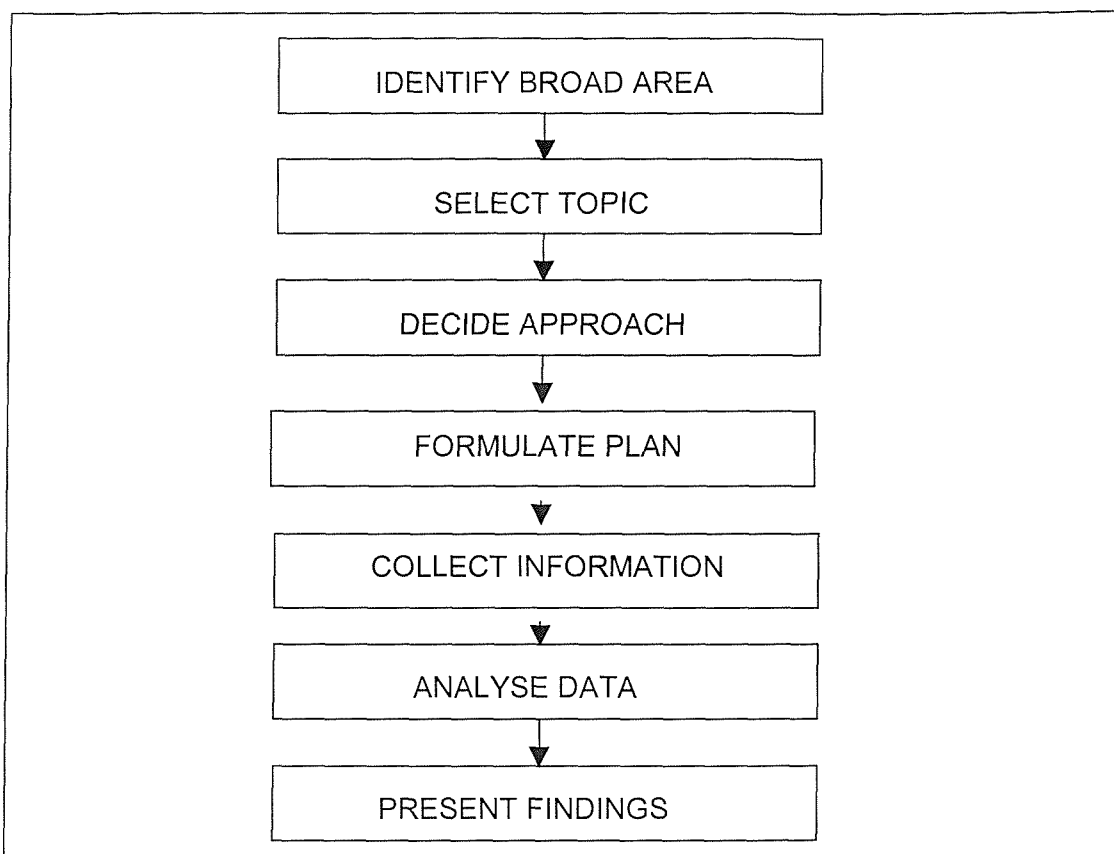


Figure 1.1 The Research Sequence (Source: Gill & Johnson 1997, p. 3)

This sequence, with some minor variations, offers a useful structure and so has been used to shape the discussion that follows.

The broadest frame of reference for this thesis is the field of management development (MD) and a crucial point of departure is the consistent failure of management training and education in the UK to reach the standards set by the US, Germany, France and Japan. A failing perhaps most clearly identified by the Handy Report (1987):

“The common concern of the sponsors was a worry that perhaps we were neglecting in Britain one of the key competitive factors, the quality of management” (Handy, 1987, p. 1).

The problem was also evidenced as far back as 1962 by the Franks Committee, (Sadler and Barnham, 1988). However the last two decades in particular have seen a series of committees, research exercises and reports focused on management education, training and development. These reports and studies have both represented and fuelled a growing government concern (Institute of Manpower Studies, 1984; Coopers & Lybrand, 1985; Mangham & Silver 1986; Constable and McCormack 1987; ESRC, 1993).

As Mangham and Silver (1986, p. 6) expressed it:

“One of the most important resources possessed by a nation is its managerial skill. Ideas can only be turned into wealth when combined with effective management. The ability to create more wealth is vital if the growing expectations of society are to be met. Those services which spend wealth must also be well managed to ensure the maximum benefits from the resources available.”

Or the ESRC (1993, p. 2):

“Those objectives may be to generate profit in the private sector or to provide effective policy and services in the public sector. Good management contributes by encouraging organisations to innovate, market and compete, and governments to operate effectively. Good management underwrites the economic performance of the UK as a whole.”

This could be seen as offering an immediate and convincing justification for the undertaking. It means that the research, if it has increased the effectiveness of management development, is potentially a response to an issue of national economic importance.

It is not possible to explore management development without also exploring the practices and philosophies of what is now generally called human resource management (HRM). Management development is generally seen as a subset of HRM and as Salaman (1995, p. 3) puts it:

“...inspired by human resource strategies the manager is seen as central to the achievement of organisational effectiveness to a degree greater than ever before and the critical skills and competencies of managers are defined more ambitiously than previously.”

If any contribution to the general practice of MD is to make a contribution to an essential sub-set of HRM, recent developments in the field of HRM itself make the thesis even more pertinent. Often HRM now focuses on its contribution and potential impact on organisational strategy to the point of it often being renamed strategic human resource management or SHRM (Armstrong, 1995).

Some theorists have gone so far as to suggest that there is also a specialist branch or approach to management development that focuses on management development's contribution and potential impact on organisational strategy, strategic management development or SMD (McClelland, 1994). Suffice to say, that in exploring the design and delivery of management development programmes with a strategic orientation, the research explores some important and relatively new issues central to the development of HRM.

Whilst the research outcomes will probably be of some value to any organisation or practitioner exploring approaches to MD, a particular concern is practice in the public services. This is currently very topical as much of the Government's modernisation agenda is about continuing a process begun by the previous Government in the early 1980's, but perhaps with even earlier beginnings, of encouraging the transfer of private sector management practices into the public sector. Norman Flynn (2002, p 6) offers a helpful summary of the features of this New Public Management, NPM:

“Management was once seen as the solution to the problem that the professionals were in charge of public services and could not be brought under political control. In this version of management, the targets incentives and controls of a top-down approach to management , known in the 1950’s as Management by Objectives, were imposed on a range of services. Ministers set big targets and sent them down through the hierarchy, where they were translated into more and more explicit individual targets.

The other problem that politicians detected in public services was that they were bureaucracies, run according to set rules and procedures and not susceptible to change. Management was one solution to this problem, asking people to be managers rather than administrators. The other solution was the market, according to a belief that competition would apply pressure on cost and quality of public services.

When neither management nor markets turned out to be the complete solution to the problems of professional rule and bureaucracy, other modes of control were sought. These included a bigger role for auditors and inspectors, and greater use of collaborative working and a focus on policy outcomes.

All of these solutions have been pursued at the same time. Collaboration is required at the same time as competition. Audit and inspection of management processes and work practices are imposed at the same time as the requirement to meet efficiency targets.”

This policy and change environment is a very demanding one for public service managers so that successful management development programmes that support managers and can be seen to contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness in delivering strategy are likely to be valued. However it may also be seen as a unique environment and private sector practices may not transfer effectively.

Whilst examples are drawn from the public services generally social services is given particular attention. Again this is a topical subject, given that government

policy is developing a programme of mandatory management awards for social services through the work of the Training Organisation for the Personal Social Services, TOPSS.

In 'Modernising the Social Care Workforce - the first national training strategy for England' (TOPSS 2000) they justify and state precisely their vision. Drawing from the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Social Services 1998/9 they point out that (TOPSS, 2000, p 13):

“What makes a significant difference to the performance of an organisation is the quality and competence of front line managers. Front line managers are the keystones of the organisation, and our Inspection work shows this. The management of practice is an emerging theme from all our Inspection work.”

So that:

“TOPSS will work with the Department of Health, the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors in Social Services, independent sector networks and the Management and Enterprise National Training Organisation to identify or construct a coherent framework of National Occupational Awards for management functions at all levels in social care. This will recognise the requirements for operational, tactical and strategic management. These standards can then be matched to existing accredited programmes, awards and qualifications. Some may combine practice and managerial elements. There should be a continuum of accredited opportunities for career progression and management development.”

When this policy is taken alongside the Investors in People initiative (Investors in People UK, 1996) that encourages services to meet a certified level of competence in all their human resource development activities then the picture becomes even more interesting. For this demands a methodical approach to workforce planning and training with clear links between activities and service strategy and business plans, together with measurable outcomes.

In effect to Flynn's already demanding repertoire of public service challenges and government policies and management practices is added a new dimension that puts MD and this research at centre stage. Management development is becoming mandatory and strategic linkage a requirement. Research that explores effective programme design and delivery, organisational outcomes and strategic linkage is likely to be both useful and welcomed.

To add even greater weight to the subjects topicality the current 'Best Value' regime of internal and external reviews of services was introduced by the Local Government Act of 1999. This demands that services, including training support services, should be subject to what is in effect zero-based budgeting. That is the provision of a service by an in-house provider within a local authority must be justified by a process of benchmarking against alternative provision and compared with the effectiveness of service provision in other similar authorities. This puts the spotlight on management development, as it should be subject to an inspection and review process that demands that it can be seen to impact on service provision by contributing to the search for continuous improvement, the delivery of Best Value and the achievement of service objectives.

These inter-related factors that have generated the research question, will influence the research process and will contribute to its final evaluation, are summarised below (see Figure 1.2).

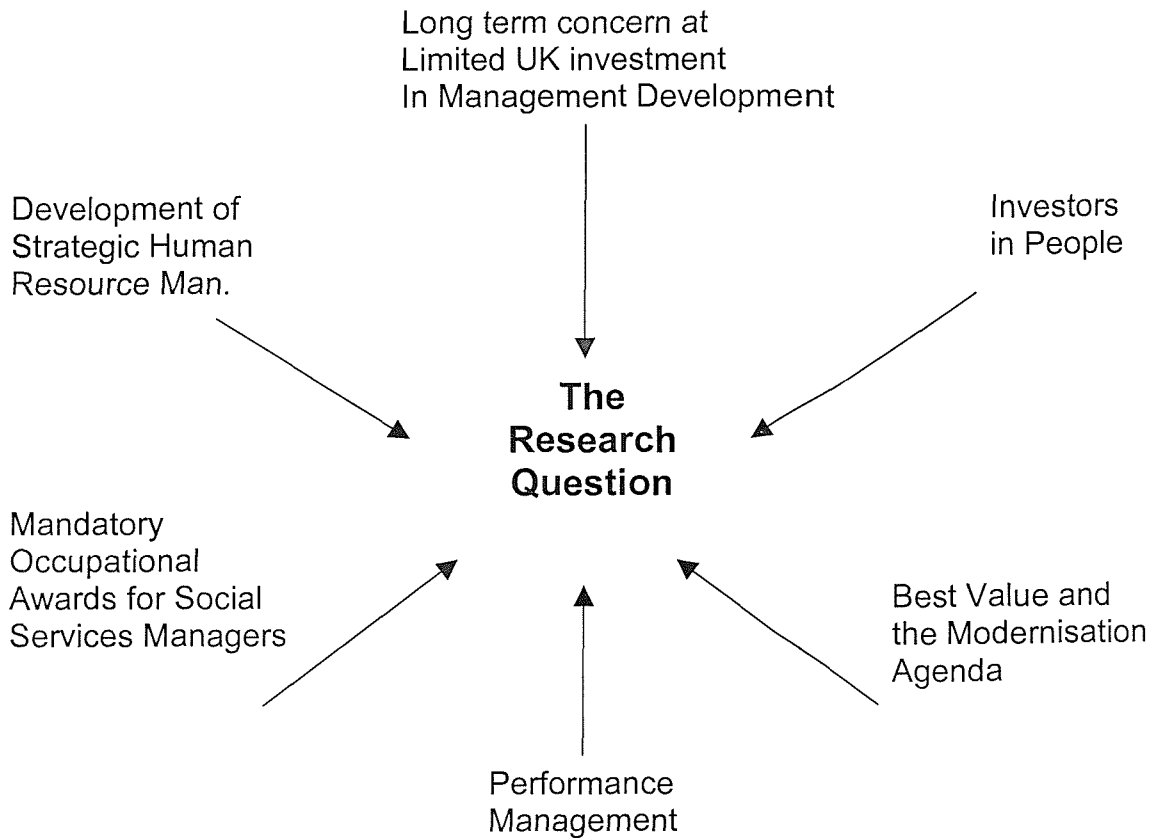


Figure 1.2 Key Drivers of the Research Question

Given the broad context identified above, the specific research question the thesis seeks to help answer is:

“How can management development programmes in the public services be managed so that they have a positive impact on organisational strategies and outcomes?”

THE SUITABILITY OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Gill and Johnson (1997, pp. 13-16) have offered a useful framework for evaluating the suitability of a topic that identifies access, time scale, symmetry of outcomes and finance as issues that should be discussed. It is possible to apply their schema to this topic.

Since the researcher was employed by the University of Portsmouth to work as a management development specialist in the public services, access was relatively easy. Moreover there was an increasing interest in strategic issues as well as management development so that it was possible to get some support from organisational stakeholders in the research.

Even a three to five year time frame was only just sufficient for the topic. To offer a management development programme to a cadre of managers in a large organisation and attempt to gauge its impact on service outcomes was in effect to manage a major organisational change. This meant the time frame was only just sufficient and indeed some of the evaluation was not complete when the research was written up.

Symmetry of outcomes refers to whether, whatever the final outcome, the research would still be useful. This was true of this topic in some senses as even the worst case scenarios were likely to prove helpful. For instance if there was no evidence of strategically orientated MD or if it appeared virtually unachievable these would still have been useful research conclusions.

The research involved the implementation of a MD programme so the impact on the organisations and managers involved could have been very negative if it had failed. However it was unlikely that there would have been no outcome at all, and even limited success in running a strategically orientated programme was likely to be a gain. Nevertheless there was no doubt a significant degree of risk in the research. It was in effect a quasi experiment within an organisation and it could have gone wrong. However the implementation was commissioned by the organisation, which offered some mitigation, and reflecting on and drawing conclusions from the activity would benefit both it and similar organisations.

The full costs of the core research, the implementation of an MD programme was very expensive. The actual cost of the programme at the centre of this research, including government funding, was about £170,000. If allowance is made for the cost of the time of managers attending the programme this would be nearer a

real cost of £900,000 over four years. In addition there were other costs - training manager time, senior manager time, and line manager time. In total it is not therefore unreasonable to estimate that it was a million pound activity.

Given the points made in the previous section about risk it was hard to estimate the potential costs of failure. However it is worth noting that it would have undermined the credibility of the senior management team, the training team and perhaps the organisation as a whole in the eyes of some key stakeholders. It would have impacted negatively on similar future initiatives and may even have discouraged other organisations from attempting programmes.

As the programme was designed to impact on organisational outcomes, its failure could have meant that the organisation did not meet its performance targets. This would have had considerable political impact and could have reduced the level of government funding, intensified the inspection regime the authority is subject to, and its discretion.

In conclusion there would seem to have been good reason for arguing that the research question was topical and pertinent and its exploration could have been of considerable benefit to many organisations. More specifically it could have impacted on the effectiveness of public services, particularly social services, and could have contribute to the realisation of government policy.

It would seem to have been feasible and acceptable as an undertaking although it carried some risks for the organisation and the individuals involved. It was also very costly to the organisation. However the risks and costs perhaps reflected its importance and value. In effect, if there was no potential research pain there was perhaps little likelihood of any tangible research gain.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Summary of Chapter Two Literature Review – Public Services Management and Strategic Human Resource Management

To set the context for the rest of the discussion this chapter opens with an exploration of the particular conditions and features of public services management. Next, given that the thesis shares the goals of strategic human resource management or SHRM, this literature is reviewed to determine if it provides the basis for good practice in management development.

Definitions of the field are identified and compared and linked to 'paradigms' that constitute distinct approaches. Attempts to identify strategic human resource management's theoretical core are examined alongside formal process models and empirical studies. Associated tools, techniques and approaches that could be mobilised by the practitioner are identified.

An important conclusion is that strategic human resource management is at an early stage of its development with writers searching to establish a credible discipline design through the re-combination of previous approaches. This activity is ideologically driven and culturally specific and as yet offers only crude and abstract guidance to a practitioner. The possible application of SHRM in public services is questioned.

Summary of Chapter Three – Management Development

Definitions and approaches to management development are explored and management development's link with strategic human resource management discussed. The range of MD activities are reviewed and an attempt is made to identify practitioner orientated tools and approaches that could assist in developing practice. A conclusion is that the literature is still dominated by the 'trainer mindset' and its related psychological models, with little on offer for the practitioner seeking strategic approaches. Where there is an appropriate

orientation it is often shallow and instrumental reaching for business outcomes but not the complexity of strategic impact.

An argument for seeing management development as strategically more significant than other human resource management activities is made although the literature to date fails to raise the pertinent issues.

Summary Of Chapter Four – Methodology

This chapter explores an appropriate methodology for the research study. Reasons for the choice of action research are discussed. Action research is explored and seen as 'multi method'. That is, it can make use of a range of tools and techniques in supporting the action research process and these can be quantitative as well as qualitative. However in this instance the approach will be qualitative and based on researcher led, group problem solving.

The tension between action research and consultancy is identified. Action research is seen as offering a very valuable approach to a consultant working on organisational developments. Whilst it mirrors the consultancy process it is argued that has the potential of allowing consultants to contribute to academic research in a field where theory and practice are poorly developed.

Other possible qualitative research methodologies are explored. For instance Grounded Theory and Participant Observation are examined as methodological alternatives. However such approaches are argued not be appropriate given the role of the researcher in initiating the project and leading much of the problem solving.

Finally the research protocol is described that allows conclusions to be linked to records of meetings and organisational documents compiled as the research progressed. There is a recorded process of ongoing reflection, analysis and re-planned action that has been reviewed in tutorials this also offers an 'audit trail' between action and conclusions/hypotheses.

Summary Of Chapter Five - Case Examples

The chapter presents five case examples drawn from the researcher's previous professional experience. These examples illustrate some of the problems and successes experienced in planning and implementing management development programmes in the public services.

1) Seatown Social Services

Traces the development of a M.D. programme over an eight year period as it moves through increasingly complex stages of development and attempts increasingly sophisticated provision. This example illustrates the importance of managing organisational politics and the need for sustained, methodical project leadership over the long term to achieve good quality results. The establishment of a partnership with a University allowed the design of awards to meet the needs of the department and resources that allow a more ambitious programme.

2) Westshire Council

Attempts to establish an ambitious management development programme in this County Council put too much demand on the organisation's capability with unfortunate results. Design flaws that made workshops very hard to run and that separated assessment from teaching responsibilities meant the delivery team lacked cohesion and did not respond to the demands placed upon it. Failure to specify desired outcomes or targets meant there was no evaluation and improvement process.

3) Stourchurch Hospital Trust

This case example demonstrates the impact of strong leadership from a senior manager on a programme's success. The management development initiative becomes a core activity for the Senior Management Team and provides strong ownership and rapid results that impact positively on organisational culture.

4) Castleport City Social Services

A small unitary authority struggles to sponsor a management development programme with a limited budget and a limited cadre of managers. Differing departmental cultures and service requirements make corporate provision problematic and take the 'unity' out of unitary. Partnership with another small authority offers only a limited way forward.

5) Foreland Hospital Trust

The national policy agenda gives impetus to this organisation's management development programme, which is sustained and developed over an eight-year period. Ownership is however vested in some key figures but not supported by the senior management team as a whole, or embedded in organisational policy. A change in the balance of power at the centre leads to a change of direction that undermines the established programme and eight years of incremental development.

Chapter Six – The Action Research

This chapter provides an account of the action research, the design and delivery of a strategically orientated programme. The programme was commissioned by Hampshire Social Services for their Children and Families Department's managers.

This means that the programme is shaped by what is in effect a National Strategy, Quality Protects, which offers Children's Services across the country a set of service objectives and performance measures. Departments are also required to produce a local Management Action Plan that specifies priorities for action.

From the initial presentation and award of the contract the priority is therefore a programme that contributes to Quality Protects, and a project team is convened to design and deliver three courses for a total of 75 managers.

As course participants and their line managers are identified they are encouraged to contribute to the design and take control of the processes that constitute the course experience.

A number of features are incorporated into the programme that enhance its impact on the organisation and its impact on strategy. The objective of strategic linkage is on the agenda from the outset but as a multi-stage implementation evolves it becomes clear that this objective will not be achieved without many months of activity, gradually building organisational capability.

As the project progresses new problems arise as Government policy is unveiled. The sheer complexity of the management task, before the problems of implementation are addressed at all, explains the low level of achievement in the field and the magnitude of strategic human resource management's aspirations.

Summary Of Chapter Seven - Conclusions

Eight broad impediments to strategic management development in public services are identified:

1. Limited general organisational strategy and business planning processes.
2. No established relevant discipline and in particular the absence of proven practitioner tools and models.
3. Poor project management of a complex and demanding task.
4. A resource crisis in many services and an increasingly turbulent environment.
5. Lack of capability in many organisations generated by the failure to sustain investment in MD.
6. The dominance of the 'trainer mindset', which focuses attention on the training process, not its outcomes or contribution to organisational strategy.

7. The particular conditions of public service management that mean strategic provision is complex and costly.
8. Approaches that are not applicable in public services.

To enhance provision it is possible to identify from the research some practitioner orientated models and tools that might encourage good practice. However the research concludes that strategic approaches to management development are very hard to implement and are currently unlikely to become the norm in public services. Rather comprehensive sustained delivery will be a considerable achievement.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW –PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This chapter begins by exploring the particular conditions under which public services management is practised. It then attempts to identify the broad implications of this context for the research question. However the issues raised provide an important point of reference and the basis for discussion in all the later chapters.

Since management development can be seen as a sub-set of human resource management, the relevant human resource management literature will be reviewed and its implications for the research question explored, before moving on to look at management development per se in chapter three. Strategic human resource management is included in this section as a variant of human resource management.

Given the size of the human resource management field there is a focus on literature that relates to the issue of strategic orientation or to management development. However as there is still a problem of volume the review is broken into sections. It firstly looks at attempts to define human resource management and then at its different ideological positions. It explores work that has tried to establish its theoretical core and then also literature that has developed formal models that map its key functions and their inter-relationships. It identifies empirical studies that have attempted to establish what human resource managers actually do, and then finally it reviews the practitioner tools and models on offer that might assist in answering the research question.

THE CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT- MANAGERIALISM AND TRADITIONALISM

The public service issues are very effectively opened up in a paper by Dixon, Davis and Kouzmin (2004) that explores the review of the German Civil Service launched to restructure and shape it until the year 2025. They note that debate is really about the contending perspectives that can govern public service reform. The main perspectives they identify are a traditional hierarchical model and a managerialist model. The models are based on different perceptions of human nature, have different intellectual orientations and generate different models of how organisations function. Dixon et al. suggest problems arise when attempts are made in reforms to combine the two models, as they are fundamentally different.

They offer an outline of the traditionalist, hierarchical model that it is based on Max Weber's ideal type of a bureaucratic organisation. Public service organisations are seen as centralised and top down, with standardised tasks and work processes. They base decision making on the formal collection and analysis of data and their leadership style is parental. Civil servants are permanent, neutral, anonymous officials, motivated by public interest and who serve any political party. They offer a continuity to service provision whilst politicians come and go. There is a political and administrative divide, with the government responsible for determining the broad features of the public interest and policy. Civil servants are therefore involved in almost a moral endeavour that has considerable impact on society. They allocate resources, have considerable status and impose values and controls on society. Civil service is therefore a distinct profession founded on the disciplines of law, history and social policy. Civil servants have legal obligations and powers and must be seen to follow proper processes and to be fair and equitable.

The alternative model is a managerialist approach. Dixon, Davis and Kouzmin describe this as carrying a business like approach, modelled on private sector practices, to the public sector. Essentially it seeks to maximise efficiency,

economy and effectiveness and provide value for money. Drawn from the perspectives of neo-classical economics, players are seen as self-interested actors motivated to meet their own needs in the market place. Under managerialism policy making becomes a technical matter best led by technical specialists from the private sector. Civil servants use the market to respond to public need. They focus on outputs, are informed by economics and management science, and expect to be rewarded according to results. They are professional generalist managers without a core profession. They seek to develop organisations characterised by low complexity and low formalisation, minimal hierarchy and an entrepreneurial orientation. They will take more risks than in the hierarchical model and will problem solve unknown situations consulting with staff on a pragmatic basis to this end. Service delivery is transformed through commercialisation which allows agencies to sell a public service and eventually through privatisation the private sector can own and control public provision.

Delving more deeply into these two traditions and exploring their intellectual roots, Dixon, Davis and Kouzmin see managerialism as based on positivism and individualism. Positivism denies the social and individual construction of reality and the influence of culture, values and meaning on knowledge. Individualism denies social structure and its possible influence on individual choices and action. The two models are therefore fundamentally opposed to each other and offer alternative approaches to reform. More crucially the reality of current public service provision is that both models shape expectations, structures and processes creating a paradoxical environment that impacts on public service managers.

Lawton (1998) also draws attention to the ambiguity, complexity and diversity of public services management and uses this platform to argue for the importance of ethical behaviour and ethical training in public services. He identifies three positions in the debate about the nature of public services management and its comparison with private sector management, the 'generecists', the 'differentialists', and those who argue for convergence. He concludes that the

diversity of both public and private sector management means that the generalisations that feed the debate are unhelpful and that the key to understanding is recognising the diversity in organisational types that can be found in either sector (1998, p. 11).

Patterson (1997) suggests that the managerialist versus traditionalist debate too readily collapses into parody and that there is little empirical evidence that can offer a comparative evaluation of new management practices with older public service traditions. He identifies key areas such as quality of working life, probity and accessibility of services and argues that there is no evidence of decline (1997, p.74). In contrast Painter and Isaac - Henry (1997, p. 305) draw attention to nineteen significant implementation problems associated with the New Public Management NPM.

Stewart and Ranson (1996) argue that whilst the public sector can learn from the private sector the model of management that underpins the private sector is not directly transferable. For instance they suggest that an approach to strategic management that is based on an analysis of competition is not applicable and that equity and justice in provision are unique features of public sector management and outcomes that are as valid as economy and efficiency. Further they suggest that developing and maintaining citizenship demands a different set of perspectives and activities from private sector management and that the public services are where collectivity rather than individuality is expressed.

They argue that management approaches must be developed that are distinctive to the public domain and recognise its inherent dilemmas. They suggest for instance that learning from experience needs to be emphasised, given the dilemmas faced by public sector managers, and that this is too often overlooked in public sector management. Also that a strategic planning model that recognises political purpose is more appropriate and that performance management must embrace a multi-dimensional performance. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1996) notes the importance of recognising that many stakeholders define the values and therefore the competing outcomes that performance

management in the public sector must allow for. She argues for an approach to performance management in public and voluntary services that acknowledges these 'multiple constituencies' and builds a balance of measures that encompasses all of them.

In contrast Weggemans (1996) points to the many similarities between public service and private sector management. In fact the agenda he outlines for personnel management in public services is dominated by the need to develop a strategic approach and to decentralise, concerns that are mirrored in the general HRM literature (Armstrong 1995). Also Bovaird (2003) offers a vision, context and content for strategic management in public services that is hard to distinguish in any way from a private sector approach.

Sebastian Green (1998) in a survey of strategic management initiatives in the public services suggests that departments are clearly managed differently since the introduction of strategic management but that implementation takes the form of what is often described as strategic planning, that is the development of goals and objectives and the introduction of performance measures. It has not been characterised by a view of the future or a more outward looking perspectives and does not emphasise innovation and creativity. Planning practices have therefore often changed very little, simply being re-labelled. However there is evidence of longer time frames being developed. This is explained by the overemphasis placed on economy and efficiency and the influence of finance departments in determining strategy. He also notes that the traditional values of public service are also not integrated into strategic initiatives and that traditional competencies are also ignored. This is despite a high priority being given in the private sector to existing competencies and values as a basis for gaining competitive advantage.

In a case study of the application of strategic management to a local authority Stoney (2001) identifies some crucial positive changes that have stemmed from the initiative. Decision making was simplified, a centralisation of control led to a shift in priorities and some decisive decision making that impacted positively on

the authority's resourcing and public image. However he noted the development of political and organisational resistance to the changes that stemmed from concern at, for instance, the reduction in influence of operational activities and increasing workloads.

Virtanen (2000) argues for a broad definition of competence for public service managers that reflects their history and reality and encompasses professional competence, administrative competence, political competence and ethical competence as well as task competence. He suggests that the New Public Management focuses too much on task competence and underestimates the significance of the other competences through its ideological reliance on market mechanisms to shape behaviours. This means that many public managers are choosing not to commit to NPM and that without commitment there will be limited personal and organisational development.

Dixon and Kouzmin (1994) draw attention to the extensive personal and organisational change agenda privatization demands and the challenge this sets for management educationalists, especially if through competitive tendering they are also subject to competition in provision and must also focus on quantifying behavioural outcomes. They also point to the importance of building commitment and confidence in managers.

PARADOX AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT

In another, later paper Dixon (2004) takes this issue of paradox and its impact on public services managers further. This paper argues that public sector management is a struggle with the paradoxes created by managerialist reforms and, that as a result of this objectivity and rationality in decision making do not offer a successful response. Nine paradoxes are identified that range from role confusion to the impossibility of being expected to deliver higher quality services at a lower cost. The paradoxes create dilemmas that are fundamental to the experience of public services management.

Dixon identifies the broad tactics a public service manager can adopt to respond to this array of dilemmas. He extends this discussion offering some insights that carry the debate to the heart of this research endeavour, since they have implications for the nature of management development in the public services. They are therefore worth exploring in detail.

As broad tactics to respond to the paradoxes Dixon (2004, p.3) suggests three options. Reframing them as puzzles, placing them in a broader social context to give them meaning or addressing the psychological responses they generate. He suggests that “philosophies and paradigms that help managers cope with ambiguity, complexity and indeterminacy”, may help and that intuition may play a part as can creativity and improved judgement.

To manage ambiguity, complexity and indeterminacy “naïve consciousness,” that encourages a crude causality must be avoided. “Management and organisational values and perspectives must be reframed” and instrumental and moral and political judgement integrated. Management development should focus on decision making rather than management techniques. This includes developing self awareness, insight into one’s own value base and advanced cognitive processes, “especially those that transcend formal logic to explore the ‘dialectical operations’ in adult thought” (Dixon 2004, p.4).

Changing their own behaviour is in itself an issue for public sector managers including becoming more performance orientated and emulating or not emulating private sector practices. Agencies might encourage managers to emulate private sector managers and should encourage administrative practices that go beyond rule following and encourages the taking of personal responsibility for decisions and actions. They should encourage managers to look beyond institutionalised organisational perspectives.

Government has tended to see managers as implementing policy rather than contributing to it. This means managers might not seek to understand the complexity of policy and policy implementation and this can limit their decision

making ability. Performance management and commercialisation demand a new set of management competencies. A challenge for agencies is providing cost-effective management development for this demanding role. This is especially the case as the role could be seen, given the paradoxes, as equivalent to “Nietzsche’s existential *Urbermensche* - the heroic superman” in that a public service manager must be everything from visionary to coach to entrepreneur (Dixon, 2004, p. 6).

LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT

Dixon and Dogan (2003) offer an in depth exploration of the impact of paradox on public services leadership. Reaching back to the epistemological and ontological foundations of differing perspectives on management and leadership they establish four broad paradigms which they label ‘*homo hierarchus*’, ‘*homo economicus*’, ‘*homo sociologus*’ and the ‘*existential outsider*’.

Homo hierarchus is underpinned by a naturalist epistemology and a structuralist ontology and corresponds to the hierarchical model outlined above. *Homo economicus* is underpinned by a naturalist epistemology with an agency ontology that emphasizes individuality and freedom of choice and corresponds to a managerialist perspective.

Homo sociologicus is underpinned by a hermeneutic epistemology and a structuralist ontology and generates the perspective that a “public agency should have a missionary orientation...good public sector leadership should be inclusion driven with a focus on building capacity to achieve results” (Dixon & Dogan, 2003, p. 39, their Figure 1). The *existential outsider* is underpinned by a hermeneutic epistemology and an agency ontology. This results in a perspective where, “...good public leadership should be survival driven, with plausibility the basis for reasoning that makes sense of situations as they arise” (Dixon & Dogan, 2003, p. 39, their Figure. 1).

The four paradigms create challenges for public sector leaders. They need to be aware of these contending positions and accept that "... what constitutes 'good' leadership is an essentially contested concept, clarifiable through constructive discourse" (Dixon & Dogan, 2003, p.29). They should be suspicious of 'best' solutions and understand contending arguments as an expression of the paradigms and , " They would thus view 'good leadership' as an iterative process that involves learning-by- doing and learning- from –experience about what is the right thing to do and how to do things right" (Dixon & Dogan, 2003, p.31).

CONCLUSIONS ON PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT

There are some important issues identified in the literature that should influence the design and delivery of management development programmes for public service managers. If the paradoxes identifies by Dixon (2004) are presented as the dilemmas experienced by a manager they present as a daunting reality (see Table 2.1). This needs to be recognised from the outset and placed in historical and organisational context for participants so that they can engage with it. Also as Dixon suggests this reality demands a manager that can cope with complexity and ambiguity so that prescriptive and instrumental approaches to development will not be adequate (see footnote at the end of this chapter).

Independence of thought and action in problem solving and decision making needs to be encouraged together with a depth of analysis that does justice to social complexity and a contested social reality. As Dixon also suggests self-awareness and reflection will be essential and learning will need to be self-directed so that personal development becomes a constant feature of management practice and a response to the fluid public service environment.

Developers need to be expert facilitators who have experience of managing in this environment and understand the frames of reference that participants will bring to the learning experience. This includes a knowledge of social policy and professional values and ethics.

Assessment should be based on application of knowledge and skills in the work place Firstly to do justice to the complexity of public service realities but secondly to allow outcome measurement. Therefore time frames for programmes need allow for long term project work.

<u>Paradox 1.</u> I must manage the service so that it is cost efficient and effective in meeting its objectives. It must conform to Government policy.	It is not clear what the objectives for my service are, very little can be quantified and policy is unclear and contradictory.
<u>Paradox 2.</u> I am held accountable for the management of the service.	I have no control over service design or delivery.
<u>Paradox 3.</u> I must be 'results orientated'.	If I achieve results I am not rewarded if I don't achieve I am not punished.
<u>Paradox 4.</u> I should take managed risks to meet the needs of service users.	I must not take political and financial risks.
<u>Paradox 5.</u> I must meet the performance targets set for the service.	Decisions that impact on performance are imposed on me.
<u>Paradox 6.</u> I must challenge poor performance.	I must not create conflict.
<u>Paradox 7.</u> I must increase service quality and the level of service offered.	I must decrease the cost of the service.
<u>Paradox 8.</u> I must meet the needs of service users and the community.	I must provide value for money.
<u>Paradox 9.</u> I must involve my team in decision making and delegate whenever I can.	I am accountable for the management of the service.

Table 2.1 Paradox in Public Services Management

(Based on Dixon, J. (2004) On Managing Effectively in a Paradoxical Public Management Environment, pp. 2-3).

The leadership paradigms can be represented as the differing expectations that can be experienced by a public services manager (see Figure 2.1). Apart from discouraging a naïve approach to leadership and encouraging contingency the model further illustrates the range of knowledge and skills required by a public services manager. In effect 'quick fixes' are not really any more an option than simplistic solutions. Management development must be extensive with a depth that does justice to the complexity and provides the skills necessary to navigate reality and negotiate agreements.

If independence and self-reliance are important engaging line managers and teams in a dialogue focused on expectations and priorities can help as can carrying the dialogue and professional development and support into a participants longer term relationship with their manager. Mentoring can provide alternative perspectives and values and peer support and group learning can further enrich the experience to good effect. Involvement of organisational specialists and senior managers and opportunity for engagement with organisational forums will further encourage dialogue, negotiation and the recognition of complexity. In sum a constructivist approach to learning is likely to offer the most useful design parameters (Murphy 1997).

Of the leadership paradigms the existential outsider constitutes almost a default situation, a set of pragmatic tactics that can permit survival. However its features can also be seen as constituting a fundamental alienation. Recognition of this as default response can help, as can an understanding of the negative organisational culture it engenders. Self-management and awareness and stress management techniques can, as Dixon suggests, deal with the emotional impact of both paradox and conflicting paradigms on participants.

MANAGERS EXPECT ME TO:

<p>HOMO HIERARCHUS</p> <p>Follow organisational policy and procedures. Implement the decisions of my superiors. Ensure subordinates conform. Be loyal to the organisation. Carry out efficiently my defined responsibilities. Refer matters beyond my authority to a senior manager. Accept a steady promotion up through the career structure.</p>	<p>HOMO SOCIOLOGICUS</p> <p>Be a good team player in the management team. Have a strong value base. Be committed to the service and meeting community need. Lead and motivate my team. Develop my team and myself continually. Be empowering and inclusive when making decisions. Be good at communicating and building trust with other groups and organisations.</p>
<p>HOMO ECONOMICUS</p> <p>Work independently within a delegated budget. Take risks and get results. Have a high personal profile. Be entrepreneurial. Be ambitious and competitive. Be rewarded according to results. Delegate to the team and ensure they perform well to achieve my goals. Build political networks to support my ambitions.</p>	<p>EXISTENTIAL OUTSIDER</p> <p>Bother them only if really necessary. Avoid problems where I can and change as little as possible. Be vague about what needs to be achieved and procedures to be followed. Enjoy the social opportunities work provides. Leave my team alone as long as they stay out of trouble. Go for the easiest solutions. Be un-ambitious. Follow up my own pet interests. Set up lots of pointless committees.</p>

Figure 2.1 The Contending Perspectives on Public Management (Based on Dixon, J. , Dogan, R. (2003). The Contending Perspectives on Public Management: A Philosophical Investigation).

It could be argued that there is little difference between public and private sector management. For instance all management could be seen as about managing paradox and all leadership could be seen as dependent on a recognition and response to the four paradigms. However the design principles outlined above are very similar in their level of sophistication to those aspired to by programmes

introduced in the seventies to develop executives who could cope with the demands of managing multi-national companies in complex political environments.

This means that even if the menu for the 'super-man/woman' is actually as valid as much in the private sector as the public then certainly the public services management agenda still must be recognised as a very demanding one that requires a programme that aspires to the best of private sector practices as well as responding to the particular experiences of public services management. As Dixon points out, therefore finding good suppliers and being able to meet the costs of management development constitute fundamental problems for public services.

A further paradox can be identified that might influence this research. Management development might be harder to manage in the public sector, not just because of its content but because of the paradoxes it too must overcome to be managed effectively as an organisational activity. Therefore designing and managing a programme may put particular strains on providers. Experience of successfully managing projects in a public service environment could be an advantage to a provider in both design and delivery.

DEFINING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Noting "...the relative infancy of the field...", Wright and McMahan (1992, pp. 296–301) suggest that human resource management HRM and strategic human resource management SHRM have developed out of an increasing interest in strategic management generally, and a resultant concern amongst various specific organisational functions to become integrated into strategic processes. They propose to provide both a definition of SHRM that will differentiate it from HRM, and review theoretical frameworks that have been used, or could be used, to clarify the role of SHRM in strategic management. They agree with Schwab (1980) that lack of definition has been a major cause of confusion in

organisational research and they quote with approval a definition of SHRM provided by Schuler (1992, p. 18):

“All those activities affecting the behaviour of individuals in their efforts to formulate and implement the strategic needs of the business.”

They make reference to Butler and Ferris (1991) suggesting that this text is in accord with Schuler as, “In other words SHRM is the macro-organisational approach to viewing the role and function of HRM in the larger organisation.” They then offer their own definition of SHRM as:

“The pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals.”

They commend their definition on the grounds that it highlights the two important dimensions that distinguish SHRM from ‘traditional’ HRM:

“First, vertically, it entails the linking of human resource management practices with the strategic management process of the organisation. Second, horizontally, it emphasizes the co-ordination or congruence amongst the various human resource management practices through a pattern of planned action.”

This latter point relates to a previous discussion, in which they draw attention to a tendency in HRM, for the field to be fragmented into:

“sub disciplines of selection, training, appraisal and rewards.... that have evolved in relative isolation from one another.”

Torrington and Hall (1998) introduce the phrase ‘human resource strategy’ HRS. They then offer a definition:

“Human resource strategy involves a central philosophy of the way that people in the organisation are managed and the translation of this into personnel policies

and practices.

It requires personnel policies and practices to be integrated, so that they make a coherent whole, and also that this whole is integrated with the business and or organisational strategy.”

They offer Schuler and Jackson's (1987) adaptation of Porter as an example of how HRS might vary according to organizational strategy. The definition is clear and concise but it is hard to see anything to distinguish HRS from SHRM. Also the definition doesn't really add much to previous definitions other than the addition of 'philosophy' to HRM policy and practice.

Armstrong (1995, p. 47) defines SHRM as:

“...concerned with those decisions which have a major and long term effect on the employment and development of people in the organisation, and on the relationships which exist between its managers and staff.... The aim of strategic HRM is to ensure that the culture, style and structure of the organisation, and the quality of, commitment and motivation of its employees, contribute fully to the achievement of business objectives.”

The addition of the dimensions of 'decisions', 'major' and 'long term' to a definition of SHRM would seem useful in distinguishing SHRM from everyday HRM.

Storey (1995b, p. 4) suggests HRM can mean all aspects of people management or a "new way". The new way is the interesting approach. He notes that HRM has generated some very controversial problems around the issues of meaning, fact and values. HRM can be very ambiguous, it has evangelical overtones and it is not clear whether it is a theory or a model. He defines it as:

“a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed

and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques” (Storey, 1995b, p. 5).

He points out that it does not consist of a set of à priori good employment practice rather a new alignment of human resource initiatives with the competitive environment and an organisations business strategy. He notes that some writers go further than this alignment and suggest that HRM policies should not just derive from, but should actively feed corporate business strategy. A feature he draws attention to is that line managers are seen as crucial to the effective delivery of human resource management policies as distinct from the human resource or personnel specialist.

Storey’s introduction of competitive advantage as a primary outcome for HRM is useful and to him HRM and SHRM are the same creature. His discussion introduces a new dimension in the form of the centrality of line managers in HRM developments and he makes a valuable distinction between approaches derived from and approaches driving or feeding corporate strategy.

There is clearly some confusion in attempts to define what is a relatively new field. For instance, whilst their discussion has considerable substance, I am not convinced that Wright and McMahan (1992) achieve their goal of providing clear definitions. They do not actually define HRM at all, yet it is included in all of the definitions they consider - except for Schuler’s - as a point of reference for defining SHRM. The reference to ‘traditional’ HRM might be an attempt to justify this, but it does not help matters when the tradition is one of only two decades at most, and the HRM field suffers as much from dispute and lack of clarity as SHRM.

Schuler’s definition could potentially define a completely different field of study from any of the others, by focussing on the strategic function per se and the behaviour of individuals rather than HRM policy and practice more generally. The definition offered by Butler and Ferris (1991) and Wright and McMahan’s own definition do not seem to be in accord. Butler and Ferris’s would allow for

the positive exclusion of HRM from strategic processes and Wright and McMahan's introduction of the issue of co-ordination, that needn't, despite their assertion to the contrary in anyway be implied by their phrase "pattern of planned human resource deployments", could be seen as identifying a different issue entirely, that relates to the effective management of HRM projects or functions and has no specific strategic dimension.

However accepting this confusion and the limitations of looking only at definition, important issues that impact on the research question have already been identified. These are worth outlining. The first and most obvious is that it is a new endeavour so that the field is not yet established. Whether one distinguishes SHRM from HRM or not, strategic orientation is clearly seen an aspiration and is presented as an enhancement to practice.

The idea that the focus of activity should be influencing behaviour that contributes to the formulation and implementation of strategic needs offers a useful direction and gives some priority to management development. Other key concepts can also be extracted from the discussion. For instance the 'vertical' linkage of practices to strategy is important but so also is 'horizontal' integration between HRM practices facilitated by an HRM strategy that gives coherence and direction to HRM activities. A focus on substantial, long-term organisational change through influencing organisational culture, style, and structure and employee motivation and capability is also helpful, as is the idea that a shift is necessary towards line manager involvement away from the existing reliance on HRM specialists.

The distinction between deriving HRM strategy from organisational strategy or HRM activity directly feeding strategy could be an important one. The notion that the primary outcome of strategically orientated activity should be competitive advantage would seem essential. However this is clearly problematic for public services where organisational strategy might be less clear and competitive advantage an unachievable outcome. However one could argue that seeking improved efficiency and effectiveness through HRM practices is a reasonable

adjustment that would at least allow public services to aspire to the practices reached for by the definitions.

One could also argue for HRM having greater significance in public services and offering itself more readily as a basis for strategy in its own right. That is to say HRM policies and practices that impact directly on staff behaviours could bring significant improvements to the many public services where the interaction between the user and staff is the core of the service e.g. care, primary health care, and education. In other words SHRM may perhaps offer the crucial strategic options in reaching for efficiency and effectiveness. It also possible to see that the benchmarking exercises that are required in current Best Value exercises (Local Government Act 1999) could provide a comparator that can replace competitive advantage as a point of reference in directing public service SHRM initiatives.

DELINEATING STRATEGIC HRM BY IDEOLOGY OR PERSPECTIVES

Brewster (1999, pp. 357-360) suggests that Wright and McMahan's definition of SHRM is much cited, but that it represents a limited focus and is in fact representative of what he calls the "universalist paradigm". This, he suggests, is the dominant paradigm in the USA and it "nomothetic", in that its methodology is deductive as it uses evidence to test abstract hypotheses. He argues that it accepts convergence to the point where context may no longer be deemed relevant. He suggests that its research base is characterised by "a small number of private sector, leading edge exemplars of good practice, often large multinationals and often from manufacturing or even the high tech sector." He proposes that whilst the research has strengths it also has limitations in that it can result in, "much careful statistical analysis of small-scale often narrow, questions whose relevance to wider theoretical and practical debates is sometimes hard to see."

He contrasts this universalist paradigm with what he calls "the contextual paradigm", which, "by contrast is ideographic, searching for an overall

understanding of what is contextually unique and why.” This research is characterised by a search for difference between approaches to SHRM in various contexts and attempts to explain the differences between approaches. The link to an individual firm’s performance is secondary and “societies, governments or regions can have SHRM.” At an organizational level (for public sector organisations must be included), objectives are not assumed to be good for either society or for the organisation and it is not assumed that the interests of everyone in the organisation will be the same. Factors such as “culture, ownership, labour markets, the role of the state and trade union organisation,” are seen as central to the subject rather than external influences to be allowed for.

This paradigm he claims is widespread in Europe but not without its adherents in North America. Its methodology is characterised by induction, drawing theory from the collection of data, and that there is, “less likelihood of the researchers assuming the purposes of power holders in the organisation are unchallengeable.” He suggests the paradigms are true to Kuhn’s classic definition, in that they often go unchallenged and that whilst there are areas where they can be reconciled there is much to be said for drawing from both.

Brewster’s focus on there being differing types of HRM or SHRM is helpful. His interpretation of Kuhn is however rather suspect in that the abiding characteristic of a paradigm is that it is dominated by one theoretical perspective that only shifts when its contradictions reach crisis point, then a new perspective dominates the paradigm. This notion of a paradigm shift challenges the positivistic pretensions of natural science, in social science differing theoretical perspectives within one field are hardly unusual. The notion that the traditions he identifies are distinguished by methodology also seems doubtful, rather Brewster is perhaps being coy about ideology. In Western Europe there is a stronger tradition of conflict models of society and organisations and a stronger tradition of public services. This would lead to the more acceptable proposal that it is possible to generate a number of definitions of HRM and SHRM and identify different characteristics that reflect these fundamental differences in perspective.

This more flexible approach and a range of SHRM approaches, might offer the possibility of greater applicability to public services whereas what Brewster has identifies as the universalist paradigm, based on private sector realities and practices, may well not fit.

Storey (1995b) offers an overview of the key features of HRM in which he contrasts it with personnel management and industrial relations. His detailed structure and description is particularly valuable and offers one of the clearest pictures in the literature of the change in perspective associated with HRM and SHRM. However it needs to be accepted that it reflects HRM's aspirations rather than its achievements, in effect his representation makes explicit the ideological differences between the approaches (see Table 2.2).

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Personnel Management and Industrial Relations</i>	<i>HRM</i>
	<i>Beliefs and assumptions</i>	
1 Contract	Careful delineation of written contracts	Aim to go 'beyond contract'
2 Rules	Importance of devising clear rules/mutuality	'Can do' outlook: impatience with 'rules'
3 Guide to management action	Procedures/consistency control	'Business need'/flexibility/commitment
4 Behaviour referent	Norms/custom and practice	Values/mission
5 Managerial task <i>vis-à-vis</i> labour	Monitoring	Nurturing
6 Nature of relations	Pluralist	Unitarist
7 Conflict	Institutionalized	De-emphasized
8 Standardization	High (eg, 'parity' an issue)	Low (eg, 'parity' not seen as relevant)
	<i>Strategic aspects</i>	
9 Key relations	Labour - management	Business – customer
10 Initiatives	Piecemeal	Integrated
11 Corporate plan	Marginal to	Central to
12 Speed of decisions	Slow	Fast
	<i>Line management</i>	
13 Management role	Transactional	Transformational leadership
14 Key managers	Personnel/IR specialists	General/business/line managers
15 Prized management skills	Negotiation	Facilitation
	<i>Key levers</i>	
16 Foci of attention for interventions	Personnel procedures	Wide-ranging cultural, structural and personnel strategies
17 Selection	Separate, marginal task	Integrated, key task
18 Pay	Job evaluation: multiple, fixed grades	Performance-related: few if any grades
19 Conditions	Separately negotiated	Harmonization
20 Labour - management	Collective bargaining contracts	Towards individual contracts
21 Thrust of relations with stewards	Regularized through facilities and training	Marginalized (with exception of some bargaining for change models)
22 Communication	Restricted flow/indirect	Increased flow/direct
23 Job design	Division of labour	Teamwork
24 Conflict handling	Reach temporary truces	Manage climate and culture
25 Training and development	Controlled access to courses	Learning companies

Table 2.2 Key features of HRM compared with personnel management and industrial relations (Source: Storey, 1995b, p. 10)

Boxall (1996, pp. 59-60) describes strategic HRM as “an area of difficult definitions and contentious theory.” He then declines to offer a definition but identifies “two broad strands of meaning in the academic discourse on HRM”, these he describes as a ‘commitment orientated model’ and one in which “HRM is defined as including all styles of labour management, including the high commitment variant.” The rest of his paper is devoted to exploring the Resource Based Theory of the Firm. Despite some thoughtful comments on approaches to strategy he doesn’t discuss the implications for strategy of his high commitment model, although a fairly obvious point to make would be its logical lack of contingency. His ‘this and the rest as well’ approach doesn’t provide much of either a definition or a typology.

Storey (1995b, p. 23) suggests that HRM has “hard” and “soft” dimensions. The hard consists of a calculative approach to managing the labour resource. The soft focuses on employee commitment, trust, satisfaction and motivation. In particular his empirical work showed no connection between soft measures e.g. employee satisfaction, and a high score of HRM characteristics. Reviewing the literature, he notes the absence of critical approaches. He cites Hart (1993, p. 29) as an exception to this trend:

“I believe human resource management to be amoral and antisocial, unprofessional, reactive, uneconomic and ecologically destructive”.

HRM is seen as having ousted the welfare and humanist values of personnel management. It is seen as a shift from a concern for “efficiency and justice” to a purely business orientated mission. Hart criticises the Institute of Personnel Management for in fact changing its mission to take on this new business orientation.

Legge (1995, pp. 33-39) suggests that what HRM brings is a focus on strategic linkage and on managing human resources as a resource. She suggests that all the soft elements were already there in personnel management and, as re-expressed by HRM, lack coherency. She sees the soft HRM model focusing on

human resource policies that develop “resourceful humans” (Morris & Burgoyne, 1973 cited by Legge, 1995, p. 36). This establishes a direct link with learning organisation theorists. She suggests that HRM is ‘old wine in new bottles’ except that the humanistic soft issues have been side lined. However, a key difference is perhaps that HRM is:

“a more central strategic management task than personnel management, in that it is experienced by managers as the most valued company resource to be managed, it concerns them, in the achievement of business goals and it expresses senior managers preferred organisational values” (Legge 1995 p. 37).

Legge (1995, p. 37) cites Fowler (1987) who suggests “it’s not what it is, but who is saying it. In a nutshell HRM represents the discovery of personnel management by strategically orientated chief executives.” Having noted this Legge does not comment on the power shift implied, but does go on to draw attention to a crucial dilemma for HRM. She suggests it seeks to find contingency between internal and external integration. This means that the soft model is necessarily weak since it is only contingent with certain strategies - it has only limited fit. She suggests that the soft approach tends to be absolutist in contrast with contingency approaches that are associated with hard line HRM.

Legge suggests that academics have adopted it because it is big business and because the Conservative Government in the 1980s set a climate where old style personnel management and industrial relations studies were redundant. She suggests that HRM offers a way for academics to continue research but with a commercially orientated discipline. She suggests that the shift to self-funded and sponsored students encourages this redefinition - it allows academics to fit the customers’ image.

Legge suggests that line managers have benefited in the shift in power from personnel to general management. This has allowed middle managers to enhance their job prospects and has gone alongside the creation of cost and profit centres and delayering. She suggests that the role of middle and first line

managers has shifted from an operational focus to a business orientation.

For personnel managers Legge proposes that acting as an interface between management and unions offered only limited credibility and excluded them from a full part in the senior management team. In effect, managing the unions was a job in decline from 1979 onwards. HRM thus provided them with a new ideology through which they might preserve their paradox – “they could have their cake and eat it.”

There is some rich material in here with regard to the research question. The idea that the search for a strategic orientation might be culturally specific, and that other drivers and aspirations are apparent in a European model, could bring into question the appropriateness of the enterprise. At the very least, it means the costs as well as the benefits of strategic MD programmes need to be reviewed. Further, this political dimension opens up the possibility of resistance to a change in MD practices, and the ‘soft’/‘hard’ controversy introduces the issue of the effect of a strategic approach on commitment or motivation. Storey’s framework, which contrasts the practices of the different traditions, offers a potential menu for adjusting a MD programme’s philosophy and design. That is, the design can be quite different depending on the tradition.

The distinction between a learning organisational model and a contingency model offers two broad approaches to designing a strategically orientated MD programme. The idea of power shifting towards line managers as the focus shifts to contingency is interesting as is the notion of the changes being driven by professional self interest of various forms. In sum the motivations and perceptions of stakeholders in an MD programme deserves some scrutiny. A public service perspective brings considerable insight to the discussion. For it is possible to argue that the four paradigms identified by Dixon and Dogan (2003) explain the paradigm shift that has occurred in Personnel/HRM. For instance Storey’s representation of HRM compared with Personnel (see Table 2.2) can be seen as a shift from a *homo hierarchus* to a *homo economicus* paradigm. Some of the other perspectives can also be seen to be based on writers comparing the

contending paradigms. For example Legge (1995) in her criticism of the 'hard' HRM approach can be seen to have taken a *homo sociologicus* position.

In effect Personnel/ HRM as a function in professional crisis could be seen as subject to the same contended culture as public services and faced by the same paradoxes (Dixon 2004). Unfortunately this does not offer the possibility of confluence. The strategically orientated chief executives noted by Legge (1995) as crucial stakeholders driving the introduction of SHRM are not present in the public services . Nor are the strategic processes and the managerialist imperatives, fuelled by market competition, that are responsible for the paradigm shift in the private sector. If Personnel/HRM has discovered contention generated by a current paradigm shift the public services are rather locked into the same with no mechanism present to complete the transition.

It is possible to argue for the softer HRM approaches and the learning organisational model having greater congruency with public services in contrast to the hard, contingency approach which is dependent on competition and strategic processes for its generation and sustenance. However in the contended public services environment such initiatives are still likely to be destabilized by bureaucratic and managerialist expectations and requirements. Even if it is possible to identify different models of SHRM, the fit with public services could still be problematic.

DELINEATING STRATEGIC HRM BY ESTABLISHING ITS THEORETICAL CORE

Jackson and Schuler (1999) identify eight key theoretical perspectives that they see as central to HRM:

- General Systems Theory
- Role Behaviour
- Institutional Theory
- Resource Dependency Theory

- Human Capital Theory
- Transaction Cost Theory
- Agency Theory
- Resource Based Theory

General systems theory views an organisation as an open system and so allows HRM to be seen as a sub-system. Inputs to the HRM system and outputs can be analysed in strategic terms. Role theory allows behaviours to be identified that need to be developed in staff if they are to work strategically and develop competitive advantage for an organisation. For instance a firm following a competitive strategy based on innovation will expect its HRM managers to develop creative behaviours with a long term focus, a high level of cooperative behaviour, a tolerance of ambiguity and a high degree of risk taking. Institutional theory is a similar perspective to role theory but treats an organisation as a social entity seeking to conform to the expectations of multiple stakeholders in seeking legitimacy. The perspective allows for the institutional resistance that maintains established practices and the factors that pressurize institutions in the same environment to develop similar profiles.

Resource dependency theory explores the relationships between organisations and their internal and external constituencies as power relationships generated through the control of resources. So HRM activities will reflect the distribution of power within the system. Human capital theory focuses on the productive capabilities of people. This allows HRM's contribution to developing an organisation's human capital, the costs of increasing human capital and the impact of human capital on strategy to be explored.

Transaction cost theory explores the governance structures that organisations develop as ways of controlling human behaviour. It seeks to look at the environmental and behavioural factors that lead organisations to retain or develop staff rather than transact for them in the marketplace. That is it examines the comparative costs of the transactions as explanations for organisational behaviour. Agency theory offers an analysis of the contracts

between parties that seek to govern behaviour. It can therefore offer insights into the factors that can influence the costs and the outcomes of HRM activities such as recruitment and selection initiatives or training programmes.

The resource based theory of the firm breaks from the established strategy paradigm that focuses on external factors to an organisation determining strategic advantage. Instead it examines the link between strategy and the internal resources of an organisation. It focuses on resources that are unique to a particular organisation and are hard to imitate, substitute or acquire and hence can be the basis for competitive advantage.

Jackson and Schuler (1999, pp. 9-16) then go on to review "empirical research" in two broad sections that explore internal and external contexts. As internal contexts they look at size, structure, technology, life cycles and business strategy. As external contexts they look at legal, social and political environments, unionisation, labour markets, industry characteristics and national culture.

Under business strategy they identify typologies of strategy that can be cross-referenced to characteristics of HRM. They conclude that "strategy is a contextual factor with important implications for HRM," whilst admitting the contributions they have drawn attention to "does not fully consider the possible complexity of and alternative models for describing the relationship between strategy and HRM." They note the need to integrate HRM horizontally i.e. across HRM systems and to move from "focussing on individuals to treating social systems as the target for study." They suggest that "future HRM research should elevate organisation analysis to a status equal to that currently enjoyed by job analysis...", and note the problem globalization poses in that HRM systems will have to function in several countries (Jackson and Schuler 1999, pp.17-19).

Jackson and Schuler's search for a theoretical core for SHRM is puzzling but instructive. For instance general systems theory would seem to be just that,

general and applicable to any system so it is not clear what it is offering specifically in relation to SHRM other than a broad, systemic perspective. In contrast they are much more specific about the contribution to be made by role behaviour but it would seem to offer a rather crude approach that is dependent on the viability of general strategies. The resource based theory of the firm would seem to offer a more concrete application but it is surely one amongst many valid strategic perspectives (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998). The secret perhaps lies in their concluding remarks. HRM has tended to take a psychological rather than a sociological perspective and generally needs a much broader theoretical base.

The search for a theoretical core becomes more problematic if the particular conditions of public services are allowed for. For instance the application of role behaviour is more complex because of the extensive role conflict created by the paradoxes experienced by managers (Dixon, 2004). The possibility of establishing a coherent role 'menu' that might link to strategy therefore seems even more remote. In contrast however institutional theory does justice to the many stakeholders public managers must respond to and resource dependency theory was originally developed to analyse public bureaucracies, and emphasizes the influence of power relationships (Ostroff and Schmitt 1993).

Human capital theory, transaction cost theory, resource based theory and agency theory are all founded on analyses that determines efficiency by comparing organisational actions and choices with market competitors. This means they assume a bounded rationality in examining decision making processes. Such comparisons are very hard, if not impossible, to make in the public services, limiting their analysis and their applicability in this context. Therefore one could conclude that the range of theoretical perspectives that can be drawn on in exploring strategy in public services may be more restricted or perhaps a substantially different set of theories needs to be established that would allow for the experience of paradox at a behavioural level or set analysis in a framework that stressed political processes. However the more robust conclusion would seem to be that as broad a theoretical base as possible would

benefit SHRM whether we are exploring its private sector or public service application and that this breadth will allow for discrimination in responding to the particular conditions of public services management.

Wright and MacMahan (1992) also attempt to identify theoretical approaches that might be relevant to SHRM and they are in close accord with Jackson and Schuler (1999). They then identify two non-strategic models where they suggest means HRM practices might not be the result of rational decision making and therefore strategic decision making processes. Rather they might derive from institutional and political forces in the firm. This perhaps indicates a narrow over rationalistic view of strategy and strategic processes and could result in excluding models that are particularly useful in understanding strategic processes in public services .

Storey (1995b) notes that since 1989 there has been a rapid growth of HRM journals and publications, particularly in the 1990s, so that HRM can be seen as establishing itself as a discipline. This specialist development has been reinforced by theoretical developments in other disciplines. Perhaps the most important of these he suggests has been the resource based theory of the firm. However Storey clearly puts little emphasis on theoretical content as a basis for delineating the field, seeing orientation or perspective as a far more crucial issue.

Generally the attempt to identify a theoretical core for SHRM seems unhelpful. It almost becomes the proposal that most of social science should underpin theorising in HRM and SHRM. The crucial issue is perhaps the need for HRM to shift emphasis from psychological approaches to sociological and to build a body of research that might inform SHRM given current deficiencies in the field. The implications of this for both HRM and SHRM are enormous, for it suggests that considerable progress needs to be made before the study of internal organizational context and the integration of functions is satisfactory, yet alone exploration of the external environment and the inter-relationship between the two dimensions. This has clear implications for the research question as it might

indicate that an integrated and co-ordinated programme would alone be an achievement without attempting strategic linkage and there will be a shortage of relevant research to offer guidance.

There seems to be some consensus that the resource based theory of the firm has a lot to offer SHRM by its approach to strategy. Other approaches to strategy may however prove equally useful and the best conclusion is perhaps that all approaches to strategy deserve exploration. However the formula for a human resource strategy that offers competitive advantage or efficiency and effectiveness is useful and could be used to shape an MD programme.

DELINEATING STRATEGIC HRM THROUGH FORMAL MODELS

Torrington and Hall (1998) offer a useful review of formal models that map the key functions of SHRM and their inter-relationships. They begin by offering two models by Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna (1984) (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Torrington and Hall note the value of the HRM model (see Figure 2.2) as whilst it is simple, it illustrates the need for co-ordination across the HRM functions. The SHRM model (see Figure 2.3) is seen by them as too dependent on rational processes of strategy formulation and also problematic because of its one-way relationship with organisational strategy. It would also seem to have left out market forces and might have been better incorporating a conventional political, economic, social and technological or 'PEST' analysis. (Dobson, 1993, p. 20)

If applied to a public services organisation Figure 2.3 would seem to offer a reasonable presentation especially as the market would be less of an external influence. However one could argue that all the external forces are encapsulated as public policy and there isn't a strategic process requiring environmental analysis operating in public services at all. Rather analysis and strategy formulation is a function of government and public service responsibilities are confined mostly to implementation. This would be in accord with the tendency for approaches to strategy in public services to focus on strategic planning (Green, 1998) and would make it difficult for an individual organisation's HRM function to influence strategy, although it could help achieve it. There would also seem to be room for the development of local strategy that responded to economic, political and cultural forces in particular communities in the context of a national strategy.

On the other hand Figure 2.2 is centred on performance management and this drives and links to appraisal rewards, training and selection. If performance in public services is harder to measure and therefore manage and in fact constitutes a fundamental paradox (Dixon, 2004), all the linkages are also less clear and harder to establish.

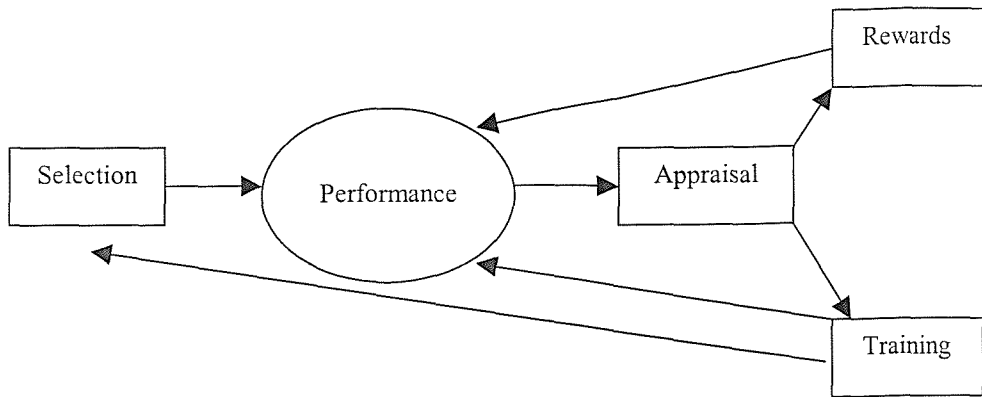


Figure 2.2

The human resource cycle

(Source: Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, 1984, p. 41)

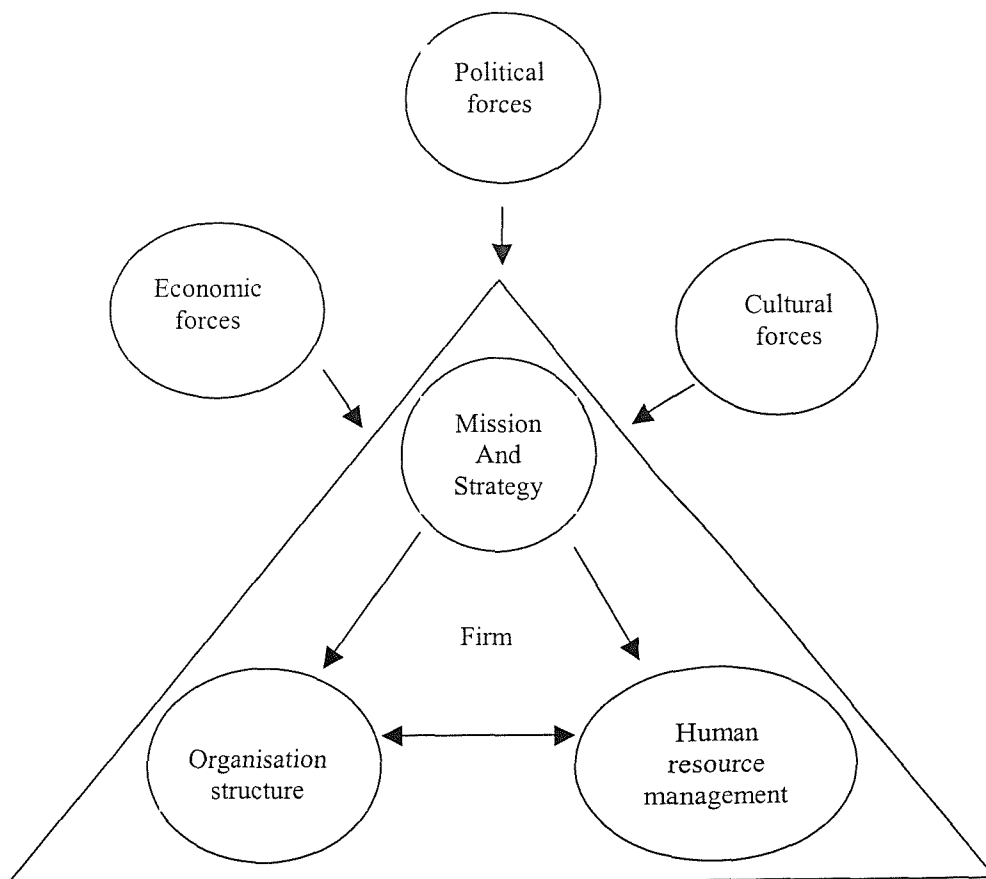


Figure 2.3

Strategic management and environmental pressures

(Source: Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, 1984, p. 35)

Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Quinn, Mills and Walton (1984) developed what has become known as the Harvard model (see Figure 2.4). This is valuable as it focuses on organizational outcomes for HRM or SHRM, rather than congruency of processes, and offers a greater detail and therefore emphasis on key variables in the external environment. Some of these variables identified are interesting in that they establish conditions that bear directly on strategy, but are specifically the domain of HRM e.g. Labour Markets, Unions. It also facilitates comparative analysis and responds to the deficiencies identified by Brewster in his criticism of a 'universalist' approach. That is it allows for considerable variance in HRM policy and practice according to external and internal conditions.

Whilst the fact that it is stakeholder driven assists its application to public services, if allowance is made for contending stakeholder expectations, that may not be resolvable without an economic imperative generated by shareholders, the linkages confidently presented in the diagram may be a lot less clear in reality. Rather than clear HRM policy choices, identifiable outcomes and long term positive consequences the result could be contended policy choices, confused outcomes that are hard to measure and difficulty in demonstrating long term positive changes.

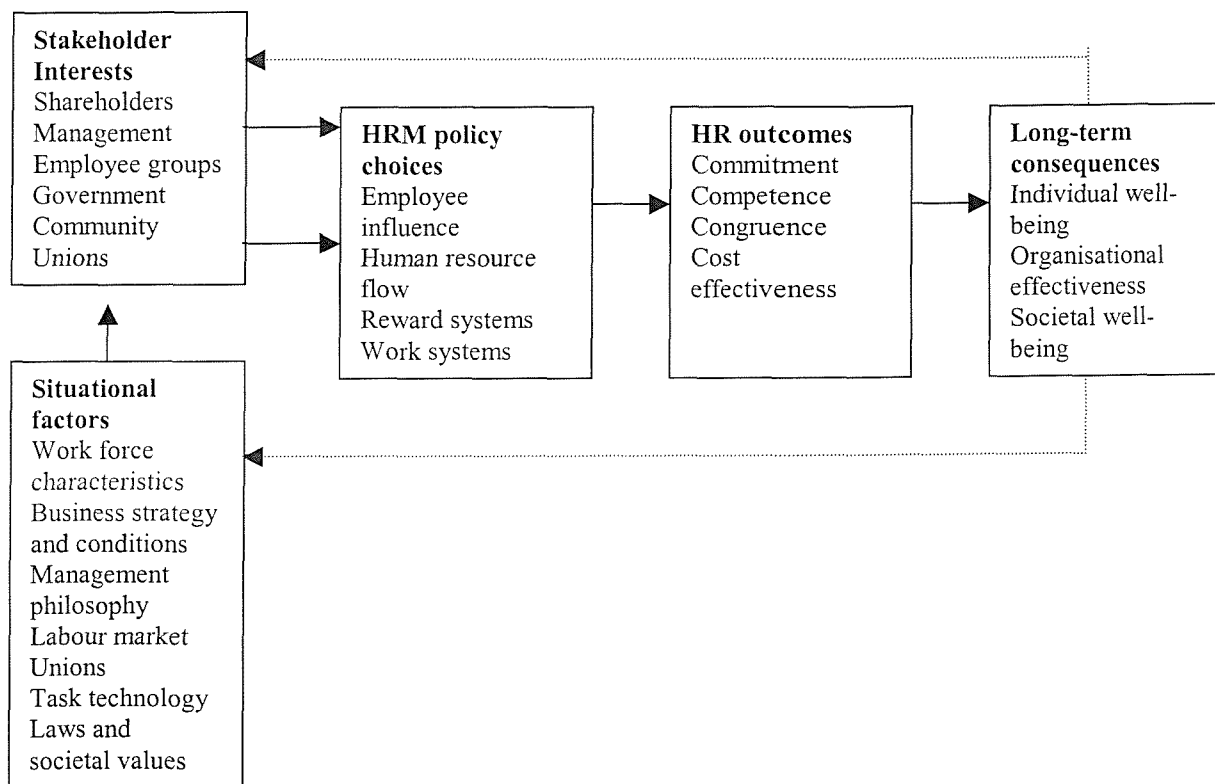


Figure 2.4

The Harvard framework for human resource management

(Source: Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Quinn, Mills and Walton, 1984, p. 34)

Guest (1989) offers detail in exploring the link between HRM practices and performance outcomes with an interesting distinction between HRM outcomes and organizational outcomes (see Figure 2.5). His presentation is clearly not focused on strategic linkage but on coherence and options in linking HRM to organisational outcomes. His categorisation of strategy is narrow and perhaps is misleading in suggesting different patterns of HRM practice and performance outcomes can be traced according to the broad strategy adopted, and he acknowledges that his categorisation is arbitrary. As with Figure 2.2, if applied to public services, the relationships between HRM policy and outcomes and organisational outcomes might be much harder to both manage and to demonstrate.

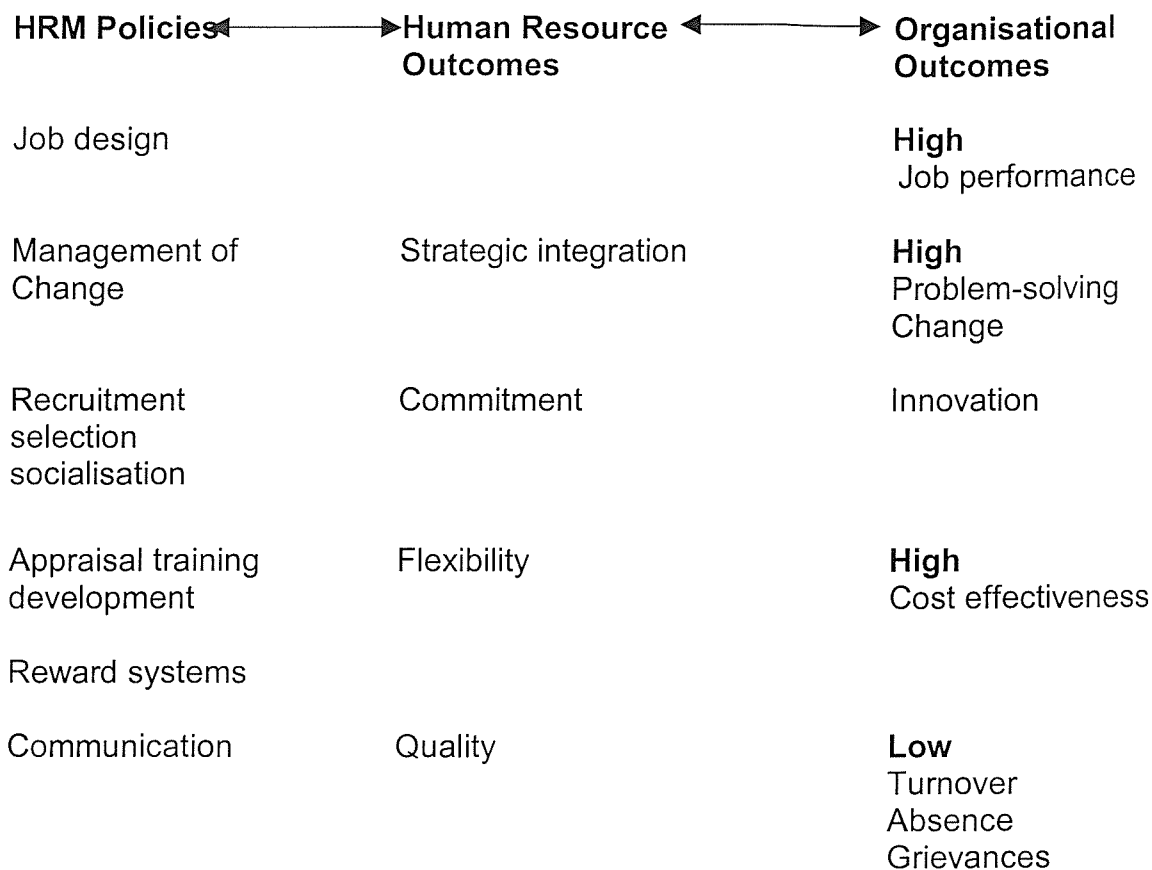


Figure 2.5

A Theory of HRM (Source: Guest, 1989, p. 49)

Hendry and Pettigrew's model (1992), sometimes called the Warwick model, builds on the Harvard model (see Figure 2.6). It is less prescriptive in its handling of the external context and draws attention to formal business strategy. Its division of the HRM context into one section that encompasses the traditional functions and another its configuration within the particular organisation, seems useful.

If applied to a public service organisation the business strategy dimension is likely to be inappropriate, whereas in the private sector it could be seen to be the key dimension. This could actually be instructive, in the sense that if competition in the market place is the key driver for SHRM and the crucial influence on HRM

policy and practice, the demand or justification for SHRM is likely to be less in public services.

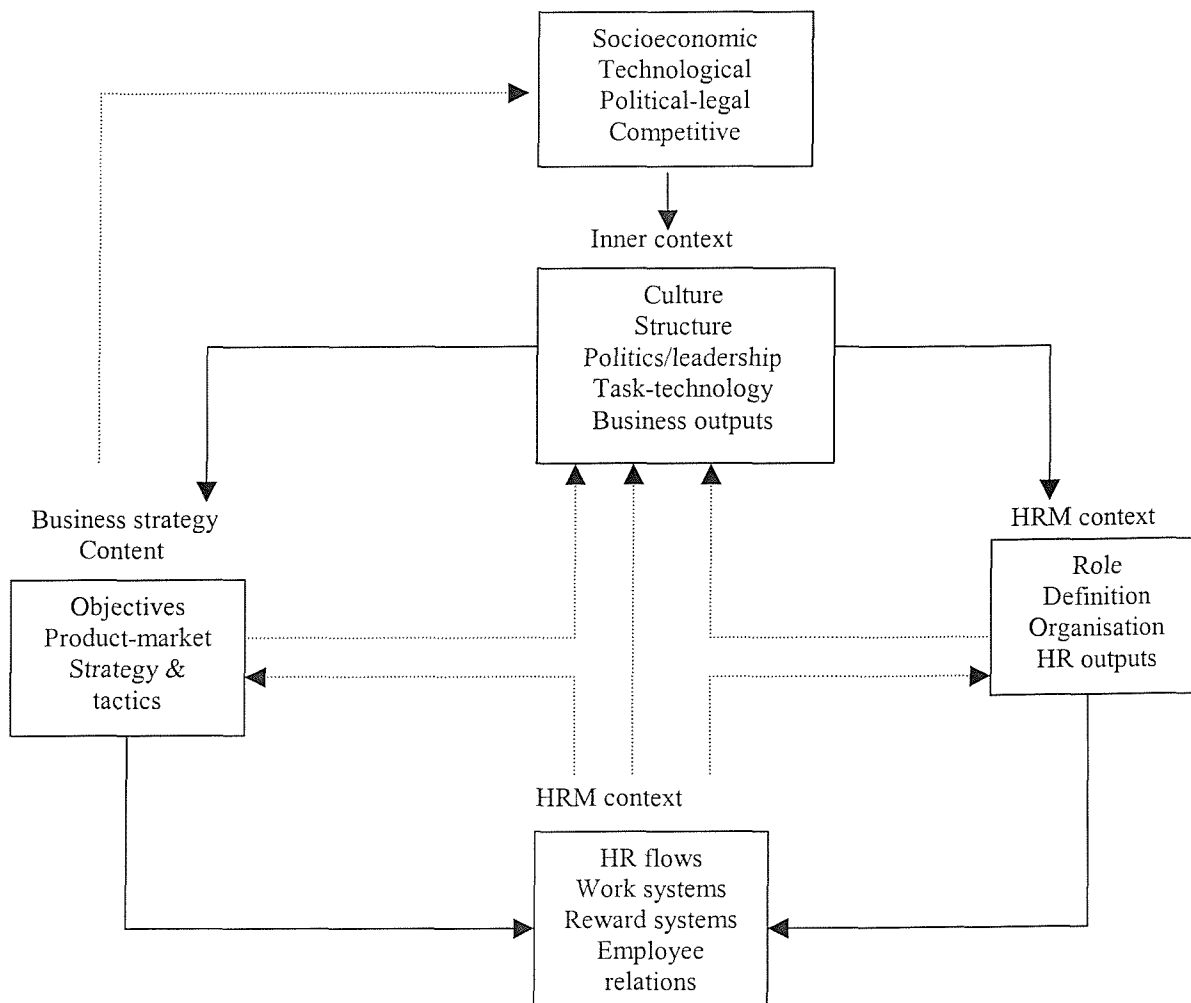


Figure 2.6
Model of strategic change and human resource management
 (Source: Hendry and Pettigrew, 1992, p. 139)

Jackson and Schuler (1995), offer a model Torrington and Hall do not review (see Figure 2.7). Whilst its presentation does not give a sense of the complex inter-relationships between the categories they identify, as a model it is comprehensive, in that its categories do encompass those identified in the other models. The informal-formal, prescribed – enacted short-term - long-term dimensions offer valuable variables and the central human resource management domain suggests that a strategic MD programme should be located in an integrated human resource management strategy.

It could be argued that the framework is applicable to the public services especially as it seems to leave out the product market. However a public service context might well mean that sense making and decision making is less clear so strategy is less clear. Therefore it is hard to link HRM philosophies and policies to strategy and use this coherency to shape practices across the HRM functions. This is bound to impact on the clarity of desired short and long term outcomes and on their achievement and measurement.

External Context
Local-National-Multinational

Laws and regulations Culture Politics Unions Labour Markets Industry characteristics

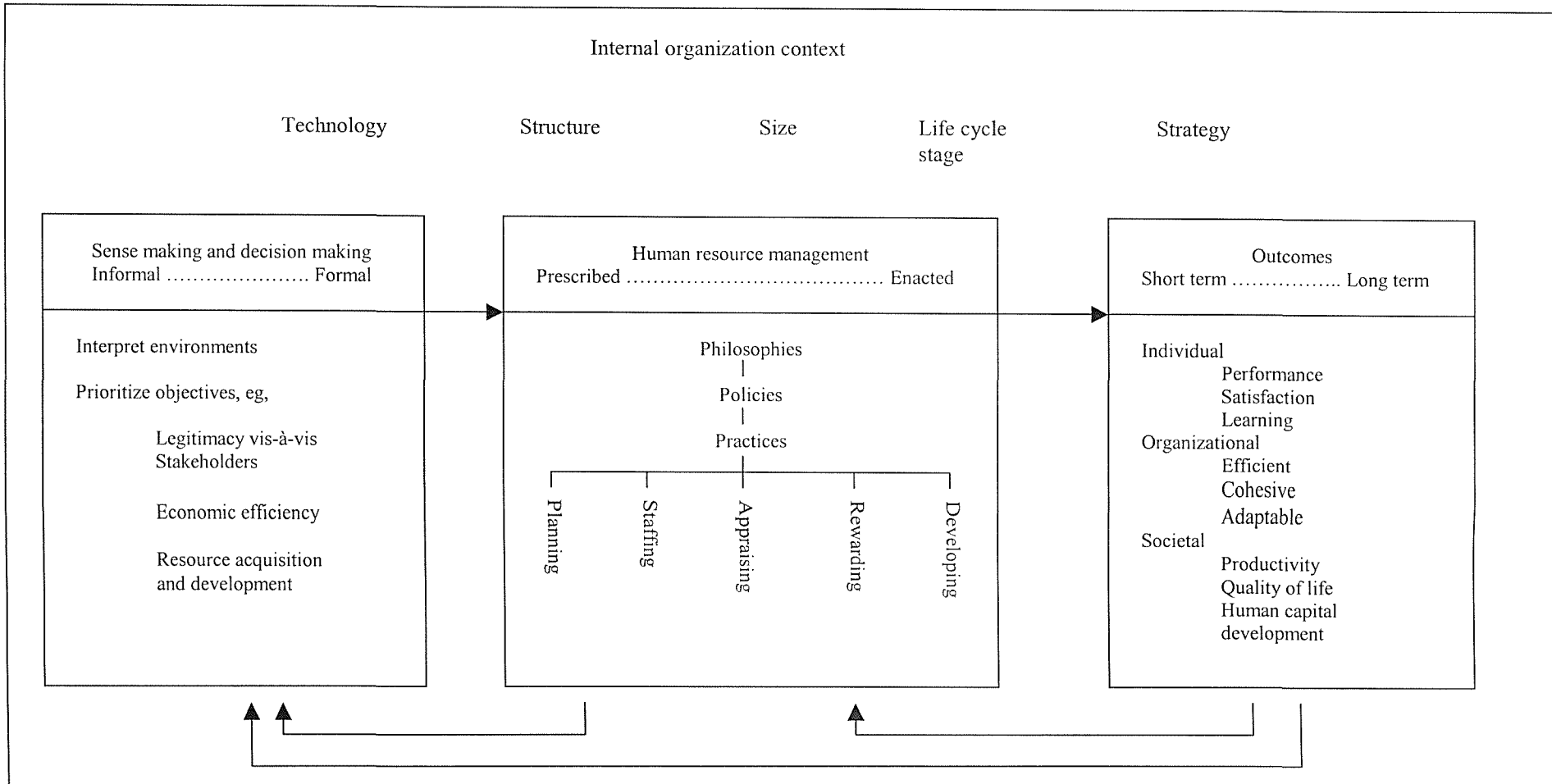


Figure 2.7

Integrative framework for understanding HRM in context (Source: Schuler, 1999, p. 18)

Without the detailed discussion that supports them formal models are not terribly helpful as they are in essence visual summaries of key dimensions and inter-relationships. This means they can be misleading in that they present a model that can indicate the possibility of coherent linkage between external environment, organisational strategy and HRM practices and outcomes that is only an aspiration. There is often no evidence that the relationship or interaction between parts of the formal model exist in practice or even proposals that might lead to such a development. In sum they can be a wish list that has yet to be achieved rather than an analysis.

Applied to the public services key dimensions can be lost and relationships weakened. For instance situational analysis is certainly a different process that cannot be centred on the product market. This means that the same drive for SHRM may not be present in public services and the linkages and relationships represented may be harder to achieve and to demonstrate. SHRM may be neither desirable nor achievable.

Presented in historical sequence the models offer a valuable picture of the development of at least the thinking about approaches to HRM and SHRM, over the last decade and a half. The increasing complexity of the representations is striking and points to the complexity of a strategically orientated MD programme. The question is also raised as to whether such a programme is possible if it is not located in a broader HRM strategy.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF HRM

Storey (1995b) asks if HRM is a theory without reality. He points to a tendency to research particular organisations such as Hewlett Packard and Xerox ad nauseam. He suggests that empirical research including his own survey in 1992 did show evidence of significant changes in the management of personnel in the UK. He suggested that unlike changes in the United States, this was taking a pluralist rather than a unitarist approach and was encompassing the British tradition of pluralist personnel management. The empirical research also indicated that the strategic dimensions of HRM are weak in practice:

“Interestingly, apart from an insistence on a customer orientation, most cases failed to offer much in the way of an integrated approach to employment management, and still less was there evidence of strategic integration with the corporate plan. This finding lends some support to the view that the HRM model is itself not a coherent, integrated phenomenon. Many of the initiatives recorded in the case research, and indicated in summary from here, arose for diverse reasons, and in practice they shared little in common. The fragmentary application of the model could of course be attributed to imperfections in take-up and implementation” (Storey, 1995b, p. 14).

Storey proposes that HRM could be a symbolic label for a ‘pick and mix’ approach by an opportunistic organisation. He notes that a disproportionate amount of HRM time and energy was invested in management development, “the panoply of HRM technology is seen in its fullest form in the management of managers”.

Legge (1995) reviews the research on the impact of HRM on working practices. She argues that whilst the soft model is the distinctive model in theory, there is little evidence of its application in practice. Rather, the evidence is for application of the ‘hard’ model. Furthermore, those changes associated with the hard model Legge suggests cannot be distinguished from old style personnel management. Legge links the soft model with Total Quality Management and Managing for Excellence but points out that implementation has often led to compliance to avoid sanctions or instrumental behaviour rather than any significant attitudinal change. Given this she asks whether HRM is not the old, hard personnel model, dressed in soft HRM rhetoric.

Tyson (1995, p. 110) concludes, having reviewed current approaches to research, “what has so far proved difficult in survey/type research is to forge the link of human resource strategies into the business strategy”. He suggests some reasons for this: firstly, rapid change in business strategy; secondly the problem of researching and understanding the actual process of strategy formulation. Tyson (1999) also points to a tendency to use surveys where crude indicators are used to identify HRM strategies. For instance representation on the board

by HRM specialists, written HRM strategy, and records of meetings in which HRM activities are linked to strategy, have been used.

Tyson suggests this is problematic in that firstly surveys often show, for instance, that there has been little change in board representation for forty years (Sisson, 1995). However surveys anyway fail to reveal the qualitative data which might demonstrate changes in thinking and behaviour, a situation that is compounded by such an approach being based on an over rational view of strategy. There is evidence that this does not accord with reality and strategy as a process often proves to be opportunistic, short term and emergent (Tyson, 1995). Furthermore he argues, referring to Purcell (1995), that there is evidence that increasingly complex organisational structures and relationships make it hard to uncover processes effectively so the relationships between corporate and business strategies and functional strategies are unclear. He argues that it should not be assumed that HRM or any other functional strategy is somehow 'downstream' of corporate and business strategy or in some way third order. New organisational types such as network organisations (Miles and Snow, 1999), that do not have even the broad structural features of more conventional organisations, make the problem even more complex.

Torrington and Hall (1998) draw attention to their own research that contradicts Storey's work in identifying clear involvement of HRM/Personnel specialists in strategy formulation. Their findings, which they suggest might indicate an improvement, are represented in Table 2.3.

Answers to the question 'Which of the following most closely describes the nature of the personnel function's involvement at a strategic level in each of the areas listed below?'

	<i>Develops strategy alone %</i>	<i>Develops strategy with the line %</i>	<i>Provides information to inform strategic decisions %</i>	<i>Implements strategic decisions %</i>	<i>None %</i>
HR planning	9 (n=18)	49 (n=93)	26 (n=49)	6 (n=11)	10 (n=19)
Recruitment and selection	15 (n=29)	49 (n=92)	14 (n=27)	16 (n=31)	5 (n=10)
Work design	2 (n=4)	25 (n=46)	24 (n=44)	13 (n=23)	35 (n=64)
Performance management	7 (n=13)	44 (n=82)	23 (n=43)	10 (n=18)	16 (n=29)
Quality initiatives	4 (n=8)	38 (n=70)	17 (n=32)	11 (n=20)	29 (n=54)
Training	10 (n=19)	60 (n=113)	12 (n=23)	7 (n=14)	11 (n=20)
Management development	10 (n=18)	57 (n=105)	10 (n=19)	7 (n=13)	16 (n=30)
Career Planning	7 (n=12)	50 (n=93)	16 (n=30)	6 (n=11)	22 (n=40)
Communication	10 (n=19)	53 (n=101)	17 (n=32)	10 (n=18)	10 (n=19)
Employee relations/ Involvement	16 (n=30)	56 (n=105)	15 (n=29)	7 (n=14)	5 (n=10)
Health & Safety	13 (n=23)	38 (n=69)	15 (n=28)	14 (n=25)	21 (n=39)
Reward	8 (n=14)	45 (n=84)	17 (n=31)	14 (n=25)	17 (n=31)
Redundancy & dismissal	11 (n=21)	46 (n=86)	23 (n=43)	14 (n=26)	6 (n=12)

Respondents were asked to select just one choice for each content area.

Row totals = 100% (plus or minus, due to rounding).

Table 2.3 Personnel roles in human resource strategy
(Source: Torrington and Hall, 1999, p. 33)

It is worth noting that the research is based on the views of Personnel managers and therefore could be over optimistic. Torrington and Hall themselves note the work of Gunningle and Moore (1994) as a baseline, that indicated that only 29% of firms had a written HR strategy of any kind. This would make the seeming improvement they identify rather too good to be true or even likely in such a short space of time.

There would appear to be good reason for questioning the actual impact of HRM and SHRM in practice. There is very little that would not appear to be in contention and a tendency for rhetoric not to be borne out by research could readily be argued. Both the humanistic aspirations as well as the strategic hopes of HRM can be challenged.

However strategic linkage is clearly a significant issue for both academics and practitioners even if practice lags behind, there has clearly been at least an ideological change of some kind. Even if the data was better, a lot of the significant issues are qualitative. For instance, if we accepted that more HRM managers are devising written strategies with line managers, they may be only tenuously linked to environmental factors or organisational strategy, and may have a limited coherence or strategic impact.

Given a picture typified by contention and uncertainty, the general agreement in the literature that there is evidence of sustained and increasing investment in management development is interesting. It could be a vanguard HRM activity that is better supported by line managers and more easily related to strategy, or other dynamics could be at work, including the self interest and power of managers being directed to maintaining their own career development.

MODELS, THEORIES, TECHNIQUES OR TOOLS THAT ASSIST THE PRACTITIONER OR RESEARCHER

Schuler and Jackson (1987) offer a frequently cited adaptation of Porter's generic business strategies to indicate how HRM policies can vary according to business strategy (see Table 2.4).

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Employee role behaviour</i>	<i>HRM policies</i>
1. Innovation	<p>A high degree of creative behaviour.</p> <p>Longer term focus.</p> <p>A relatively high level of co-operative, interdependent behaviour.</p> <p>A moderate degree of concern for quality.</p> <p>A moderate concern for quantity; an equal degree of concern for process and results.</p> <p>A greater degree of risk-taking; a higher tolerance of ambiguity and unpredictability.</p>	<p>Jobs that require close interaction and co-ordination among groups of individuals.</p> <p>Performance appraisals that are more likely to reflect longer-term and group-based achievements.</p> <p>Jobs that allow employees to develop skills that can be used in other positions in the firm.</p> <p>Compensation systems that emphasise internal equity rather than external or market-based equity.</p> <p>Pay rates that tend to be low, but that allow employees to be stockholders and have more freedom to choose the mix of components that make up their pay package.</p> <p>Broad career paths to reinforce the development of a broad range of skills</p>
2. Quality enhancement	<p>Relatively repetitive and predictable behaviours.</p> <p>A more long-term or intermediate focus.</p> <p>A moderate amount of co-operative, interdependent behaviour.</p> <p>A high concern for quality.</p>	<p>Relatively fixed and explicit job descriptions</p> <p>High levels of employee participation in decisions relevant to immediate work conditions and the job itself.</p> <p>A mix of individual and group criteria for performance appraisal that is mostly short term and results orientated.</p> <p>A relatively egalitarian treatment of employees and some</p>

3. Cost reduction	<p>A modest concern for quantity of output. High concern for process: low risk-taking activity; commitment to the goals of the organisation. Relatively repetitive and predictable behaviour.</p> <p>A rather short-term focus.</p> <p>Primarily autonomous or individual activity. Moderate concern for quality.</p> <p>High concern for quality of output. Primary concern for results; low risk-taking activity; relatively high degree of comfort with stability.</p>	<p>guarantees of employment security. Extensive and continuous training and development of employees.</p> <p>Relatively fixed and explicit job descriptions that allow little room for ambiguity. Narrowly designed jobs and narrowly defined career paths that encourage specialisation expertise and efficiency. Short-term results-orientated performance appraisals. Close monitoring of market pay levels for use in making compensation decisions. Minimal levels of employee training and development.</p>
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Table 2.4 Business strategies, and associated employee role behaviour and HRM policies (Source: Schuler and Jackson, 1987, p. 216)

The framework is helpful in establishing that HRM policies can vary to offer an organisational culture aligned against a particular strategy. However as Tyson (1999) points out, the problem lies with notion of generic strategy, in that innovation, quality and cost reduction are perhaps essential for survival in today's market place, rather than the basis for strategy or for achieving competitive advantage. Also such linkages do not seem to be based on empirical studies but are logical constructs to demonstrate the possibility of such a relationship.

Whilst there is no obvious 'fit' with the trends identified in the public services in chapter one, it is possible to suggest a shift towards cost reduction. This does not offer a very appetising menu for a management development programme but may indeed be the reality.

Torrington and Hall (1999) offer a typology of strategic linkage (see Figure 2.8) which although quite crude, opens up the issue for discussion and could generate some useful practitioner theory through an exploration of the organisational features that are congruent with the different types of linkage.

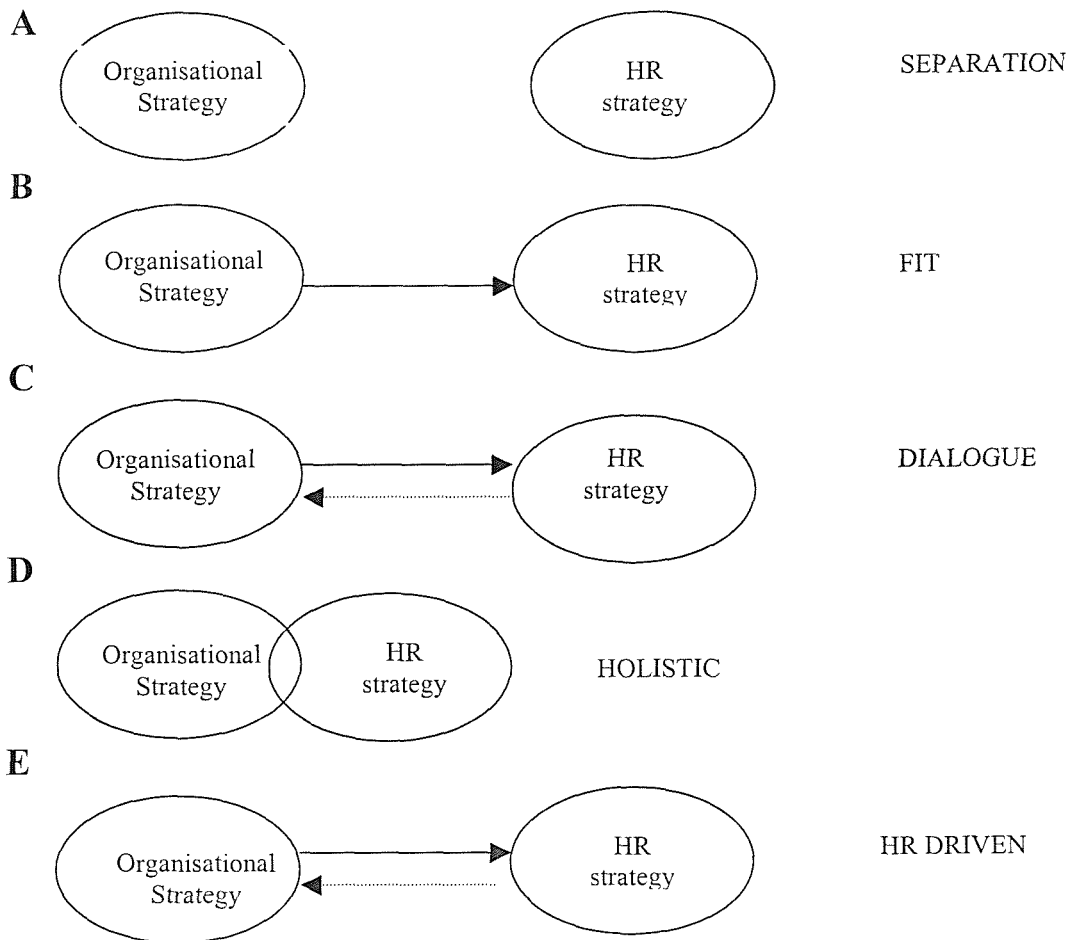


Figure 2.8

Potential relationships between organisational strategy and human resource strategy (Source: Torrington and Hall, 1999, p. 27)

Smilansky (1997) offers a text devoted to the practical application of HRM, although early sections are focussed on exploring the development of HRM per se. His approach is unusual in that he does not offer much in the way of models, but establishes the shift in culture and behaviour required by HRM specialists shifting from old style Personnel Management to HRM, and then surveys stakeholders to determine the change agenda. This is based around some useful tools for surveying internal customer perceptions and a map of the HRM improvement process (see Figure 2.9).

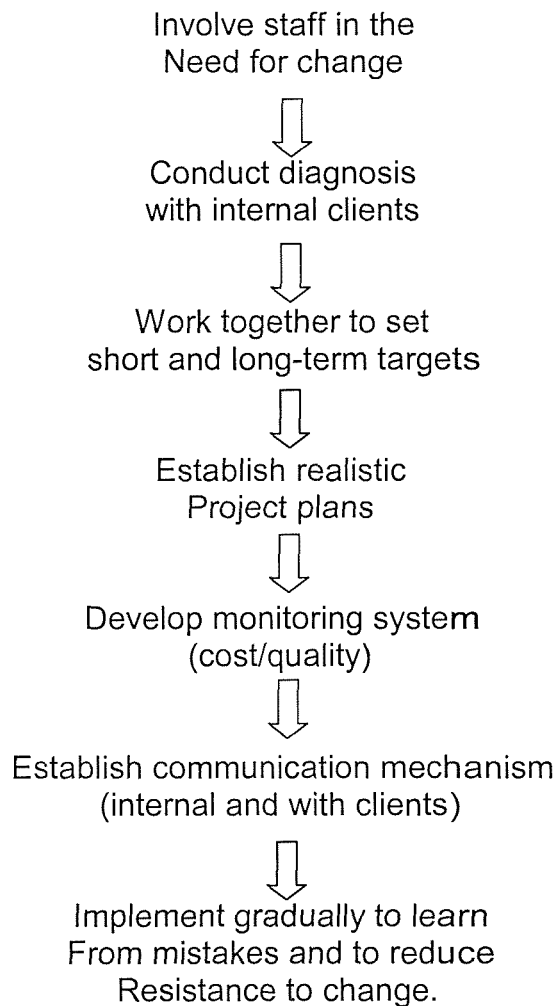


Figure 2.9 Key Stages in improving HR services

(Source: Smilansky, 1997, p. 95)

The early stage of development of HRM and SHRM means that practice orientated tools seem to be few and far between and some are quite abstract or at an early stage of formulation. Schuler and Jackson's model has little practical value other than establishing the principle that HRM practices could vary with strategy. If a less rigid typology of strategy is adopted then the connections rapidly become less obvious and a practitioner is left with little guidance.

Torrington and Hall's typology of strategic linkage is at a very early stage of its development but introduces the valuable point that linkage might vary and be of strategic significance in its own right. Smilansky's survey and project management approach offers a useful place to start. The project management

approach doesn't prescribe HRM strategy, in that it allows for design according to an analysis of a particular organisation and its needs as perceived by stakeholders.

This 'build it from the ground up' attitude is possibly useful not only in a period when practitioner models are few and far between but also longer term when models are perhaps always going to be too crude to do justice to the complexity of organisational strategy. It could certainly be used to design an MD programme. Perhaps practitioner tools are never in reality conducive to direct application. Their function could always be to draw attention to key variables or issues leaving it to the practitioner to experiment and design the reality. Compared with a prescriptive approach this obviously also allows more opportunity for innovation. In public services this action orientated approach could also be effective and it is perhaps less dependant on consistency in organisational strategy and objectives. However if as in Figure 2.9 targets and plans are negotiated with coalitions of internal stakeholders these perhaps might not be strategic and may in fact be re-active and short term.

CONCLUSIONS

There is perhaps rather too much HRM literature devoted to definitions, formal models and theoretical domain, and not enough to empirical studies and practitioner tools. This means that there is little guidance offered on how a strategically orientated HRM activity of any kind might be approached.

However that is not to say this literature is fruitful although one is forced to conclude that a strategic orientation for HRM is new and still at an early stage. It is not a necessity or inevitability and there are variants in approach even within the broad category of HRM. It would seem to be debatable as to what is driving the search for strategy, but increasing competition, political intervention, and the self-interest of HRM specialists or Chief Executives, would all seem to be possibilities. The drivers for the introduction of SHRM might therefore be weaker in public services.

MD is not generally treated as having special significance strategically. It seems to be represented as just a sub-set of training yet logically, just the fact that it impacts directly on strategic processes, might be grounds for giving it particular attention. There is little evidence of this issue being identified researched and debated. There is however evidence of MD being invested in and sustained over time, so that if the issues are not made explicit, there is perhaps an awareness of its strategic significance in practice.

Eclecticism in the particular approach to strategy adopted would seem wise and interest in the resource based theory of the firm will either bear fruit or prove to be over-optimistic. There does seem to be an over-dependency on its potential at the moment with no real in depth exploration of how it might influence a strategically orientated HRM.

The literature has however offered some of the potential key dimensions of a strategic orientation but they need to be placed in the context of the research question. That is they need to be reviewed in the light of what they might offer a practitioner in managing a MD programme that will impact on organisational outcomes and strategy.

One dimension is that activity might influence both strategy formulation and implementation and could also focus on individual behaviour. It should allow for *planned and emergent strategic processes and might need a hierarchy of expressed philosophy, policy and practice to shape it.*

An area to address is vertical linkage of MD with strategy and this relationship may take several forms. Horizontal integration of the target function with other HRM functions and activity should also be attempted. There needs to be a focus on major long-term organisational change and this might contribute to a change in organisational culture, style, structure, and the commitment, capability and motivation of employees.

An MD programme could seek to bring a change in management practices that move them towards flexibility, a customer or business orientation, decision making and behaviour that reflects organisational value and mission, transformational leadership, a nurturing and facilitative approach, a team approach and developing a learning organisation. However this may be the menu of a 'soft' approach. A 'hard' approach might put a bigger emphasis on performance management and cost efficiency. The programme might seek to change systems and reach into OD and a shift from a psychological to a sociological frame of reference.

The substance of desired management behaviours may vary with the detail of organisational strategy, that is there might be a contingency approach, or there could be one grouping of coherent, interrelated management behaviours that link to one generic strategy. Improved competitive advantage may be the crucial strategic impact a programme should reach for or in public services efficiency and effectiveness.

Change could need to be predicated by a shift to line manager influence and power and any programme might need to be owned by the senior team. There may need to be an HRM specialist on the senior team. It may be necessary to build a programme from the ground up taking a project management approach based on a consultation with key stakeholders on business needs and desired outcomes. *Personal motivation may need to be a factor that is taken into account.*

In sum the HRM and SHRM literature has put the research question in context and offered some useful broad parameters to a strategically orientated HRM activity. However it still remains that SHRM may be less achievable in a public services environment. As organisations public services could be viewed as 'loosely coupled systems' (Weick,1976). This means that processes are not standardized except where they present serious risks to the organisation. There is a lack of co-ordination and an absence of rules with frequent conflicts between sub-systems. Executives may have little top down control and it can be hard to

establish linkages between plans and actions. In such organisations links between strategy and any activity might be hard to demonstrate but these loose relationships can be functional allowing for creativity, diversity, and resilience in a turbulent environment.

Therefore one could argue that the introduction of SHRM is a strategic choice in itself and that it might have negative impacts on a public service organisation as well as positive outcomes (Stoney, 2001). Or if the features of an organisation are seen to have developed incrementally as a response to demands placed upon it, public services may already have functional structures and systems that are not congruent with 'top down' strategic initiatives. Alternatively one could predict problems with more mechanistic or 'hard' HRM initiatives but see softer approaches that accept a looser relationship between strategy and outcomes as likely to be more successful.

These positions however all rest on the argument that loose coupling is functional. However if we take education, the setting that Weick originally used as a point of reference, the Government of the UK has consistently sought for over a decade to strengthen school leadership and management through inspection regimes that focus on school development plans and reviews (*Inspecting Schools, Framework For Inspecting Schools (2003)*). In other words they have not recognised the benefits of loose coupling but have seen it as dysfunctional and set about changing it. Even accepting this however the mismatch noted in the discussions so far, between public services realities and SHRM aspirations, would at least lead to the conclusion that SHRM could be a dramatic cultural and operational change for a public services organisation and initiatives could generate significant resistance and prove as problematic as much as beneficial.

Footnote

Dixon and Dogan (2003) and later Dixon, Dogan Sanderson and Tripathi (2004) explore the philosophy of the social sciences in order to develop a framework that offers a critical analysis of public services management. They identify the competing epistemologies and ontologies that underpin theorising to create a

taxonomy of four core 'paradigms'. That is the epistemological positions of naturalism and hermeneutics combine with the ontological perspectives of structuralism and agency to generate these four positions or stances.

Naturalist structuralism presumes an objective world in which social structure determines behaviour ('homo hierarchus'). Hermeneutic structuralism presumes a subjective social world where meaning is socially constructed ('homo sociologicus'). Naturalist agency presumes an objective social reality where people make rational choices based on self interest ('homo economicus'). Hermeneutic agency presumes a subjective social reality that is contested by people's subjective interpretations so that behaviour is unpredictable ('the existential outsider').

They are then able to establish in detail a relationship between the four paradigms and management theories expressed by a broad range of writers and researchers that offer particular perspectives on organisations and organisational psychology and their associated managerial behaviours. So, for instance, adherents of naturalist structuralism would see organisations as bureaucratic and mechanistic with centralised decision making and standardised work processes. They would expect obedience and loyalty from employees and see them as motivated by personal needs being met by the organisation. They would adopt a parental leadership style with leaders making the decisions.

I have drawn on their four paradigm model to demonstrate just one dimension of the impact of the contested nature of public services management on an individual manager. Given the far reaching applications the model is capable of this is a very limited and simplified application. Dixon and Dogan (2003) and Dixon, Dogan, Sanderson and Tripathi (2004) go on to explore methodologies that synthesise the four paradigms and make proposals for an approach to public services management that accepts that it is contested and conflict ridden but allows for creative solutions through constructive- discourse and an iterative approach.

CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW - MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (MD) - A REVIEW OF THE FIELD

This chapter will explore definitions of management development, particularly identifying those that stress a strategic orientation. It will then outline the training/education debate in order to identify the different approaches to MD and their associated philosophies. The context of MD and its relationship with organisational development will be discussed followed by a review of management development practices exploring formal and informal processes. It will attempt to develop an approach that will allow for their combination in an effectively managed programme.

This will be followed by a detailed exploration of activities before the key issue of their application in strategically orientated programmes is explored. This final section will provide the basis for the conclusion which will explore the implications of the literature for the research question and the next chapter on methodology.

THE DEFINITION OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Even very early definitions of management development established a link to organisational strategy. For instance Ashton and Easterby-Smith (1975) suggested MD was, “a conscious and systematic decision/action process to control the development and managerial resources in the organisation for the achievement of organisational goals and strategies.” Many writers have adopted this emphasis on the link between MD and strategy. Molander for instance (1986, p.5) suggests MD is:

“a conscious and systematic process to control the development of management resources in the organisation for the achievement of organisational goals and strategies.”

However other writers focus on its role in assisting managers to respond to organisational change. For instance Jones and Woodcock (1985) draw attention

to Denning, Hussey and Newman's (1978, p. 8) definition of management development as:

"the total process which an organisation adopts in preparing its managers for the growth and change that occurs in their working environment."

Storey (1989a, p. 5) suggests that this theme of MD as organisational engineering is a common one. He refers to Morgan (1988), who treats management development as a key device to engineer organisational change and sees it as in particular a way to manage a change in organisational culture.

MD as personal development is another approach adopted by some writers. Jones and Woodcock (1985, p. 1) propose that MD is:

"the sum of all the activities available to individuals to help them to meet their growth needs and keep the organisation viable."

A famous definition that also emphasises personal growth is Mumford's (1999, p. 6) who sees MD as:

"an attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through a planned and deliberate learning process."

These few definitions allow us to gather the essence of the many. There would seem to be four key themes. MD is planned and purposeful. It is sometimes seen as contributing to strategic implementation and facilitates organisational change, particularly cultural change. It is generally seen as encouraging personal growth and development and building personal effectiveness.

Whilst this perhaps establishes the domain of MD, with different writers stressing a particular dimension, the particular 'emphasis' a writer has given to the field could be significant for the research question. For instance a contribution to organisational outcomes would not seem to be so crucial to writers that stress personal growth and development.

A further debate attempts to differentiate between management 'education', 'training' and 'development'. Heisler and Benham (1992, p.17) suggest that MD in the literature has three definitional components, education, training and experiences. However they can identify no consensus on the interrelationship or components of each and point out that they are often used interchangeably. They refer to Beck et al. (1980) and Keys and Wolfe (1988) who identify education as the capacity to think and training as narrow and vocationally or skills focused. Management training is seen as a subset of management development, which is 'positionally and organisationally specific to those already in the ranks of management'.

Heisler and Benham (1992) propose that both education and training should be seen as subsets of MD which is best seen as both a process and an outcome. They summarise this view as a diagram, (see Figure 3.1 below), that emphasises both personal growth and organisational effectiveness as outcomes.

TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

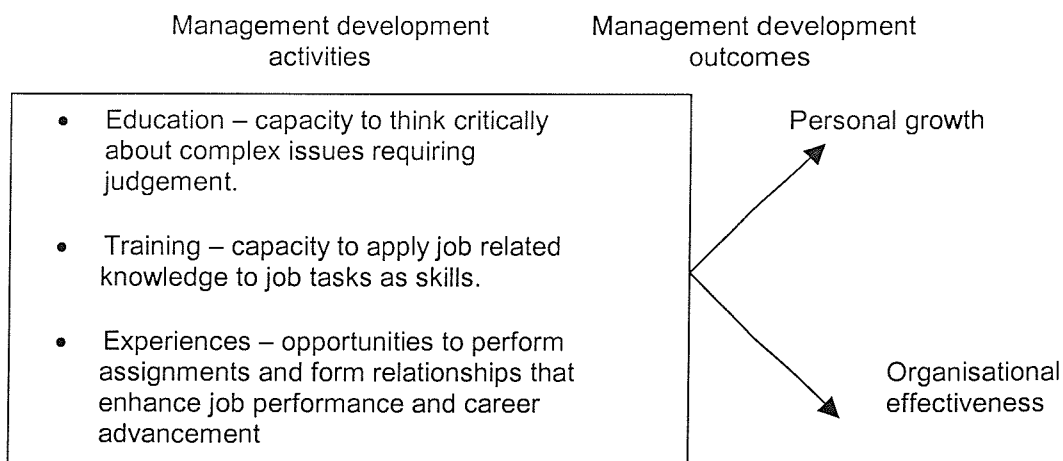


Figure 3.1
Training and Management Development

(Source: Heisler and Benham, 1992, p. 16)

However there is a danger in their representation as it could be interpreted as aligning personal growth with education and experiences with organisational effectiveness. Given for instance the problems faced by public service managers

in responding to paradox (Dixon, 2004) the opposite might be the case. The capacity to think critically and respond to complexity might have more impact on organisational effectiveness than work experiences, that could overwhelm a practitioner not conceptually equipped to understand the phenomena they are faced with and so formulate a response. It is also unclear whether one can achieve both personal growth and organisational outcomes from an activity and if this can be in equal measure or whether there is a tension between them.

Storey (1989a, p. 5) argues that MD is inevitably seen as more generic than training but draws attention to MD also being presented as additional to training and education rather than encompassing them. A further issue he raises is whether MD embraces unplanned experiences that develop managers i.e. things that simply happened to them which on reflection helped develop their management practice. He identifies many papers purporting to be about management development that are actually about management training.

Fulmer and Graham (1993, p. 30), carry the education training debate into a more detailed discussion of management development practice. They suggest that a traditional era in education and training is rapidly drawing to a close as it did not offer sufficient competitive advantage to organisations. They quote the former head of strategic planning for Dutch Shell who said, "In the future, the only sustainable competitive advantage may be an organisation's ability to learn faster than its competitors" (Fulmer and Graham, 1993, p. 31). They also propose that failing to distinguish between education and training can cause harmful confusion. This traditional era, which they locate as falling between the end of the second World War and the mid 1970's, is characterised by the fragmented provision of training for new entrants and middle managers and education for a limited number of senior executives. They also argue that the training needs of senior managers, was often neglected.

Training they see as having been focused on skills and consisting of a vast array of training courses and titles within and outside of the organisation. It was piecemeal and fragmented in that it is driven by individual needs and developed a training course at a time to respond to new problems. Where individual needs

are not the driving force, changes in activities or needs are identified by management function e.g. supervisors, first-line managers, personnel managers etc. Training often has measurable outcomes in terms of enhanced or new skills and training managers often seek to identify these outcomes. Unlike training, to them, education does not have specific measurable outcomes. They take the view that training tends to be 'maintenance' orientated rather than 'anticipatory', i.e. its point of reference is current functioning and practices not the changing environment. Education rather than training tends to be anticipatory and may make the difference between success and failure in today's competitive market place (Fulmer and Graham, 1993, p. 33).

They suggest the traditional era is being replaced by education for managers rather than training, and that education is provided as a set curriculum in-house for all managers that blends training with education and experience. It may well be developed and delivered by a University or consultancy but it is comprehensive and maintained over time. They offer examples of the sort of programme they mean, developed by IBM (see Figure 3.2).

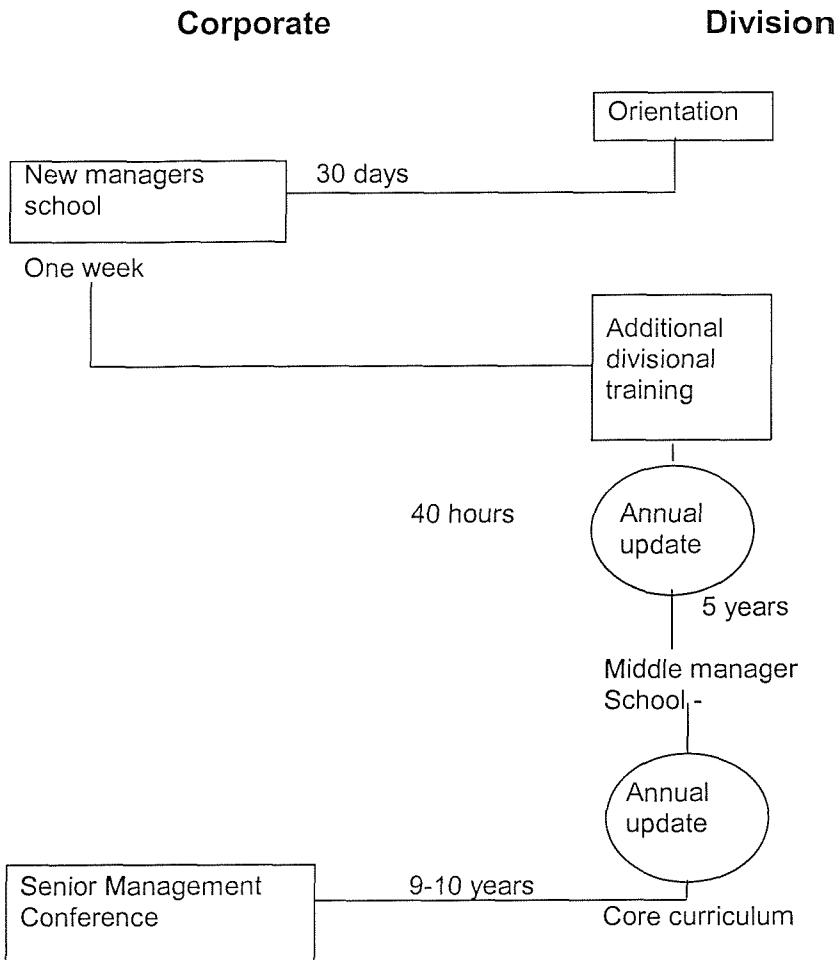


Figure 3.2 Middle management education programmes

(Source: Fulmer and Graham, 1993, p. 37)

Much of this debate would seem to be about method, Fulmer and Graham have established a rationale that links the current external environment with organisational culture and decision making processes. This has not been made explicit by any writer, but given the close connection they establish with the external environment, Fulmer and Graham's position could be refined to allow a variance in MD methods according to strategy.

These various standpoints and definitions again raise the possibility of a typology of approaches to MD, that is to say that perhaps the differences in definition noted earlier go beyond mere emphasis to indicate significant differences in outcomes and processes and that these may have varied over time. For instance, given that Mumford (Storey, 1989a, p. 5), has come to question the extent to which MD is deliberately planned, one could suggest there are approaches that see MD as relatively unplanned, and focused on reflection and personal development. These contrast with approaches such as McClelland's (1994) that present MD as planned, pro-active, and focused on strategic outcomes. His approach introduces a very common current emphasis in exploring MD that reflects the recent growth of strategic human resource management. The approach focuses on the strategic linkage of MD, even to the point of designating a specialist, named approach within the broader field, i.e. strategic management development or SMD.

Somewhat inevitably this will also allow for the formulation of a contingency approach. Molander (1986) offers us one. His definition, already outlined above, is set in a discussion of the external and internal change environments faced by organisations and is immediately followed by him taking the stance that there is no recipe for management development. He advocates a contingency approach by which management development is dependent upon "an assessment of the prevailing needs experienced by management at a particular time and within a particular division of an organisation" (Molander, 1986, p. 5). In his review Storey (1989b, p. 5) also argues that the main shortcoming of MD is a tendency for writers to apply 'universal nostrums.' Molander goes on to suggest that too specific a definition of management development is possibly harmful in that it might militate against a responsive approach.

Molander however seems to mean that MD should respond to different needs within an organisation. He does not make a connection with different organisational strategies although this might be implicit. Crucially for the research question, we have now established a range of positions for MD which includes both emphasising strategic orientation and treating it as relatively unimportant, with the suggestion that methods might vary with strategy.

APPROACHES, PHILOSOPHIES, AND THE CONTEXT OF MD

Molander (1986) suggests that management development can include organisational development and that performance problems may well not be solved by developing individuals but by intervention in the social systems that constrain them. In a sub-section on style he suggests that the approach of management development to managing the changes in individuals or organisations that it aspires to, is a crucial dimension. Management development can be prescriptive or consultative. He suggests that not taking into account individuals needs is prescriptive but this is necessary in some cases such as induction or for posts where a qualification is necessary.

In his conclusion Molander warns against the most common form of management development which he suggests is prescriptive and focused on individual performance and skills. He argues for development that is based on attitudinal change and is also sociological. This offers a typology of approaches to management development all of which can be approached prescriptively or through negotiation with the individual manager.

1. Individually focused skills development.
2. Psychologically focused change of attitudes and values.
3. Sociological approaches that embrace organisational development.

Molander comments that the latter approach has been slow to be established and provides the challenge for MD in the future. He goes on to say that management development is not the preserve of the trainer but a major

responsibility of any manager and that managers need particular attributes to respond to its heavy demands. They need an ability to analyse an organisation or their part of it and diagnose problems, a basic understanding of management development techniques and the consultative and interpersonal skills to introduce change.

Molander (1986, p. 21) contrasts Taylorist rational approaches to management with approaches that create adult working conditions. This leads to what can be seen as a sub- text. He suggests management development is a function with two major aims “firstly to confront the structure and systems of the organisation and to help it change and secondly to develop within its managers the analytical social and professional skills necessary to do it”. He views these aims as the inner light of management development.

Barry Welch (1992) offers us more philosophical critique of management development than is the norm. He seeks to offer a new paradigm, that he locates in the failure of conventional approaches. He seeks to offer a counter-weight to what, drawing on Handy, he describes as the “age of unreason”. He seeks to make a direct link between management development and world problems.

He proposes that the change he is advocating entails converting management development into a new, shared enterprise which he describes as career management. He justifies this conversion, by reference to the deficiencies of current management development:

“Ask most people at work about ‘management development’ as it exists now and it is likely to call up many unflattering associations. Reactions may well include the following:

- *In many small organisations, management development does not happen at all. Individuals have been largely limited in their own careers by the scale and horizons of that company - if they did not like those limitations they needed to leave, but often they failed to do so, and then it became*

'too late'.

- *In big company typically management development means over-elaborate administration imposed by extensive hierarchies, promising much but delivering little. It most obviously takes the form of annual appraisals and maybe succession planning. There is training too, but that is separated from development. What does occur, say, by way of appointments, seems disconnected from any discernible plan.*
- *Careers have usually unfolded of their own volition; by way of the initiative of the individual or by pure chance rather than by the company deliberately taking really important steps. When times were good and business was expanding a succession of bigger jobs turned up more or less of their own accord; when times were bad the company responded without very much consideration.*
- *The Personnel department is run by people whom most managers, if asked, would prefer not to employ in their own departments. If Personnel have contributed anything constructive, they say, it is small when compared with the depredations wrought in the name of industrial relations and 'orderly' administration.*
- *When personal encouragement, stimulation and practical assistance was needed, management development processes, including training, have mostly been conspicuous by their absence.*
- *Facing up to the pressure being exerted by demanding customers, eager competitors, clamorous shareholders and the succession of organisational responses to them, the last thing we want from management development is more of the same - or, come to that, any of the same!" (Welch, 1992, p. 2-3).*

These deficiencies are then set against the broader perspective of world ecological problems and people's everyday experiences of alienation within top down organisations. These he suggests are caused by the mechanistic world views of Cartesian-Newtonian science and he draws attention to a tension between the freedom we now experience as consumers and our lack of freedom within organisations. He dismisses those who claim that we can already be seen

to enter a world of empowerment and individuality, and denies the liberating effects of IT.

Human resource management he typifies as making the same errors in managing people as operations management has made with physical resources, it is exhausting the resource. He sees middle managers as excluded and left feeling exploited and expendable.

- *“Just as the emerging reality in the market-place is that the customer is king, so in organisations a matching shift needs to take place towards individuals. That shift has to occur so that organisations are able to achieve the high degree of responsiveness which the market-place increasingly demands. It also has to occur so that companies, as social institutions, can recover cohesion and replace the old ‘power’ model which is no longer viable as the basis for the future” (Welch, 1992, p. 9).*

Looking at organisational change Welch suggests that Fordism where the individual is enveloped and controlled by the organisation, their behaviour channelled by standardisation, is being replaced by new structures and relationships that value and are orientated around the individual and individuality.

In effect the Fordist model is being reversed and he traces a change in management style towards the manager as facilitator and leader. This change is being generated by a more demanding environment that requires responsiveness. In this new organisation, change is seen as inevitably continuous. Flow rather than stasis is the norm. Organisations can no longer rely on training managers to bring change as they did in the 60's and 70's. To summarise the difference between old and new approaches to training he offers a matrix representation (see Figure 3.3).

	Old	New
1. Basis of developing/ providing training products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maximise uptake <input type="checkbox"/> Wide menu of stand alone events <input type="checkbox"/> 'Something for everybody' <input type="checkbox"/> Quantum based on historical take-up and extant resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work with customers to meet customers' needs <input type="checkbox"/> Set in career management framework <input type="checkbox"/> Plan quantum to meet strategic requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritise use of limited resource according to strategic requirements
2. Positioning and objectives of training products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on primary skills <input type="checkbox"/> Remedial bias ('catching up') <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives often uncertain or inadequately conveyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 'Whole-person' developmental approach <input type="checkbox"/> 'Training ahead' - stretching preparing for new challenges <input type="checkbox"/> Serving specific business and organisation cultural objectives
3. Training, style and format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching - 'done to' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - instructional - authoritative <input type="checkbox"/> Stand-alone events <input type="checkbox"/> Distant from work; little or no follow-up <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Learning - person-centred <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multi-media - experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Modular - collaborative <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-work and subsequent action plans; contact with manager; participants networking <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist trainers supplemented by line managers and external faculty
4. Attendance criteria nominations process and follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunistic; dependent on budgets <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain match to personal need; ill-informed nominators <input type="checkbox"/> 'Needs' identification uncertain <input type="checkbox"/> People not knowing why sent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Planned <input type="checkbox"/> Competences language becomes lingua franca <input type="checkbox"/> Learning objective specified <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance part of development and career plan

Figure 3.3

'Old' and 'new' approaches to (management) training
 (Source: Welch, 1992, p. 12)

Molander (1986) is writing in a pre-HRM world where personal development is the starting point for MD but it reaches beyond this to organisational development. Despite his criticisms of HRM, Welch (1992) seems to be writing very much in the 'soft' HRM tradition, reaching for both strategic outcomes and improved working conditions for the individual. Molander's approach, which allows for the MD specialist to hold objectives which are not the organisation's can be seen as facilitating change or the anti-thesis of a strategic orientation. Alternatively it could simply be seen as realistic and not militating against a strategic linkage which could be provided in other ways.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

In commenting on deficiencies in current management development practice, Molander (1986, p. 5) suggests that:

“much of what passes for management development has the character of randomness, and is sometimes controlled by individuals who have neither the authority or the influence to ensure that there is likely to be an effective outcome of their efforts”.

For Molander, MD should clearly be planned and activities chosen according to the desired outcomes. In a matrix he offers an overview of management development activities and styles (see Table 3.1).

Style	FOCUS		
	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP	ORGANISATION
Prescriptive	General Management Courses Qualification Courses Some forms of Appraisal	Some forms of Team Building Project Based Learning Some Forms of Management by Objectives	Some forms of Management by Objectives Some forms of Organisation Development
Consultative	Counselling Coaching Needs Analysis Career Planning Specified Experience Task Related Courses	Analysis of problems Identification of Needs Role Negotiation Action Learning Some forms of Team Building	Organisation Analysis and Feedback

Table 3.1 Types of Management Development Activity

(Source: Molander, 1986, p. 6)

Molander then goes on to explore the changing role of management development in relation to the organisational life cycle. This is interesting as it offers the basis for an approach to MD where activities vary according to the organisation's culture.

Phase	Activities
Birth (Innovation)	<p>No particular MD effort required. The organisation is too small to allow of MD specialisation. The entrepreneur will intuitively resist MD. He knows what he wants in others and will find appropriate colleagues.</p> <p>Available capital will be directed towards defraying start up costs and the development of new market opportunities. Managers will learn on the job. Development will be problem centred and self appropriated.</p>
Growth (Expansion)	<p>As the organisation increases in size, the need emerges to develop a suitable structure based on differentiation. More refined financial controls will be required. Opportunities for individual development are still readily available. The critical role of the entrepreneur declines.</p> <p>Key MD activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of appropriate managerial structures • Identification and development of individual professional and managerial talent • Management succession and appraisal • Management by Objectives • Team-Building
Maturity (Control)	<p>Emphasis on growth is tempered by concern with monitoring achievement. This will encourage bureaucratic 'sprawl', and bureaucratic skills are seen as important. Opportunities for individual growth limited to steady career development, often within one function. Identification with the organisation decreases, with consequential decline in levels of motivation. The management development 'specialist' emerges.</p> <p>Key MD activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Skills Training • Autonomous managerial work groups • Management by Objectives • Counselling and Coaching • Appraisal • Committee (rather than Team) Skills Development
Decline (Survival)	<p>The organisation becomes 'finance led'. This will have significant impact on organisational culture and management style, which will become more centralised and controlling. The level of bureaucracy will increase and middle managers will have less power. The problem of survival becomes paramount. The organisation becomes reactive to external pressure. The level of motivation declines sharply.</p> <p>Key MD activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Skill Development • Negotiations Skills Development • Assertiveness Training • Finance Skills Development • External Environment Control Skills

Table 3.2 Growth Phase and Management Development Activity

(Source: Molander, 1986, p. 137)

Molander's work offers us groupings of MD practices that can be placed in different combinations that have some coherency. That coherency can then be aligned to reflect organisational culture. The link to strategy is however not made and the rationale for the pattern of activity and its variance is hard to establish. The model (see Table 3.2) would seem to have started with the idea of an organisation having developmental phases and a flexible MD provision taking this into account. There is no obvious empirical base for the grouping of activity against phase although this could be drawn from the writer's own experiences. In sum we are near but still far. MD activities that vary according to strategy would seem possible but there are no actual examples, robust models or formulae for shaping a programme.

Turning to surveys that have tried to establish the reality of MD practices, Thompson, Storey, Mabey, Gray, Farmer and Thompson (1997) used a range of research methods across a broad spectrum of organisations which included public services. They found an equal balance between formal and informal activities. They noted an improvement in the last decade on the definition of the objectives for management development but much development still seemed short-term and tactical rather than strategic. That is respondents said that strategy was the underlying driver of MD although the data indicated that appraisal and therefore individual job requirements seemed more influential.

Jones and Woodcock (1985) suggest management development can broadly be divided into formal and informal processes and that it can be differentiated from organisational development, where systems are the client. The design tools they offer give a clear picture of the key activities that constitute management development (see Table 3.3). This offers a useful menu of activity that can be drawn on in designing a programme and the activities will be explored in greater detail in a later section. They also offer a guide to good practice in programme management that could assist project planning (see Figure 3.4). However some of their features of an effective MD programme, for instance links to performance management, may be harder to achieve in the public services than in the private sector.

Management Development Activity

- 1 In-house training
- 2 External Training
- 3 Training/assessment Centre
- 4 Performance Review
- 5 Career Development
- 6 Job rotation
- 7 Secondments
- 8 International Assignments
- 9 Using consultants
- 10 Mentoring
- 11 Counselling
- 12 Coaching
- 13 Organisational Role Analysis
- 14 Task forces/project groups
- 15 Seminars

- 16 Exchange Consulting
- 17 Group Training Programmes

Table 3.3 Management Development Activity

(© I Gray, 2000. Source: Derived from Jones and Woodcock, 1985)

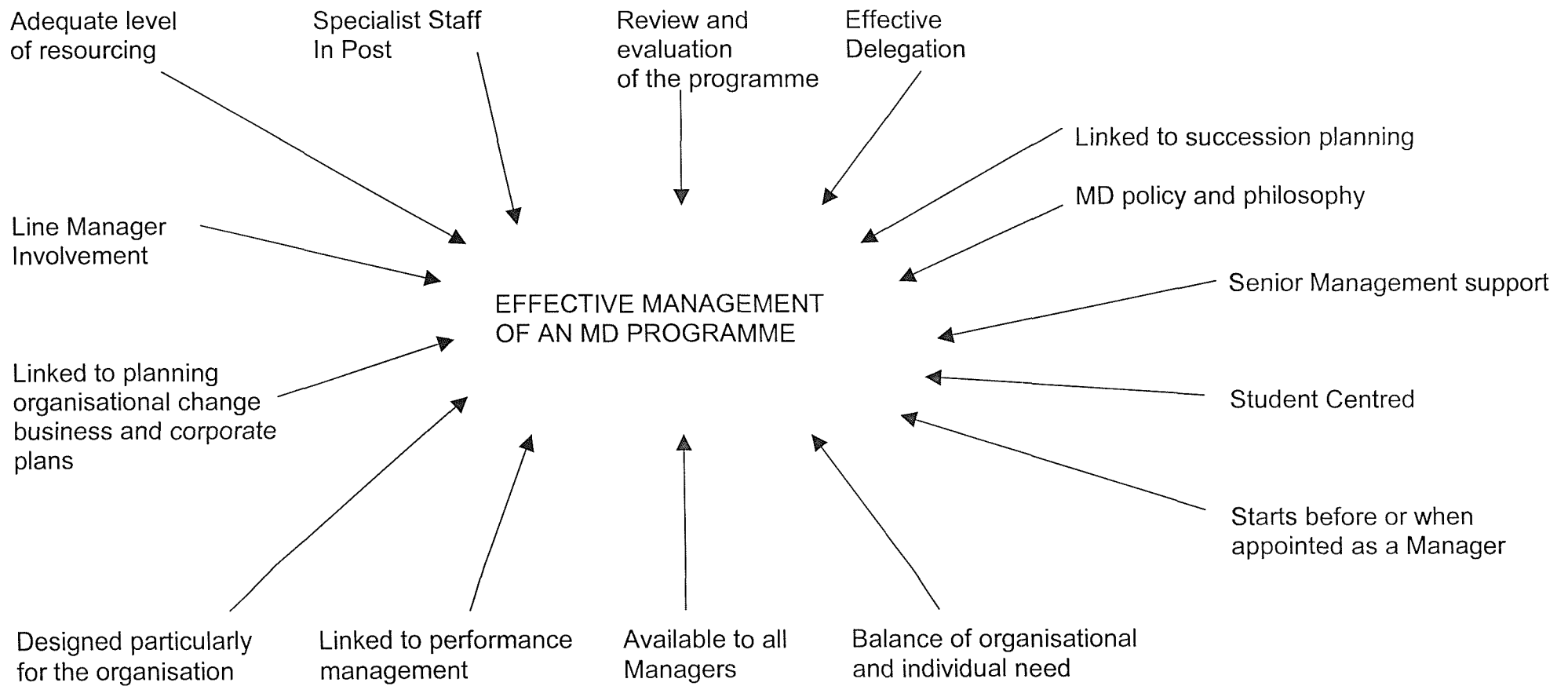


Figure 3.4 Effective Management of a Programme (© I Gray, 2000. Source: Derived from Jones and Woodcock, 1985)

However if the representations are helpful as a starting point Jones and Woodcock do not provide a rationale for varying activity in a programme design even if the principle of design variance is established. Also whilst strategic linkage is also clearly a feature of Figure 3.4 the influence of this over the other dimensions is not clear. In sum we have useful design tools that map dimensions and options but no real guiding principles. Perhaps it will help to explore MD activities in some detail, but before attempting this, the particular context of the public services needs to be revisited.

PROBLEMS OF SMD PROGRAMME DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES

In the previous chapter it was argued that management in the public services was contended and consequently managers were faced with paradoxes that demanded independence of thought and action in problem solving and decision making and a depth of analysis that did justice to this contested social reality. In effect they need to be flexible enough to analyse situations using the perspectives of four identifiable paradigms and also combine eclectically management behaviours and responses in negotiating a response. (Dixon and Dogan, 2003). This also means that they must be able to deconstruct the paradox they are faced with and must be able to apply the complexity of thinking required for what Argyris and Schon (1978) have called double-loop learning. That is learning that will question an organisation's norms, policies and objectives. They must be capable of,

“... those sorts of organisational inquiry which resolve incompatible organisational norms by setting new priorities and weightings of norms, or by restructuring the norms themselves together with associated strategies and assumptions” (Argyris and Schon, 1978, p. 18.)

Also a range of approaches to HRM and SHRM were identified with two polar positions of a soft humanistic approach and a harder more mechanistic approach. These differing approaches could also be seen to be generated by the four paradigms and it was suggested that Personnel/HRM was experiencing a

paradigm shift towards a *homo economicus* position, this change being driven by market forces.

In the public services it was suggested that these market forces were not present so that there was not the same drive for HRM and SHRM and that linkages across HRM functions and with strategy might be much harder to establish. In fact public services could be seen as loosely coupled so that SHRM initiatives might generate as many problems as solutions. Some consideration was given to softer approaches perhaps being more congruent with public services. Now within the MD literature a similar pattern has emerged. There is also a range of approaches with a soft humanistic approach focused on personal growth and development sometimes aligned with a model of the learning organisation and a harder more mechanistic approach that focuses on strategic outcomes. So a similar range of positions can be established in relation to SMD as were established for SHRM. SMD could be seen as not appropriate to or achievable in public services organisations, or highly desirable in its hard form to overcome their dysfunctional management. Alternatively the softer approach based on personal growth and development or group learning could be seen as more congruent.

A study of reform in the Swiss Postal Service (Finger and Brand, 1999) identified deficiencies in soft learning organisation approaches that attempt to change a bureaucratic organisation. They suggested that the learning organisation idea and the emphasis on individual or group learning was easy to sell and generated less resistance but there was not any demonstrable connection to organisational change in structures, systems and procedures and no link to the organisation's strategic objectives. They strongly advocated that a link between learning and strategic objectives should be made. To them a learning organisation approach brought cultural change but this did not suffice.

It is also possible to contrast an approach to learning organisational theory that is concerned with psychological and group processes (Argyris and Schon, 1978) with one that has a broader perspective that embraces organisational structure

and systems (Senge, 1990). Further it could be argued that systems and structures need to be explored through models of organisations that allow for conflict and political behaviour (Easterby-Smith and Araujo, 1999). This would seem to support a design that reaches to both maximise personal and organisational learning, encourages politicised systems thinking and establishes strategic linkage.

Fifteen years ago John Storey (1989 a), p. 3) drew attention to the already established breadth and the rapid growth of literature relating to management development. He suggested then that there was a need to offer this abundance some analysis with a view to providing it with a sense of order. The field is even more daunting today. So how does one combine the daunting array of management development activities into a coherent programme design? In the section that follows the key management development activities will be examined with regard to their likely impact on personal learning in attempting to achieve the expertise required by a public services manager and on organisational outcomes and strategy.

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Taught Courses and Training Programmes

There are pre and post-experience educational courses provided by Universities on a full or part time basis. Certificate and Diplomas in Higher Education, Post Graduate Certificates and Diplomas, First Degrees, Foundation Degrees and Masters Degrees are all on offer. Study period varies from one to six years part time, depending on the course.

In addition to these there are short courses provided in-house by consultants or by in-house trainers. Fulmer and Graham (1993, p. 36) suggest programmes may well be developed and delivered by a University or consultancy in-house. They offer two examples of the sort of programme they mean both developed by IBM (Fulmer and Graham, 1993, p. 37). One was developed for new first line

managers one for middle-managers and they mix taught programmes and courses with coaching and appraisal.

Research by Bosworth, Davies and Wilson (2002) indicated a positive co-relation between proficiency and performance but not between management qualifications and performance. This might relate to the importance of informal processes but there would seem to be a number of explanations including that the research tends towards the tautological.

The problem with taught courses and training programmes is that in the case of qualifying awards they can too readily be dominated by the requirements of an awarding body and in the case of training programmes standardised for repeated delivery and over focused on skills, behaviours and organisational procedures. Strategic links for both can be nonexistent and personal learning and organisational learning very limited or dependent on the student. Application, iterative learning and outcome measurement linked to strategy would need to be designed in as central features of a programme. This might not be possible at all for taught courses leading to a qualification that required purely academic outcomes.

Team Development

Developing the management team rather than the individual, sometimes using action learning, offers a different approach that has considerable organisational impact. This approach mobilises group dynamics and also allows team resources to be fully exploited and can build long term team capability. Targeted on a senior team it can facilitate major organisational change.

The classic approach is probably Belbin's (1981), but more sophisticated analyses of team functioning and development programmes have been devised incorporating his role analysis but also incorporating other psycho-dynamic perspectives and approaches (Woodcock 1982).

Another popular team development activity is outward bound or other outdoor activities and challenges. After several decades of practice this remains popular and controversial. Participants have identified benefits such as improved leadership skills, closer team working, confidence and enhanced ability to work under pressure. Others have doubts about any improvements and in particular transferability to the workplace is questionable (Oddou, 1987).

Working with a management team in the workplace should allow the maximisation of personal, group and individual learning. However there is a danger that too much attention will be given to exploring team dynamics and not enough to group problem solving focused on work based issues. The problems addressed may also have no links to strategy.

Competencies

Competencies have long played a part in training and development (Boam and Sparrow, 1992). They have in recent years been applied to management development particularly in Great Britain. The essence of the approach is that competent management practice is defined and this definition allows the current performance of individuals to be audited against the definition. Learning experiences, of whatever form, can then be designed to respond to the identified learning need. Competencies also allow the effectiveness of MD interventions to be gauged both for individuals and as a way of judging the effectiveness of MD initiatives.

Boyatzis (1982, p. 21-25) distinguishes between 'basic' and 'optimal' competencies and establishes a model consisting of eighteen groupings that define competent practice. Cahoon (1987) distinguishes between the affective, cognitive and behavioural attributes of competent managers and Welch (1992, p. 42) distinguishes between capability and competence. Competence to Welch embraces flexible and pro-active behaviours based on understanding and is the basis of innovation (see Figure 3.5). For public service managers it could also be

the level of expertise required to survive on an everyday basis given the absence of clear requirements and the many unknowns they must accommodate.

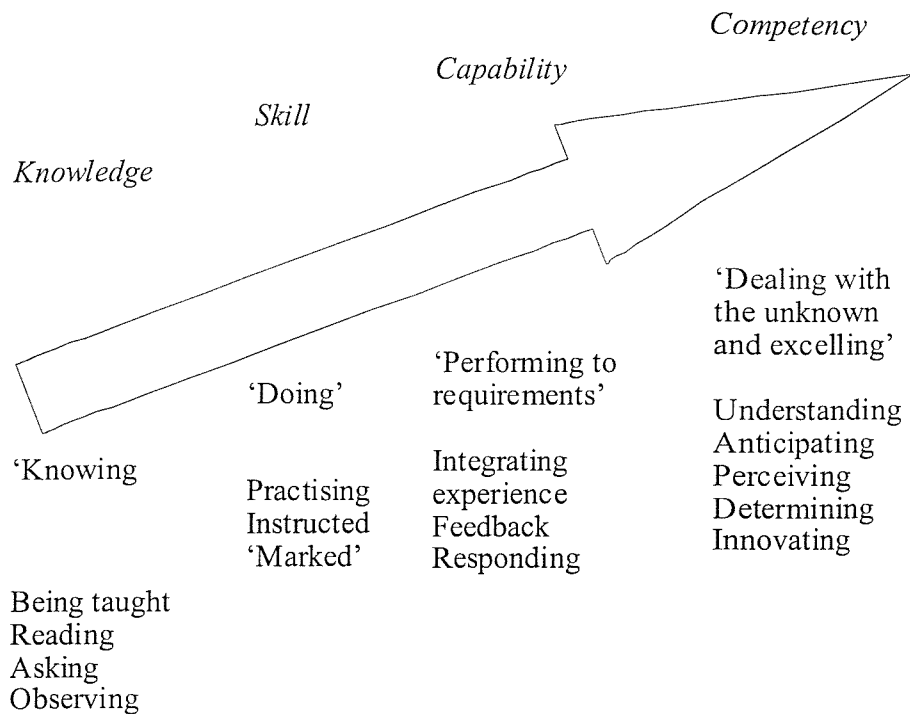


Figure 3.5 Attaining Competency

(Source: Welch, 1992, p. 42)

In Great Britain a particular approach to competency has been developed in the form of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's). Management NVQ's were a response to criticisms of the quality of management education and its failure to develop management practice in the face of British industrial decline (Constable and McCormick, 1987; Handy, 1987). Heavily promoted by the Government in the hope that they will impact on management development and management practice they are becoming mandatory for managers in some parts of the public services. For example the Registered Managers Award RMA is compulsory for the managers of residential establishments for the elderly in order for their unit to be registered by the Care Standards Commission. Similar mandatory awards are to be introduced across the care sector (TOPSS, 2000).

Management NVQ's are at three levels. Level three is for supervisory managers, level four is for first line managers and level five is for middle and senior managers (MCI, 1997). Some of their features are:

- 1) Detailed National standards of competence against which candidates practice is assessed by a qualified assessor usually on the basis of portfolio of work based evidence.
- 2) Open access to those in a management position but NVQ's cannot be achieved unless you are a practising manager.
- 3) Practice is broken down into 'units of competence' that can be passed one by one within a five year time frame to achieve the final award. For example the NVQ 4 consists of nine units encompassing managing service and product quality, managing organisational change, customer care, managing personal development, managing recruitment and selection, managing team performance and development, managing finance and resources, managing projects and managing information.
- 4) Learning experiences are not prescribed. The emphasis is on measurable, assessed performance in the job. All MD activity can be on the job and in fact if a candidate can demonstrate competent practice to an assessor they need not undertake any formal or informal learning activities.

Criticisms of NVQ's are legion and academics have been particularly vocal (Torrington and Hall, 1998, pp. 421-422). Problems identified include:

- 1) Too much focus on assessment rather than learning and development.
- 2) Very bureaucratic time consuming processes.
- 3) Poor take up and completion rate.
- 4) Failure to standardise assessments.
- 5) Failure to demonstrate organisational impact.
- 6) Failure to emphasise understanding and knowledge in a conceptually complex activity like management.
- 7) Failure to bridge the academic/practitioner divide.

However approaches are being modified and becoming more sophisticated in response to these problems (McKiddie, 1994, p. 30-33). Some Universities are now offering NVQ's alongside academic awards and Government policy now encourages their inclusion in Foundation Degrees.

At its best a competency approach reaches for complexity of thinking and it offers a valuable opportunity to link individual and group learning to strategy. In fact by offering clear statements of learning outcome it can make direct links between personal learning and strategy. However at its worst, probably epitomised in the crude delivery of NVQ's, it can offer negligible personal development and by its reliance on national standardised assessment procedures and outcomes can also militate against strategic linkage.

Appraisal and Performance Management

Appraisal and performance management play an important role in MD as they are often the basis for auditing current performance and agreeing targets. Also they usually integrate target setting with personal development planning. As they also gauge performance, they provide opportunity to review the effectiveness of MD activity in achieving outcomes, whatever the developmental methods chosen.

Appraisal is often part of a broader performance management system for instance *Investors in People* (1996) seeks to link personal development planning into business planning processes. This should make it central to ensuring that MD has a strategic orientation but this seems to get little attention and Bevan and Thompson (1992) found little correlation between performance management systems and corporate performance. Also there is increasing concern with regard to the negative effects of appraisal, Barlow (1989). In particular its demotivating effects, its tendency to focus on control rather than development and its bureaucratic tendencies have been criticised.

For instance Welch (1992) describes appraisal as the epitome of the control approach. He suggests that it is very unpopular and notes a number of negative phenomena. These include top down policy, they are personnel department led, managers being driven to complete them as a paper exercise and so constantly avoiding them, staff who are left with a sense of pointlessness, injustice or the view that their manager is out of touch.

He sees a need to stop approaching appraisal as an administrative task and tackle the heart of the issue which is its ownership. That is it must become the property of the manager and the individual. The whole is encapsulated by a need to shift from an administrative procedure, with completed forms as the outcome, to a focus on the quality of the face to face interaction (Welch, 1992, p. 23). Welch suggests appraisal should be primarily developmental and not concerned with performance management. He points to the injustice and inaccuracy of the judgements made when performance and reward are the focus.

Appraisal can be linked to succession planning (Gratton, 1987) and competency assessment assists with the auditing process. Sometimes survey methods are used to augment the appraisal process. For instance 360 degree feedback allows staff, peers, customers and senior managers to comment on a manager's performance and so to contribute to assessment, target setting and development planning (Edwards and Ewen, 1996).

Appraisal could potentially be where organisational needs, determined by strategy, and individual learning needs are brought together. If the relationship with the manager is facilitative and it is combined with coaching it could also drive personal development. The problem is however that it too often becomes controlling, encouraging defensiveness rather than openness so creating barriers to individual and organisational development.

Assessment Centres

Assessment centres originally developed to select managers for promotion or identify ineffective practice. More recently however they have focused on developmental outcomes (Griffiths and Allen, 1987). Participants are often taken off-site, sometimes for several days at a time and subject to a series of exercises and tests designed to gauge current management performance and identify future potential and developmental needs.

The approach can be seen as providing a more in depth assessment of performance than appraisal as it employs specialists to carry out the task and is more rigorous and intensive. The more sophisticated developmental plan is not however necessarily as well implemented. Assessment centres can too easily front load the process whilst producing no better outcomes for the individual or the organisation. Assessment criteria may not have any strategic linkage and the process could easily become a more prolonged and threatening appraisal, producing even more defensive behaviour.

Secondments

Secondments to other departments, project teams, other organisations or even community projects can offer managers development opportunities (Storey, 1989a). These need to be carefully planned to ensure that they have clear outcomes and should be integrated into a learning contract (Boak, 1991).

Another variant is their use by multi-national companies to socialise their fast-track managers into the company. This has been a practice run alongside executive 'diplomatic' programmes since the 1970's and has been viewed by some as ideological control (Edstrom and Galbraith cited in Storey, 1989a, p. 14).

Secondments offer a valuable way to challenge perspectives and also build networks beyond individual departments and organisations that will encourage

organisational learning and facilitate change. They could help managers develop a bigger strategic picture.

Learning Contracts

Learning contracts can be generated by appraisal, by assessment centres or any other auditing process. They consist of clear agreed developmental objectives and a development plan that are reviewed and adjusted over time to track progress (Boak, 1991).

They allow for continuous professional development and can be self driven rather than dependent on an organisational system. For many managers self development is the only option and techniques and exercises are available to help them (Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, 1991).

A softer approach to managing the learning process than appraisal they tend to give the learner more control and longer term goals. However this means they might facilitate personal growth and development but not organisational change and they may not use strategy as a point of reference.

Mentoring

A mentoring relationship with a peer or more usually a senior manager has long been seen as a valuable MD activity. In Great Britain it is often used to enhance and support personal learning as part of a taught course (Gibb and Megginson, 1993). They may also assist with career development and include personal support and counselling, network building, coaching and role modelling. It can be used to introduce a new manager to the organisation or provide experience of other functions or divisions.

Clutterbuck (1987) offers detailed guidance on effective mentoring and there would seem to be evidence that mentoring does enhance motivation and career

progression (Wilbur, 1987). However whilst mobilising the experience of senior managers makes a lot of organisational sense it is perhaps too easy to underestimate resourcing and the skills required. The quality of the mentoring relationship and the value of the experience can vary enormously.

Mentoring by allowing intensity of contact in a non threatening relationship could well be a crucial means of encouraging personal development. However there is no necessary link to organisational development or strategy and the voluntarism at the heart of many mentoring relationships will mean this component cannot be managed or evaluated very effectively.

Coaching

Sometimes another manager, often an immediate superior can offer coaching opportunities to a subordinate. The coach needs to be an effective and experienced manager and typical activities are regular joint problem solving, allocation of challenging projects, introduction to and explanation of organisational systems and sometimes direct teaching and career counselling. Mumford (1994) offers a full picture of the opportunities that can be provided.

Coaching can be a key component in 'on the job' learning. Sometimes organisations identify and support appropriate coaches for particular tasks (Singer, 1979). There is evidence that it is best approached in a planned way with careful identification of learning objectives and reviews of progress. That is as a formal teaching exercise.

Coaching offers personal development towards organisational ends and can be managed as a group experience. It can be directly linked to strategy and a skilled facilitator can overcome defensiveness and encourage challenging analysis and responses to problems. It tends however to be used prescriptively to develop particular skills or organisational knowledge.

Counselling

Managers experiencing personal difficulties or with special needs or persistent relationship problems in the workplace can benefit from counselling. There can be problems in maintaining role boundaries when there are performance problems and counselling is a skilled activity often requiring training and particular attributes and values of the counsellor if the intervention is to be successful. Organisations often employ professional counsellors to overcome some of these difficulties (De Board, 1983).

Counselling could be used to support a manager in difficulties generated within or from outside the workplace and this could well entail considerable personal growth and development. There isn't however a direct link between this activity and organisational outcomes or strategy.

Action Learning

Revans (1972) was the founder of action learning as an approach to MD. Despairing at the prescriptive impractical nature of management education he introduced an approach based on the project management of problem situations. Students analyse a work place problem, responding to and learning from each new situation as it arises.

Part of Revans' approach was exchange arrangements that allowed managers to tackle a problem in another organisation bringing a fresh set of perspectives to an entrenched problem. Action learning has the advantage of allowing on the job training and also organisational outcomes to the learning process. It is very similar in its processes to action research but focuses on personal and organisational learning (see chapter four). It could readily use strategy as a point of reference or be used to develop strategy.

Peer Group Learning

Opportunity to learn from peers can be a natural part of organisational life or facilitated by learning groups or sets, Pedler (1986). Sometimes they are initiated as part of a formal training programme but continue after the formal programme as a network of contacts that can assist with work based problems and provide support and stimulation. Sometimes managers in a learning set will all work on a colleague's problem offering different views and perspectives and later in turn being assisted by the group with one of their work projects. Peer group learning could well provide equally for personal and organisational development and be set in the context of organisational strategy.

Distance learning and e-learning

There have been major public service distance learning initiatives such as the MESOL Health and Social Care programmes and in-house training is readily supported by locally produced materials. Distance learning allows busy managers flexibility in when they learn and may integrate more readily with organisational learning.

E-learning and more recently 'blended learning' that mixes other delivery methods including face to face contact with e-learning, has obvious potential to enhance MD programme delivery (Joy-Mathews and Gladstone 2000). Enhanced communication and increased availability of information alone are likely to impact on MD quality. However often the delivery of e-learning activity has not reached its promised potential, especially with a subject as complex as MD (Revans, 1998).

Distance learning and e-learning can be problematic as means of encouraging personal growth as they often replace personal contact and group experience. If they are not designed and managed by the organisation they can also militate against organisational development and strategy.

In conclusion there is a rich menu of MD activities each researched in some detail. However there is little to help a practitioner 'join them up' and they are, given their volume, a little bewildering. Positively the range allows the possibility of an integrated design where the choice of activity, their modification and their integration into a programme, takes account of the organisations strategy and its current features. It would however be very much up to the MD practitioner to give this coherency. Whilst there are very few texts that directly address SMD these might offer more detailed guidance on an approach to programme design.

Activities seem to be located either in the hard or else in the soft traditions, tending either to favour personal growth or organisational control and outcomes. So, for instance, learning contracts and mentoring can be contrasted with appraisal and coaching. In designing a strategic public service management development programme one has therefore perhaps to attempt to reach a balance of activities drawn from the two traditions in order to reach for both the complex problem solving skills a public service manager needs and organisational development with strategic linkage.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (SMD)

In a comprehensive review of management development practice Thompson et al. (1997) identify a substantial improvement in investment and the priority given to management development compared with Constable and McCormick (1987). They note that there is evidence that this is driven by organisational strategy but that much activity is still 'short term and tactical'. They note the importance of defining competence in progressing MD and identify considerable improvements. However they conclude that:

“there was not a great deal of evidence of deep thinking about management development, either in learning processes or in respect of an operational model or in how to link it to organisational strategies” (Thompson et al. 1997, p.79).

They make five recommendations for organisations that are very important for this thesis:

“1) The higher the level at which management development is initiated and implemented, the greater its effectiveness and impact. 2) Continuity of management development programmes as well as responsiveness to change are important attributes of effective management development. 3) Better evaluation and analysis of development outcomes would be desirable. 4) The provision of facilities for CPD such as learning resource centres can help individuals extend their own learning. 5) there is still not enough linkage of management development to strategic objectives, career prospectives, and other aspects of organisational policy” (Thompson et al. 1997, p.81).

Mabey (2002) offers a statistical analysis of the Thompson et al (1997) survey that indicates a strong correlation between key features of a ‘mature’ management development provision and the nature of the broader HRM context in which it is set. For instance high commitment HRM is linked with the provision of an MD policy, MD being given priority and based on diagnosis of need and review of provision.

If there are early definitions of MD that stress the link to strategy there are early models of desired public sector practice that are remarkably comprehensive. Clarke (1988) in the Local Government Training Board’s *“Going for Better Management- a strategic approach to management development”*, offers the features of an effective management development strategy. This includes not only the establishment of a clear policy but also reviewing the authority’s strategy and identifying changes in policy that have management development implications. It encompasses in its model the identification of competencies, clarifying selection processes, succession planning, performance management and provision of a systematic and integrated on and off the job programme. However it is very much a training audit approach and it lacks detail in nearly

every area. Nevertheless it offers a broad vision of what a progressive programme might encompass.

Hussey (1988) having explored in depth the deficiencies of management development in the UK concludes:

“It is clear from the evidence discussed so far that training in most British Companies is neither used as a competitive weapon, nor is it seen as being a matter for serious concern to top management” (Hussey, 1988, p. 84).

As a prelude to a series of case studies that illustrate his points he then identifies the ways in which a management development programme can contribute to organisational objectives:

“I can think of six situations where an appropriate training initiative can make a major contribution to corporate objectives: creating an awareness that challenges the perceptual boundaries; implementing a new policy; implementing a strategy; changing or maintaining the culture of the organisation (creating shared values); meeting a major environmental change; solving specific problems” (Hussey, 1988, p. 85).

McClelland (1994) suggests that increased global competition has led to many companies rethinking their competitive strategies and strategic human resource development SHRD has become more important. He points out that specialists have been arguing for the last decade for MD to have a more strategic role. He suggests that there is evidence that this is becoming increasingly accepted however there is also considerable resistance and apathy resulting in MD being seen as simply training, a cost centre activity with few returns.

McClelland suggests that:

“The basic premise of strategic management development SMD is to ensure that, as new products/ services are anticipated and developed, the organisation

has identified and mobilised competent and knowledgeable managers to perform the various tasks necessary to implement successfully the strategy in an efficient and timely manner” (McClelland, 1994, p.2).

He identifies a number of key features for SMD. It is founded on a constant monitoring of organisational plans to determine the development activities that will be necessary to achieve optimum performance. There is a need for close co-operation between general managers and SMD specialists. It isn't focused on individuals and competence in their current functions but on anticipating and preparing for change.

He proposes that SMD should be mandatory and should be based on the need for managers that are strategically rather than tactically orientated. This also demands a change in the thinking of HRD specialists who must develop a more strategic orientation and SMD specialists must be involved in all stages of strategy formulation and implementation. Senior managers need to be involved and there needs to be an inventory of available organisational skills, knowledge and talent.

McClelland sees a big barrier being organisational cultures wedded to individual development and effectiveness but suggests a balance can be struck that also allows for an organisational focus. There may also be a problem of a shortage of MD specialists skilled and experienced in strategy formulation and implementation. He concludes that an organisation attempting to implement SMD will face many obstacles but that there are many gains that have strategic value. These include skilled, adaptable managers with a proactive approach to change. Open communication, co-ordination and co-operation. An enhanced people orientation and increased flexibility that can make the competitive difference.

This is the most helpful vision of SMD on offer and it seems coherent in the direction it proposes but also in the challenge the approach will present to HRM specialists, line managers, organisational culture and values and organisational

capability. For MD specialists to be represented at the top of the organisation and involved in strategy formulation is a major shift in political power and it is not clear what might trigger this. The paper is driven by logic and HRM ideology rather than examples drawn from practice. Its model of strategic linkage is perhaps rather passive with MD responding to strategy rather than constituting strategy, which was an option identified by Armstrong (1995).

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey of 1000 senior managers (CIPD, 2002) confirmed the view of Thompson et al. (1997) in concluding that 86% of senior managers said that integrating management development with the implementation of organisational goals was a priority. They note the surveys suggest that MD has two purposes, sustaining the current business and developing managers to create future business models.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) in a book devoted to the strategy and practice of management development, draw attention to the Ashridge model (Barnham, Fraser and Heath, 1988, see Table 3.4).

1 The fragmented approach

- Training is not linked to organizational goals
- Training is perceived as a luxury or a waste of time
- Approach to training is non-systematic
- Training is directive
- Training is carried out by trainers
- Training takes place in the training department
- Emphasis on knowledge-based courses
- The focus on training (a discontinuous process) rather than development (a continuous process)

2 The formalized approach

- Training becomes linked to human resources (HR) needs
- Training becomes systematic by linking it to an appraisal system
- The emphasis is still on knowledge-based course but the focus of the course broadens, with greater emphasis on skill-based courses
- The link which is made between training and HR needs encourages organizations to adopt a more developmental approach
- Training is carried out by trainers, but the range of skill demands placed on a trainer develops with the new breadth of courses offered
- Line managers become involved in training and development through their role as appraisers
- Pre- and post-course activities attempt to facilitate the transfer of off-the-job learning
- Training is carried out off the job, but through career development the value of on-the-job learning gains formal recognition
- There is more concern to link a programme of training to individual needs

3 The focused approach

- Training and development and continuous learning by individuals is perceived as a necessity for organizational survival in a rapidly changing business environment
- Training is regarded as a competitive weapon
- Learning is linked to organizational strategy and to individual goals
- The emphasis is on-the-job development so that learning becomes a totally continuous activity
- Specialist training courses are available across the knowledge/ skills/ value spectrum
- Self-selection for training courses
- Training is generally non-directive, unless knowledge-based
- New forms of training activity are utilized, e.g. open and distance learning packages, self-development programmes, etc.
- More concern to measure effectiveness of training and development
- Main responsibility for training rests with line management
- Trainers adopt a wider role
- New emphasis on learning as a process
- Tolerance of some failure as part of the learning process

Table 3.4

The Ashridge Model: the role of training and development

(Source: Barham, Fraser and Heath, 1988, p. 75)

They suggest that the typical 'fragmented' approach means it is hard to justify any investment in MD and the activity and personnel are marginal to the organisation. In 'formalised' approaches there is a fixed menu of systematic activity led by specialists but the link to the organisation's strategy and HRM strategy is weak and programmes are not individualised. In 'focused' MD activities are methodical but flexible, individualised and work based. They are led by project and line managers. This typology they see as possibly providing a hierarchy of provision and they point out that others (Burgoyne, 1998) have argued for a ladder of organisational 'maturity' and present Burgoyne's model (see Table 3.6).

1 <i>No systematic management development</i>	2 <i>Isolated tactical management development</i>	3 <i>Integrated and coordinated structural and development tactics</i>	4 <i>A management development strategy to implement corporate policy</i>	5 <i>Management development strategy input to corporate policy formation</i>	6 <i>Strategic development of the management of corporate policy</i>
No systematic or deliberate management development in structural or developmental sense, total reliance on natural, laissez-faire uncontrived processes of management development.	There are isolated and ad hoc tactical management development activities, of either structural or developmental kinds, or both, in response to local problems, crises, or sporadically identified general problems	The specific management development tactics which impinge directly on the individual manager, of career structure management, and of assisting learning, are integrated and coordinated.	A management development strategy plays its part in implementing corporate policies through managerial human resource planning, and providing a strategic framework and direction for the tactics of career structure management and of learning, education and training.	Management development processes feed information into corporate policy decision-making processes on the organization's managerial assets, strengths, weaknesses and potential and contribute to the forecasting and analysis of the manageability of proposed projects, ventures, changes	Management development processes enhance the nature and quality of corporate policy-forming processes, which the also inform and help implement.

Table 3.5

Levels of Maturity of Organisational Management Development (Source: Burgoyne, 1988, p. 41)

If the fragmented approach seems to be typical of MD initiatives in many public services it also could be seen to be generated by the paradoxes operating in public services. Neither the formalised or focused approaches seem to do justice to learning organisation theory and therefore might not generate the problem solving skills a public service manager needs. They also assume a competitive or market environment and a sophistication in organisational planning systems that are often absent in public services. It could be that if the fragmented approach is to be avoided public services need a different formulation.

Burgoyne's formulation presents a strategic orientation as the higher stages of development for MD provision and in its levels 4, 5 and 6 seems to be struggling with the different types of strategic linkage, noted earlier in this chapter as identified by Torrington and Hall (1998). As with the Ashridge model public service initiatives would often seem to be confined to the lower end of the scale at stages one and two but the more sophisticated provision of stages five and six would seem to be dependent on private sector practices responding to a market environment. Public services could aspire to Bourgoyne's level four but it seems a very bureaucratic aspiration that will do little to prepare managers for the complexity they must manage. Again, there doesn't seem to be stage representing an achievable or congruent model for public services.

Woodall and Winstanley (1998) suggest that 'close fit' between strategy and MD is easier said than done given the complexity and diversified form of many organisations. They propose that strategic processes are also probably not rational or formal but emergent and that this impedes integration with MD. They suggest HRM specialists may not have great expertise in strategy and are critical of models that correlate generic strategies with HRM activities. They argue that new organisational types may further compound the problems but that the resource based theory of the firm may offer a way forward although there is no evidence as yet of HRM components being identified as a core competency. They then move quickly to look at evaluating MD and approaches to developing strategically orientated MD is not addressed.

Poulet (1997, p. 437) identifies four characteristics of an effectively designed management development programme. They should be focused, with clear objectives and their impact should be capable of measurement. They should be designed to be congruent with beliefs and value base of the participants and to provide a mix of cognitive and experiential learning. He maps the design process in the diagram below (see Figure 3.7). Whilst there is a link from business performance to training needs analysis this isn't emphasised.

He does emphasise the need to benchmark at the start of the design process to identify the changes required as a result of the programme and also the individual and organisational blocks to learners implementing new skills that must be overcome. Poulet's design process could be applied in public services and offers guidance to a practitioner. However compared with the private sector some key activities are more problematic. For instance benchmarking and training needs analysis at the start of the process and analysis of 'business' performance at the end can be very difficult and these are crucial anchor points. So public services design and delivery may be harder to manage quite so formally and so methodically as the representation suggests.



Woodall and Winstanley (1998) also outline a consultancy-based approach to design, referring to work by Robinson and Robinson (1989) which emphasises the need to establish key processes that ensure line manager needs and expectations are being met, outcomes identified and provision made for individual design to meet learner needs (see Figure 3.7). Their representation is initiated by the identification of a business need and so potentially has a strategic orientation although this isn't emphasised. It also offers a useful model for the practitioner in approaching MD programme design and is notable for the amount of time invested in the consultation and design phase compared with implementation.

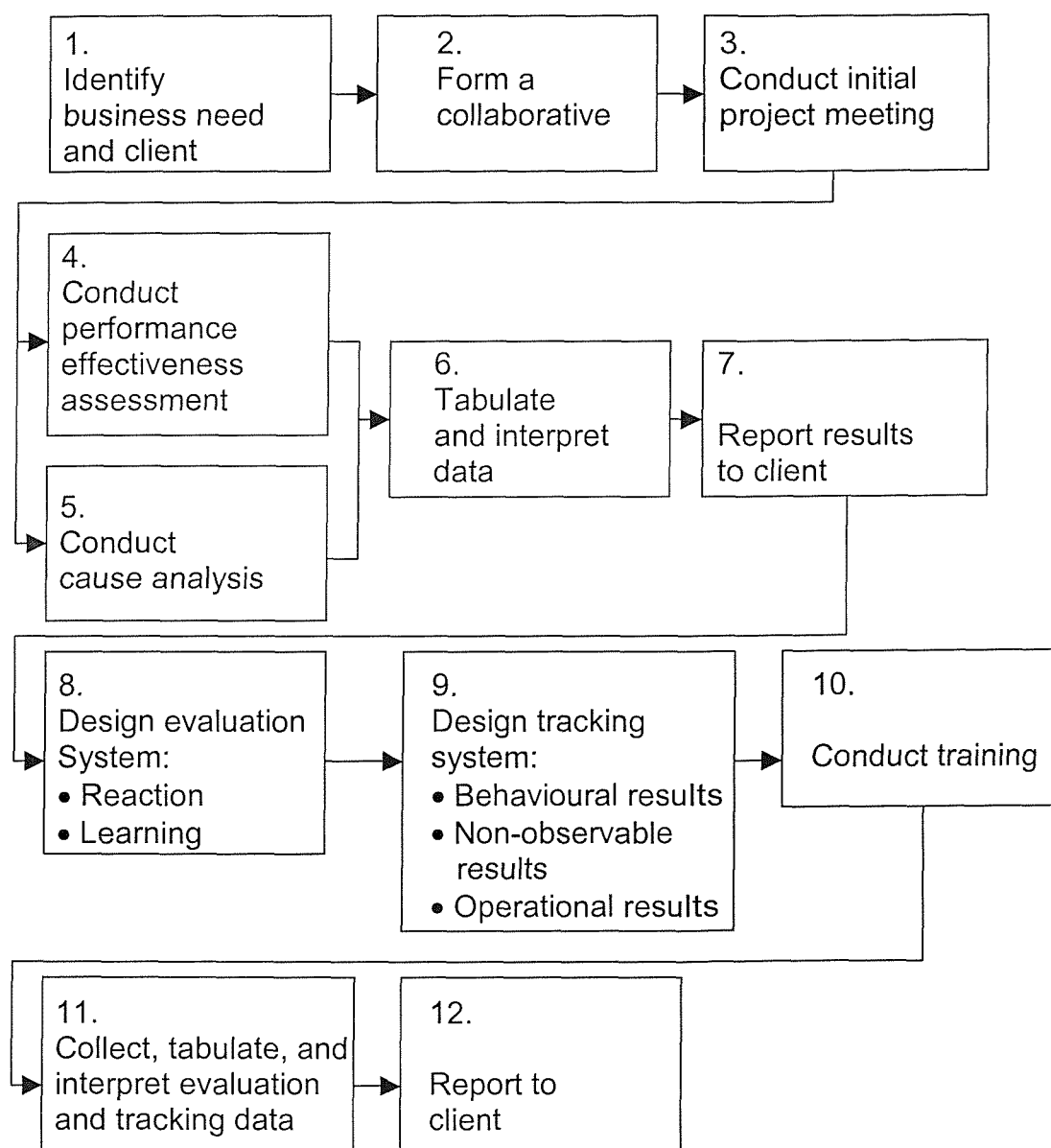


Figure 3.7
Training for Impact
 (Source: Robinson and Robinson, 1989, cited in Woodhall and Winstanley, p. 30)

Woodhall and Winstanley also present an adapted version of Easterby-Smith's (1986) model for evaluating MD which is very trainer and development orientated and doesn't encompass organisational outcomes and strategic impact explicitly (see Figure 3.8). However it is extremely useful and contains the elements that could be readily combined to provide for an evaluation with a strategic orientation. They explore auditing management development emphasising the need to involve key stakeholders and drawing attention to Investor in People (1996) as a potential benchmark.

- (1) Clarifying the purpose
 - Proving? Demonstrating that the cost of delivering management development interventions were more than covered by additional contributions to business performance, or that the chosen interventions met pre-set objectives
 - Improving? Establishing the ways in which the type and delivery of management development interventions might better meet individual manager and organizational needs
 - Learning? Establishing who actually does take advantage of specific management development interventions, and their experience of them
 - Controlling? Establishing that the management development activities have taken place in the planned manner

- (2) Choosing the methodological approach
 - Scientific: which tests hypotheses about what should happen by means of a controlled experiment .
 - Systems: which identifies the inputs and their relation to the way in which they were implemented to result in specific outcomes.
 - Goal Free: disregarding the ostensible aims and objectives of the programme and stakeholders, to establish which in practice these turned out to be.
 - Illuminative: allowing the evaluation process to focus progressively upon interesting issues and practice, rather than just address preconceived criteria.
 - Responsive: involving the various stakeholders in the evaluation process, by letting them set the agenda of what is to be evaluated.

- (3) Adopting a framework (the CAIPO model)
 - Context – identifying the reason for the programme and stakeholders.
 - Administration – the mechanisms for nomination, selection and briefing of participants before the intervention, and the follow-up mechanisms afterwards.
 - Inputs – the contributions of various methods, techniques and people.
 - Processes - the record of what happened, and the experiences of trainees and trainers.

- Outcomes – the impact of the programme on participant perceptions, learning, behaviour, etc.
- Data collection - ensuring that the methods and techniques capture information from those closest to the intervention
- Implementation - using methods to ensure commitment from appropriate stakeholders such as action plans, tasks forces etc

Figure 3.8

Easterby-Smith's model of evaluation for management education training and development (Source: Woodhall and Winstanley, 1998, p. 29)

Robinson and Robinson's model like Poulet's (1997) assumes that business need, desired performance and operational results can be readily defined. In public services where they often can't be the model is too prescriptive and rigid. In contrast Easterby -Smith's model allows for options more appropriate to public services. For instance clarifying the purpose of a programme need not be reliant on analysis against business performance but could still identify how it might meet individual manager and organisational needs. The evaluative method chosen could be 'responsive' and based on stakeholder involvement rather than precise performance measurement.

Given this array of possible approaches Milan and Prokopenko (1989, p. 2) point to the weaknesses of many needs assessments and subsequent evaluations. They suggest there is a tendency for assessments to be static rather than business and future orientated. They adopt the Ashridge model (see Table 3.4) and suggest that an effective needs assessment is focused on the environment and the future, emphasises continuous organisational assessment and self-learning and is linked to lifelong learning for individuals (Milan and Prokopenko, 1989, p. 185)

If assessment and evaluation needs to be a lot more sophisticated than the current norm in MD programmes Milan and Prokopenko offer a very complex and detailed range of approaches and issues as complicated as determining and implementing methodology in social research. That is precisely the point. At the level of a 'focused' strategic approach, needs analysis and evaluation is a complex piece of social research. This perhaps explains why there is in fact little

current evidence that MD does impact positively on organisational performance (Bosworth et al. 2002).

Tovey (1991) suggests that companies often cannot be seen to respond to a strategic development by taking actions that include an MD response.

Seibert, Hall and Kram (1995) found weak links between business and MD strategy and traced this to inflexible HRM specialists that were inward looking and too focused on individual learning. Hussey (1996) maintains his early pessimism about the strategic orientation of MD and suggests that little thought is actually given to strategic implementation and it is this which might trigger SMD.

Burach, Hochwater and Mathys (1997) suggest that SMD is dependent on linking competency development at a personal level to core competencies. Also commitment from senior managers, integrating individual learning into organisational learning, a shared corporate culture and a career development focus that encourages trust and team co-operation between managers at all levels.

Mahmoud (1999) offers a case study of a management training initiative in an American hospital that sought to make a link with organisational mission and strategy. He emphasises firstly the importance of vertical and horizontal integration i.e. involvement of senior managers and cross- departmental communication. Secondly a design, delivery and evaluation process that has an organisational point of reference.

Whilst there isn't a lot of material directly relating to SMD and offering guidance on programme design, what there is very useful. It doesn't unpick the problems of complexity of design identified in the previous section on MD activities but it does offer the practitioner a broad sense of direction in programme planning and identify the challenges of SMD. However there are problems in applying some of the models in public services that are generated by weaker planning systems and difficulties in defining and evaluating performance.

CONCLUSION

There would seem to be some consensus that management development has progressed or should progress beyond the provision of educational or training events to an integrated programme of diverse activities including those that impact on organisational rather than personal development.

There is some agreement that such a programme should be tactical, in that it needs to be planned implemented and evaluated within a framework of organisational policy and designed to respond to organisational need. This need for a planned and structured approach seems sometimes to be presented as strategic MD, when it actually consists of organised and sustained MD.

There is a reference in the more recent literature to the need to go beyond this formalised approach to achieve a strategically managed integrated programme of activities that should contribute directly to organisational objectives and strategy.

Some approaches are value driven and relate management development to belief and value systems set in broader social issues. These are however rare. A lot of the MD literature is focused on methods of personal and organisational development. In fact methods seems to dominate the literature. Different value systems and ideologies can however be seen to underlie different approaches to MD and as in the HRM literature one can identify 'hard' and 'soft' approaches. In designing a programme there may well be choices to be made about philosophy as well as more functional issues.

However programme design is the weak part of many texts. There is little on offer about how methods and approaches can be combined and the different impact methods, or clusters of methods might have on outcomes. There are however models on offer that offer a broad guidance on programme design even if they do not focus on strategic issues.

The linkage of programmes to organisational strategy and objectives receives little real attention. In fact considerably less than in the HRM literature. It almost suffices that it is included in the particular writer's model of good practice. There is little evidence of MD being treated as different from HRD in fact the same research and models reviewed in the HRM/SHRM literature re-appear with the same strengths and deficiencies. There is very little guidance on how strategic MD might be practised, few case studies that might illustrate its distinctive activities and no real clarity in even a crucial area such as the identification of strategic outcomes.

There is an approach to MD that seeks contingency, that is MD programmes vary as they are linked to organisational features and strategy. However management development is often related to and seen as a key component in developing a learning organisation. This offers an alternative to a contingency approach. In effect investment in MD increases organisational capability whatever the strategy.

Most perspectives that embrace a strategic approach tend to see management development as contributing to strategic objectives in a secondary role. It is not seen as a main source of strategy, although it is perhaps implied in the learning organisation model.

Definitions and approaches that really emphasise strategic MD are few and far between. Personal development mostly seems to come first. However, influenced by some of the discussion in this chapter, one could posit a definition that emphasises this. For instance, "strategic management development is the formulation and implementation of organisational strategies that develop or re-design the management function to gain competitive advantage, or in public services, improve efficiency and effectiveness."

Since it is possible to trace the evolution of the definitions and approaches to management development as they build towards establishing strategic linkage and the movement away from a focus on personal training and development. It

is possible that MD has not yet achieved this transition as a discipline and, as with SHRM, we are discussing aspirations rather than realities. This would make a project management/ problem solving approach to achieving a strategically orientated programme the only option. That is, in answer to the research question, there is not a body of opinion or proven practice to draw on in managing a strategically orientated management development programme. There is however in both the HRM and the MD literature the identification of the broad parameters and issues that could help shape and inform such an experimental approach.

Unfortunately much of the material is strongly orientated towards the private sector and does not fit public service realities. This is particularly noticeable when attempts to describe the characteristics of strategic MD provision or design don't seem appropriate or readily achievable in public services (see Table 3.5 and Figures 3.6 and 3.7). Thus in designing a programme for public services there are perhaps more unknowns to grapple with in determining both the design process and the characteristics of the final design.

CHAPTER FOUR - METHODOLOGY

This chapter, given the research question and the literature reviews in chapters one, two and three, will seek to explore and identify the research epistemology and methodology. It examines the positivistic and hermeneutic paradigms and their impact on management research and identifies some problems that might be restricting research outcomes. In searching for a method that does justice to the complexity of management development activities several qualitative methods will be discussed.

Given the research question action research, as it is likely to provide a suitable methodology, will be examined in some depth. Its epistemology, methodology and detailed practices will be outlined and then used to shape an approach to the research activity - the design and delivery of a strategically orientated programme.

The possibility of drawing on the researcher's previous experience will also be explored with a view to developing case studies. Finally the actual research practices used in chapter six will be outlined.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Storey (1989b) comments on a major weakness in MD research:

"...we are basically left with a disconnected set of surveys and other bits of information which, at best, give a broad feel of the extensiveness in the use of particular techniques, but which fail to reveal much about how practices interrelate with each other, or with situational characteristics...if it is intended to seek out a study which locates the practices and processes of the management of managers within their organisational and environmental contexts, then very few studies would even begin to meet the requirement" (Storey, 1989b, pp. 9-10).

In attempting to identify the characteristics of a strategically orientated MD programme, as concluded in the previous chapter, the inter-relationships between practices and the situational characteristics of the organisation are crucial features, arguably the most important features. This means the characteristics of much current research into MD might not yield results and one should seek an alternative approach. There is more depth to the issue than this however. One must ask why an important field of study might have consistently adopted an unproductive methodology and this is particularly pertinent as it might in itself be a partial answer to the research question. That is, one of the developments that will help MD in the public services adopt a strategic orientation will be a body of research that addresses the crucial issues and dimensions. Current research, because of its methodology, might not be offering a practitioner audience a body of knowledge that is fit for purpose (Jackson and Schuler, 1999).

Evered and Louis (1991, p. 13) offer a schema of research perspectives. At one end of the scale they see the researcher is an external 'rational' onlooker, focusing on one part of a complex reality, and at the other the researcher as an actor in a complex multi-faceted social situation that they both influence and are influenced by (see Figure 4.1).

	MODE OF ENQUIRY	
Researcher's relationship to setting	From the outside	← → 'Being there', immersion
Validation basis	Measurement and logic	← → Experimental
Researcher's role	Onlooker	← → Actor
Source of categories	A priori	← → Interactively emergent
Aim of inquiry	Universality and generalizability	← → Situational relevance
Type of knowledge Acquired	Universal, nomothetic: theoria	← → Particular, idiographic: praxis
Nature of data and meaning	Factual, context free	← → Interpreted, contextually embedded

Figure 4.1 Mode of Enquiry (Source: Evered and Louis, 1991 p. 13)

Gummesson (1991) offers a similar representation that distinguishes between a 'positivistic' and a 'hermeneutic' paradigm or epistemology and this can be seen to equate to the extremes of Evered and Louis's schema (see Table 4.1).

Positivistic Paradigm

Research concentrates on description and explanation.

Well-defined, narrow studies.

Thought is governed by explicitly stated theories and hypotheses.

Research concentrates on generalization and abstraction.

Researchers seek to maintain a clear distinction between facts and value judgments; search for objectivity.

Researchers strive to use a consistently rational, verbal, and logical approach to their object of research.

Statistical and mathematical techniques for quantitative processing of data are central.

Researchers are detached, i.e., they maintain a distance between themselves and the object of research; take on the role of external observer.

Distinction between science and personal experience.

Researchers try to be emotionally neutral and make a clear distinction between reason and feeling.

Researchers discover an object of research external to themselves rather than "creating" the actual object of study.

Hermeneutic Paradigm

Research concentrates on understanding and interpretation.

Narrow as well as total studies (holistic view).

Researchers' attention is less focused and is allowed to "float" more widely.

Researchers concentrate on the specific and concrete ("local theory") but also attempt generalizations.

Distinction between facts and value judgments is less clear; recognition of subjectivity.

Preunderstanding that often cannot be articulated in words or is not entirely conscious – tacit knowledge – takes on an important role.

Data are primarily nonquantitative

Both distance and commitment; researchers are actors who also want to experience what they are studying from the inside.

Researchers accept influences from both science and personal experience; they use their personality as an instrument.

Researchers allow both feelings and reason to govern their actions.

Researchers partially create what they study, for example the meaning of a process or a document.

Table 4.1

**Comparison between the Positivistic and Hermeneutic Paradigms
(Source: Gummesson, 1991, p. 15)**

One explanation of the deficiencies in the MD literature, noted by Storey (1989b), is that management science is tending to adopt a positivistic epistemology. This may not encourage the inter-relationships between MD practices and the 'situation' of organisations to be properly explored because it does not fully allow for contextually embedded, complex, emergent studies that focus on situational relevance.

Gill and Johnson (1997, p. 6-7) argue this same point. They suggest that positivism has had an unhelpful influence on management research in diverting people away from qualitative methods that are more sensitive to context. Further they suggest that some of the methodological debate has put managers off research and encouraged pragmatism and a practitioner/ researcher divide. They refer to Checkland (1981), and argue that attempts to apply scientific methodology to real-world, essentially social problems, have been responsible for the limited success of management science.

Carter and Jackson (1990, p. 222), argues that management research in a post-modern era has lurched from this unproductive dependence on positivism towards "Great Histories" where famous managers tell stories of their successes for others to emulate. They suggest there is a research and educational crisis that has resulted in a management education, "...at best irrelevant, possibly unintentionally dangerous or, at worst, pernicious" (Carter and Jackson, 1990, p. 227).

Storey (1989a p. 8) refers to Ashton et al. (1975, p. 25) who offers a diagram that opens up another dimension to the problem. Using case studies Ashton et al have developed a continuum that suggests that as practices and cultural changes become embedded in an organisation their visibility becomes less. In effect behaviour and perception are so much a part of organisational life that to the actors they are taken for granted. To an outside researcher they are therefore so well camouflaged at worse to be invisible at best to be a puzzling anomaly they might uncover but which they are unable to explain.

This is the problem ethnomethodology attempts to grapple with (Garfinkel, 1967) in relation to social life in general. The significant patterns of social behaviour are not apparent unless those patterns are disrupted by research interventions. If ethnomethodology's methods have been criticised as unethical in researching natural social situations in organisations, they are also not really a practical proposition at all. How then does one uncover the hidden social? Positivism, wedded to observable data, could hardly attempt this.

There would seem to be good reason for accepting that the study should be located within the hermeneutic, interpretative or qualitative paradigm and that this choice has significance in that it counters a tendency towards positivism that might have led to deficiencies in the existing literature. This would be in accord with Mintzberg's approach (1973, p. 229). This consisted of determining a methodology of a study by reviewing what other methods have been used to study the phenomena and then choosing an approach that compliments them. Given the discussion above a qualitative approach that embeds a MD initiative in organisational context is likely to prove valuable and yield results.

METHODOLOGY

Feyerabend (1975) offers a form of methodological anarchy in suggesting that any method is likely to help and yield results and that too much attention is given to methodological choice. He suggests that much discussion is post hoc and merely self-justification and that any research is to be commended. If this is perhaps a little radical, the literature reviews that preceded this chapter indicate a lack of studies in strategic management development and it could be argued, that given a limited field, his view is more pertinent. Perhaps it is more crucial that this research is attempted and that an approach is adopted that looks likely to offer results in relation to the research question and the detailed issues of methodology are mostly secondary. That is, any qualitative methodology is likely to prove useful.

Addressing the issue of research into fields of study that lack depth or established history Marcus and Fisher (1986) argue that, “in periods when fields are without secure foundations, practice becomes the engine of innovation.” In other words the opportunity to observe or collect data in new fields of activity, and then reflect on or analyse this data, is very limited, and any science must look to the practitioner to actively experiment, if progress is to be made and a body of knowledge eventually developed.

If Feyerabend is the extreme of instrumentalism Gill and Johnson (1997, p. 1) point out how resourcing is often a key determinant of methodology, whatever the broader debates and issues, yet it is seldom identified as such, as it tends to undermine the image of the objective, independent researcher. Also, as noted in chapter one, they highlight the issue of access and feasibility. Often researchers are not only limited in terms of what they research, their methods can also be circumscribed by their circumstances and the context in which they must function.

One answer to the problem of much of organisational reality being hidden (Ashton and Easterby-Smith, 1975) is to be actively involved in the generation of the social change as a participant, before it becomes taken for granted. The researcher will thereby have mapped its progression along Ashton’s continuum from overt and observable behaviour to taken for granted assumption. That is to say rather than just observing the management of an MD programme with a strategic orientation, one can actively design and manage one. The researcher can then be there as organisational history is made and hopefully gain depth of understanding that other methods cannot aspire to in handling such a complex activity. However, the problem is that the researcher is also responsible for the activity and this can undermine dramatically the researcher’s objectivity.

So what are the methodological options?

Bryman (1988, p. 11–12) identifies six broad categories of method: semi-structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups, observation, ethnography,

research diaries and life histories. All of these are dependent on the activity that is the substance of the research question being socially established. The issue of method is how the qualitative data is collected and interpreted.

A further representation by Evered and Louis (1991) identifies the method of action research where the role of the researcher is more pro-active. As is the case with Bryman (1988) some researchers do not see this category as social research because of the problems created by the researchers involvement in the social interaction (see Figure 4.2).



Mode	Primary purpose of knowledge-yielding activity		Role of researcher
	Organizational action	Organizational inquiry	
From the inside  	Copying Action-taking Managing Surviving	Situational learning Action research Clinical practice Case research	Organizational actor Participant observer Unobtrusive observer
	Organizational design and engineering Controlled experimentation Social technology	Traditional positivistic science	Empiricist Data analysis Rational model builder

Figure 4.2 Alternative Modes of Enquiry

(Source: Everard and Louis, 1991, p. 13)

This problem of involvement can be illustrated with reference to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This approach to the interpretation of qualitative data is currently very popular as it allows the conceptual framework that shapes a social interaction to be determined and verified by an objective and methodical analysis of records of that interaction. However it cannot be readily mobilised in circumstances where the researcher is leading and shaping significantly the

interaction. Then the researcher will have generated the phenomena they will later attempt to discover.

Action research would however allow management development activity to generate a research outcome, however compromised its interpretation might be.

It is also very appropriate given the discussion above when there are not naturally occurring examples of the phenomenon that can be researched by more objective methods. If there are problems with generalising from the results, action research can provide a body of knowledge that will help span the researcher practitioner divide and could provide a basis for theorising and theory testing. If management practice is seen as managing organisational change, action research must be a key, congruent research method for the discipline. One could also argue that as it focuses on and encourages organisational innovation, it is more congruent with management science than with other social sciences.

Given the research question and the state of the field, there would seem to be good reasons for action research to be seen as an appropriate methodology. It is important therefore to explore its features in some detail.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION RESEARCH

Susman (1993) offers a clear but simple view of the ontology and epistemology of action research based on his experience as a management consultant - a group that action research appeals to because of its congruence with their professional activities. He states that principally he is aware of a real world that exists independently of him and of which he has, and always will have, an incomplete knowledge. He sees the independence of this world demonstrated by his frequent inability to manipulate it through prediction and action. He suggests that his knowledge of this reality will always be indirect and limited by his language and by his conceptual repertoire, which is culturally and historically specific. He then goes on to outline his approach to action research which he labels the pragmatist viewpoint and sees as dominated by three epistemological

questions: Why do I want to know more about the world? How should I go about knowing more about it? How can I be confident that I know more about it?

He traces the lineage of the viewpoint to Dewey (1929), who saw all human knowledge as an artefact created to help us come to terms with the world and to manipulate and re-create it. To Dewey all methods of enquiry, including scientific method, are historical products that have proven themselves effective in dealing with problematic situations. Problems and methods therefore necessarily vary culturally and historically, but it is the desire to problem solve that drives the search for knowledge. This desire is initially emotional in that a situation is experienced as unsettled and indeterminate, so that we are motivated by a need to reduce uncertainty or risk. Uncertainty that stems from either not understanding the situation we are faced with or not understanding which action should be taken.

In these few comments Susman has established some the key features of action research. It seeks to actively change the world through problem solving and in its origins it developed from a liberal, critical reaction to conventional research and education.

If in Evered and Louis' representation above (see Figure 4.2) action research is located at the far end of the research continuum from positivistic approaches. Gill and Johnson (1997) do not agree, but see it as better positioned nearer to positivistic science as a 'quasi-experiment' - reserving the extreme pole position of qualitative approaches for ethnography and grounded theory. Coghlan and Brannick (2001, p. xi), also suggest that, "doing action research means being engaged in a more rigorous series of diagnostic situations, planning and taking actions and evaluating them, than is perhaps the norm."

There are however action researchers who working politically with communities and underprivileged groups who would not seek to locate themselves on this continuum at all as they would see it as a critical perspective or critical theory. Their perspective is Marxist or Neo- Marxist and they draw on the work of

Habermas (1968) and the Frankfurt School and Freire (1978) in establishing an alternative ontology and epistemology that challenges conventional science as repressive.

Sarantakos (1993) overviews their perspective suggesting that they see reality as a social creation but one in which its representation is such as to serve the needs of the powerful and is illusory. Further reality is not ordered but in a state of conflict and tension. These contradictions are the source of the dynamics that underlie social change. The purpose of critical theory is to uncover the illusions that distort reality thus empowering and liberating people and bringing social and political change. Both positivistic and interpretative perspectives are seen as repressive and as generating the false consciousness that prevents personal and social liberation and maintains capitalist hegemony.

A more liberal version, orientated perhaps towards social reform rather than revolution is represented by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) who suggest that social justice must be an outcome for action research. Greenwood and Levin (1998) are dismissive of interpretative and hermeneutic approaches, seeing them as encouraging the disengagement of social scientists from the social reality they purport to study. They further suggest that action research closely resembles research in the physical sciences which is also based on iterative cycles of thought and action. They quote and endorse Kurt Lewin's views, who they identify as a key founder of action research, that "nothing is so practical as a good theory" and "the best way to try and understand something is to try and change it." They also see their roots in Dewey's pragmatic philosophy but also in the post war industrial democracy movement that developed amongst other things into the pragmatic, participative approach at the heart of total quality management. Democratic processes and liberating outcomes are also features of their approach:

"Whether the problem is a social-organizational or a material one, the results of AR must be tangible in the sense that participants can figure out whether the solution they have developed actually resolves the

problem they set themselves. Here we connect directly back to pragmatic philosophy. The results of an AR process must be judged in terms of the workability of the solutions arrived at. Workability means whether or not a solution resolves the initial problem. This is not a matter of double-blind experimentation, stratified random samples, and significance levels. It is a matter of collective social judgement about the outcomes of a collective social action. Social judgement is itself the result of a kind of democratic conversation in which the professional researcher has only one vote” (Greenwood and Levin, 1998, p. 77).

Another variance of action research has developed from its practice by various professional groups such as teachers, nurses and social workers. In this guise it has been re-named practitioner based enquiry. This also has hermeneutic and critical factions but offers a different variation where for instance a nurse in working with a patient would seek a very close affective relationship to help respond to a personal problem, seeking to experience their world as closely as possible. This locates the action research process at the extreme end of the experiential continuum with validity lying with the individual patient’s perception of whether their personal problem has been alleviated. It affords very limited potential for generalisation except for the practitioner who might carry their conclusions into their casework and the patient who might apply some learning to other aspects of their life.

In co-operative inquiry (Reason and Heron, 2003) the object is involving ordinary people in research and achieving practical outcomes for them:

“A group of people come together to explore issues of common concern and interest. All members of the group contribute....and finally everybody has a say in whatever conclusions the co-operative inquiry group might reach....the split between ‘researcher’ and ‘subjects’ is done away with” (Reason and Heron, 2003, p. 2).

These approaches have interesting connotations for management consultancy in that they value research that contributes not to a wider scientific community but to professional practice. Taking this a stage further management action research also contributes to organisational knowledge and practice, so that one can begin to develop a range of research outcomes with a major contribution to macro-theory at one end of the scale and personal development at the other. In such a schema management action research would be quite well located in terms of its outcomes even if it only contributed to organisational understanding.

Reason and Torbert (2001, p. 2) takes this view a stage further suggesting that there are broadly three research paradigms, empirical positivist, postmodern interpretism and transformational action research. They cite Susman and Evered (1978) agreeing with them that positivistic approaches, "are deficient in their capacity to generate knowledge for use by members of organisations" and "the findings in our scholarly management journals are only remotely related to the real world of practicing managers" (Reason and Torbert, 2001, pp. 582-585) They conclude:

"we hope that this article will enable others to assess the scientific merits of action research. We believe that action research is both a scientific in terms of the criteria of positivistic science and relevant in terms of generating good organisational science. As a procedure for generating knowledge, we believe it has a far greater potential than positivistic science for understanding and managing the affairs of organisations" (Reason and Torbert, 2001, p. 601).

ACTION RESEARCH AND ITS PRE-SUPPOSITIONS

So if the norm is to classify action research as post-positivist and hermeneutic there are also a number of political positions taken by action researchers. To Sarantakos (1993), for instance this is an ontological difference, to Hassard (1991) it is about the existential presuppositions of organisational theory. Gummersson (1991) describes it as the issue of meta-theory.

Whether it is a matter of theoretical position or ontology it is crucial as it sets the context of the research cycle and the diagnostic phase that begins the cycle is deductive i.e. analytical and therefore dependent on this initial set of perceptions. Susman (1993) states that his approach is systemic as he views an organisation as a socio-technical system. However it is possible to identify a number of possible theoretical positions. For instance a systemic perspective might be adopted alongside the perception of both the organisation and its social context as conflictual, that is to adhere to what Morgan (1996) described as a political model and give weight to power relations as a crucial organisational feature. Alternatively one could adopt a Parsonian consensus orientated model (Parsons, 1937) A similar range of possibilities are on offer In approaching intra-personal and inter-personal relationships and the issue could be described as determining a researchers ideological position and then congruent theoretical perspectives.

Hassard (1991) separates ideology from theory and proposes eclecticism. He suggests that multi- paradigm analysis is desirable in action research as each social science paradigm offers a different perspective on a problem or project. Further he suggests this will lead to greater epistemological variety, methodological democracy within academic communities and enhance academic neutrality. However he identifies a number of features of academic communities that will resist such a change, including current training pathways in organisational behaviour and the dominance of research by orthodoxy. At organisational level multi-paradigm approaches could conflict with the value base of sponsors. Also a lack of theoretical consensus could be seen to undermine the validity of outcomes.

Gummesson (1991) takes this issue a stage further suggesting that pre-understanding has other dimensions as well as academic theory, and builds in personal experience as a feature. This includes experience from private life as well as learning from previous action research projects.

McNiff (1994) cited by Ferguson (1999) offers an interesting counterpoint to this theoretical and political theme in drawing attention to the role of affect in action research as practitioner based enquiry:

“For me, in my perhaps idiosyncratic understanding of action research, it is that ability to be able to share the passion, the awe, the wonder, the beauty, the delight in your own life and share that with somebody else, to show that you really do delight in your own life, and each moment is better than the last, and help someone else to share that view of delight, and help someone else to find the delight in their own life” (McNiff, 1994, p. 19, cited by Ferguson, 1999, p. 28).

Whilst this might at first appear irrelevant to management action research, a similar optimism is required of a management consultant attempting to engineer organisational change. It is perhaps as much a pre-supposition as any other broad perspective.

THE ACTION RESEARCH METHOD

Susman and Evered's (1978) portrayal of action research, below, identifies five phases diagnosing, action planning, action taking, evaluating, and specifying learning (see Figure 4.4). This illustrates effectively the centrality of the problem solving process to action research. The similarity of the process to the 'management process' or 'the project management process' or continuous improvement may explain its attraction to management consultants and theorists.

Susman and Evered (1978) also emphasise the importance, again after Dewey, of reflective learning in this cyclical process. They represent it as an iterative process that permits continual review, re-analysis and re-planning, a process Kaplan (1964) calls the circle of interpretation. Their representation places and gives centrality to the relationship between the client and the action researcher (see Figure 4.4).

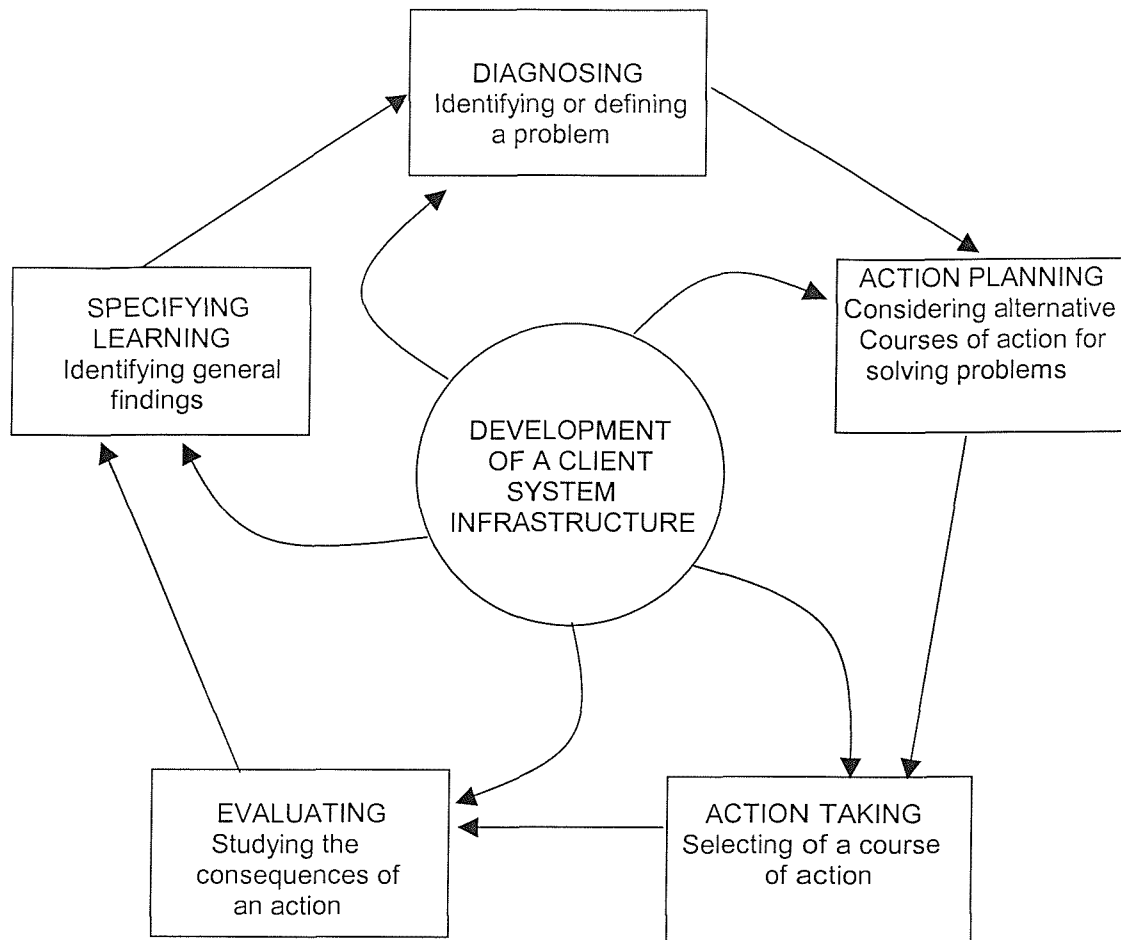


Figure 4.4 The Process of Action Research

(Source: Susman and Evered, 1978, p. 589)

They suggest that the design phase of the action research could be seen to allow for verification by prediction since from this initial analysis, proposals are made about actions that will change the functioning of the organisation. However there are practical and moral imperatives that mean such a pure experimental process is not viable. Action inevitably releases emergent processes in the organisation that the researcher must respond to. Verification of the initial analysis and the action is only possible through retrospectively reconstructing the plan to see how the system was conceptualised during the stages of its transformation, i.e. conclusions will be heavily dependent on interpretation.

It is noticeable that both representations do not include the statement of objectives and performance measures although these could be included in their general heading of action planning. However such statements of desired outcome would facilitate verification of the initial analysis.

Sarantokos (1993) views action research as the application of fact finding to practical problem solving in a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. He sees it as potentially involving the collaboration and co-operation of researchers practitioners and laymen.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) identify three key features of action research which have accord with Susman's (1978) and Whittaker's (1998) schemas:

"It can be argued that three conditions are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for action research to be said to exist: firstly, a project takes as its subject matter a social practice, regarding it as a form of strategic action susceptible of improvement; secondly, the project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated; thirdly, the project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice, and maintaining collaborative control of the process"
(Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 165)

They point to the crucial political dimension of action research, associating it with critical theory and suggest that otherwise the research model is no different from other models. In other words the political dimension is all.

THE TECHNIQUES AND PRACTICES OF ACTION RESEARCH

Gummesson (1991) suggests that action research or science can draw on the range of methods for data collection and analysis, but that these will on the

whole be qualitative e.g. surveys and structured or informal interviews. He allows however for the mobilisation of positivistic methods e.g. statistical sampling.

He draws attention to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) work and agrees in tackling the problem of generalizing from case studies and projects that it is important to distinguish between the processes of theory generation and theory testing. In theory testing a more systematic approach is necessary which he sees as available in Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory.

Greenwood and Levin (1998) offer a number of case studies to illustrate action research and conclude that they involve a wide range of approaches to action research. They describe the processes as guided by the image of the friendly outsider interacting with a diverse and complex group of local problem owners in a complicated conversation that results in the generation and clarification of ideas and actions. However this never results in single hard-line consensus to which everyone is subordinated. Beyond this they summarise their views in a representation of their approach that has four dimensions.

- *Constructive use of arenas for dialogue: In our work, we strive to construct arenas where participants and researcher(s) can engage in a dialogical relationship. These arenas create the space in which mutual learning takes place.*
- *Cogenerative research; the research process emerges out of joint experiences and from mutual reflections about these experiences shared between participants and researcher(s).*
- *The use of multiple methods – We strongly reject the notion that AR is a particular theory or a specific set of methods. A great many theories and methods developed in the social sciences and humanities can be used in AR processes, if and when the participants decide they are appropriate and gain the requisite skills in deploying them together. What defines AR*

for us is the combination of research, action and democratization, not adherence to a specific methodology” (Greenwood and Levin, 1998, p. 152)

Having accepted a multi-method approach in which they make no distinction between positivistic and interpretive traditions they introduce the idea of search conferencing which they summarise and see as dependent on a good understanding of group process and researcher skills in making group interventions. It offers an interesting method based on mobilising communities as problem solvers. It is specific to action research and only permitted by the level of involvement of the researcher.

Argyris and Schon (1996) also offer in their approach, which they have designated action science, a range of concepts and interventions to promote group and organisational learning as well as rules of practice and guidance for testing hypotheses. Techniques include ‘confronting’, ‘single and double loop learning’, ‘models of social action’ and the ‘ladder of inference’.

Reason (1994), Heron (1996) and Torbert (1991), all offer a repertoire of perspectives, concepts and interventions that apply social psychological psychotherapeutic and existential insights to action research in contrast to the sociological and political approach of Greenwood and Levin (1998).

ACTION RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

Gummersson (1991) presents an outline of how the researcher role and the consultant/project leader roles interact. He suggests that the researcher role demands a process of critical analysis and reflection that goes beyond project monitoring and review.

He describes the role of the action scientist as:

“On the basis of their paradigms and pre-understanding and given access to empirical data via their role as change agent, action scientists develop an understanding of the specific decision, implementation, and change process in the cases with which they are involved. They generate a specific (local) theory which is then tested and modified through action.

The interaction between the role of academic researcher and the role of management consultant, within a single project as well as between projects, can also help the scientist to generate a more general theory which in turn becomes an instrument for increased theoretical sensitivity and an ability to act in a social context, a theory that is never finalised but is continually being transcended” (Gummerson, 1991, p. 9).

Argyris, Putman and Smith (1989) have suggested a differentiation between action research and action science. This allows for instance journalistic endeavours or research focussed on professional development or consultancy to be distinguished from research whose intent is to contribute to social science. Hult and Lennung (1978) established by survey the characteristics they would attribute to action science and Gummerson (1991) expands his definition to encompass these characteristics. He identifies eight characteristics of action science:

- 1) Action science always has two goals, solving a problem for the client and contributing to science. This demands the integration of the roles of management consultant and researcher.
- 2) During a project both the researcher and the client personnel should develop their understanding and competence.

- 3) The understanding developed during an action research project should be holistic in that it relates to the totality of a problem in its full complexity accepting the need to simplify this complexity to permit understanding.
- 4) Action science requires the consultant and client to co-operate and the consultant and client must exchange feedback and adjust their approach as the project progresses. This militates against the control mainstream science demands of a research process.
- 5) It is primarily applicable to bringing change to social systems.
- 6) There must be a mutually acceptable ethical framework within which action science is used. This is however an area of contention with some action scientists accepting the need to work where there are conflicting issues and values others rejecting this.
- 7) Pre-understanding of the corporate environment and of the conditions of business are essential to manage an action research project effectively.
- 8) Action science should be governed by the hermeneutic paradigm, although some elements of the positivistic paradigm may be included.

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CLIENT

Another crucial dimension to action research identified by Susman (1993) is the relationship with the client. Susman presents this as a process of empowerment in which the consultant relieves some of the "clients" emotional reaction to the identified problem, which is necessarily significant to them, but to which they have no solution, by guiding them through a systematic approach to its analysis. The researcher is presented as a facilitator, and by the inclusion of an affective dimension, therapist. This opens up for discussion the ethical question of the roles and relationship of researcher and client.

From the school of critical theory Wilson (1993) offers a radical and challenging perspective on the role of the researcher or consultant in an action research, or any other applied research activity. Wilson suggests that social research is part of the bureaucratic-meritocratic mode of domination characteristic of contemporary society.

“Modern approaches to social research presume and institutionalise a dependency relationship in which the researcher adopts an exploitative or care taking attitude towards the subjects of research” (Wilson, 1993, p. 249).

To Wilson the ideology of professionalism is merged with the ideology of scientism to provide a powerful but questionable legitimacy to the researcher. In care taking or empowering relationships, the process of domination is perhaps more pernicious since the assumption of superior knowledge, expertise and status is disguised by concern or care for the client.

To Wilson the solution lies in the adaptation of a counter-structure in the form of an ethical stance. Subjects must understand what researchers have produced about them and concur in the results. If they do not concur the researcher/subject dialogue must continue. This dialogue is an essential final phase of the research process during which the findings are explained to the subject. Subjects should have the right to not only resist the interpretation of the researcher but also write their own interpretation which should be published alongside the professional version and have the same status. To Wilson this should be a professional requirement that would increase the validity of research, counter its repressive function and enhance the impact of research on society.

CHOOSING AN APPROACH TO THE ACTION RESEARCH

The literature offers a daunting array of varying approaches and perspectives that locate action research in positivist, interpretive and critical traditions. It applies social psychological, psychoanalytic sociological and political concepts

and techniques and seeks psychological, social and political outcomes. The context of application varies from major social change programmes through community projects to organisational cultural change, organisational problem solving and finally group and individual empowerment and self-development.

However it is possible to identify a number of key issues and establish a position on them to guide this research. It is readily possible to work with clients in problem solving groups to bring about organisational change through the design and delivery of a management development programme. Clients will be training managers or general managers and it will not be possible to aspire to political or general social change or involve the group in developing psychotherapeutic insight. However the culture of the organisations means participants will not reject conflict models of organisational functioning or reflection on personal and group development and group and organisational processes. It will therefore be possible to aspire to operate democratically, openly and reflectively and work towards organisational change.

In chapter two it was argued that the realities of practice for public service managers demanded analysis that drew on the full range of theoretical paradigms underlying social science. (Dixon and Dogan, 2004). This was in accord with Hassard (1991) who, as previously noted, also advocated multi-paradigm analysis as a basis for action research. There is an inevitable logic to proposing that since the setting for the action research is a public service that this position should be adopted and as wide a range of perspectives as possible drawn on in diagnosis and evaluation (Susman, 1978).

The process of action research can be seen to mirror a project management approach to the development and implementation of management development programmes discussed in chapter two (Smilansky, 1997). As a research method this is congruent with the ethos of the organisations in which I work and their approach to management training and development. Reflection and findings could be shared between members of the project teams and projects are ongoing lasting for four years during which period application of the action

research process could allow for improvement and there could be regular participative evaluation involving key stakeholders.

I am an experienced project manager, team leader and group worker. So there seemed to be good reason for accepting that an action research project, that allowed the exploration of strategic linkage, was a viable option.

RESEARCH PRACTICES THAT WERE USED

Greenwood and Levin (1998) see action research as multi-method and best seen as an approach typified by group problem solving and validation by the client. Therefore activity and evaluation were centered around a project/problem solving group and several sub-groups. This allowed the research process to mirror the action research processes outlined above (Evered and Louis, 1991; Gummertsson, 1991). The project group was chaired by the customer organisation so they had control of the process from design, through action planning and implementation to evaluation.

To augment the naturally occurring records of the project groups a research log was kept that included a research commentary and provided the basis for regular analysis and discussions with the researcher's tutor. The project group agreed that I would write up the findings of the project and they agreed to comment on this.

Disagreements, including those that could not be resolved were recorded and presented. Formal regular evaluations and surveys managed by the project group allowed a broad range of stakeholders to contribute to the conclusions. The whole process spanned 2-3 years. This thesis constitutes the full action research report.

In sum the action research project offered the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to an important service and tackle some new ground in the design of management development programmes in the public services. It also offered

what Stringer (1996, p. 160), described as “the search for understanding in the company of friends.”

DRAWING ON PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

As I was heavily influenced by previous experiences in leading management development projects, consideration was given to using case studies to encapsulate these experiences and make explicit the influences that shaped my approach to the action research.

Yin (1994) suggests that a case study is ideally used in situations where the research question explores the how and why of a phenomena, when no control is required by the researcher over behaviour or events, and when the focus is contemporary. However I did require and exercise control over events and these events are now not contemporary. Although Yin in his work does not perhaps accord action research the credit it deserves and the studies were perhaps best seen as the results of previous action research, they certainly could not be seen as current.

In offering a definition of a case study Yin suggests:

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundary between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 23).

Yin also notes how the tendency to use methods sequentially also contributes to a methodological hierarchy that disadvantages the case study. That is, very often, the case study is used as the basis for an exploratory phase that is followed then by survey and experiment. Only these latter phases of the research are then seen as valid.

It is apparent that even allowing for a more permissive stance on researcher involvement than Yin advocates, there are still some problems with

retrospectively adopting a case study approach. Even accepting that in this instance the case studies would be used as an exploratory tool to help augment the literature reviews and shape the second phase of the action research proper, they would not be, in the strictest methodological sense, case studies.

However, whilst accepting the explanatory value of pure case studies in their own right and their status as a rigorous method of enquiry, there would appear to be a continuum of practices in the management literature all described as case studies. If at one end of the scale it is a rigorous qualitative method at the other it is study in a box at the end of a chapter that is usually not evidenced in any way. Often it is merely a reflection on a personal experience or a description of an event or a scenario. There could perhaps therefore be a place for previous experiences. This might especially be the case when they could be partly evidenced from records and even could achieve some verification by being presented to the original stakeholders for comment.

However, even allowing the further mitigation that the intention was only generate analytic generalisations to shape further research not validate those generalisations, the studies were not shaped by any kind of a research protocol and in the last analysis had to be seen as questionable. Nevertheless, there did seem to be value in the availability of a number of studies that afforded a degree of comparison and a range of examples that offered a depth of experience and detail that would not otherwise be accessed. As the availability of studies that explore the complexity of a management development programme in organisational context is part of the research problem (Storey, 1989b) the material has been included but under the heading of "cases" to avoid confusion. They are therefore the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CASES

This chapter will be based on five cases drawn from my personal experience that offer examples of how management development programmes in the public services have been designed and implemented. The objective is to identify likely problems and any features that have proven to be successful. They have been chosen because they offer a reasonable range of organisational types across a range of public services.

The exercise of reviewing and selecting the cases will provide opportunity for professional reflection. Making this reflection explicit will also serve to alert the reader to the researcher's preconceptions on starting the action research. This offers a more rigorous approach than simply attempting to outline preconceptions for the reader or attempting a post-modern autobiography.

The chapter will also provide an indication of the complexity of programme design and delivery and the influence of factors such as organisational history, structure and environment on these processes.

CASE 1: WESTSHIRE COUNCIL

In 1994 after a long period of consultation across its departments, Westshire put the provision of their management development programme out to competitive tender and awarded it to two providers in two parts. The contract for the delivery of twelve days of workshops was awarded to a local University. A separate contract for the assessment of the practice outcomes was awarded to a private consultancy that was approved as a centre for the delivery and assessment of NVQ's by a national awarding body. Some departments were not welcoming of this corporate initiative and sought to maintain their own provision. They were allowed to do so in the short term as long as they provided the same NVQ awards as the corporate programme.

The workshops were expected to meet the needs of council managers at supervisory, first line and middle and senior levels, nearly one thousand managers as a total population. The two providers were expected to co-operate on the design and delivery of the workshops and in-house trainers and interested managers would act as assessors for the NVQ's working with the consultancy. Staff were expected to sign up for an NVQ at levels three, four or five and then book in to workshops agreed with their manager and assessor when their diaries allowed. Following the workshops they would collect relevant workplace evidence in a portfolio to demonstrate practice competence against the performance criteria for the relevant NVQ.

The University team tendering for the contract had concerns about the programme design and had proposed that rather than buying in to workshops on an individual basis managers should be assigned to a learning group that would attend together until completion. Their reasons for this were:

- 1) Managers attending training sessions are often under considerable work pressure and assessment of outcomes as required by the NVQ provision is demanding and requires personal risk taking. The support provided by a consistent learning group is therefore invaluable, the group dynamics are often the key factor in encouraging managers to complete a programme.
- 2) Group dynamics also contribute considerably to the quality of a training session. This is especially the case when an organisation is seeking organisational outcomes. A consistent learning group allows the group to form and develop increasing the contributions and interaction between participants and shaping the learning experience to respond to the realities and needs of the managers. Learning from each other and joint problem solving, are possibly more important learning experiences than trainer inputs. A shifting population of workshop members stops the group developing and limits problem solving activity.
- 3) The programme was likely to prove very hard to manage as it was very individualised. With everyone working to their own learning plan to

different assessors even tracking and monitoring individuals progress was likely to prove difficult. Management costs would be high and if under resourced would lead to breakdown.

- 4) Trying to meet the needs of all managers at all levels in the organisation within one workshop would be a big challenge for the trainers. Learning groups would allow a workshop to focus on the needs of one level at a time.
- 5) There was a capability problem. The organisation was new to management development but reaching for a very ambitious and complex programme design. There was a steep learning curve for managers attending workshops, their line managers, training managers and those acting as assessors. Considerable hidden inputs were necessary beyond the contract to bring all those involved on line, just in briefing and selling time alone, ignoring the likelihood of the processes needing constant troubleshooting to be established and to function well. To give an example it was highly likely that in a number of cases line manager, participant and assessor relationships would get stuck and the participant would stop making progress. For instance, the promotion of a line manager who had agreed the development plan, an inter regnum and then a new manager who hasn't been briefed on the programme and their responsibilities, is more than enough to take a participant out of the process entirely. Problems such as this one first need to be identified, itself not easy. Loss of an individual's development opportunities is often not a high priority compared with service delivery problems. Then someone needs to intervene and in, extreme cases, take over some of the line manager or assessor roles.

Given the above issues, the University was pleased not to be asked to provide the assessment inputs. In fact as they aired their concerns outlined above in the contract negotiation as diplomatically as possible, their reluctance probably resulted in the split contract. This in itself presented the University team with another dilemma. Co-ordination between customer and two suppliers was a

further vulnerability and the quality of assessment processes was as dependent on workshop content as much as anything else. The delivery team agreed on a strategy of delivering the workshops as well as possible and predicted a likely breakdown in the programme overall.

Delivery of the workshops proved very difficult the trainer responsible having to develop a strategy of dividing the participants into small sub-groups according to their level of responsibility, in order to allow discussion. This sometimes meant providing separate case studies that were pitched to meet the needs of the different groups, e.g. a senior/ middle manager case study that raised strategic issues, a first line manager case study that focused on team leadership. Given the need to try and meet such a range of need, learning packs were developed to support the workshops that differentiated between the groups.

After some initial teething problems the workshop provision was well received and received consistently good evaluations. The programme ended when local government was re-organised without a single participant achieving an NVQ. More problematically there were no adequate records of the progress made by individuals to allow continuity of approach in the confusion of a major organisational restructuring.

CASE 1: CONCLUSIONS

ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY AND DESIGN

The case is useful in emphasising that management development initiatives are major, complex organisational changes that whatever the strategic view are probably not seen as a priority by many managers on the ground. Given that they often also lack the expertise and experience that is essential to implementation those responsible for a programme need to plan for considerable organisational resistance and implementation problems.

An extensive consultation process resulted in a very good course design that would respond well to the organisations needs and offer an excellent

development opportunity to individuals. However the design was very ambitious, resource hungry and dependent on considerable expertise. As a result implementation failed. There was clearly a disproportionate amount of time spent on design planning compared to implementation planning and capability seems not to have affected design at all. An already impressive range of risks was increased by separating delivery from assessment and involving three delivery teams.

Organisational readiness must be an issue. If organisations are inexperienced and have a very low level of MD activity capability needs to be developed over time. They should start with a relatively simple programme, that is less vulnerable but builds expertise and support in the organisation, as a means to developing a more ambitious provision in the longer term.

Lack of MD expertise was also clearly a problem. Programme design and implementation is very hard in practice compared with its principles, which seem very simple. Organisations need to make sure they have someone leading their development or advising them who has a proven track record in MD. Developing expertise has got to be crucial to developing any form of robust MD provision in public services let alone a strategic one.

An alternative view would be to see the implementation problems as an example of the effect on initiatives of public service conditions. The extensive consultation that drove the development led perhaps to a design consensus but paradoxically this was not one that could be managed. Were managers left in a position where they could respond to the needs of their stakeholders up until a point but then were left with a number of problems such as lack of resourcing that they could not respond to and were outside of their control? Or was the failure of students to complete at heart a performance management problem, generated by line managers unable to respond to realities in the work place that presented them with paradoxes they could not work through? (Dixon, 2004). Were they for instance expected to co-operate with the MD programme by freeing staff to attend and supporting them but also expected to maintain current levels of service delivery?

In any event it was possible to see this as an attempt at a more focused approach to MD (Barnham et al. 1988) being reduced to fragmentation by public service paradoxes.

INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT ON DESIGN

Environmental turbulence is another interesting factor. Constant restructuring of public services is the norm so any provision should allow for this. Completion for individuals must be relatively quick and this means a programme probably needs structure. However the training section providing the structure can easily cease to exist so that self-motivated individuals who lead their own learning could also be seen as a priority outcome. Even a slightly more structured design might have got several groups of managers through to the successful completion of an award and begun the process of building support and expertise in MD. A partial success whose achievements were disrupted would have been a good outcome compared with a communal failure that will hamper future initiatives.

LIMITS OF CORPORATE PROVISION

It is interesting that some departments did not see the corporate provision as meeting their needs. A standardised provision can be a problem, killing off initiatives as much as setting the foundation for provision. The compromise of adhering to the corporate principles and outcomes but allowing variation would seem a reasonable solution and might be a good design alternative to standardisation in also allowing for the strategic objectives of different departments to be more influential. Not that strategic intent was a point of reference in this case.

CONTRACTING PROVISION

The contracting process seems to have proven very unhelpful in this instance. It assumed a rigid process of determining organisational need, expressing that as requirements, putting it out to tender, then choosing between competitors. Yet major design issues were arising during the tendering process when the

organisation engaged with provider groups with expertise. A process of seeking expressions of interest followed by exploration followed by tendering would have allowed the tendering process to be part of the design or problem solving process rather than its termination. Such an approach would have been encouraged by the acceptance of a likely expertise problem from the outset. Organisational overconfidence proved quite damaging especially when new problems identified were responded to in an ad hoc manner.

The adversarial approach to tendering resulted in potential contractors who saw problems either raising them and risking losing the contract or keeping quiet and making the best of things. Since successful completion or particular outcomes were not contract requirements, (if they had been contractors would probably have backed off), the organisation carried the real risks. Contractors could simply provide the minimum according to the contract.

Given the above how provision is obtained would seem important and one must ask whether such a crucial provision as leadership development can be trusted to external providers. At the very least long term partnership in provision would seem desirable to cut through the negatives and short termism generated by crude contracting.

WAS IT STRATEGIC?

It does not appear to be the case that a strategically orientated programme was really the issue. A successful sustainable provision would have been a very valuable achievement. Strategic orientation might well have compounded the programme's complexity and vulnerability although it could be argued it would have improved ownership, resourcing, prioritisation and planning.

It could be argued that taking into account the points raised above it was a strategically managed programme. That is to say that gauging organisational capability and vulnerability and making allowance for its external operating environment are all crucial aspects of strategic analysis that would have resulted in a less ambitious but more effective approach.

Cynically one could argue that the programme was strategic for a public service organisation. That is, it adhered to government requirements in tendering processes, it appeared to be an ambitious corporate initiative that built on the government's policy of introducing management NVQ's and it involved public private partnerships to deliver its programme. It could be that more recent policy that is based on performance outcomes and measurement will encourage a different approach that focuses on strategy and service outcomes by introducing strategic planning processes (Stoney, 2001).

However, *outcomes are so hard to measure and analyse in public services that a strategic approach may too difficult to design or evaluate and it perhaps should be accepted that 'strategic' means something different in the public services.* Perhaps a strategic programme in public services is one that can be seen to adhere and respond to current government policy, takes into account organisational capabilities and local realities and is successfully implemented and sustained. It could be that the features of strategic MD outlined in the literature (Burgoyne,1988) are simply not achievable in public services.

CASE 2: SEATOWN SOCIAL SERVICES

Seatown Social Services has been investing in management development since 1991 mostly working closely with one provider. Currently each year just over 100 managers are involved in intensive management development activity - that is they are attending taught workshops and demonstrating competent practice with an assessor. Activity varies from the equivalent of at least a half-day a month per manager attending workshops up to two days a month. In addition there is activity back in the workplace, working on projects supported by the line manager, that cannot easily be gauged but must at least twice the workshop time. Of these hundred managers 95% at least achieve units or full NVQ awards, an unusually high completion rate.

The nature of the collaboration as well as the volume has changed overtime. It began with the provider HE institution being asked to deliver some short courses

e.g. a preparation for managers to be involved in staff recruitment and selection processes lasting two days, a two day workshop on supervision skills. This grew, over a two year period, to longer courses of from 6-8 days duration e.g. an introduction to team leadership, a general introduction to management. Finally a series of qualifying courses were developed for managers at supervisory and first line manager levels, firstly delivering University awards and then developing to provide NVQ's.

During this period of collaboration the nature of the relationship changed. It began with the spot purchase of courses but developed into firstly the shared management of programmes and then joint design and delivery and secondments of staff between the two organisations. It is now structured by a partnership agreement that agrees an annual plan of collaborative activity that encompasses not only training courses but also new developments. These can be new qualifying awards or provision that develops the organisation e.g. recruitment and support of in-house assessors and mentors for management activities. The contract runs for a three to five year period to give stability to the work and there is a current contract running until 2006.

In terms of MD design the partnership has delivered an interesting mixture of features. In - house training is combined with educational inputs and work based learning driven by line managers. Outcomes are measured by both academic and vocational assessments. There is provision for progression from supervisory to first line manager level and in the last five years professional and management training experiences and agendas have been increasingly merged.

The relationship has been developed over this twelve year period by three different training managers, each introducing new developments but continuing with the broad policy of their predecessor. The early work was characterised by an organisational steering group that represented key interest groups in the organisation at different levels and in different sectors. This group approved and directed developments for five years but then was placed by a smaller less representative working group that did still however contain a senior HRM manager and line manager. New developments have been accompanied by

broader representation of the organisation on working groups and selling exercises, to bring the organisation on board when new initiatives have been launched.

Recent developments have included the adoption of a policy to jointly design and deliver a new vocational award unique to the organisation. This was very innovative and supported by the Director of Seatown Social Services who had to deal with considerable internal and external criticism and resistance to drive the changes through. This development is now firmly bedded into the organisation and has finally now been seen to have anticipated national developments and has been integrated with new national occupational awards introduced by the Government. Government agencies have recently begun to hail the initiative as creative and one to be emulated by other organisations, encouraging the publication of the story of the awards design and delivery.

In this latter phase of partnership the organisations workforce plans have driven the annual development plan so that there is a clear strategic intent. A joint steering group has oversight of the work and includes senior representation in the provider organisation. The new vocational award developed was a response to a clearly identified organisational need for enhanced service delivery that was not otherwise being provided and has been labelled as 'the Seatown strategy' by the organisation. Overtime the type of provision can be demonstrated to have changed as organisational needs changed. Some change came from government initiatives some, as above, were a response to local conditions and perceptions based on an analysis of community need.

CASE 2: CONCLUSIONS

The case study is important in that there is evidence of strategic intent, analysis and evaluation of outcomes in terms of organisational strategy and ownership at a very senior level in the organisation. So teasing out the strengths, weaknesses and developmental features of the case could be significant.

CONTINUITY AND PARTNERSHIP

Time scale is an obvious feature. Level of activity is high and sustained but achieved good results in a turbulent environment. Continuity of policy has also clearly been important and this has been combined with careful testing out and then cultivation of one provider in a close working relationship. This is very similar to the model of purchaser and supplier relationships central to the philosophy of Total Quality Management. Certainly the development of a strong joint management and delivery team has got to be an issue and secondments between the two partners is also likely to be significant in breaking down barriers between the two organisations.

POLITICAL SUPPORT AND OWNERSHIP

An early period of intense internal political activity was important to overcome resistance and build ownership of a management development programme. This was repeated overtime when new phases of development began or there were signs of strong resistance developing, indicating a strong political awareness amongst the key organisational players.

Ownership by the departmental director and the head of HRM were also crucial factors. The latter more ambitious developments were probably only possible because they were both initiated and supported by the director publicly. In an organisation where leadership is centralised, as it is in most Social Services departments, this is probably necessary and the same probably applies to other organisations. It could be argued that this need for active senior ownership is greater for a management development programme because it has most impact on the very people who are responsible for its implementation, and will elicit greater empowered resistance.

It is interesting though that middle manager and senior manager provision has not been developed. It is hard not to see this as a weakness but it could have actually reduced organisational resistance to the implementation. Perhaps as middle managers were not expected to take on their own developmental agenda

but were only asked to manage the process for their subordinates it was a far less threatening experience. Future stages may start to address this issue and take on the middle and senior manager challenge, or with other managers being seen to benefit from opportunities the managers themselves may start to want to be involved.

CAPABILITY IN POLICY AND PLANNING

Policy and planning processes were formal and explicit. An annual development plan based on an analysis of internal and external environments gave impetus and control.

In terms of design the programme was ambitious. The integration of education with training and also with work based learning fits the pattern of cutting edge MD provision identified in chapter three. The combination of academic and organisationally orientated outcome measurement and finally integration with professional training activity shows unusual capability in managing such complexity. Most of the key variables of MD activity identified in chapter three have been experimented with and integrated at some point in time. There was even outward bound activity on one course and assessment centre provision is just about to be introduced. Mentor support was provided but dropped because of logistical problems. There is therefore evidence of experimentation as well as structured, formal, design. The joint design and implementation teams have learnt from their successes and failures and the whole has developed incrementally.

The programme compares very well with Burgoyne's characteristics of a strategic approach (Burgoyne, 1988) and this has been achieved by an interesting mix of actions drawn from the four management paradigms identified in chapter two (Dixon and Dogan, 2003). Whilst the programme was set in corporate requirements, weaknesses in formal planning processes were responded to by mobilising the training management team and some astute political activity. An entrepreneurial Director seeking a more business and

performance orientated approach carefully chose a provider and supported their design and delivery. It perhaps provides an example of the eclectic, complex response necessary in a public service environment.

CASE 3: STOURCHURCH HOSPITAL TRUST

The Trust's Chief Executive drove the organisations management development programmes from the outset. A first step was that he and his management team completed an NVQ 5 in management, as a team exercise, and then trained as assessors.

He then bought in a university as an external training provider and ran a mandatory NVQ 4/Certificate in Management programme based on taught workshops and national distance learning material. His senior team assessed the annual intake of managers onto the qualifying course and the intention was for all Trust managers to complete the course and qualify. Assessment was by organisational project work.

This very structured general management course was augmented by a menu of in-house short courses, on specific topics, that changed each year. The training manager had responsibility for co-ordinating the programme including liaison with the senior managers and assessing participants.

The programme was introduced very quickly in two phases. The first phase, of training the management team to NVQ 5 level, took about two years. The course then ran for each year over four years with the senior team training as assessors in the first year. A substantial proportion of the Trust's managers achieved the award. However the Chief Executive took up a post leading management development in the National Health Service and the University course leader left to lead an e-learning initiative for industry, and the course ceased to run. Short course provision gradually declined and plans to run a NVQ 5 to offer progression for NVQ 4 holders has not come to fruition.

CASE 3: CONCLUSIONS

LEADERSHIP AND THE SENIOR TEAM

This programme was driven from the top down and was very dependent on the Chief Executive's leadership. This achieved rapid results but it was also perhaps a fragility that led to decline when he left. Crucially there was little sign of organisational resistance. Being assessed by a member of the senior team had obvious attractions and the Chief Executive was able to exercise direct control over the development of the full management team.

Taking the senior team through the NVQ 5 was an invaluable starting point as this involved them as a team in reviewing key organisational functions including strategic processes as well as educating them into the practicalities of the management development programme.

In effect management development impacted directly onto the strategic team and the strategic function and built capability at the same time as the team actually set strategic objectives. MD and OD have in this case become very hard to distinguish from each other and this could be a feature of strategic management development.

MERGING STRATEGY, MD AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

As senior managers assessed the practice of their own management teams they had a direct influence over performance management and organisational outcomes as well as opportunity to build relationships and develop their team. They could also shape the processes that constituted the management development activity to fit their strategic agenda. Management development became in effect almost inseparable from strategic and operational management. This eliminated the problem of 'linkage' as there is no gap between the activities in the first place. To give an example instead of having to ask the question of how the MD programme might be linked to organisational

strategy and appraisal the question does not really arise. Strategy is management development, is appraisal.

CONTROL AND ORGANISATIONAL SIZE

It is interesting that this programme was not designed or delivered by an external provider, the partnership was helpful and brought in expertise but control stayed with the organisation's managers. This echoes the power shift to line managers identified in the SHRM literature (Legge, 1995) but in addition suggests that an initial step is a key, high profile senior manager taking on leadership of the MD programme.

Another key dimension is size. This was a relatively small organisation so could a similar approach in a bigger organisation have worked? Does a team and a people driven approach disintegrate with organisational width and depth so that policy and procedures become more important? i.e. linkage re-appears or is a bigger problem as organisational size increases. There would seem to be a logic to this in that one could speculate that strategic linkage is not an issue in an owner/manager residential establishment. There as in other small businesses one person has responsibility for strategy, their personal development and operational management.

CASE 4: CASTLEPORT CITY SOCIAL SERVICES

A small unitary authority with a small training team, and so only able to purchase provision, they were able to purchase one full Certificate in Management and NVQ 4 for Social Services managers and then could no longer support a course themselves. Attempts to run a course with other council departments did not work with considerable cultural clashes and conflicts developing between participants and sponsoring departments who had different experiences and expectations of training.

Castleport now buy course places in collaboration with another small unitary authority and managers have to travel a considerable distance to attend. The

training manager is clearly pressured to keep expenditure down and cannot buy into some of the more expensive developments. Given the size of the department there are problems releasing and supporting staff. The course often puts considerable stress on managers and whilst most achieve their qualification there is an above average drop out rate. The training manager is very conscious that the organisation will be under considerable pressure to achieve government targets for occupational awards even with Government monies to pump prime and directly sponsor the activity.

CASE 4: CONCLUSIONS

ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Size matters. It is very hard for a small organisation in the public services to support any development programme, let alone a strategic one. There is no obvious direct return from any service improvements to fuel the activity, as there might be in the private sector. So development activities are more starkly a cost with little opportunity to spread the impact of this that a bigger organisation can provide.

A small purchaser cannot influence design or delivery or invest in joint management and delivery, as in the previous examples. This undermines the quality of the provision and the potential organisational impact. Their only opportunity would be to emulate Stourchurch Hospitals and drive the development from the top and fully integrate it into strategic and operational management.

CREATING DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Given the degree of difficulty experienced in providing any kind of management development activity small organisations, probably in both the public and private sectors, might need mandatory government policy initiatives and/or funding to ensure progress. It should be noted that the key feature of the Hospital Trust in the case study above was not that it was a relatively small organisation but that it

had a charismatic leader. This is rare and cannot be legislated for. Otherwise there are few other internal drivers that can be mobilised.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CONFLICT

The conflicts with other departments is an interesting feature. Different departments in a diversified organisation can have differing MD requirements and different strategies. However even when this is not the case different histories, cultures, training capabilities and therefore perceptions, expectations and behaviours can also mean one corporate approach does not work even if similar outcomes are required. Just as with general strategy the objectives of a corporate strategy have perhaps to be 'localised', particularly in their implementation, to take account of these differences. Alternatively it would be possible to see the case as offering an example of a public service organisation that would benefit from a stronger corporate planning process, whatever the impact on departmental planning (Stoney, 2001).

CASE 5: FORELAND HOSPITAL TRUST

The Trust's training manager established a joint assessment and delivery for a Government sponsored course with a University provider. The provider jointly managed the delivery of a taught Certificate in Management for the Trust and a distance learning course for newly appointed general managers across the region. Sustained over an eight year period the working partnership proved very successful, meeting the needs of many of the regions general managers and training a substantial portion of the trusts unit and departmental managers.

For four years the distance learning course recruited steadily and had a good completion rate. The centre became a pilot site for project assessment, and the introduction of senior manager standards, (NVQ5) when these were introduced. Members of the teaching team were commissioned to write materials for the national programme. However recruitment to the national distance learning course eventually declined and the course was closed.

The Certificate course continued to recruit well and developed considerable support from middle managers in the Trust. Its output each year of trained managers was in fact twice that of the more prestigious distance learning course, but it had a lower political profile at a senior and national level. The course was based on work place projects that managers could see brought improvements to the service. It built a population of graduate managers who in turn sent their staff on to the course and also acted as mentors on the course.

The course was driven by the organisational Training Manager and her deputy. It was supported by the Chief Executive and the head of HRM, although their contact was minimal and indirect. A change in the HRM manager led quickly to the retirement of the training manager. The course continued for a couple more years with an able deputy attempting to gain agreement for a more structured MD strategy. However the course was closed and replaced by a leadership programme supported by a leading consultant and run for registrars and GPs with an academic assessment.

CASE 5: CONCLUSIONS

SUSTAINED BUT NOT STRATEGIC

Although very much based on taught courses the provision had organisational impact through its work based project assessment. However it never either reached for or achieved strategic impact. Rather it was driven by national and regional initiatives. It clearly had value however, simply as a management development programme sustained over time. In fact it was viewed nationally as one of the leading assessment and delivery centres.

Locally its ownership by the Training Manager worked well but perhaps limited its impact on organisational outcomes and strategy. It was just one of many national training initiatives and the Certificate in Management that had the most local impact on the Trust had less of a profile than the national, Government sponsored distance learning initiative.

ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND MD

Departure of the HRM Manager and then the Training Manager left the Trust's Certificate in Management course without political sponsors. Despite thoughtful attempts by HRM specialists within the organisation to enhance it and make it the basis for a more effective organisational MD strategy, it was soon replaced by the agenda of another champion and power group, despite the protests of some important middle managers. Strategic MD needs senior organisational sponsorship and protection to survive and continuity of strategy can perhaps only survive changing personnel if there is formalised strategic process.

This is perhaps the most controversial case as different stakeholders would clearly see the story very differently. To the remaining HRM specialists for instance the new leadership programme was a disaster. To the groups supporting it, the new initiative was a new creative programme at the cutting edge of Government policy replacing a course that had served its purpose. This political interpretation of events before and after the fact is a problem for every researcher and no methodology can overcome it. In fact it is no different from the macro-political interpretations that apply to any social issue in general social science. It must be seen as part of the political reality of organisations and an unavoidable feature of organisational research and analysis. In fact all the case studies can be subject to other interpretations that would be supported by different stakeholders, just as some organisational stakeholders could readily be identified who would support the interpretations offered here.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CASES

Strategic intent and impact was explicit in only two cases Stourchurch Hospital Trust and Seatown Social Services. In both instances personnel within the organisation led and drove the development. In one it was the Chief Executive themselves, in another the training manager supported or in alliance with the Chief Executive and other senior managers. This is interesting, as the differentiating factors between the two organisations is time and size. The smaller organisation driven by the Chief Executive achieved results very quickly.

The much bigger organisation took longer and needed a political alliance to drive it. The primary conclusion must however be that strategic MD does not happen unless someone or groupings with power in the organisation owns and drives it. The door is however open to the possibility that there are a range of approaches that vary according to the characteristics of the organisation.

Even in these cases the outcome was from my perspective not a direct, explicit linkage between strategy and the activities that made up the programme. There were some clear connections, for instance Seatown had an agenda that was about training managers to respond to the needs of the service. In a lot of cases this was however hidden from an outsider even one working in partnership and was not made explicit. I would suspect it would have been also hidden from a more distanced researcher unless they gained access to the formal and informal interactions within the organisation that shaped the activity over a very long period of time. In the instance of Seatown a twelve year period at least.

Stourchurch Hospitals would indicate that with a strategic management development programme MD and OD become integrated and that therefore questions of strategic linkage begin to become irrelevant. The research question itself loses meaning as strategic management development is achieved.

Successful, sustained management development programmes are probably a rarity let alone those with a strategic linkage. If the cases are representative there is a lot to achieve, certainly in the public services. Any management development is to be welcomed, strategic linkage is a luxury item and organisational capability may not support the delivery of the more 'advanced' approaches identified in the literature (Barham et al. 1988 and Burgoyne, 1988).

If leadership and organisational politics are key issues ingrained strategic processes and formal expressions of strategy may allow continuity in an environment where organisational restructuring and changes of key personal are the norm. Management by champions has its limitations.

The cases can be seen to each generate key messages that are actually easier to digest than the complexity of each scenario. These messages are also possibly the conceptual framework that shaped my thinking on undertaking the action research. I think to me the key issues were firstly political, that is it is crucial to manage organisational politics and to have support and a power base to lead the programme. Secondly it was important to ensure that the design matched organisational capability, to be strategic a programme needs to be ambitious but it also has to be realistic. Thirdly it is important to plan and manage the project carefully. It is probably necessary to mobilise a project team and a clear MD policy and development plan to guide its work would be an asset. Finally the effort needs to be sustained in the long term if it is to have any real impact. In my view the literature does not put sufficient stress on these issues, it is too focused on training processes and methods.

It is also interesting that looking across the cases it is perhaps possible to locate them in Dixon and Dogan's paradigms (2003). The first case is the *homo hierarchus* response of a large county council. Stourchurch Hospital is a *homo economicus* initiative and in Castleport one can perhaps see the defensive behaviours of *homo exestentialis* undermining attempts to improve provision. Seatown Social Services, which offers a more sustainable, flexible and eclectic response that draws on all four paradigms in its perspectives and actions, could be perceived as the most successful.

CHAPTER SIX – THE ACTION RESEARCH

This chapter will provide an account of the action research, the design and delivery of a strategically orientated management development programme. It attempts to offer the reader an overview of the key events although to get a fuller picture it may be necessary to refer to the appendices that contain extracts from the Action Research Log (Appendix two to Appendix ten). The period from February 2000 to October 2001 is described in some detail with commentaries provided on the key events as they occur. There is a conclusion written in 2002 that attempts to draw out the key outcomes from the action research. This is followed by an update written in October 2003 and some further conclusions.

The activity is still ongoing at the point when this thesis was submitted in July 2004, and the learning community driving and responsible for the programme is still working and learning together. However it is not possible to capture and present fully such a complex and moving picture beyond 2003.

THE PROGRAMME AND ITS ORIGINS

The programme was commissioned by Hampshire Social Services for their Children's Department managers. This meant that the programme was shaped by what is in effect a National Strategy for children's services called Quality Protects, which offers departments across the country a set of service objectives and performance measures. Departments were also required to produce a local Management Action Plan MAP, that specified priorities for action to achieve these national objectives.

From the initial presentation and award of the contract, the priority was a programme that contributed to the Quality Protects agenda. A project team was convened to design and deliver three courses for a total of 75 managers. All stakeholders were encouraged to contribute to the programme design by the provision of a course/programme file that made the components of the programme transparent and open to scrutiny. As students and their line

managers were identified they were encouraged to contribute to the design, and take control of the processes that constituted the course experience.

A number of features were incorporated into the programme that enhanced its impact on the organisation and its impact on strategy. For instance, the students were required to firmly ground their course experience in operational objectives. Project work was publicised across the department, a representative practice assessment panel overviewed the project outcomes for the organisation and the evaluation was led by the service director and focused on the contribution the programme made to departmental strategy. Gradually the course became a focus group identifying management problems and contributing to their solution.

THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF A STRATEGICALLY ORIENTATED PROGRAMME

To help order the presentation of material it is useful to divide the activity into the phases of the project lifecycle i.e. Conceptualisation, Planning, Execution and Termination. These can be further broken down into stages and steps, as in Chapman and Ward's (1995) representation below (see Table 6.1).

Phases	Stages	Steps
Conceptualisation	Concept	Trigger event Concept capture Clarification of purpose Concept elaboration Concept evaluation
Planning	Design	Basic design Development of performance criteria Design development Design evaluation
	Plan	Base allocation Development of targets and milestones Plan development Plan evaluation
	Allocation	Base allocation Development of allocation criteria Allocation development Allocation evaluation
Execution	Control	Modification of targets and milestones Allocation modification Control evaluation
Termination	Deliver	Basic deliverable verification Deliverable modification Modification of performance criteria Deliver evaluation
	Review	Basic review Review development Review evaluation
	Support	Basic maintenance and liability perception Development of support criteria Support perception development Support evaluation

Table 6.1

Phases, stages and steps in the project lifecycle

(Source: Chapman & Ward, 1995, p. 146)

Whilst, in full, this is too complex a structure for the purpose of describing the action research, a simplified version is helpful and allows the key events to be placed in sequence:

CONCEPTION	Feb-June 2000
PLANNING DESIGN	June-Nov 2000
PLANNING	Nov 2000-Feb 2001
EXECUTION DELIVERY	Feb-July 2001
REVIEW	July-Oct 2001

This provides a useful framework for a schedule of key events (see Table 6.2).

<u>PHASE</u>	<u>STAGE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Conceptualisation	Elaboration and Evaluation	Departmental Planning Group agrees concept, gains permission of Senior Team and puts programme out to tender	7/2/00
Planning	Design	Presentation by provider organisations and award of contract Meeting with Purchasing Manager Steering Group Meetings Curriculum Planning Group Meeting	16/6/00 22/8/00 14/9/00 11/10/00 17/11/00 7/11/00
	Planning	Curriculum Development Group Meetings	30/11/00 27/1/01

<u>PHASE</u>	<u>STAGE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	
Execution	Delivery	Introductory Day	7/2/01	
		Curriculum Development Group Meeting	27/3/01	
		Workshops	11/4/01 12/4/01	
		Curriculum Development Group Meeting	30/4/01	
		Workshops	16/5/01 17/5/01	
		Curriculum Development Group with Student Representatives	5/6/01	
		Workshops	13/6/01 14/6/01	
		Workshops	11/7/01 12/7/01	
		Review	Practice Assessment Panel	26/7/01
			Workshops	12/9/01 13/9/01
	Workshops		10/10/01 11/10/01	
	Mid-Point Evaluation Day		31/10/01	

Table 6.2 Schedule of Key Events.

THE CONCEPTUALISATION PHASE

Because the programme was purchased by Hampshire County Council Social Services after a tendering process, the events that led up to that point are not fully known and yet they constituted the crucial phase of conceptualisation. So, for instance, I did not know which stakeholder triggered the project, what they were responding to, or what their objectives were. However, the tendering process was preceded by a meeting on the 7/2/00 where it could be surmised that the concept of a "Quality Protects Management Development Programme" was explored and evaluated and considered to have enough substance to warrant the programme being put out to tender. Minutes of the meeting were provided at the start of the design phase, as essential information, so that it clearly had significance as an organisational event in the eyes of the manager responsible for purchasing the programme. An analysis of the document revealed a number of interesting characteristics (see Appendix two).

Of those attending the meeting three key stakeholders were still active in the planning/design phase, the Assistant Director, SL, the quality protects specialist, NT, and the purchasing manager, CB. Two other members of this meeting were not involved after that point. SL, NT and CB can be considered key stakeholders, but there may well be "significant others" although their influence did not become apparent as the project has progressed. The meeting called itself "The Quality Protects Management Development Programme for Child and Family Unit and Team Managers - Development Meeting." This clearly linked activity to government policy. In effect this provides a closely defined national strategy for children's services that all Social Services Departments have to adhere to.

The aim of the meeting was stated as "to identify a strategy to develop management competence to ensure the delivery of the departments QP objectives" and the external factors that could be seen as the trigger for the project were identified. These were the quality protects agenda itself, together with the modernisation agenda, which sought to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service management and delivery. Also of significance was the introduction of a national training strategy, designed to rationalise the

management of training resources and requiring managers to achieve a National Vocational Qualification at level 4 in Management NVQ 4.

Some internal factors for initiating the project were also identified. A skill and knowledge gap, requests from managers for training opportunities and the absence in the past of training and development activities for managers were all mentioned. A consultation process was outlined that identified a menu of training needs.

The minutes conclude that the current in-house management development programme would not meet their needs and they would need to seek an outside provider. An outline plan was presented for obtaining permission from the senior management team and putting the programme out to tender.

Commentary

Even with the limited information available it was apparent that the issue of linking a programme to government policy was a crucial component of the initial concept. Given that the policy was focused on services achieving clear objectives, and performance criteria are identified to gauge achievement, this in effect provides an organisational strategy.

This was not elaborated on though and there is no statement of strategic objectives, priorities or desired outcomes and no reference to local strategy. The detail of the meeting was the menu of skills and knowledge inputs required.

THE PLANNING PHASE: DESIGN STAGE

There were a number of key events that comprise the design stage of the planning phase.

- Formal presentation by providers tendering for the contract 19/6/00.
- Meetings with the purchasing manager and myself 22/8/00 and 14/9/00.
- Steering Group meetings on 11/10/00 and 17/11/00.

- Curriculum Development Group meetings (a sub group of the Steering Group) on 7/11/00 and 30/11/00.
- Exchange of contracts.

The Presentation

Each provider received a briefing document and opportunity to discuss the contract with the purchasing manager prior to the presentation. Providers could bid for one or both of two programmes, one for managers of residential homes for adults one the quality protects programme. They were each given a 45 minute slot with no contact with the other potential providers. The presentation was made to a panel consisting of the two purchasing managers for children's and adult services, a representative of the Hampshire Care Association, an organisation for independent adult care providers, and the departments NVQ specialist.

I made the presentation with a colleague, following a consultation with the purchasing managers for both services (see Appendix three for the specification and Appendix four for the presentation).

The presentation made clear reference to a number of provisions that would contribute to a strategically orientated programme e.g. joint design with the purchaser, clear contribution to service outcomes. However as the specification did not mention strategic impact or linkage, this was not stressed as a feature. As a result of the presentation the contract for the quality protects programme was awarded to my team, the residential manager's contract to another provider.

Commentary

The tendering process was skewed by the two programmes being put out for tender at the same time. The quality protects programme demanded close partnership in design and delivery and a strategic orientation. However this was gleaned from conversations with the purchasing manager who provided the

quality protects objectives, it was not a strong theme in the specification itself (see Appendix three).

The residential managers programme was to be designed to allow any adult residential provider in the County to nominate managers whether it was a statutory, voluntary or private organisation. It could not really offer a strategic link to so many and varied employer organisations or be jointly designed. A tender structured to win one of the contracts would almost inevitably lose the other.

Since there was potentially greater income in the long term from the residential managers programme there was a real danger that none of the providers would bid for the quality protects programme, especially as some of its features were diluted in the specification by the other programme. Discussion after the award of the contract indicated that there was an even more severe situation than this. Those purchasing the residential managers programme were clear they wanted a simple, well priced programme that got people the award they needed to meet the Government's requirements under the new Occupational Standards as quickly as possible. They very positively did not want anything more ambitious.

It is perhaps fortunate that things did not go badly wrong at the point where the project went for tender. Whilst in reality the process made a good match between purchaser and provider in terms of mission and skills and experience in design and delivery, it meant strategic linkage was actually muted in the contract specification. This could easily mean the issues are lost as the project progresses.

Another point of interest is that one group of purchasers clearly did not want a strategic programme, rather they wanted a bottom line in terms of costs and objectives. This stance was taken by small organisations with tight margins that struggle to release and support staff and have a history of unambitious investment in training and development. One could see this bottom line approach as a strategic decision based on an analysis of external or internal factors or else suggest simply that a strategically linked programme is a luxury

item not all organisations can afford. In fact the complexity and higher costs of a strategically orientated programme might mean that a cost benefit analysis for many organisations excludes it as an option.

Post Presentation and the Award of the Contract

Following the presentation and the award of the contract I had two meetings with the purchasing manager and was given the minutes of the 7/2/00 meeting which outlined the concept of the programme. This allowed me to go the second meeting on 14/9/00 armed with questions that focused on the strategic issues e.g. what organisational plans could provide us with targets for the programme?

At the first meeting of the Steering Group on the 11/10/00 the key details of the programme were agreed and responsibility for implementation handed over to a working group, 'the Curriculum Development Sub-group'. Much of the discussion was focused on the modular content of the course with little reference to strategic issues.

The Curriculum Development Group met on the 7/11/00 to agree a programme design, which was presented to the Steering Group and accepted, on 17/11/00. It was presented as a course/ programme file that contained a very full description of the course design. It was hoped such a detailed representation allowed all parties to review, comment on and change the design. This was indeed the case with changes being proposed both in the Curriculum Development Group and the Steering Group.

At the second Steering Group meeting on 17/11/00 CB, the purchasing manager, had left and been replaced by JE on a temporary contract. One other of the Steering Group members had left and another could not attend. Two middle managers nominated were not able to attend and had not attended the Curriculum Development Group whose more detailed work was feeding the Steering Group.

Although he had been closely involved in the detailed discussion of the course content in the first Steering Group the assistant director said he was happy to delegate responsibility for the design to the Curriculum Development Group.

Commentary on the Design Stage

The design process was much aided by the production of the course file that allowed people to see precisely what the course consisted of and was presented with a summary of the features proposed by the previous Steering Group and incorporated into the final design (see Appendix five for the preliminary design features of the programme).

There was now however a core group designing and planning the programme consisting of myself, the purchasing manager and the quality protects specialist. They were the only one's with full picture of the course details, the original Steering Group having either left or taken a step back. Amongst those leaving was at least one key stakeholder, the original purchasing manager.

The change of personnel in a short time span was extreme i.e. two senior managers inside a month, this combined with absenteeism caused by workplace demands meant that the Steering Group had almost ceased to function. Proposals for departmental restructuring may explain the Assistant Director taking a step back or it could be that the detail of the programme file was too much or it was simply a genuine decision to delegate. Provision of a foreword for the programme file and his leading off the introductory day, did however indicate that he still maintained considerable commitment.

Absence of middle managers (service managers), who are the line managers of course participants from both the Steering Group and the Curriculum Development Group is very worrying as they are a very influential group not least because they release and support programme participants. There would seem to be two forces at work here, extreme turbulence in the organisation together with a tendency for senior stakeholders to be diverted by crises or else their next project. Given a brief that was not that clear in the first place, the spirit and

design of the programme was now in the hands of the core group of project champions. Fortunately this still resulted in a robust design that could clearly be shown to respond to parameters set by the Steering Group. What is worth noting is that production of such a detailed document as the programme file was very time consuming. Offering a summary of its features further increased the pressure on me so that a less explicit and transparent design plan was a considerable temptation. However this would but would have left the design in my hands and reduced the opportunity for organisational managers to influence and manage it.

Beyond the volume of the work there was also the need to innovate, for instance the departments identification of a problem with their quality assurance systems meant the development of a module that had not been taught before and a new assessment exercise.

The psychology of the process and some of the interaction in both curriculum development and Steering Group are worth reflecting on. The effort required to produce the programme file generated opportunities for people to change things. A typical interchange was something along the lines of:

“I feel bad changing this after you’ve done so much work?”

“No, you go ahead, that’s the name of the game.”

It was important that people were given permission to change things but this was inevitably demanding. However it was essential that change and interference were seen as successes, not as a nuisance.

This is particularly hard if the change is not one the facilitator agrees on or if perhaps the proposer has clearly not briefed themselves properly or understood the issue. In contrast at one point departmental specialists were asked to review assessments for performance management and quality assurance and came back with no proposed changes at all, a somewhat disappointing result given that these were key areas for a strategic MD program and also central to the

modernisation agenda. Indeed it was not hard to see why a facilitator might be tempted to keep things to themselves and discourage involvement. It is perhaps more surprising that they should facilitate yet without this the result would be either a standardised design or else one driven by the specialists perceptions and needs.

Overview of Features Encapsulated in the Initial Design

The initial design of the programme contained the following features that made a significant contribution to achieving organisational outcomes that were related to strategic objectives. These features were summarised and presented to the Steering Group for their agreement.

Their presentation in a file to Steering Group members, students, line managers and the course team not only facilitated the design process but also aided induction and preparation:

- 1) Introduction and statement of principle by the assistant director.
- 2) Provision of policy briefing papers.
- 3) Operational objectives exercise.
- 4) Programme philosophy and objectives that included contributing to strategic objectives.
- 5) Involvement of line managers in briefing and setting operational objectives and agreeing and assessing project work.
- 6) Assessment by work based projects.
- 7) Practice assessment panel involving key stakeholders and focusing on organizational outcomes.

- 8) Evaluation led by the assistant director and focused on strategic linkage.
- 9) Design and/or oversight of content by organizational specialists.
- 10) Regular inputs from organizational speakers on strategy, policy and procedures according to departmental priorities.
- 11) Using the programme as a point of communication. For instance providing policy and planning updates.

PLANNING PHASE: THE PLANNING STAGE

There were a further three meetings of the Curriculum Development Group to refine the design and plan the programme's delivery e.g. finalising dates, contacting speakers, booking rooms, selecting and briefing course participants, allocating tutors, planning the introductory days. Whilst this detail is available it was not the focus of the action research, although obviously no project outcomes at all would be achieved without it.

However there were a number of significant events in these meetings. As a result of discussions in the Curriculum Development Group it was decided to explore the possibility of a longer term and more ambitious partnership between the University and the Department. This would constitute a strategic partnership allowing the University to meet one of its objectives of a closer relationship with employers and allowing the Department to respond to an increasingly demanding Government training and development agenda.

With a view to exploring this the Curriculum Development Group put together a discussion paper (see Appendix six) and arranged a meeting in March between the key senior managers. Whilst there was agreement that the idea had merit, no further action was proposed other than a meeting in six months time. Considerable interest was expressed in an integration of the management development programme with the new post-qualifying child care award (PQ award), another initiative in the Government's National Training Strategy. This

would crucially allow managers to still be fully qualified professionals, which they could not be without achieving the PQ award, a loss of status and employment prospects that managers resented.

To properly evaluate whether the programme was meeting Departmental needs by responding to strategic objectives and impacting on service outcomes the Curriculum Development Group decided to form a Practice Assessment Panel PAP, this would consist of the programme tutors, the Curriculum Development Group a middle manager and a key departmental specialist. It would review the early project work and make recommendations for change. Its first meeting was scheduled for 26/7/01.

Commentary on the Planning Stage

Although there was considerable enthusiasm for a 'strategic partnership' in the Curriculum Development Group this was not evidently shared by the senior managers. They failed to feedback to the development group, so even the decision 'to meet again in six months' had to be discovered through questioning another manager.

There are signs that the two groups are now in different places and certainly the Curriculum Development Group felt it was being held back for no good reason. The penalty for the disengagement of key stakeholders is now perhaps being paid.

The formation of a PAP would seem a good option allowing approaches to be changed if they are not yielding results, before it is too late. This review and evaluation by a representative group also strengthened the action research process.

EXECUTION PHASE: THE DELIVERY STAGE

On 7/2/01 the introductory day for the programme was held. The main purpose of the day was making the link between organisational strategy and the programme and this was achieved by a number of features.

The Assistant Director opened the day with a talk on the strategic importance of the programme. The role of line managers in using the process to achieve service outcomes according to MAP priorities was emphasized.

A start was made on the operational objectives exercise in the session and course participants and line managers were encouraged to see the programme process as one that would be changed to respond to their needs and that they were the main stakeholders (see Appendix seven).

The course ethos and presentation of content was well received as a different way of approaching management development, but concern was expressed at the pressures it would put on participants and line managers. Two students did not attend because of work place problems and two nominations did not materialise. Rather than a group of 14-15 (the original plan was for 25) we had a group of 10. One participant had to leave at lunchtime because of a crisis.

Morale was much improved by the purchasing manager being able to confirm, after some investigation, that departmental policy meant participants were entitled to one day of study leave every two months. Car parking problems also caused considerable concern.

Only three of the six middle managers attended. Those that did were enthusiastic and supportive, one agreeing to join the practice assessment panel. The operational objectives exercise was criticized as too clumsy, it was suggested that the breakdown into sub-objectives was too detailed.

Commentary on the Introductory Day

A useful start in that the key people in making the programme a success seem engaged and supportive.

It was however worrying that two did not attend and the pressure of workplace demands looked like being a problem. Perhaps the greatest cause for concern was the absence of half of the line managers (service managers) they were crucial to the success of the programme and were now not properly briefed. It was crucial that there is an early response to the deficiencies of the operational objectives exercise.

The prompt response by the purchasing manager on the issue of study leave did a lot to raise morale.

Curriculum Development Group Meeting 27/3/01

The Group was clear that a priority was ensuring that service managers were contacted and briefed. Attempts to see them individually had failed so that it was agreed that the purchasing manager and the QP specialist would attend one of the service managers team meetings.

Changes to the operational objectives exercise were discussed so that they could be taken to the student group for their agreement. It was agreed that all participants would be sent a map of local car parking and a letter suggesting availability and costs. The purchasing manager will contact the missing students and their line managers. The speakers for the April workshops were finalised.

Unfortunately it became apparent that the two participants who did not attend had dropped out and that service managers were not able to nominate anymore. There may have been release problems that meant it was not possible to run a programme with more than 10-12 line managers absent from the field at any one time, given that there were some severe recruitment problems. (One area team was at 46% of establishment).

Commentary on the Development Group Meeting 27/3/01

It was important that the Curriculum Development Group responded quickly to the problem of middle manager support. A quick response to student comfort issues and proposals for change was about “putting your money where your mouth is.” In all probability the group was actually testing out our response, if we had taken no action it would have been classified as “just another course”.

This need for quick review and response was very demanding on the program leaders and also requires a good knowledge of group dynamics. It would be easy to disregard minor complaints and changes as not a priority, yet our perceived attitude at this formative stage could have made a big difference.

The logistics of release on a department under pressure created a new planning problem i.e. if you are pro-active about planning for management development you must allow for the operational problems this can create. Whereas it was almost voluntarist, with service managers deciding on nominations and covering any problems caused by release, if you are going to link MD to workforce planning and for instance say all managers must be trained by 2005, then you must look at the impact on the ground across the organisation. Given only a small population of managers there is probably a ratio of release to population that if exceeded causes big problems in the workplace.

Workshops 11/4/01 and 12/4/01

One participant failed to attend, but feedback indicated that the programme was well received, even if participants were not ecstatic (see Appendix eight). There is evidence that the content was seen as relevant to their work situation and that the level of discussion and presentation was good. There were however some problems with equipment and more briefing on project work was requested. The organizational speaker caused some dismay as the statistics gleaned from the organizational management system were seen by participants as very inaccurate. They felt they were not consulted properly on the development of the system.

There was discussion in the group as to the extent to which they could use the group to raise departmental problems and how safe it was to do this. One participant was constantly interrupted during the workshops with phone calls about workplace problems.

Curriculum Development Group 30/4/01

It was agreed that it was crucial there was a response to the management information systems problem and that the student group should be encouraged to raise departmental problems. The group was seen as a useful point of consultation for the department.

Accordingly the QP specialist agreed try and get a place for a participant representative on the department's management information system working group and to respond to any issues they might raise in future that could impact on the department.

The QP specialist also requested that abstracts of the project work participants were undertaking might be disseminated across the department. It was agreed to put this to the participant group. There was concern expressed by the purchasing manager and the QP specialist that it had been a difficult experience for the in-house speaker. It was not clear if they had been a guest speaker at the University or running a departmental seminar.

It was agreed that they would be briefed by a University tutor, but should lead the session as if it was an in-house session. It was agreed to raise the issue of workplace interruptions with service managers if they continued. Their personal tutor agreed to chase the missing student and try and get them back on board.

It was agreed by the purchasing manager that the University tutors might be given access to the departmental IT network to aid communication. Although there was no movement from senior managers it was agreed that the Curriculum

Development Group would review options and make some proposals to the senior team.

It was agreed to invite two student representatives to the next Curriculum Development Group to jointly plan the review day for the 31/10/01 (see Appendix nine).

Commentary on the Curriculum Development Group meeting 30/4/01

There was an interesting shift to the group being used to influence departmental thinking e.g. membership of the information management working group (known as CCMIS) and publicizing their project work.

Also there was a shift towards further integration of the University and departmental teams. Almost, we were reaching for any bridges between the programme and the workplace, and this now includes bridges to policy making and strategic processes. It included systems and it included putting people in the right place.

The positive response to the participants on the issues they have raised and the principle of, "raise it, you will always get a response," was very valuable and encouraged the group. Workplace crises disrupting learning was still a problem however and it was agreed that it might need a more vigorous response. There was a problem in that the service was to a degree an emergency service so stopping a response by managers to staff with an urgent problem was hardly contributing to improving organisational performance.

Workshops 11/4/01, 12/4/01, 16/5/01, 17/5/01

The offer of membership of the CCMIS group was well received and the proposed sharing of project work across the department agreed to, but with a concern that this could lead to people becoming seen as the departmental specialist on certain subject and imposed on thereafter! Student representatives were identified and space was allowed for group discussion on the programme

review and its management. Evaluations show a gradual improvement with a very positive response to the May workshops. The student interrupted by workplace telephone calls discussed the problem with their line manager, so that it would not happen over any of the four days.

During the workshops the role of the programme in providing a focus group was discussed together with the notion of the programme as an organizational change agent rather than just an individual learning opportunity.

Commentary on workshops

The sudden improvement in evaluations could have been a result of an improvement in teaching. However there are good reasons for suggesting that it was more complex than that. The tutor group had perhaps 'jelled' and was teaching more effectively, but also so had the student group, so that they are making better use of opportunities. Even the Curriculum Development Group had improved its functioning and the positive responses from the department on suggestions and issues raised, had improved everyone's morale and commitment.

Another perspective was that the complexity of the programme probably meant that it has only just become clear to students and that as they now have grasped the key concepts they feel much more confident about the programme and their project work.

In sum there was a process of gradual development of the learning community to the point where as a team it could now be seen as performing. Of great interest is that the community was now seeing itself as seeking to change the department, not just providing an individualized learning experience and a qualification. Clarification of mission has been part of this process.

A startling viewpoint is that if indeed this was a point of take off it took a very long time and a great deal of effort to get there. In effect 12 months and from the providers side alone an expenditure of £10,000-15,000. This was probably

matched by the purchaser in actual costs with hidden costs of at least the same i.e. £50,000, to just get to the starting gate.

Curriculum Development Group of 5/6/01

There were two parts to the agenda. The first part reviewed developmental options that the group might choose to work on. There was agreement that the integration of the programme with the post-qualifying award and existing management short courses would be the priorities and the tutors agreed to lead on these developments (see Appendix ten).

For the second part the student representatives joined the group and shared their evaluation of the programme so far. A structure and criteria for the 31/10/01 review day were agreed after discussion of some initial proposals (see Appendix nine).

Evaluation by the student representatives was very helpful and positive. New issues raised were the need for more preparation time, a clearer link between MAP objectives and the work of first line managers and a programme contract that clarified expectations. New suggestions were for dedicated supervision sessions with line managers to give adequate space for discussion and completion of project work and for a project bank of projects that would be a departmental priority. The value of the programme being a departmental consultation point with first line managers was emphasized.

The evaluation structure agreed on focuses on and gives priority to strategic linkage although it offers good opportunity to review other aspects of the learning experience. The initial planning steps were taken in preparation for the practice assessment panel and for the next sequence of outside speakers. Following discussion in the group on recruitment problems to the service it was agreed to explore linking the department in to the University's key skills work and developing a University/department/FE link.

Commentary on the Curriculum Development Group 5/6/01

It was encouraging that the review criteria agreed on emphasized the strategic impact of the programme. This was in itself almost a test. The student group would seem to have adopted the mission of the programme and were now actively making suggestions for improvement e.g. a project bank. The model of a strategic partnership had clearly not gone away, but rather was being driven by the Curriculum Development Group. The idea of using the partnership to aid recruitment was a new extension of the principle.

A key issue remained to be resolved, the commitment and involvement of line managers. There were indications that there was still need to work on the link between the MAP and projects and first line realities given the student evaluation. It was perhaps that we had raised expectations and anxiety, as there was no evidence in tutorials that most students had not agreed operational objectives linked to the MAP.

UPDATE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH AS AT OCTOBER 2003

The fourth intake of the programme was planned for 2004, suggesting that organisational commitment had been maintained. The active involvement of the purchasing manager, the quality protects specialist and the Assistant Director continued, as did the provision of in-house speakers. By the time of the fourth intake most first line managers had been taken to the point of qualification and senior practitioners were to be included in the 2004 intake.

Group size continued to be low, (only 10-11 students), indicating that this was possibly the release limit for the department. The Practice Assessment Panel proved to be a crucial planning group and was persistent in striving for completion. Early withdrawal from the course increased but the completion rate was still very high. Even if participants did not complete by the set date and achieve their qualification, they were supported and encouraged to work to a new set date. Only one participant did not qualify and she left the department.

Students continued to complain about work pressures, but these were responded to. The complexity of the handbook and the dual assessment process became issues. Recently the program was criticised as too 'in-house' and contact with private sector managers was requested to broaden the experience, although this has not been implemented.

Middle manager involvement continued to be a problem although their support of their participants and their commentary on project work steadily improved. The 'Curriculum Development Group' and the practice assessment panel eventually ended up being the same people. The Steering Group ceased to meet and the program did not appear to be as centrally driven as before. Redeployment of the quality protects specialist took away the efforts and influence of a crucial champion. The strategic alliance between the University and the employer did not come to fruition and senior managers did not meet again.

The Government ended the Quality Protects initiative. This together with an increasing crisis on the ground caused by staff shortages and a major organisational restructuring, led to something of a siege mentality for those responsible for the programme. The focus drifted a little to making sure people completed and the course was seen positively for this reason, rather than for its strategic impact on the organisation.

However there was a revival of interest in the programmes strategic value with the commissioning manager beginning to work on a formal departmental management development strategy. A working group supporting this initiative produced the far more ambitious map of MD activity and this led to a discussion of and identification of strategic outcomes by the group (see Figures 6.5 and Table 6.3). It was intended that the Table 6.3 would aid the senior management group with responsibility for the wider programme in setting clearer objectives and targets for the programme. This was a response to a deficiency in the evaluation identified by the Working Group.

The development of a middle manager programme (NVQ 5 strategy and operations), for all departments offered a new point of engagement for service

managers and showed early signs of proving successful. Other departments began to explore similar programs as the government's initiatives, which made occupational awards for managers mandatory, were gradually rolled out.

There was a decline in the feedback on the course delivery and the team had to engage in determining and responding to the causes of this. The commissioning manager began exploring with the assistant director re-focusing program evaluation on strategic outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE ACTION RESEARCH

Maintaining the political support and interest of stakeholders in a programme demands constant attention. Even with a committed sponsor there was a tendency to front load the conception/contracting and design stage with management time, then for them to withdraw and focus on another project. Yet only they can be a judge as to whether a programme has impacted on the organization in such a way as to have contributed to strategy and they had a crucial contribution to make to delivery as well as design. There are a number of ways in which stakeholders can be kept engaged through the project management process. Perhaps the crucial first step is to ensure it is a key objective for the project leadership. However options mobilized in this programme included giving them a role in the process e.g. line managers involvement in assessment, the Assistant Director's leadership of the mid-programme review, and building in structures that encourage ownership e.g. the Practice Assessment Panel.

INVOLVEMENT OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

This involvement of key stakeholders when applied to the design stage is also the way to build in strategic linkage from the outset. In effect there is a lot of expertise in organizations that can be mobilized to link a program to strategy. The issue is firstly putting it on the agenda and then inviting those who can make a contribution to do so. In this example those involved not only included those specialists who were members of the Steering Group or the Working Group, but

also the students themselves who are often best placed to help with design e.g. the students suggested the adjustments made to the operational objectives exercise. This puts a new angle on student centered learning as in this context student centered learning is also organizationally centered learning. More hangs on programme leaders behaviour and attitudes than just individual learning. In fact it is not unreasonable to argue that this minutiae of activity e.g. responding to the car parking problem, is as important as more tangible design features. Participants that own and are committed to the programme and have as their objective linking their activity to strategy, is a force to be nurtured.

However whilst there is expertise in the organization that can be mobilized, it may not be experienced. Developing a strategically orientated programme can be a steep learning curve for all and the programme leadership had a crucial role to play in facilitating the learning. For instance a superior attitude would obviously be destructive whilst accepting you are managing a learning experience for more than just the students is empowering. Reflecting and learning from the pilot was therefore the essential developmental activity. To see the taught programme only as a taught programme is, therefore, misleading. It was a piece of group action research in its own right i.e. the action research was aimed at triggering an organizational learning and development process built around the course group experience and the organization's support of that experience.

CLARITY OF EXTERNAL GUIDANCE/STRATEGY

A lot of the programme was only possible because of the clarity of Government strategy and performance measurement and the mandatory requirement that this should be encapsulated in a local Management Action Plan MAP. This has not previously been the norm in Social Services and the lack of clear strategy would obviously greatly undermine attempts to achieve strategic linkage. However even when strategy is not explicit, encouraging the identification of operational objectives for assessed projects, will at least ensure some linkage to unit business plans. In this example, where organizational strategy was explicit, making it the point of reference for the programme from the beginning was a

crucial step.

WEAKNESSES OF THE PROGRAMME

However a weakness in the programme was the lack of discussion of design options that might have gone beyond the Government agenda e.g. the desired departmental culture in the longer term or perhaps a local perspective of some kind. This is the consequence in part of a centrally driven mandatory strategy, but it is also a qualitative change which is hard to define and therefore hard to subject to analysis and choice. In any event it was a level of sophistication that the programme has not really reached as it has remained focused on the tangible quality protects objectives and the national agenda.

If cultural change was an objective of a programme, a difficulty for programme leaders and for action research is the long time scale for this sort of major organisational change. Even this programme with a focus on performance criteria i.e. 'the what, not the how', will span a three year period of implementation at least. In fact even with more limited objectives the aim is some form of substantial organisational change. Competent project management working to objectives that include strategic linkage and is consistent and sustained is therefore an essential key to strategic management development. Consistency of personnel, structures and systems can readily be seen as greatly facilitating this long term approach so that re-structuring of the department for instance could well have undermined the programme to some degree.

If we add to this long time scale the complexity of the task, the risk of project failure are so high the existence of strategically orientated programmes is possibly more surprising than their rarity. If the other processes that need to be managed in parallel in order to generate action research are added to the equation the current limitations of the discipline also cease to be that surprising. If we add the four project management processes to action research and discipline development, both of which also have several dimensions, we are faced with a dauntingly complex whole (see Figure 6.3).

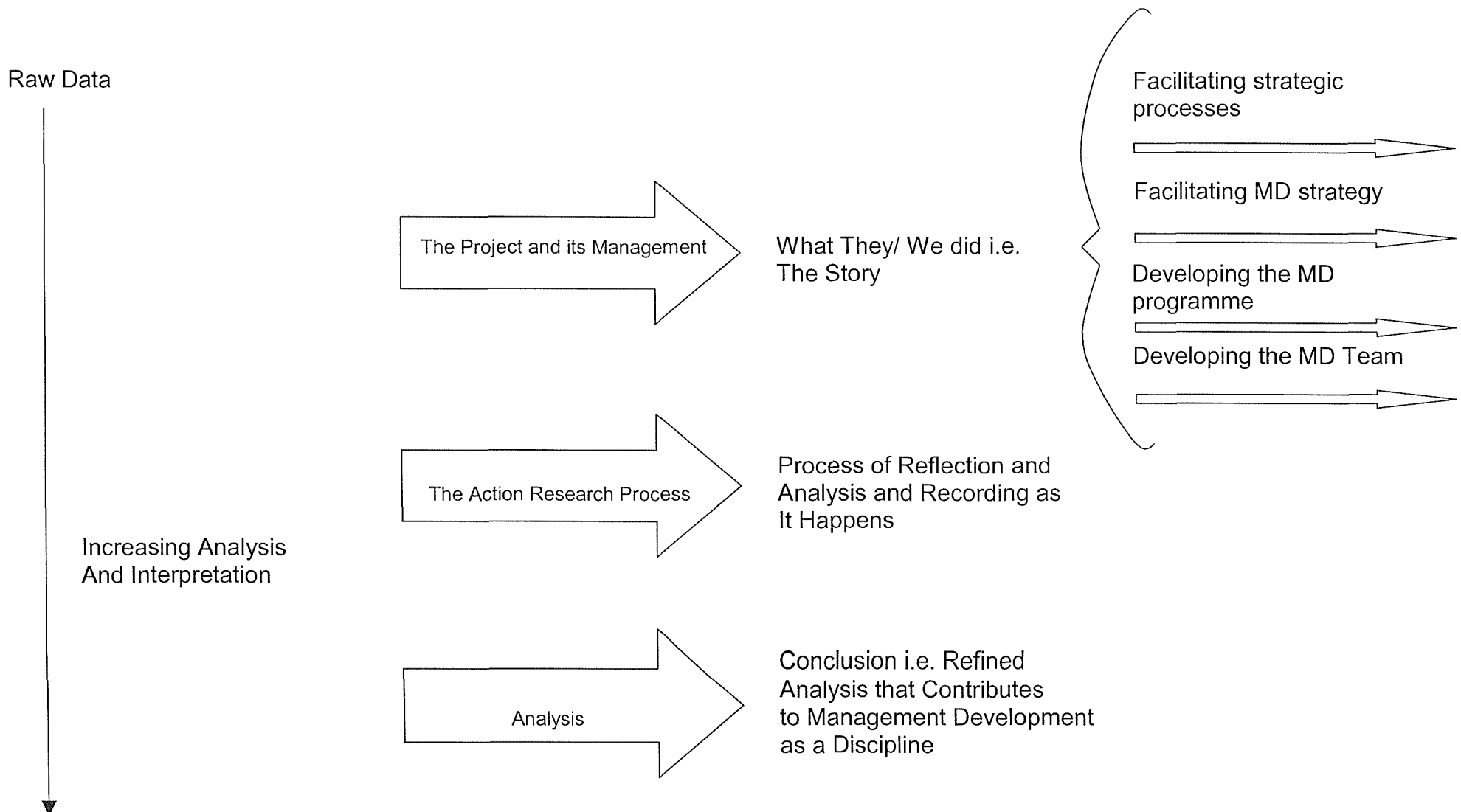


Figure 6.3 Levels of Reflection and Analysis – Project Management and Action Research
 (©I Gray, 2000)

GIVING A DESIGN STRUCTURE

Whilst a taught programme can be seen as encouraging a fire and forget approach that is, sending students on a course and then forgetting about them, it is robust. That is, whilst relying on line managers to appraise and then coach or train within their teams would allow more fine tuning of activity towards desired ends, it is also resource intensive. It demands a lot of training and support by middle managers, a lot of line manager time, and it can be very hard to manage and ensure consistency of implementation. However, as suggested earlier, the price paid for the robustness of a taught course in introducing change is the need to constantly seek to keep managers other than the students engaged.

A planned approach to nominations creates a new problem of release. I am not aware of any research that would help make a judgment about the feasible release ratio for a given population of managers and suspect it is new territory.

The taught course combined with the NVQ 4 standards offered a good basis for the program before the design period built in other features. However a crucial outcome of the design phase was the provision of a policy log and the operational objectives audit. The National Vocational Standards encourage audit against their criteria, that do not reflect strategic priorities. In fact they almost militate against a strategically orientated program, suggesting there is a standard definition of competent management that applies to all organizations.

ENABLING PRACTITIONERS

Whilst accepting that there are no pre-set answers to designing a program, and that an action research approach is essential, from the account of the design and implementation process it should be possible to identify the key variables that facilitate implementation and then develop practitioner tools that will assist others. For instance, an illustration of the design features of the programme could prove to be very valuable in encouraging practitioners to address the issue of links between strategy, a programme design and service or organizational outcomes (see Figure 6.2). Another option would be a representation of the

tendency for senior stakeholder interest to decline throughout the project lifecycle. This might alert a practitioner to the need for a very planned approach to managing stakeholders (see Figure 6.3) to ensure continuity of their involvement and avoid a tendency for their attention to divert to other more urgent matters once a project is launched.

One could argue that in public services the level of turbulence experienced by project leaders and senior managers will be greater, partly because of the effect of paradox (Dixon 2004) and partly because of frequent changes in policy. This will make stakeholder management very problematic indeed as, without the focus that comes from a managerialist organizational culture, senior managers will be the more readily diverted and harder to bring back on board. It may even suffice to give initial and token attention to performance management and evaluation and then perhaps project sponsors themselves are rightly diverted into organizational politics and stakeholder management that are the more significant dimensions. This might create a general culture in public services where sponsors loose control of development projects. Evaluations could therefore be routinely tokenistic, non-existent or reveal gaps between achievement and expectations and requirements that cannot be filled once they are discovered. This will limit organizational learning as well as achievement but could also encourage a *homo existentialis* avoidance of evaluation to minimize the threat.

Alternatively, a model that linked the facilitation process to the stages of group or team development could also prove useful to emphasize the importance of social-psychological processes (see Figure 6.4). A psycho-dynamic representation of the stages of team development has been set against the desired shift in power from a consultant or specialist to the organizational project team. This brings into sharp relief the importance of the storming phase. If the consultant or specialist handles this badly, by becoming defensive, they will stop the empowerment of the organizational team and stunt the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer.

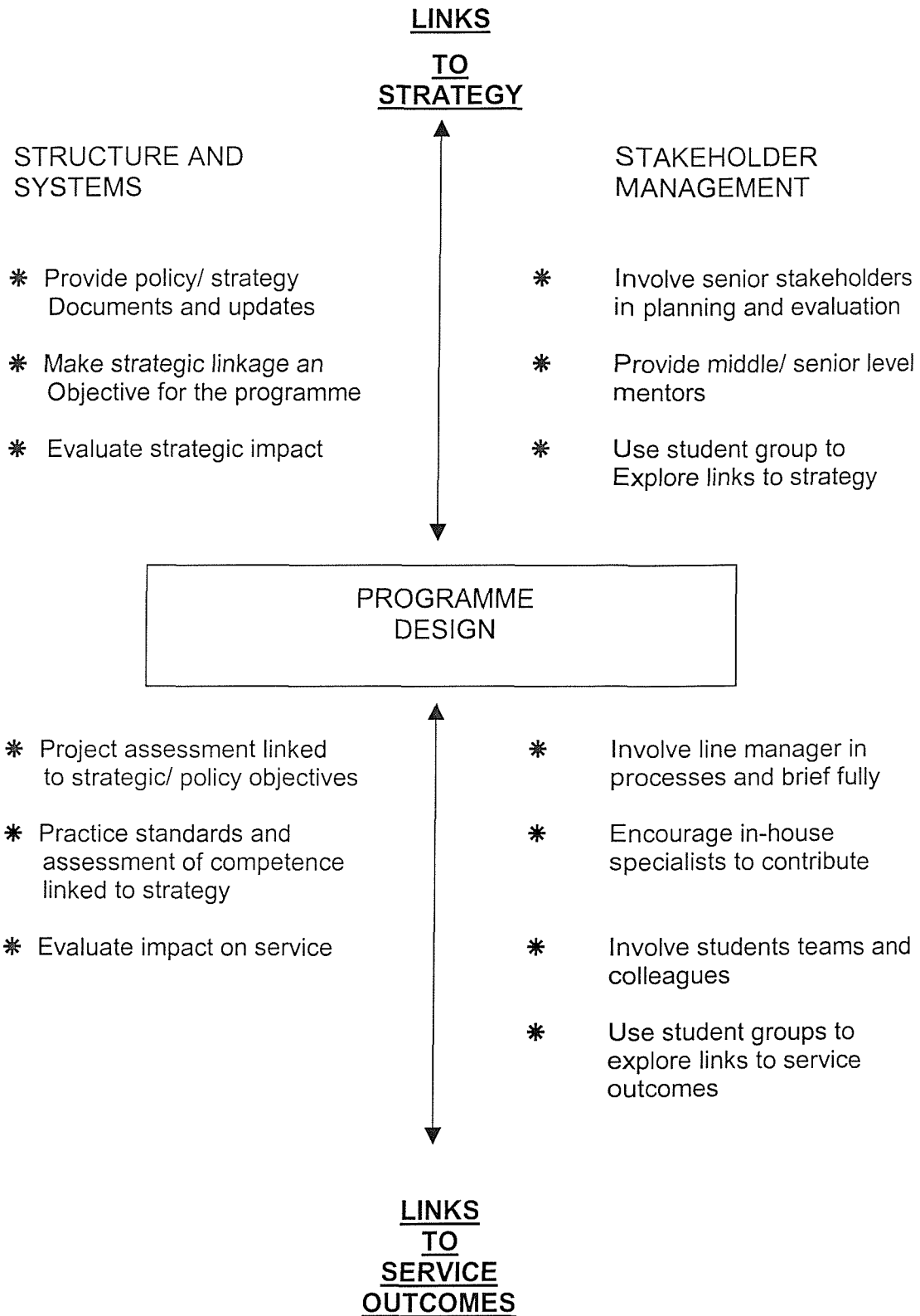


Figure 6.2 Programme Design – Strategic Linkage
(© I Gray, 2001)

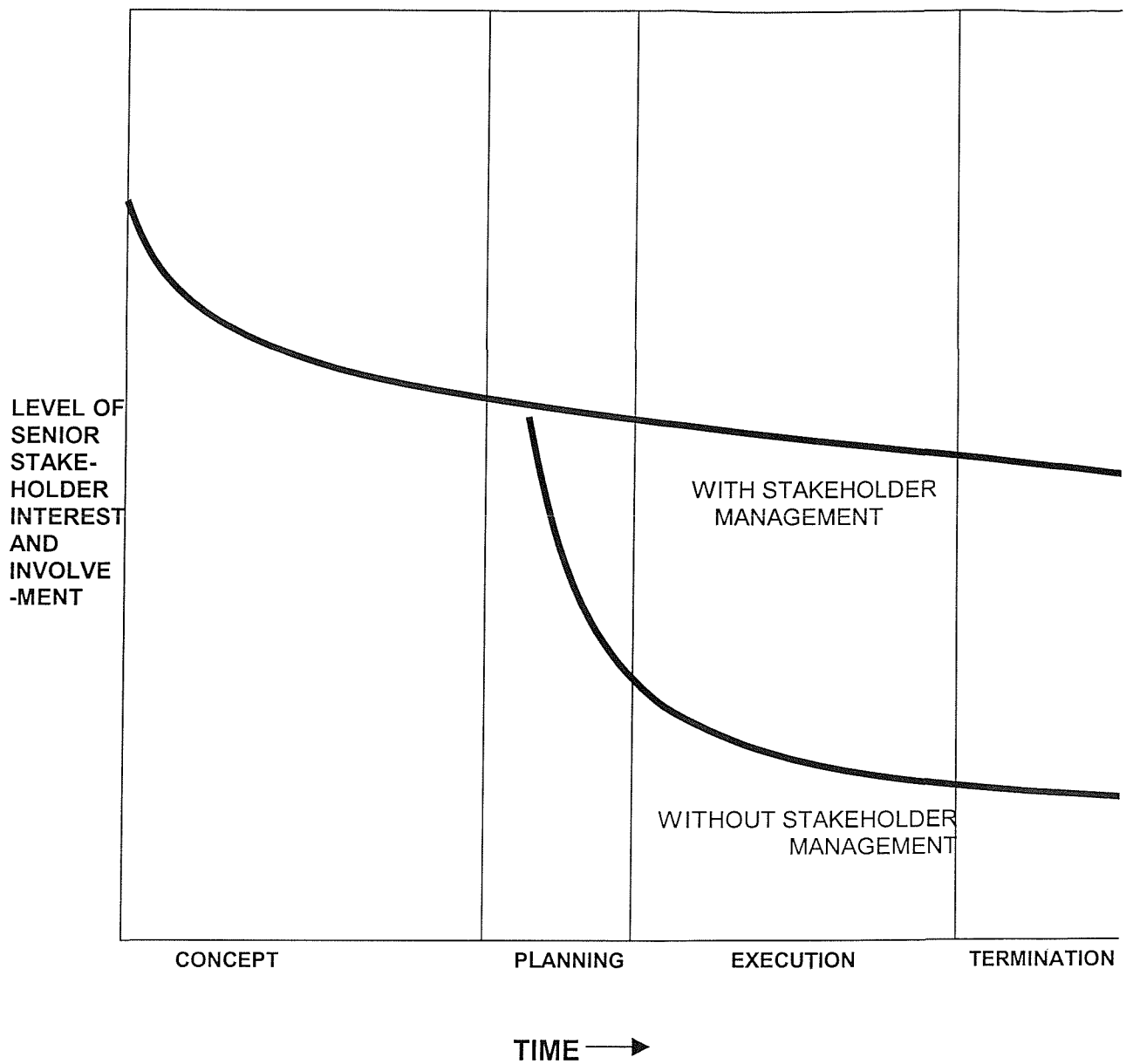


Figure 6.3 Level of Stakeholder Interest in the Product Lifecycle
 (© I Gray, 2001)

Stage of Team Development

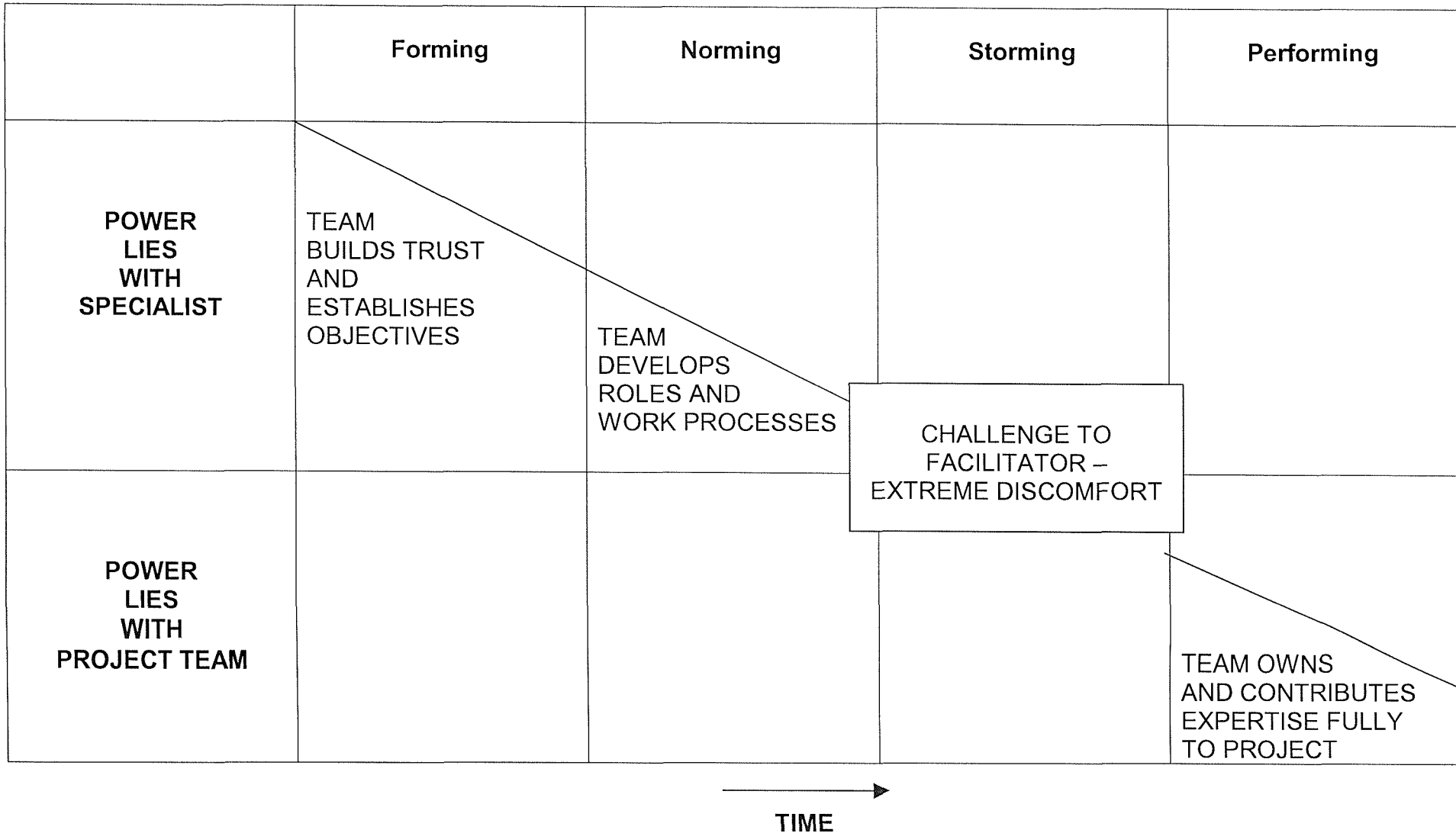


Figure 6.4 Power and Psychological Discomfort for a Specialist Facilitating Organisational Change with a Project Team
 © I Gray 2001

Such practitioner tools should not divert people away from constantly searching for new options that help build links. The account of the action research reveals a process not just of responding to project problems, but also actively seeking to build links between strategy and front line activity. This can be in the form of systems or by putting people in the right place. Of great significance is that in this process of seeking linkage the biggest asset and link became the student group, as first line managers they are the natural link between strategy and service delivery. Enhancing their role as perhaps the key linkage empowers them and the organization and justifies the view that management development should be seen as much more strategically significant than other development or training activity.

There is an interesting question about practitioner audience. If the action research is taken alongside the case examples there would appear to be grounds for suggesting two broad scenarios that allow a strategically orientated programme to be developed. One is led by a senior manager or a senior manager team or coalition, the other by a middle manager or middle manager team or coalition. Given the very different dynamics of the two change situations, dynamics generated primarily by power differentials, the two practitioner groups may require different perspectives, models, tools and techniques, accepting that there may be some common, and valuable ground. To take the issue a stage further one could also suggest that it is the interaction between these two groups that is crucial to managing a programme and focus on what might assist or impede this relationship from either perspective. A typology of interactions might be possible.

If the message, "if you want strategic linkage plan and design for it," seems obvious so is the message, "review and evaluate for strategic impact." An interesting feature of the research was that this, like everything else, had to be worked for. The driving group of managers had to struggle to ensure that the review was not captured by the many other agenda items and that the review represented the views of all stakeholders. It is almost a model of continuous struggle and it is perhaps a necessary counterpart to a model of continuous improvement. For it is not just that a strategically integrated programme needs

Careful planning and good project leadership, it is rather that there are psychological and sociological dynamics working against the project from the outset that must actively be overcome. In other words the counteracting or resisting forces are naturally there, elicited by the introduction of the change process. This view of an organisation as conflict ridden is Morgan's (1996) muted, political model. Too many managers do not perhaps envisage an organisation as working this way, but rather assume consensus and therefore dramatically underestimate the problem of organisational change.

STRATEGIC IMPACT

There was a very mixed picture of success and failure in terms of strategic impact and focus. However the fact that the initiative was sustained from February 2000 was no mean achievement in itself and there were signs of a further new phase beginning which was even more ambitious in terms of strategic effect and closer co-operation. This was balanced by the decline of the original Steering Group, persistent problems in engaging middle managers, the programme becoming over dependent on a core group of professional trainers, and the negative effects of an organisational crisis. The Government's change of policy and a possible national re-organisation of the service further undermined the project's momentum but the introduction of occupational awards encouraged investment in MD by other departments.

Even if the group driving the changes was perhaps too low in the organisation, it worked very successfully to problem solve and keep a strategic focus, its work driven by the commissioning manager. The Assistant Director's support was crucial. Indeed the tight project team and its action research approach with its directorate level sponsor remained the key to developing a strategically orientated provision. If a formal departmental MD strategy established a firmer middle manager power base and located the initiative in a longer term vision and plan, its potential impact could be very substantial and it could provide a model of good practice for others to emulate.

If this is to be too focused on formal strategic linkage, it is also worth asking if the programme helped develop managers with the skills and understandings to manage in the complexity and contention of a public services environment (Dixon and Dogan, 2003). The learning experience did attempt to find a balance between operational objectives and competencies linked to strategy and opportunities for personal development. Project work, which was academically assessed, demanded planned research. It emphasised the importance of *problem analysis and encouraged critical evaluation of tools and techniques*. Regular reviews of project progress leading to adjustments to tactics and action plans to bring improvement were encouraged. Reflection on personal effectiveness and personal learning were important activities that were also assessed. Team and user involvement were also emphasised as was shared learning, with the department more generally as well as within the teaching and learning group. There are grounds therefore for arguing that the learning experience was sophisticated enough to meet the needs of public service managers and that the practical focus on work based projects meant the realities of public service practice were an anchor point for the programme.

The small working group that drove the development from the beginning continued to meet and collaborate closely and it could provide the nucleus of a planning group for future developments. The key commissioning manager for Hampshire from this group kindly commented on the research (see Appendix eleven). It is interesting that what may prove to be valuable practitioner tools such as Figure 6.5 and Table 6.3 were produced by the working group in a later phase of activity. These are presented as they were actually produced by the group without refinement and would seem to offer more direct guidance on programme design than anything to be found in the literature. They grew out of the action research process and represent some key group learning that, if the influence of the working group continues, could have an impact on the wider organisation. They could perhaps offer prototypes of what might constitute a more practitioner orientated set of MD tools and techniques.

Figure 6.5 emphasises the importance of strategic ownership and targets and that the programme should be driven by a working group with clear delegated

objectives. The programme has provision for supporting managers with a performance problem as well as induction and initial assessment but is centred on benchmarked training for three levels of managers. Beyond the benchmark training is the provision of MD opportunities to allow for continuous professional development. Links should be established between the programme and other HRM policies and systems and evaluation should be based on a consideration of service and strategic outcomes. Whilst accepting that it is crude and a formal model not the reality, it at least represents the aspirations of an actual working group.

Table 6.3 reviews the strategic outcomes that could shape the objectives of the working group. It is not intended that the working group adopts all of them but that the 'menu' should be used in negotiation with senior managers. It would not seem unreasonable to ask why there hasn't been clearer representation of possible outcomes in more general use as it would seem to be the nub of SHRM. However the last word on the action research and the realities of public services management must lie with a member of the working group who has since been successful in negotiating an initiative with at least some of the features represented. She commented, in relation to the two figures, *"I am not sure the department is ready for something quite so joined up as this."*

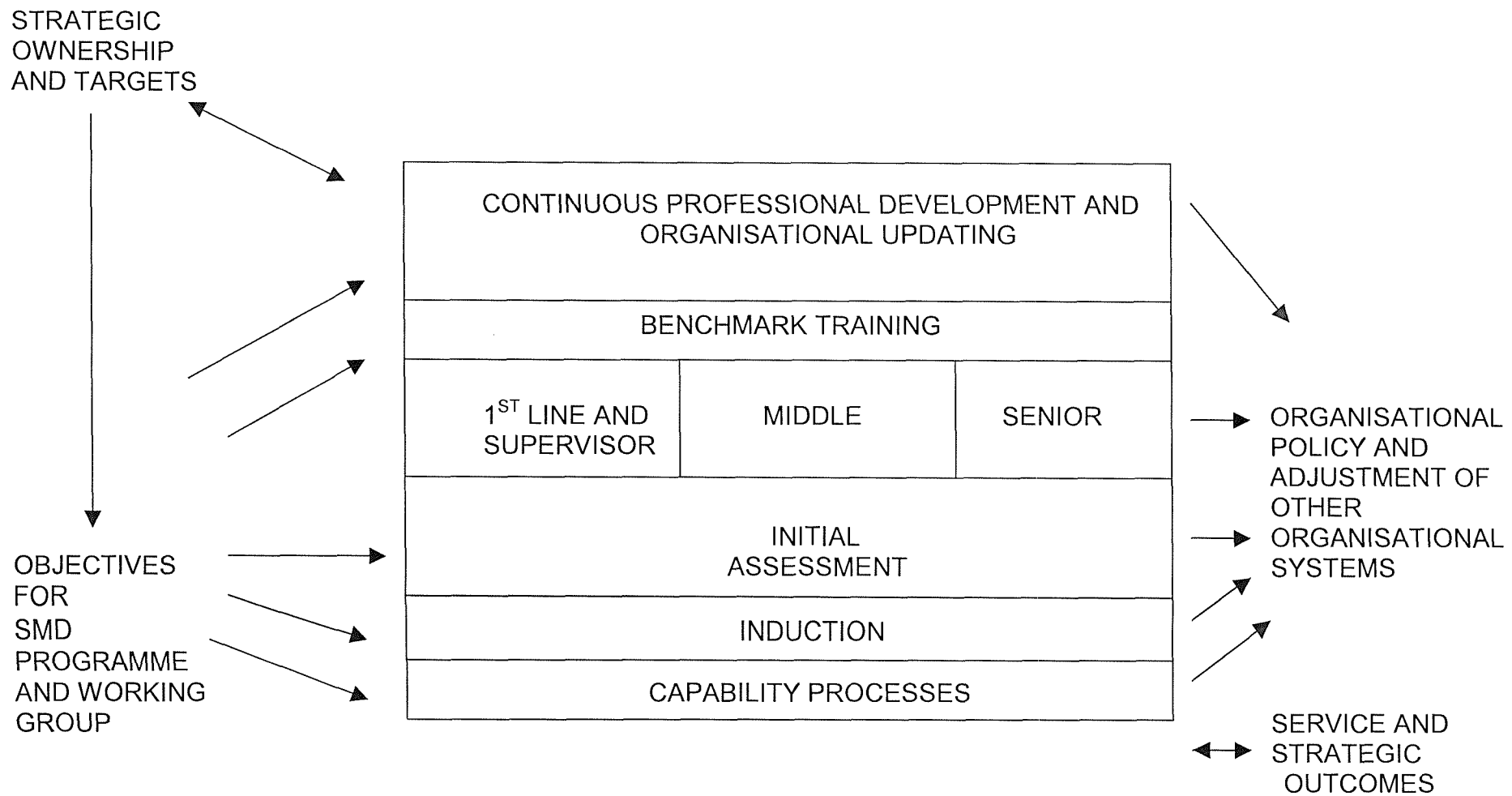


Figure 6.5 Key Dimension of a Strategically Orientated M.D. Programme (DEVELOPED 10/6/03 IN QP WORKING GROUP)

- ❖ Managers at each level are trained to a general definition of competence that matches strategic objectives for the organisation i.e. what do we want from first line managers over the next five years? MD should deliver it.
- ❖ Managers at each level are trained to enhance strategic implementation and formulation i.e. MD directly enhances strategic function.
- ❖ Current strategic objectives are translated into a training needs analysis, i.e. managers are prepared/updated to deliver our strategy on
- ❖ MD is designed to change organisational culture i.e. manager behaviours, values and attitudes are developed to align with strategic direction, the sort of organisation we want is
- ❖ MD is designed to impact on particular performance indicators or dimensions of SWOT. This includes responding to managers with capability problems.
- ❖ An environmental demand targets MD strategy, e.g. a Government policy demands MD or competitors compete on the basis of MD and the organisation must emulate this.
- ❖ MD builds general organisational capability.
- ❖ MD provides individual continuous improvement in personal management skills even if outcomes and application is not clear.

Table 6.3 Strategic Outcomes and Management Development
 (© I Gray, 2003)

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSIONS

In chapter one the research question was established as, “How can management development programmes in the public services be managed so that they have a positive impact on organisational strategies and outcomes?” This chapter will pull together the main themes that arise from the research as a whole, focusing on the key messages for a practitioner.

In a final section on methodology some key issues that came out of the research process will be identified and explored together with some of the flaws in the research. Finally postscripts will critically review some recent literature and a crucial recent policy development.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Management development initiatives are major, complex organisational changes that, whatever the strategic value, are probably not seen as a priority by many busy operational managers. Given that organisations often also lack the expertise and experience that is essential to implementation, those responsible for a programme need to plan for considerable organisational resistance and implementation problems.

A good course design that would respond well to an organisation’s needs and offers an excellent development opportunity to individuals can easily be too ambitious, resource hungry and dependent on expertise the organisation cannot provide. As a result implementation is prone to failure. A disproportionate amount of time can be spent on design planning compared to implementation planning and organisational capability and project risk assessment are too easily neglected.

So there is good reason for seeing organisational readiness as a crucial issue. If organisations are inexperienced and have a very low level of MD activity capability needs to be developed over time. Possibly starting with a relatively

simple programme that is less vulnerable, but builds expertise and support in the organisation as a means to developing a more ambitious provision in the longer term.

CONFLICT AND CHANGE

Environmental turbulence is another crucial factor. Constant restructuring of public services and changes in policy and practice are the norm so any provision should allow for this. Activities with long time scales can be a problem so a programme probably needs structure and milestones e.g. periods of intensive personal development with outcomes, such as qualifications, at each stage. This also permits transferability of investment in MD as managers move from department to department. A modest programme whose achievements were disrupted but had some success will be a good outcome compared with an ambitious, strategic communal failure that will hamper future initiatives.

Whilst informal processes such as support and coaching by line managers is fragile even a training section that might be providing structure can cease to exist. Part of an MD strategy might be to recognise this and reach not just for strategic linkage and outcomes but also for the development of self-motivated individuals who will drive their own learning throughout their career. Partnership in provision e.g. with a University can also provide a source of stability. In effect it is possible to build in stability and this may be worthwhile even if it seems to be a diversion from a focus on organisational strategy and outcomes. In fact in public services it could be argued that such an approach is strategic.

Conflicts with other departments in an organisation on approaches to MD are interesting phenomena. Different departments in a diversified organisation can have different MD requirements. However even when this is not the case different histories, cultures, training capabilities and therefore perceptions, expectations and behaviours can also mean one corporate approach does not work even if similar outcomes are required. Just as with general strategy the objectives of a corporate MD strategy therefore have to be localised particularly in their implementation to take account of these differences. If a standardised

provision can be a problem, killing off initiatives as much as encouraging them, a compromise of adhering to the corporate principles and outcomes but allowing variation would seem a reasonable solution and might be a design alternative to standardisation.

A further source of conflict is between the individual trainee and the SMD programme. For instance the negotiation of project topics in the action research consisted of trying to find a balance between operational and individual needs and interests. In other words if a managers learning is directed towards organisational outcomes and away from personal interests some compensation may be necessary. Qualifications can for instance provide this but so also can interest from senior managers, career development and empowerment and involvement in organisational developments.

RESPONDING TO THE SKILLS GAP IN PROVISION

Lack of MD expertise is a national problem. Programme design and implementation is very hard in practice compared with its principles, which seem very simple. Organisations need to make sure they have people leading their development or advising them who has a proven track record in MD. Developing expertise has got to be crucial to developing any form of robust MD provision in public services let alone a strategic one.

The contracting process can be unhelpful when it assumes a rigid process of determining organisational need, expressing this as requirements, putting it out to tender, then choosing between competitors. Major design issues arise during the tendering process when the organisation engages with provider groups with expertise. A process of seeking expressions of interest followed by exploration followed by tendering would allow the tendering process to be part of the design or problem solving process rather than its termination. Such an approach is encouraged by the acceptance that there is likely to be an expertise problem from the outset; organisational overconfidence can prove quite damaging especially when new problems identified are responded to in an ad hoc manner generating incoherence in the long term.

The adversarial approach to tendering can result in potential contractors, who see problems, either raising them and risking losing the contract, or keeping quiet and making the best of things. If organisational outcomes cannot be made the basis for contract requirements the organisation carries the real risks. Alternatively contractors could provide the minimum according to contract then simply take the money, or they might see the risks and back off.

So how provision is obtained would seem important and one must ask whether such a crucial provision as leadership development can be trusted to external providers. At the very least long term partnership in provision would seem desirable to cut through the negatives and short-termism generated by crude contracting and respond to the skills gap. The cultivation of one provider in a close working relationship, very similar to the model of purchaser and supplier relationships central to the philosophy of Total Quality Management, may provide an answer. The development of a strong joint management and delivery team perhaps with secondments between the two partner organisations is also likely to be significant in breaking down barriers between the two organisations involved.

A strategically orientated programme might not be the real issue. A successful sustainable provision could be a very valuable achievement. Strategic orientation might well compound a programme's complexity and vulnerability although it could be argued it will improve operational ownership, resourcing, priority and planning. It could be argued that taking into account the points raised above a limited programme will constitute a strategically managed programme. That is to say that gauging organisational capability and vulnerability and making allowance for its external operating environment are all crucial aspects of strategic analysis.

STRATEGIC INTENT AND OWNERSHIP

Strategic intent, analysis and evaluation of outcomes at a senior level in the organisation make a big difference to implementation and outcomes for the

organisation. Even so there must be continuity of policy and the level of activity must be high and sustained over a very long period to get results, i.e. 5-12 years in a reasonably turbulent environment. An early period of intense internal political activity can be important to overcome resistance and build ownership of a management development programme. However this may need to be repeated overtime when new phases of development begin or when there are signs of strong resistance developing. This indicates the need for considerable awareness amongst key organisational players.

Ownership at a senior level is a crucial factor. More ambitious developments are probably only possible because they are both publicly initiated and supported by preferably the chief executive. It could be argued that this need for active senior ownership is greater for a management development programme because it has most impact on the very people who are responsible for leading its implementation, and will elicit greater resistance compared with other organisational change.

Local ownership by a training manager or HRM specialist can work well in the short term but is also fragile and can limit a programmes impact on organisational outcomes and strategy. Strategic MD may well need senior organisational or political sponsorship and protection to survive.

In contrast a programme driven from the top and then cascading down and led by the chief executive can achieve rapid results but its weakness is its dependence on an individual's energy and commitment. However such an approach may minimise organisational resistance. Full involvement and commitment from the senior team may follow and there could be other advantages in training senior managers first that goes beyond commitment, as their understanding and ability to actively contribute, must be that much greater. Also this approach means management development impacts directly onto the strategic team and the strategic function and builds capability.

MD POLICY AND ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC PROCESSES

Policy and planning processes that are formal and explicit i.e. an annual MD development plan based on an analysis of internal and external environments gives impetus, control and continuity. This makes an ambitious programme achievable incrementally and permits the integration of education with training and also with work based learning. The combination of educational and organisationally orientated outcome measurement may be helpful and integration with professional training activity can be valuable. Experimentation is as important as well as structured, formal, design. Design and implementation teams need to learn from their successes and failures and allowance needs to be made for useful practices to emerge and the final whole to develop incrementally.

A fundamental problem for a practitioner attempting to develop a strategic approach to management development in the public sector is the weakness in organizational strategy. Despite the introduction of the New Public Management between 1979 and 1997 strategic and business planning processes have often been rudimentary so that the systems structures and activities that a management development programme might have linked with, have been at best limited, at worst non-existent. Best Value has not yet had a significant impact on strategy or business planning and sadly can be seen as being reduced to the one off event of the review rather than as an opportunity to make external benchmarking a feature of everyday practice.

This is partly caused by the nature of public services management, in that strategy can be seen as the prerogative of central government through its legislative and policy formulation and implementation processes. Local politicians and managers have often had limited discretion to respond to local conditions and, given severe resource constraint, few creative options. Performance management may however be changing this by focusing on outcomes rather than processes and procedures although there is considerable contention around this issue (Carter, 1996).

However what room for discretion there has been has not been fully exploited and the degree of discretion is perhaps not really the issue. That is, even in scenarios where strategic freedom is potentially optimized, for instance a multinational company, many managers will inherit strategy and be confined to limited interpretation according to local conditions. In fact one could argue that this local interpretation is crucial to the realization of general strategy. A simple model of strategic management development would thus see a general strategy linked to a macro-level management development strategy that was then interpreted and modified at different levels and in different divisions in the organization according to micro-conditions. Translating this into the public services one could envisage a government policy on management development that was related to the realization of general policy and then adapted according to local conditions.

Re-framed the problem is not the nature of public services management but the failure of planning processes and the question is not about strategic management development but rather management development that is purposeful - in that it links to planning processes at any level and is evaluated according to its contribution to operational objectives at any level. A fundamental flaw up until recently could however be seen to be the absence of management development strategy from central government policy despite an agenda dominated by changing the management of public services to model private sector practices. How did this happen?

The answer lies in a closer examination of Government strategy/policy. Up until 1997 the objective was not only to introduce a new managed culture to the public services but also to do this via market mechanisms i.e. the creation of quasi markets. These were to be created through the reconstitution of services around a purchaser provider division, through compulsory competitive tendering, through the freeing of services from local authority control or, ultimately, by privatisation. Competition resulting from the new markets was seen as driving planning processes and therefore the integration of supporting activities into these planning processes. Lack of strategic or purposeful planned management development, is the failure of this policy to subject public services to market mechanisms or replace this strategy with a meaningful alternative. Government

policy since 1997 takes a different approach that favours inspection and performance management as alternatives and this is beginning to be applied to management development.

The case studies in the thesis very much reflect management development initiatives up until 1997. The action research on the other hand, offers an exploration of a new post 1997 era where strategy/policy has changed. The New Labour Government is committed to change in public service management but not to reliance on market mechanisms. The action research illustrates this well. There are three key features of the policy environment in which the Quality Protects Management Development programme is implemented. Firstly the introduction of very precise objectives and performance measures to Children's Services and mandatory planning processes. Secondly the introduction of Best Value, in effect a zero based budgeting technique. Thirdly the introduction of mandatory management awards for defined occupational groupings. Whilst it is perhaps not by chance that this increased central control has coincided with the action research, the balancing question is, if programmes are happening, do they respond to local plans and local conditions or are they over standardised?

In sum the current era is typified by increasing central control and reduced local discretion, which could be seen to undermine strategic management development. But as part of this central control is clearer workforce planning policies and processes, including requirements for management development, it could be seen to greatly enable it. There could therefore be as much gained as is potentially lost, especially as MD programmes that are more sensitive to local conditions become a feature in the longer term, once the basics of good practice are established.

STRATEGIC LINKAGE

As the culmination of the research, the action research project, offers an interesting review of the means for achieving strategic linkage. The Quality Protects initiative focused on strategic objectives and performance criteria but these were set within a more general mission that made the initiative meaningful

to practitioners and managers.

Organisational competencies were translated into individual competencies to shape the programme and it also aspired to bring change in the leadership of the service and to impact on business planning and strategic processes. However what emerged was the importance of people in facilitating linkage. Some horizontal linkages (Mamoud, 1999) became a feature of the programme. Line manager and senior manager, inter-organisational and interdepartmental interactions were crucial learning events where key issues were tackled.

Linkage is perhaps not just about developing systems, procedures or measures that join up activity but more crucially filling gaps with group problem solving activity. In the spirit of liberal and radical action research the learning community was mobilised to work on establishing strategic linkage.

It is also to the credit of the initiative that it clearly mirrored Torrington and Hall's (1999) model of HR driven strategy (see Figure 2.8). Training needs analysis played a part, MD strategy responding to organisational strategy, but crucially the organisational strategy itself was to reach for improved performance through SMD.

PROGRAMME DESIGN.

In the literature review I was concerned at the lack of guidance on programme design. That is there was a lot of material that looked at methods but not a lot that explored design principles and offered guidance on how methods may be combined or integrated. This had the effect of leaving very open the question of what a strategic design might look like. So, given the action research, what are the characteristics of a strategic design and is it possible to identify design principles?

Crucially a strategic design must emphasise strategic linkage but as in the section above there are a number of approaches to this. However my view is that a core activity has got to be some attempt at a performance review that is

set against the strategy and is used to set developmental objectives (Finger and Brand, 1999). These objectives then need to be translated into management development activities that can be evaluated against the developmental objectives and therefore the strategy. This may well be a problematic process, especially in public services, but it need not be based on precise measurement of performance, it could for instance be stakeholder driven (Woodhall and Winstanley, 1998). It can also be at an organisational or an individual level or both.

However I do not think I have moved things on much with regard to micro-design. This could be because it is not the issue that I first thought it was, in that a lot of the action research design process consisted of taking a method and then shaping it to contribute to strategic outcomes. For instance the design used competencies but they were selected to respond to the performance improvements the organisation was seeking. Formative assessments/appraisals and personal development plans were designed to make explicit reference to operational objectives and the Quality Protects agenda.

So it is possible to argue that any activity or method can be given a strategic orientation, even for example mentoring or outward bound. Mentors could be senior managers with strategic responsibilities; outward bound could be used to build closer relationships with colleagues from partner organisations to improve co-operation and co-ordination. However in the discussion in chapter three it became apparent that there were soft and hard management development activities. Soft activity, for instance mentoring, that encourages personal development is perhaps best blended with hard activities that facilitate strategic linkage such as appraisal. This blend of learning activity could be seen as essential in public services where strategic linkage and performance management will have its limitations and there is a need for highly skilled problem solvers and active learners (Dixon, 2004).

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SMD

If the planning processes that might have generated strategic management

development programmes have been limited in the public services, the project management capability that is essential to their effective implementation has also been deficient. The cases identify several initiatives that have failed because of deficiencies in their project management and the action research reveals points of vulnerability where the development is threatened by a breakdown in the project management process.

An ironic conclusion that can be drawn from this is that lack of management development leads to lack of management development. More positively it is possible to identify problems in design, network and stakeholder management implementation and evaluation all of which have disrupted provision. Part of the answer to the question of what facilitates strategic management development is therefore effective project management.

One could argue here for there being a general issue of the organisational readiness of public services organisations for strategic management development. This capability problem interacts with a shared environmental climate to limit the sophistication of provision that can be reached for. In other words ambitious strategic initiatives require long term sustainability and sophisticated project management and planning processes and there is good reason for seeing these as problematic given current organisational capability and the current service climate that is typified by political turbulence and operational crises. Centrally driven, mandatory standardized provision, with limited but achievable objectives may be the only viable option and this is exactly the government's current strategy.

MANAGING PARALLEL PROCESSES, THE REAL CHALLENGE IN ACHIEVING STRATEGICALLY ORIENTATED PROGRAMMES?

If the issue of strategic linkage is about managing the interface between the strategic management process and the project management process of programme implementation, then one way of envisaging increasing sophistication of design is to increase the layers of process that are being managed simultaneously. In other words one could see effective programme

management as the management of a number of interacting open systems.

Whatever the visualization, the systems or processes that can be identified and the complexity of analysis and activity they generate can be seen as problematic in itself. Inevitably they increase the demands on resources and skills and they also increase the risk of project breakdown. For instance action research can be seen as offering a more reflective approach to project management that does justice to this complex reality, yet it also generates another level of complexity.

Likewise a more sophisticated management development programme will seek to impact on everyday operational management not just on individual learners so pushing up the complexity of the task and possibly explaining why research and practice tends to be one dimensional. Some of the parallel processes that can be considered and built in to contribute to this complexity are;

- * The strategic management process.
- *The HRM /workforce planning process.
- * The MD project management process.
- * The action research process.
- * The operational management process.
- * The academic research process.

Given the Government's concern that many quality problems in service provision lie with system breakdowns between departments and services, one could also see that even a further dimension could be added which would be managing the processes above with some co-ordination across services, for instance across Health and Social Services, or Social Services and Education. Under a

governance approach this could be even more ambitious with a programme taking a wider brief and attempting to respond to the leadership needs of a community (Broussine, 2003).

Mandatory occupational qualifications for managers in public services could therefore have only limited impact given the general lack of sophistication in project or programme management, which is possibly the heart of the problem. This may also be a feature which explains poor provision in the private sector as well and the limited research of the activity. Strategic MD is simply just too hard to manage.

REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY

On the whole the methodology proved very successful. The mixture of approaches combined well together the literature review establishing the context and the key features of a strategically orientated programme and the cases giving this more depth. The action research then offered a more verifiable activity, then encompassed the detailed practice. Such a combination is probably the only way to access a relatively under-developed field and certainly given the level of pro-activity demanded by the researcher, qualitative methods that did not allow for this would not have worked. Definitely anything other than a qualitative method would not have done justice to the complexity of the endeavour. However other interesting insights emerged during the research process.

ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON METHODOLOGY

Gill and Johnson (1997) whilst offering a structure for the research sequence that is presented as uni-linear and rigid, point out:

“An idealised representation of the research sequence will help the naïve researcher ... however it rarely accords with actuality” (Gill and Johnson, 1997, p. 2).

They refer to Bechhofer (1974) who suggests:

“the research process is not a clear-cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world..”

(Bechhofer, cited in Gill and Johnson, 1997, p. 2).

Whilst I would not disagree with the proposal that a research question brings coherence I would argue that for some research, the coherence of the research question is an essential part of the desired outcome rather than the starting point. This is particularly the case with research orientated towards responding to a problem and that is the case in this instance, where the focus of the research is an organisational problem.

A parallel lies with different approaches to strategy formulation and implementation. Mintzberg (1998) introduces the learning school of strategy by referring to Charles Lindblom's suggestion that:

“policy making in government is not a neat, orderly controlled process, but a messy one in which policymakers try to cope with a world they know is too complicated for them” (Mintzberg, 1998, p. 176).

Quinn (1980) opened the emergent strategy debate and challenged the established design school and planning schools of strategy with his concept of logical incrementalism, which criticised a too rigid approach to applying the problem solving process in addressing this particular organisational function. The same arguments can apply to any problem solving activity, so that allowing a problem definition to emerge could be essential to good practice.

If this is accepted as a premise, then research protocols, practices and processes that are based on a concise research question could steer researchers into unhelpful behaviours and mislead them. Worse than this it could stop some research activities from receiving attention. Could it be that the

approach is over-influenced by positivistic perspectives? That in natural science a more linear, research process is possible as the research is more focused and defined and less complex in terms of the variables being explored and their behaviours?

Another way of looking at it is to suggest that there is a story presentation versus story writing issue. In writing the story the plot changes and is adapted by the writer to bring coherence, to allow for new ideas as these are arrived at. The narrative is shaped and constructed to result in the final written piece. The final story is far more structured and coherent than its complex and muddled process of development. As Hemingway succinctly expressed it, *"First drafts are shit. I re-wrote the ending of 'A Farewell to Arms' thirty-nine times, before I was satisfied"* (cited in Stein, 1995, p. 277). In a similar way at the end of a piece of research it is perhaps easy to offer a concise research question and an equally clear set of research processes and outcomes. Yet the reality of the research process is very different and a much more confused and tentative activity.

So could a rigid approach to determining the research question be positively harmful? In many problem-orientated activities the definition of the problem is at best unclear. At worst there are several competing definitions based on initial perceptions and analyses of the issue by different stakeholders. Much of effective problem solving and therefore analysis can be about determining, integrating or challenging these different problem definitions.

I struggled with this issue of defining a research question for some time. I suspect now that the struggle was generated by this gap between presentation and reality. The process was helpful and the goal not unreasonable since it encouraged the exploration, I could have enjoyed it more if had not convinced myself it was a failing.

There are grounds for a particular approach to the research question that is well suited to a problem solving approach and to action research. In essence it is to propose the adaptation of an aims and objectives structure that encourages and

facilitates reflection on the research process and the research question, as it changes overtime, as an essential part of the research.

By this approach the aim encapsulates the core research question and a series of objectives identifies a sub-set of issues as separately identified yet integrated activities. Objectives can focus planning and implementation and also provide a basis for review and evaluation. This reviewing mechanism also allows for the re-formulation of the aim and objectives as the research progresses so that changes in approach and their possible causes can be identified. Necessarily this can include changes in the primary research question. This project management approach to research is congruent in particular with action research.

Crucially by this approach the research process becomes iterative and reflection on the process per-se is encouraged. Accounts of research activities will also be presented as nearer the muddled reality and will isolate changes of direction and therefore understanding, opening these key, perhaps definitive moments up for closer examination. The research sequence then looks more like the figure below than Gill and Johnson's original representation (see Figure 7.1).

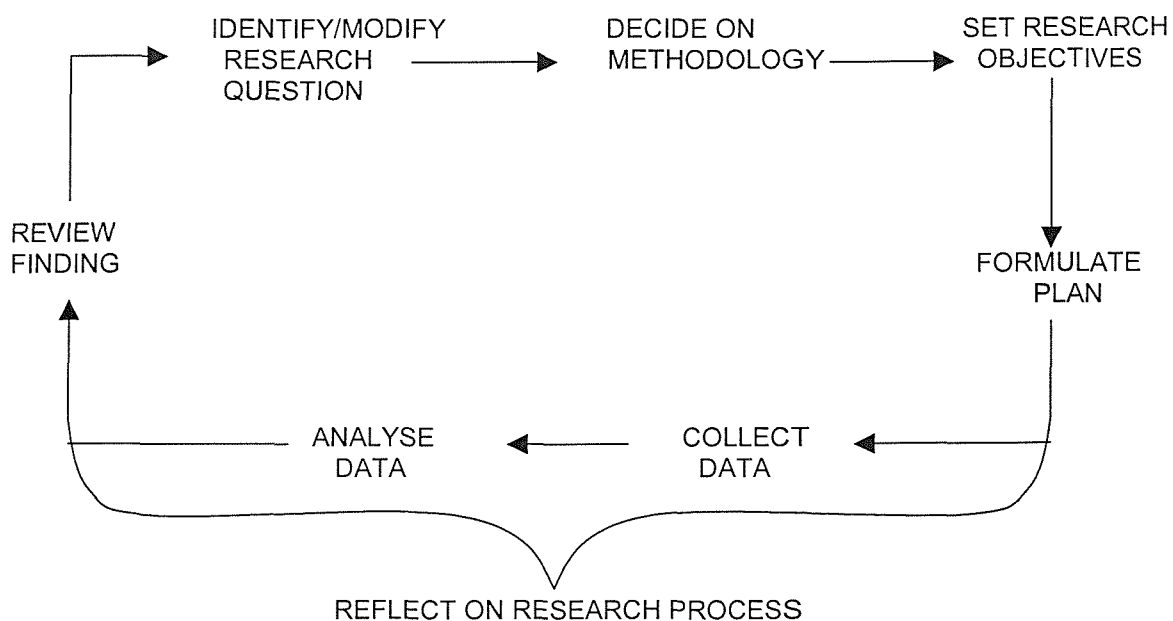


Figure 7.1 The Research Process

(©I GRAY, 2003)

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

At the start of the research I was able to identify a number of difficulties. These lay primarily with the complexity of the activity for instance keeping adequate research records efficiently whilst carrying out the task put a huge strain on me. In effect being both researcher and consultant is resource heavy. However some difficulties stemmed from the conflict of consultant and researcher roles. An example of this is dealing with hidden agendas, including situations when my analysis and actions were not fully shared with the clients for good operational reasons but could have had significance for the research. In other words there were problems with organisational politics and I found myself inevitably involved in what Coghlan and Brannick (2001, p. 64) describe as “back staging”, being aware of and influencing organisational politics to progress the project or, as they express it elsewhere:

“Handling interpretations or outcomes which would be perceived negatively by the organisation is a particularly sensitive issue” (Coghlan and Brannick, p. xii).

To offer an example, that illustrates both these issues, appendix one contains a summary and analysis of two crucial project meetings on a different project from the one used in the action research. This level of detail is not the norm for my everyday practice or for the organisation in its minute taking. Yet it does not cover even a substantial part of the actual interaction in these two meetings or apply anything other than a cursory analysis. Outside of these two meetings is a mass of other interactions, equally significant yet occurring on a daily basis over many years and known to me and, possibly many others yet not recorded.

For instance, to illustrate the problem of volume and also hidden agendas and actions, there were at least four other interactions crucial to understanding the process and outcomes of these two meetings - two meetings with individuals and two meetings of a sub-group. In these four interactions I firstly tested out the proposition that our current approach to part of the programme was not working and then articulated and proposed a change. I suspect these interventions fed a

series of other interactions that I am not aware of that encouraged a change of client perspective at the next formal meeting.

This client's behaviour must be placed in the context of a design phase that finished in 1998 in which they disagreed with me over the vulnerability of the programme. Given that as an action research team we have learnt from our reflection on the implementation of the design and changed our approach, should I then have made my covert intervention overt? The clients would agree with my record as presented, they may or may not agree with my hidden intervention or my view of error in the original design. In fact they could be very sensitive about it. Could I be seen as point scoring under the guise of making explicit group learning? Whilst as a consultant I have no doubts that the risks of reflection and complete openness are not necessarily balanced by the likely outcomes, as a researcher is such pragmatism ethical? Given that there are some potentially important insights here into organisational learning, methods of intervention and the management of organisational politics, all directly pertinent to the implementation of management development programmes and strategic impact, do I invalidate any conclusions by not subjecting them to community scrutiny? I could for instance find that my view of the sequence of events and my interpretation is replaced by completely new data and interpretations, that I know nothing about.

In sum there is in action research an almost unavoidable danger of consultancy taking precedence over action research. However in my view the richness of the data that action research allows access to cannot be achieved in any other way. Also the insights that can come from even limited reflective, organisational learning, are so valuable, in fact irreplaceable, that as Glaser and Strauss have suggested there is no option but to accept the constraints and proceed. An approach to validity that makes organisational research impossible offers rather a limited future to social science. If there are limitations on how democratic and open one can be with the client and how one can effectively generalise from the research outcomes, practitioner orientated and organisational research are valuable in their own right. Also theory generation must precede theory testing

and this thesis can provide a basis for further research and in fact has generated some useful insights and outcomes.

ON PRE-SUPPOSITIONS

A theme throughout the case studies and the action research has been the importance of political processes in organisations in resisting or facilitating successful implementation. It was crucial to my achieving a successful outcome but one also could see other organisations and similar initiatives stalled or stalling because they did not take them into account.

This means that conflict models of organisational functioning are important tools for consultants and managers yet there is good reason for suggesting that management science finds them uncomfortable (Morgan 1989). If for instance one examines the chapter on action research important insights were generated by the neo-marxist and liberational approaches that did not sit happily alongside more conventional managerial perspectives.

It is hard not to conclude that there is an ideological bias at work that could prove very harmful to professional practice which arguably should be eclectic, that is experimenting with perspectives to understand and respond to issues as implementation progresses. As the end of the cold-war will have undermined some of these perspectives and reduced their research activity, we could be faced with a situation where the post-modern era is actually one of diminished vision and methodology at least as far as management is concerned. What is perceived as a political and ideological victory could be matched by a parallel loss in effectiveness and service outcomes. We should be able to live with a differentiation between organisational and macro-social analysis and should speculate if we cannot, on what sort of harmful political processes are driving this relentless search for hegemony?

ON A REFLECTIVE DIARY AND ACTION RESEARCH

As a professional social worker I used a reflective diary to record my emotional responses to events during an intervention with a client or user. In exploring an appropriate methodology for this research I rejected it as not suitable for task focused management action research. This was a mistake.

As indicated in the account of the action research my psycho-emotional responses to situations were very significant and could have made the difference between success and failure. In effect interpersonal skills and self-awareness are important professional skills for any action research activity. Not monitoring this dimension could have proven to be very costly and possibly means some research outcomes have been lost.

ON TUTOR SUPPORT AND ACTION RESEARCH

My tutor acted as a very important critical friend and was experienced and versatile enough to respond to the range of issues raised in tutorials. It was however I think quite demanding and a bit beyond the parameters of tutoring research that is supported by more conventional methodologies.

The pattern of sharing reports of events and maintaining an evidence log that was open to scrutiny was important to verify the legitimacy of the account. The written notes kept after each tutorial proved very helpful in the same respect. However on top of the complexity of the activity and all the natural organisational records demanded by that, it proved very time consuming. If it was perhaps overdone a little this illustrates Argyris's (1985) distinction between practice and science. The processes needed to make consultancy verifiable are too costly for me to use them in my everyday work. If the cases in chapter four proved useful they cannot be turned into something more verifiable without a significant investment of effort.

This has considerable implications for research in that it means that a lot of valuable management consultancy is unlikely to be translated into research

outcomes. This is rather a damaging problem if, as the literature review suggests, a lot of current research and literature is both too abstract and methodologically unsound. If universities could find a cost efficient way of bridging this divide they could open up a flood of useful material. For instance a way forward might be to provide consultants and other project and strategic managers with professional mentor/tutor support carrying the weight of the action research processes to offer some verification and then focusing in on the most productive outcomes to give them more depth. Such a partnership would greatly benefit the local population of consultants and other practising managers. Also it would enhance and benefit the work of any business school offering the facilitation. It could also encourage movement between academic and professional populations. In effect it would build a more productive research and management community.

SOME FLAWS IN THE RESEARCH

There were a number of issues identified by the literature review that I did not take account of in planning for or implementing the action research. A crucial dimension was that the programme was not part of a broader HRM strategy. An immediate effect of this was that it was not integrated properly into other HRM functions, although the need to do this was identified, for example, recruitment, selection, and induction could have been adjusted to take into account the principles and practices of the programme, but this was not done. In effect, ownership of the programme and its principles was confined mostly to the steering and working groups.

The motivations of the Steering and Working Group and my own motivations must also be taken into account. Here was an opportunity for trainers, educationalists and HRM specialists to get involved in strategy. Resistance could have been generated by this attempt to gain power and influence. Was the Service Managers' limited response generated not by apathy or other priorities or perhaps a failure to sell the development properly or rather did it stem from a fundamental conflict of interest? Did they need to own, drive and steer it to

make it really work. Was the problem really the Steering Group is in that SHRM cannot really be an HRM initiative?

Another lost and related dimension was ideology. Despite being fully aware of the ideological issues, I entered the research perhaps over committed to the SHRM ideology of a strategically orientated programme and a particular approach to strategy. However I did not perceive at the time its conflict with the culture of social services or its limitations. Having found common ground with the Steering and Working Groups I, in fact we, did not then consider other options or locate the initiative in a broader perspective or philosophy. This lack of a broader vision was driven by a number of factors. I was educated into an approach to strategy dominated by the design school (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998) and carried this with me into the action research. The HRM and SHRM literature has a similar bias and the perception of the steering and working groups was focused on the Quality Protects objectives and performance measures driven by the Government's modernisation agenda that is, in essence, a top down approach to strategy and performance measurement. Also the issue of philosophy being necessary to shape developments is not stressed in the literature and it is easy in practice to reach for the tangible, especially when the exploration of other options may be uncomfortable.

One could argue that the shift in role of the course participants to a focus group, engaging with specialists and managers formulating and implementing strategy was a response to the failure of this instrumental approach. That is, there is a gap between the service level performance measure and the front line of service delivery that only line managers can bridge. It is not possible for a top down strategy to control or measure the processes without their active involvement. The learning group in effect found a way forward that was not in the original design and although it was useful to them was not more widely supported. There was perhaps a shift from a SHRM to a learning organisation approach.

Another way of looking at the issue is to take up Brewster's (1998) position that European SHRM needs and takes a broader perspective than that afforded by an Americanised model. This is particularly necessary when looking at a public

service rather than a single profit-making organisation. The fundamental question then becomes what approach to strategy formulation and strategic management development, (the two cannot perhaps be separated), will best serve the development of Social Services, or any public service long term and is congruent with their culture and mission or can be driven through their culture and mission. The Government's choice in focusing on performance management may well be flawed and based on them attempting to drive a change that is perhaps not achievable. The learning community found another more congruent approach that if it had been more widely supported by the department, could have done much to mitigate the negative effects of crude performance management. Unfortunately, this view has not become part of organisational learning and I do not think it can be. It goes beyond the brief for the programme.

The irony of this is that the action research has worked both for the organisation and as an academic exercise. The importance of what could have been viewed as abstract ideological debate in the literature has been confirmed as in fact crucial, and a practical way forward has been found that would enhance the strategic impact of the programme. However the current political environment, the capability and the power relationships in the organisation, working together, do not allow this to be capitalised on. It is not a failure for the organisation in that to have got as far as it has, and to have achieved what it has, is no mean feat and would seem to have put it ahead of many other organisations. Rather, there is an issue of organisational and environmental readiness for action research.

QUANTIFICATION OF OUTCOMES

Surely though, given the availability of performance measures built into the strategy, it must have been possible in the action research to make some quantifiable connection? If we take a measure, such as the number of changes in main carer experienced by a child, we had a situation where a programme participant worked with their team to improve the recruitment, training and support of specialist foster carers as a piece of project work. This should have impacted positively on the performance measure, by reducing placement

breakdown or the need for short term arrangements to act as a holding measure until a placement could be found.

However there are a number of factors that make the connection almost impossible to make even in this apparently straightforward example. If the participant used the MD activity to add impetus to existing work based initiatives, even if you can identify an improvement is it down to the MD or would it have happened anyway? If the measure improved, was it because of the availability of placements or other variables in a complex scenario with a very long time frame. If the organisation restructured during the period of the project was it better decision making processes, resulting from this change, that made the difference, even when one of the new carers was used? If you could bore right down and identify a case where the whole multidisciplinary team were saying that the availability of a specialist carer, resulting directly from the MD project, prevented a placement breakdown the judgement is still qualitative. If the placement eventually breaks down does that matter, or has it lasted longer than the less specialist options that may have meant several break-downs and changes in carer?

Further In trying to make these connections we are expending a lot of time and effort in a research exercise that organisations may well find alienating and which pumps up the cost of the MD activity, perhaps meaning it isn't cost effective. Does this mean that linkage between MD and organisational outcomes is necessarily an act of faith? Not if one accepts the value of participative, stakeholder driven qualitative methods in making the judgement. If MD can be seen to impact methodically on organisational activity and problem solving and building capability towards identified strategic outcomes there is likely to be an improvement in organisational performance. This is perhaps as strong a linkage as one can either facilitate or evaluate.

THE PARADIGMS AND PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Just as the paradigms identified by Dixon and Dogan (2003) offer an insight into the realities of public service management they also potentially offer a typology of approaches to SHRM in public services. Five approaches can be identified working from their analysis.

Firstly there is a traditionalist bureaucratic approach that establishes training and development pathways for managers at different levels determined by a policy agreed by senior managers. Strategic linkage is provided by the choice of course content with competencies perhaps being used to ensure learning and organisational outcomes that respond to the current corporate strategy. It may be provided by or with an educational institution so that qualifications and formal assessments can also feature. It is in effect a quality assurance approach, or as Dixon and Dogan express it, managing for process. It has the strength of providing a reliable, structured investment in MD but it is over centralised, cumbersome and unresponsive to variance in need and strategy. It can be prescriptive and fail to motivate managers or develop them as active learners.

There is a managerialist response in which there are no fixed pathways or policy. Individual managers use management development as a tool to achieve objectives they have negotiated and use methods that are work and outcome based. Methods vary, as do objectives, with the current business plan but the preference is for work assignments and individual learning. It is driven by individual appraisal, strategic linkage is overt and the focus is performance management and demonstrable outcomes. Managers are motivated by their career ambitions. As Dixon and Dogan (2003) express it, it is managing for results.

There is a soft or learning organisation approach that mobilises management teams to determine strategy and action including management development activity. Staff can be involved in assessing a manager's skills and ability as a leader. It uses action learning, team development, coaching and mentoring. It can have a strong value orientation and seeks to develop managers that have a

strong value base and good interactive, facilitation and leadership skills. It motivates managers through its value base and a sense of team loyalty. As Dixon and Dogan (2003) describe it, it is managing for inclusion.

There is an anarchistic approach where managers develop through coping. There is neither clear policy and procedures or attempts to manage performance. If there is an attempt at strategy it is open to interpretation and not reviewed. Management development, if there is any provision at all, can take any form but will have no structure or direction. It can be compulsory or voluntarist but it won't be evaluated. If it generates challenges it will be stopped. It develops managers who are politically astute, cynical and self-reliant but also potentially disillusioned and alienated or perhaps without integrity. It is what Dixon and Dogan (2003) describe as managing for survival.

There is a final holistic position which does justice to all four paradigms. It offers a policy driven structured approach which sets a baseline of competence that reflects organisational strategy. However it also allows individual appraisal to set more specific personal objectives linked to business planning processes and tries to measure organisational outcomes. It augments the standardised organisational MD provision with other work based opportunities. It mobilises teams and uses methods that encourage community and group learning and allows managers to contribute to strategy. It is value driven and it develops self-reliant, critical thinkers with a good political awareness that accept the contended nature of management practice.

There is a confluence in developments within HRM and MD generally that can be interpreted as them also developing a theoretical core that does justice to this holistic paradigm and challenges the tenets of a pure managerialism. This can be seen to be driven by market forces and the complexity of competing in a global economy that means every perspective and possible action that might yield competitive advantage is reached for. However managing for results will still hold sway, so that in the private sector there is the possibility of an MD strategy that is more demonstrably contingent with organisational strategy and so has very particular characteristics. The holistic model therefore may or may

not be contingent. In contrast in public services it may be the only contingent model that offers a response to organisational and environmental realities.

However even for the private sector the cost of the holistic model, of recruiting and developing these super managers could be prohibitive. It might even be an almost unobtainable aspiration, as witnessed, for instance, by the problems encountered in identifying examples of actual organisations that have achieved the characteristics of a learning organisation. In public services, with more limited resources and no prospect of a return on its investment, neither the mechanisms to drive the changes or the means to achieve them might be available. So the very organisations that most need these highly developed managers are the least able to develop them. This could be the ultimate paradox that has locked public services into an unhappy impasse where policy initiatives seem unable to achieve their objective of enhancing service quality.

A possible solution might be for government to make a serious attempt at providing public services with the management they need through mandatory, career long programmes but to combine this with heavy investment and initiatives to develop capability in public services management development that might offer this higher quality of provision. Management development in public services might then do justice to the four paradigms. It might offer managerialist solutions but alongside more structured and sustained provision. It might equip managers with the theories and skills to mobilise teams and respond to stakeholders and a value base that will inspire them to do so. It might develop managers that can see the strengths as well as the weaknesses of traditional approaches to public service. It might provide them with the skills they need to survive as public service managers, without survival becoming their only tactic. Its graduates might have the sophistication of thinking and the breadth and depth of theoretical understandings to allow them to recognise the paradoxes, navigate their way through ambiguity and negotiate workable solutions that overtime can enhance the services they are responsible for.

POSTSCRIPT ON LITERATURE

Inevitably the literature has caught up with the research. For instance there is a very welcome contribution from Mumford and Gold (2004) that constitutes a restructuring of Mumford's popular text (1999) to give it a much stronger strategic orientation. However they offer quite a crude figure (2004, p.28) to illustrate the link between management development and organisational strategy and don't really explore the issue of linkage in depth. They refer to a management development strategy developed by the Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation but as an example the strategic linkage is very tentative, rather it is a coherent planned strategy for training managers.

Another development is a paper by Brown (2003) that offers a very valuable review of the literature and constitutes a serious attempt to establish a conceptual framework for SMD. He suggests, in a model, that successful SMD requires integration with real management activities, a strategically orientated competency framework, clear goals supported by a CEO and strong organisational commitment to strategic management. All features supported by this research. He concludes that there is a need for further research to develop a "better understanding of the contingency based relationships which may exist. Because of the complexity of the subject such research might best be case study based" (Brown, 2003, p. 302).

Hopefully this thesis will make a small contribution to this long term endeavour. My concern however is that whilst the search for contingency was an early motivation for me I am not so sure now that helpful models can be developed. The variables that shape an SMD programme are so many and so fundamental I am not convinced there is value in typology. For instance key variables have got to be organisational mission, organisational history, culture and structures, MD history and capability, differing environments and strategies, and differing strategic processes. Add to this a choice in MD methods and the detail of programme design and I am not sure that diversity and complexity are the norm. Rather it is the action research processes that supports this search for contingency that are perhaps to be valued.

POSTSCRIPT ON POLICY

Policy has also moved on and in May 2004 TOPSS (Training Organisation for Personal Social Services) published its outline of a strategy for leadership and management development (Lyn-Cook, McDonnell, Mason and Zutchi, 2004). It is the most recent policy document available giving direction to MD in Social Services and it aspires to a strategic approach. However it should be noted that it has been distributed for consultation and the final strategy may look quite different.

The paper notes the problems in management development outlined in chapters one and two of this thesis such as lack of consistency in provision, lack of integration of MD with OD, fragmentation of provision. It presents a table (Lyn-Cook et al. p. 11) that offers an overview of the model against three dimensions of the individual manager, the organisation, and partnership with other departments. If the programme designed and delivered as part of the action research is compared with the characteristics outlined in the table the results are encouraging. Of the nineteen characteristics in the table twelve are clearly featured and three others partially covered. The four key deficiencies are integration of the management development programme with recruitment, selection transition and induction processes, succession planning, commitment to Investors in People (IIP), and clarification of the value base of managers. Also more emphasis could have been given to a fuller range of learning opportunities, partnership working and learning. All these were identified as issues but did not feature strongly in the implemented programme.

This is very encouraging as it means potentially that the action research and the initiative by Hampshire Social Services anticipated by four to five years the central features of a model likely to be adopted nationally, and it is hard not to see this as a reasonable comparator for a strategically orientated initiative. However, the research suggests that there are some problems with the TOPSS model as presented, and there are some pressing reasons for giving these careful consideration as they may have considerable impact. It is perhaps more

to the credit of the research that it offers the basis for a cogent critique of the model than that it mirrors its features.

Whilst the TOPSS model reaches for strategic linkage and impact, these are not emphasised or clarified. Rather detail and discussion is focused on the individual learner and their current role. The characteristics identified in the model could cover and provide a strategic orientation, but they could also be muted when it comes to practice. It is easy to argue that the flavour of the proposed development is still trainer and individually orientated.

The auditing process against a range of national vocational standards proposed in a case study of a team leader (Lyn-Cook et al. pp. 15-17) is positively alarming. It is a central feature of the TOPSS model and as an audit, it is far too complex and will probably alienate both participants and line managers. It is hard to see this approach as anything other than trainer driven given the expertise it will demand. It will also absorb a lot of resources and its point of reference is the participant's current job description and job role rather than the future requirements of the service. A study based on one participant at one management level would also seem rather inadequate. The example chosen is rather too heavy on audit and offers little on planning and providing learning opportunities or evaluating them. Generally, whilst the TOPSS model claims to be evaluated and informed by research there is no evidence of this. There are no examples provided, references made to other research or anything other than the very limited pilot providing the case study. Accepting their methodological limitations the cases provided in chapter four of this thesis, for instance, would alone seem to offer more depth and rigour.

The TOPSS model is very ambitious in the range of features it seeks to encapsulate. In this it is reminiscent of focused provision in the Ashridge model (see Table 3.4). Given where many organisations are coming from in terms of current experience and capability, it is probably over-ambitious and too open in that it allows too much choice of design, yet provides little guidance on practice. It might have been better to go for a simple standardised model as an industry standard and then encourage progression beyond this in the longer term,

eventually aspiring to the features of the more complex model. For example the provision of standard management NVQ's at levels three, four and five based on structured training/educational events will be more than enough of a problem for most organisations. This will be especially the case if new policy initiatives result in substantial restructuring in the sector, because development and implementation will have to be carried through in the face of increasing turbulence.

There is no real guidance at all on planning and implementation or any indication of how the current deficiencies in provision will be overcome. A worst possible interpretation of the TOPSS model is that it merely represents a trainer's wish list gleaned from the plethora of current practices in MD that and it is neither coherent or practical. It is policy without substance and is more likely to generate failures that compound the problems rather than progress towards the ideal representations of the model. Reliance on partnership to provide capability and expertise assumes a supply is available with a public services orientation and at a public services price, but there is no evidence of this. Perhaps lots of experienced providers of public services MD are out there just waiting to be asked to co-operate, or perhaps their absence partly explains the deficiency of provision in the first place.

In sum, the TOPSS national model for leadership and management development strategy confirms the value of the research as an issue of national importance. It attests to the research encapsulating, perhaps ahead of its time, the key issues and the main parameters of a strategically orientated MD programme. However, the research, in addressing the issues of strategic linkage and implementation more thoroughly than the TOPSS model provides for, allows its limitations to be readily identified.

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Appendix One:
Commissioning Meeting

Meeting of 6.10.00

In attendance: RH
NM
MK
IG

Reason for Meeting - review of contract and planning next years activities.

RH stimulated a discussion on where the national training scene was developing. General conclusion was that we were well positioned to respond to whatever the outcome of the green paper, ie, social work degree of NVQ based awards.

The discussion continued to cover the need to integrate the SSD MD programme into the DCC Corporate programme.

It was agreed that

- a. Integration would be facilitated by an assessment centre approach
- b. There was opportunity to re-design the MD programme into the BA Public Services Management validation.

Reflective Commentary

A valuable review of the partnership which attested to its achievements delay in validation of the VSA has worked in our favour. It is more opportune to do it in the next six months.

The assessment centre approach would be an innovative way of solving the problem and the extension of the contract would encourage investment by the University.

Meeting of 22.9.00

In attendance: NM
RJ
HS
IG
MG

Reason for Meeting - discussion and planning for the general MD programme, in particular problem solving the difficulties associated with the "slow track" short course programme for the NVQ4/CHSSM.

Process

The meeting ran from 10.00 am - 12.00 noon. It was a little disrupted by MG's leave. (I knew in advance). However a very open discussion that explored all the key issues allowed us to:

- a. Schedule the short course programme up until March 2001
- b. Postpone the NVQ4/CHSSM until January/February 2001 (responsible to MG leaving).
- c. Agree the cause of problems with the slow track/short course NVQ4/CHSSM, ie, lack of "Diagnostic profiling" or auditing, and unclear MD policy. Students and line managers have agreed learning pathway and students attend not understanding the programme. It was agreed:
 - a. To suspend the programme where the problem was explored.
 - b. In the meantime deal with the back-log of assessments.

One option considered was employing someone to profile students by meeting with each other over a period of one year to set in motion their

Reflective Commentary

1. We have achieved a great deal in locating the cause of a) problems with the contracting process b) problems with the course delivery - in DSSD policy dissemination and performance review practices. This mutual awareness will avoid compounding the problem and/or generate a solution.
2. There is possibly a political and a practical block to clarifying and disseminating policy, ie, not enough support at centre - the policy is unclear.
3. Consolidating, by assessing the backlog of students will limit damage.
4. There is a major problem to confront in establishing learning needs and planning learning pathways. Line managers are not able to do the job because of pressures on them, or lack of skills or choice. We must develop an alternative approach, current tactics over two years have failed.

Appendix Two:
Development Planning Meeting 7/02/00

QP MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME C&F UNIT AND
TEAM MANAGERS - DEVELOPMENT MEETING 07.02.00

Present

Aim of Meeting

To identify a strategy to develop management competence to ensure the delivery of departments QP objectives.

Rationale for Action

Acknowledgement that there is a skill and knowledge gap for many of C&F front line managers in areas of system, people and practice management.

The Quality Protects agenda is central to the delivery of effective and efficient services to service users.

T&D opportunities for front line managers have not been a priority, DMT acknowledgement that front line managers are key to successful organisation.

The Modernising Agenda and return the National training strategy identify management development as a priority.

Managers themselves are wanting to develop skills, competence and confidence.

Action To Date

Team and Unit Managers have been invited to identify what knowledge and skills gaps they have.

Service Managers have also been asked to identify what tasks managers need to be competent in achieving.

The Commissioning Team (in particularly Natalie) asked to identify what particular skills and knowledge managers need to successfully deliver on the OP MAP and objectives.

Following limited consultation – a list of skills and tasks have emerged thus. (not in any priority order)

Managing the CC Planing Process ?
Implementation of Care Management ?

Networking and Negotiating Skills
Partnerships and Working Across Agency
Intra Authority Working
Evidence Based Management Practice
Managing Change
Standard Setting
Monitoring and Reviewing
Decision Making and Prioritising
Matching Needs and Services
Managing Absence Managing Work in the Absence of Staff
Managing Self
Managing others under pressure
Managing Workloads
Cultural Change and Practice Shifts
Managing the Manager
Vacancy Management / Illness
Managing Performance and Conflict
Encouraging reflective practice/evidence based practice
Contracting
Budgeting
Managing Budgets
Communication
Networks and Links to Resources
Resource Identification
QP MAP
Evaluation Outcomes
Managing Information
Collecting and Analysing Management Information
Service User / Customer Involvement
Best Value
Implementing IIP

External Environment

CB identified briefly some of the directions in the National Training Strategy

1. Unit Managers will be a priority for Management Training
2. Money from DoH more clearly linked to recognised Qualifications. (i.e. more difficult to spend money on short courses or those which meet a local agenda but don't necessarily meet National Occupational Standards or national rec.Q's)
3. Expectation that soon all front line managers will have NVQ4 or equivalent in management. (Government seem to be favouring a competency based approach)

Decision

It was agreed that our internal interests re QP, the interests of individual staff and in order to meet the emerging Government agenda re Competent, qualified, registered workforce we would explore the possibility of an NVQ4 in management for all front line managers. The qualification will reflect the SSD context of the QP agenda.

The current training calendar offers courses which support up to NVQ3 in terms of practice and therefore we would not be able to mix and match managers to existing courses.

The corporate NVQ4 would not have as strong links to the QP agenda as we would want and is not cost effective to commission as a bespoke service at the moment.

Agreed that a possibility would be to buy in a Man. NVQ4 from an FE College who could attract DEFE funding to subsidise places. We could then add additional input to promote the QP agenda via HTS staff who have skills and knowledge around departmental requirements on this.

Issues about staff with existing NVQ4 or equivalent resulted in a decision to state that all managers would be expected to attend however some module which were specifically management focused could be omitted. There would be no reason why Q staff could not continue to build their portfolios for evidencing competence perhaps at level 5 at a later stage.

Action Plan

1. Steve Hawker to contact all Managers with the findings of the consultation and begin to introduce the notion of a formal qualification which underpins the QP agenda and offers them an opportunity to build on qualifications ready for registration with the GSCC.
2. SH CB NT and KL to meet to see if NVQ4 competence's match the identified need.
3. If 2 is viable need to Map the competence's more closely to start to identify which competence's we would want to train to.
4. CB to identify a outline plan for implementation.
5. Group to reconvene in April to report back to SL.

Action since this meeting

SL CB KL & NT met to check viability of NVQ4 in management meetings our needs.

See attached – Would appear that elements would broadly meet our requirements.

Appendix Three:
Specification for the Programme

Project Specification for Registered Managers and Quality Protects Managers

NVQ Level 4 in Management

Introduction

This document details two projects that Hampshire Social Services (HSS) are planning to run from September 2000. It forms the basis of an invitation to tender for one or both of the projects.

The structure and key requirements of the two projects are the same. The main difference being target groups of staff and links to other Social Services initiatives. Each project is described separately below. The expectations and delivery arrangements are dealt with in the same section.

Arrangements have been made for the presentation of proposals by potential providers for the projects on the afternoon of Monday 19 June 2000. Providers are invited to identify which of the projects they wish to be considered for, describe how they will meet the project requirements, arrangements for partnership working and details of costs. Presentations are scheduled for 20 minutes with a further 20 minutes allowed for questions and discussions for each provider. Specific arrangements for each provider are given in the attached letter.

Background information

The draft national training strategy for care identified targets for the achievement of appropriate vocational qualifications for all staff. HSS are developing a range of projects to meet these requirements. One key group of staff identified in the strategy are 'registered managers' and HSS has decided that this category of staff will pilot this initiative in the coming year.

In the strategy documentation TOPPS identify the need for a new, more appropriate qualification for registered managers. Whilst this potential new qualification is acknowledged HSS has decided to go ahead with a programme using the existing management NVQ standards at level 4. This is in line with advice in the Training Support Grant guidance documentation.

Project one: Registered Managers of Residential Homes and Day Services for Adults.

Within Hampshire the main initial focus of this project will be on homes for older persons and services for adults with a physical or learning disability. Social Services has applied for funding to undertake an initial programme for NVQ level 4 in management which will be run in partnership with Hampshire Care Association (HCA).

The project aims to recruit between 66 and 85 candidates, all of whom are within the registered manager target group.

Given the size of this project and the geographical spread of candidates it is anticipated that 3 or 4 teaching groups will be arranged and located at appropriate venues.

Project 2: Managers in Services for Children and Families

This project will initially target 20 managers, who may be in residential or field social work, again to achieve level 4 in management. HSS is currently undertaking a major training programme within the Quality Protects (QP) framework and this NVQ project will be required to mesh closely with that. It is anticipated that the provider of this project will work closely with the provider of the QP training.

Outcomes

That each candidate achieves a management NVQ at level 4 within 12 months. Regular completion of units towards the full qualification will be expected.

Delivery details

The project start date will be September 2000, with the target for completion in September 2001.

The training provider will be required to incorporate:

- candidate induction to the programme
- underpinning knowledge sessions
- group tutorials and one to one support
- all assessment
- arrangements for internal and external verification
- candidate support, where additional needs are identified
- venues
- all learning and NVQ materials

Hampshire Social Services (and HCA for project 1) will:

- select candidates
- identify the appropriate NVQ optional units for candidates to complete
- provide mentors for each candidate
- facilitate work place assessment

The training provider be expected to:

- communicate regularly and effectively with HSS about the projects
- incorporate equality into all learning and assessment
- support the value base of the commissioning organisation
- ensure that quality systems and processes are integral to the programme
- meet statutory requirements with respect to policy and procedure
- work in partnership with the QP training provider for project 2

Partnership working

It is hoped that the projects will be run in a partnership involving all key players. A steering group will be established for each project which will monitor the project and provide a focus for communication and information flow. Each project will nominate a co-ordinator to work

with the provider on logistics and to support the programme. The project co-ordinators will monitor and report on progress to the HSS and HCA. The training provider will make progress information available on a regular basis and liaise with the co-ordinator where there are specific problems.

Quality assurance

The success of these projects is essential in order to meet the national training strategy targets. Arrangements for Quality Assurance and evaluation will be negotiated when the contracts are awarded.

Further information

The contact for further information is:

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NVQ Project Leader
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Winton Close
Winchester
SO22 6AB

Telephone: 01962 843032
Fax: 01962 877592
e-mail: hrttje@hants.gov.uk



Social Care Group
Department of Health

Objectives for Social Services for children



(1)

Objectives, performance indicators and targets

The Government believes that setting national objectives is the essential first step to improving the effectiveness of children's social services.

This paper sets out the Government's objectives for children's services. They provide a new clarity about the work that local authority Social Services Departments should be doing and about how they should be directing their resources. Social Services Departments must be able to demonstrate that they are achieving these objectives, and so need effective systems for measuring their performance. To make this easier, each main objective has a set of sub-objectives which help define more tightly the main objectives and which can be accompanied by measurable performance indicators.

Some sub-objectives are relatively convenient to measure – relevant information is both routinely recorded and collected. For others, this is not currently the case and routine measurement will have to wait until there are improvements in management information systems. There is a need for on-going work to develop a range of useful performance indicators. In a minority of cases, routine measurement is difficult and the best way of assessing progress is through specially designed surveys or inspections.

For some objectives the Government intends to set specific targets identifying the level of improvement to be achieved by a given time. These will be published shortly in the Department of Health's "Guidance on National Priorities for Health and Social Care". Where objectives will be complemented by specific targets, these are indicated in the text.

The meaning of "Children in Need"

This phrase is a central concept in the Children Act 1989. The Act sets out the legal basis from which local authority Social Services Departments can decide which children and families they need to be working with and/or providing with services. When the term is used in this paper it is referring to children and families who receive help funded or part funded through social services provision.

Some children in need are looked after by local authorities, at least for a period. The aim for all children supported by local authorities, whether they are looked after or not, is to do everything possible to help them achieve as much as all other children. The objectives for looked after children and other children supported by social services are therefore similar but, because the direct responsibility for looked after children is greater, indicators of performance are addressed particularly to them.

TRODUCTION

"Perverse incentives"

The needs of children requiring personal social services are complex and providing appropriate services is not at all a simple matter. The Government's objectives need to be understood as a whole. If one objective were to be pursued in isolation from the rest, there might be a danger that the outcomes for children could be inappropriate or even dangerous. For example, the first objective does not mean that a child should be kept with carers unquestioningly if that child is not receiving proper health care (the third objective).

The Department will therefore observe carefully how service provision reacts to these objectives and targets, and will not hesitate to make adjustments to ensure that the overall aim of getting a better deal for children being helped by social services is achieved.

Ethnicity and Culture

There are no objectives which relate specifically to the social care implications of race and culture. The Government's objectives apply to all children and their families, regardless of ethnic or cultural background. The Department of Health intends to begin as soon as possible to collect ethnic data on children looked after. This will enable both central and local government to assess how far these objectives are realised for different ethnic groups and identify significant differences which may require attention.

Children with Disabilities

For some children with disabilities and their families, objectives based on developmental progress are not entirely appropriate. For such children the important objective is that they receive appropriate, and well coordinated, health and social care services. This is expressed in objective 6. This should not, however, inhibit the pursuit of child and family related objectives for disabled children when these are appropriate and beneficial.

Consultation

The Government is committed to the eight main objectives it has announced for children's services. However, we would welcome comments on the sub-objectives in order to ensure that they are as useful, realistic and measurable as possible. We therefore plan to consult local authorities and others on the sub-objectives, primarily in discussions with the LGA and ADSS, but individual authorities who wish to contribute can do so. We will also be consulting with those organisations who represent the interests of children.

Child and family outcome related

Objective: To ensure that children are securely attached to carers capable of providing safe and effective care for the duration of childhood.

This objective applies to family support work as well as to children looked after. If the quality of care falls below a threshold of safety and effectiveness such that children are at risk of significant harm they may need to be moved to other carers.

Sub-objectives:

- 1.1 To reduce the number of changes of main carer for children looked after.

This sub-objective is currently measurable. There is an Audit Commission indicator based on the number of children who have three or more placements in one year which in some authorities is as high as one third.

There will be a National Priorities Guidance target to complement this objective.

- 1.2 To maximize the contribution adoption can make to providing permanent families for children in appropriate cases.

The intention here is to ensure that adoption is considered as soon as it becomes clear that there is no realistic prospect of the birth family providing the basis for safe and adequately effective parenting and to avoid children staying unnecessarily long in the care system.

- 1.3 To reduce the period children remain looked after before they are placed for adoption, or placed in long term foster care.

This sub-objective is intended to promote effective care planning. National statistics are already kept by DH which can produce a suitable measure.

- 1.4 To increase the number of families of children in need supported by a series of planned short term care arrangements involving for each child the same substitute (respite) carer.

This sub-objective is significant for children with disabilities but should be extended to apply to all children in need. It counters children moving in and out of "care" in an unplanned way and substitutes planned and therefore predictable periods of short term care which support the main carer(s). DH collects national statistics which inform this objective.

ETC.

Appendix Four:

Presentation

CCIPSM

We can offer:

- Consultancy on MD strategy
- NVQs in Management (3, 4, and 5)
- University Certificate and Diploma Awards, eg,
 - Certificate and Diploma in Health and Social Services Management
 - Certificate and Diploma in Public Sector Management
 - Diploma in Social Care Management
 - Progression onto degree programmes, eg,
 - BA Public Services Management
 - MSc Professional and Policy Studies
- Partnership working (based on a joint business plan)

SOME CURRENT CUSTOMERS, ORGANISATIONS

Hampshire County Council

Portsmouth City Social Services

Bournemouth Social Services

Bournemouth Council

Dorset Social Services

Southern Focus

Leonard Cheshire Foundation

Chichester Hospitals

Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals

Portsmouth City Council

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Hampshire County Council

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Dorset Social Services

Southern Focus

Leonard Cheshire Foundation

Chichester Hospitals

Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals

Portsmouth City Council

CCIPSM WORK WITH HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Certificate in Public Services Management for:

Adult Education	Current
Environmental Grouping	Current
School Administrators (won regional Training Award November 1998)	1995-1999
Corporate programme and short courses for Treasurers Planning and Surveyors	1990-1999
Certificate in Personal Social Services Management	1989-1992

PRINCIPLES OF OUR APPROACH

- * Joint design so programmes respond to organisational need.
- * Joint management and delivery to enhance quality.
- * Developmental – there should be evidence of participants improving management practice.
- * Outcome orientated – employers should be able to identify service improvements as a result of the programme.
- * Integrated – line managers need to be in control of their management teams development.
- * Participant centred.
- * Dual accreditation to provide progression.

1. COST AND SPECIFICATION (PROVISIONAL)

£1500 - £1800 per capita (depending on final specification) plus EdExcel fee of £120

To include:

17 – 25 days workshops

4 one hour tutorials per candidate

Introductory day for students/line managers/mentors

Study skills workshop

University project assessment and award

NVQ assessment and award

Pool of additional tutorial hours per cohort for additional participant support

Two days of mentor/line manager review/briefings

All course documentation

Work place visit

Training and venues and equipment

2a. LENGTH OF PROGRAMME

We would recommend 18 months from Introductory Day to Award to ensure:

- * Sufficient preparation time and full involvement of line manager and mentor.
- * Adequate time to provide underpinning knowledge.
- * Developmental opportunities and chance to apply techniques in the work place.
- * Time to respond to unforeseen events e.g. major service changes.

2b. START TIME

We will need to recruit additional staff to the team and would also like time for:

- * Joint design of programme
- * Joint selection of candidates

So:

WHILST INTRODUCTORY DAYS IN THE AUTUMN COULD BE POSSIBLE, WE WOULD PREFER A JANUARY – MARCH START.

WE WOULD SEEK TO STAGGER THE START AND FINISH DATES OF THE COHORTS.

3. INDUCTION

We will provide:

- * Detailed course handbook.
- * A portfolio guide and the NVQ4 standards.
- * An Introductory Workshop that will involve line managers and mentors.
- * A mentor handbook and notes of guidance for line managers.
- * A study skills/return to study day with a library tour.
- * Personalised help from the Professional Development Unit for individuals with particular study skills problems.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

We will provide:

- * Joint steering group.
- * Line manager and mentor involvement in the programme including review/briefing sessions.
- * Daily evaluation of the teaching – (evaluations available to the steering group).
- * Regular reviews with the participants who will be represented on the steering group.
- * Boards of Studies, Unit Boards and Boards of Exam where partnership members will be fully represented.
- * Designated course leaders with responsibility for each cohort.
- * University external examiner and internal verification. Edexcel external verifier and internal verification.

5.1 TUITION/WORKSHOPS

- * 17 – 25 days of taught workshops (depending on options covered).
- * Designated tutor for telephone and email support and four set one hour tutorials.
- * Additional tutorial support for individuals with difficulties to an hourly limit agreed in the contract.
- * Work place visit.

5.2 STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

<u>Dates</u> <u>2001</u>	<u>Module No.</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>NVO Unit</u>
18 Jan	Introduction Day	Programme and roles Line managers and mentors of participants attend, 9.30 am - 12.30 pm	
19 Jan	1	Developing Self Assignment 1a – Personal competence report	C2
15 Feb	2	Effective Use of Information Operational project 2a	D4
16 Feb	Tutorials	360 degree feedback	
15/16 March	3	Planning, and project management Operational project 3	G1/G2
12/13 April	4	Managing Change in a Best Value Environment	A4
18 May	Tutorials	Operational report 2a due Presentation 2b due	
14/15 June	5	Managing Quality including Health and Safety	A2
12/13 July	6	Managing Relationships Operational project 6	C5

17/18 Sept	7	Managing Staff Performance C13 Operational project 3 report due
16 Oct	Tutorials	Operational project 3 feedback
12/13 Nov	8	Staff Development C10
17/18 Dec	9	Managing Resources B3 Operational project 9 Operational project 6 report due

2002

15 Jan	Tutorials	Operational project 6 feedback
4 Feb	Final Day	Presentations and Course Evaluation Operational project 9 report due

Board of Exam – March 2002

NB: Programme assumes

- * Recruitment and selection
- * Health and Safety/Risk Assessment
- * Best Value

Are delivered by in-house training outside of the programme.

6.1 Assessment

The course is assessed by:

- an audit of personal competence and a self development plan
- an audit of operational competence against the NVQ standards
- four 1500 – 2000 word operational project reports (one in each of the key roles)
- nine competence reports of 500 - 1000 words each
- a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates competence

The operational projects are:

Module 2	Challenging the Status Quo
Module 3	Planning and Managing an Improvement in Service Delivery
Module 6	Managing Performance
Module 9	Managing Resources

5.2 Assessment

Responsibilities

University Tutor

- Mark all project work.
- NVQ assessment.
- Work based visit.

Line Managers

- Witness testimony.
- Comments sheet for work based operational project.

Mentor

- Support and guidance with operational projects.
- Additional witness testimony.

6.3 Assessment

Verification

Internal Verifier

- Regular review of portfolio and all assignments.
- Sample pre Unit Board and Board of Exam/Award Board

External Verification

- Sample of all work compared with national NVQ and University standards.
- Commentary on assessment process to Boards of Studies and Board of Exam/Award Board.

7. CANDIDATE SUPPORT

- * Peer learning set.
- * Mentor
- * Tutor
- * Counselling Service and other University facilities

8. QUALITY PROTECTS (QP)

We would welcome:

- * Full involvement of Q.P. training provider in all aspects of course design and delivery.
- * Can involve our Q.P. specialists in the Centre for Social Work to assist with design.
- * Will dovetail our design and the new professional and post quality awards to integrate the level 4 programme.

Appendix Five:

Preliminary Design Features of the Programme

Appendix Five - Preliminary Design Features of the Programme

Preliminary Design Features of the Programme

1. Line Manager and student scan together for operational objectives.

Outcomes

- a. Strategic awareness should help focus activity generally ie. objectives should influence behaviours outside of the programme.
- b. Encourages the behaviour longer term ie. regular consultation on policy/strategic objectives should enhance appraisal.
- c. Project work during the programme should be focussed on operational priorities.
- d. Line Managers should see the benefit to the service of investment in the programme.

2. 360° Feedback.

- a. Re-structures management/leadership as a joint responsibility that is negotiable and is co-constructed.
- b. Encourages evidence based management, practice and reflection.
- c. Illustrates the relationship between personal risk and personal growth.
- d. Engages team in the development processes and encourages them to think about their customers perceptions.
- e. Clarifies the network of relationships necessary for the manager to work effectively.

3. Personal Competence Report

- a. Balances the 'task' focus of the MCI Standards with behavioural and attitudinal objectives.
- b. Encourages transferability ie generic skills are applied to a number of interrelated tasks.
- c. Offers a skills/attitudinal/personal effectiveness dimensions to the Line Manager student relationship.

4. Time Management Exercise

- a. Addresses directly an area that benefits from continuous personal development.
- b. Encourages a mixture of action orientated research and reflection as a pre-cursor to personal development.
- c. Offers an example early in the programme of tangible benefits for the individual.

5. Assistant Director's Foreward - on behalf of Steering Group

- a. Demonstrates the political credibility of the programme.
- b. Shows that the Steering Group owns, supports and controls the programme.
- c. Offers opportunity to share 'vision' and to 'flag up' future developments.

6. Gantt Chart of Project Submissions

- a. Introduces the technique.
- b. Re-enforces time management issues.
- c. Encourages a planned approach to implementation of projects and submission.

7. 'Master-File' Approach to Course Documentation

- a. Allows change/flexibility - sections can be added or changed.
- b. Allows development by stages given pressures on Steering Group and need to consult broadly on policy.
- c. Offers a 'personification' of the programme the Steering Group can use to understand and design the student experience.
- d. Represents the programme process ie. student has control, policy and practice and personal development are inter-related, outcomes and standards and academic processes are integrated.
- e. Aids course management and student self management ie. handouts, finished projects, assessment and feedback can all be put on file.

8. Assessment

- a. 'Operational project report' allows students to target developmental work on their operational objectives, and allows application of project management techniques.
- b. Portfolio building activities allow some variation but are all developmental i.e. encourage application of theory and technique and provide organisational outcomes.
- c. Whilst there is opportunity to include in the portfolio 'natural' work based evidence, the theme of the programme is bringing improvements to the service that contribute to MAP performance targets.
- d. For Unit F6, students will lead an internal audit in a colleagues work place. This will offer individuals a good 'taste' of a colleagues working environment and encourage a culture of openness and evidenced analysis in identifying and responding to quality problems.
- e. The complexity of assessment builds into the Diploma year. Students are presented with increasingly demanding applications of theory, tools and techniques.

9. Units and Unit Content

- a. The NVQ4 units requested have been incorporated in the programme including F6 - Auditing Quality.
- b. F3, the unit provisionally included in the Registered Home Owners Award, (Continuous Improvement of Service Quality) has been included in the Diploma (it isn't a level 4 unit).
- c. NB: it will be necessary to ensure access to Health and Safety in-house courses during the NVQ4/Certificate in Health and Social Services Management course.
- d. Some content identified in the original needs analysis has not been covered an needs discussion by the Steering Group or Curriculum Development Group.

10. Line Manager Involvement

- a. Line Managers have a lot of control in identifying operational learning objectives and agreeing personal learning objectives.
- b. They must agree the focus of and endorse the quality of all project work.
- c. The process of audit and evaluation should bring improvement to appraisal/performance reviews.

- d. They have been given responsibility for agreeing an improvement plan for their working relationship with the student.
- e. Briefing workshops for line managers could be included in the timetable. Strong political presence from senior managers would be valuable at these meetings if they are provided.

11. Pre-Course Preparation and the Portfolio Building Period

- a. The amount of pre-course preparation may delay the start of teaching but allows for speedy programme launch to respond to funding deadlines and opportunities.
- b. The portfolio-building period allows time for reflection and consolidation. Progress reports on project work, allows implementation to extend into this period.

12. Diploma and Organisational Input

- a. As the Steering Group designs it the Diploma will be validated and integrated into the BA Public Services Management - this will allow a very flexible choice of NVQ units.
- b. Progress to an NVQ5 could be considered but an organisationally driven agenda has its attractions.
- c. The University's main role in the final 'Diploma' period will be to provide assessment facilities - most other in-puts are in-house - we are happy to be very flexible in agreeing roles and responsibilities for this part of the programme.
- d. The programme is innovative and will probably meet the criteria for a Regional Training Award. If this is to be considered then engagement with the Local Skills Council would be advisable at this stage.

Topics Identified in the Training Needs Analysis not fully covered in the proposed design or where content is unclear.

1. Managing the County Council planning process.
2. Implementing care management.
3. Partnership and working across agency.
4. Intra-authority working.
5. Matching needs and services.
6. Vacancy management/illness.
7. Networks and links to resources.
8. Resource identification.
9. QP MAP.
10. Best value.

Other Topics/Needs discussed in the Steering Group 11.10.00 but not yet included.

- Investors in people and HRM policy.
- Managing for equal opportunity.
- Use of IT.
- Management briefings.

Appendix Six:
Partnership Proposal

PROPOSAL

- A) That we establish a medium term partnership to allow a strategic response to the Government's Quality Protects Management Training and Development agenda.
- B) That the partnership allows us to mobilise and capitalise on resources in both organisations by:
 - * Agreeing on an annual basis a schedule of projects/activities set within a longer term strategic plan.
 - * Specifying each organisations contribution to the resourcing of the agreed schedule and the long term strategy.
- C) That the current Steering Group and Curriculum Development Group can be modified to facilitate this i.e.

1. ROLE OF THE STEERING GROUP.

The role and membership of the steering group is extended to include University membership and encompass management of the partnership contract and the annual project schedule and resourcing agreement.

Its current objectives will include;

- 1.1 Review and evaluation of the NVQ 4/CHSSM programme.
- 1.2 Integration of the existing in-house courses with the NVQ4/CHSSM.
- 1.3 Extension of the programme to meet the needs of middle managers e.g.NVQ5.
- 1.4 Extension of the programme to meet the needs of senior practitioners e.g NVQ 3 in Management/Certificate in Supervisory Management.(Child Care.)
- 1.5 Integration of the whole into the BA in Public Services Management.(Which will be designed to allow progression through organizational project work that contributes to the Departments change agenda.).
- 1.6 Updating and re-design of all as the Government's training agenda rolls out and linkage of MD to Professional and Post-Qualifying Training developments.
- 1.7 Formulation and dissemination of the Departments MD strategy/policy and its integration

into other Departmental functions and systems e.g. recruitment and selection, performance management.

2 ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The work and membership of the Curriculum Development Group will be extended to;

- 2.1 Cover the steering groups agenda as outlined in 1 above and broaden its University and Departmental membership accordingly.
- 2.2 To establish and manage a group of Associate Lecturers who are Departmental specialists and managers who will;
 - * Assess managers on the programme.
 - * Contribute to teaching on the programme.
 - * Contribute to programme design.
 - * Lecture on other University courses and programmes.
 - * Have access to University facilities and development opportunities e.g Library and research facilities, higher degrees, seminars and training sessions.
- 2.3 Facilitate secondments between the University and Hants SSD to assist in the design and delivery of the MD programme.

Appendix Seven:

Introductory Day

Appendix Seven - Introductory Day
PROGRAMME FOR THE INTRODUCTORY DAY

(QUALITY PROTECTS CHSSM/NVQ4)

WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

- 9.30 *Welcome and Introductions - Jane Evans
- *The programme in the context of Quality Protects - Natalie Trentham
- *The programme and Hampshire Strategy - Steve Love
- 10.45 Coffee
- 11.00 *Overview of the Programme - Ivan Gray
- 12.30 Lunch
- 1.30 *The 11 Quality Projects Objectives - Natalie Trentham
- *Philosophy and Course Objectives - Jane Evans
- *Personal Objectives and Ground Rules for the Course - Jane Evans
- 3.30 - 4.00 Final Thoughts and Questions

ROLE OF THE LINE MANAGER

- Support and motivate
- Agree operational objectives
- Agree personal learning objectives
- Provide witness testimony when requested (the first request is the Line Manager relationship audit)
- Agree the focus and provide commentary on operational projects
- Advise the steering group on course content and quality
- Provide the final comments for the personal competence report
- Provide final comments on the portfolio of evidence

PRE-COURSE PREPARATION

PERSONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- * Time management exercise
- * 360° Feedback exercise
- * Line Manager relationship audit
- * Audit against personal effectiveness standards



1-5 objectives and action plan

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- * Operational objectives prioritisation sheet

Appendix Eight:

Evaluations

Appendix Eight - Evaluations

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: Quality Projects NVQ4

MODULE: 2

DATE: 12/4/01

TUTOR/S: Iva Gray / Jenny Peddar

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. Although the information provided by the outside speakers was up to date and relevant to our practice we didn't have an opportunity to discuss the learning opportunities this created and the underlying conflicts and assumptions it created.
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>8</u> 9 10 Excellent <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: NVQ4 Quality Protects.....

MODULE: 1.....

DATE: 12.4.01.....

TUTORS: Ivan Gray | Jenny Peddar.....

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <i>Group size good</i> <i>noise level in room high (traffic)</i> <i>good pace — kept to structure while having enough time for discussion</i>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: <i>Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 (7) 8 9 10 Excellent</i> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME: C.....

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: QUANTITY PROTECTS NUQ4

MODULE: 1

DATE: 12 April 01

TUTOR/S: Jerry + Ivan

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Acceptable</i> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <i>Considerable</i> <i>Adequate</i> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <i>Relevant</i> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <i>Enter a little</i> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <i>continue to keep to the same size groups for future discussion and participation.</i>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: <i>Poor</i> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>8</u> 9 10 <i>Excellent</i> <hr/>

NAME: 1

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: NVQ4 Quality Protects Management Course

MODULE: 1

DATE: 11/12/4/01

TUTOR/S: Ivan Grey Jenny Peddar

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> Very considerable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Considerable <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Little
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Of limited relevance
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enter fully <input type="checkbox"/> Enter a little <input type="checkbox"/> Enter with difficulty <input type="checkbox"/> No involvement
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <u>The size of group make participation comfortable. Going out for lunch is a considerable luxury - keep lunch hours.</u>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>(8)</u> 9 10 Excellent

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: Master's Q1 Management

MODULE: 2 DATE: 12th April

TUTORS: Wendy / Tony

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <i>From Introductory module to here goals not so having ideas for projects etc regular - also some ideas of study - reading prior to Module</i>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 9 10 Excellent <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: 2.P. management dev. prog.

MODULE:

DATE: 11 & 12 April

TUTORS: Ivan Gray Jenny Peddar

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <i>Forewarning participants to prepare ideas on topic for challenging status quo an assignment.</i>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: <i>Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (8) 9 10 Excellent</i> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: The Quality project management development programme

MODULE: 2

DATE: 12.04.01

TUTOR/S: Juan Gray - Jenny Peddar

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Poor
2	The interest and stimulation generated was:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Very considerable	Considerable	Adequate	Little
3	In relation to my work setting the session was:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Very relevant	Relevant	Fairly relevant	Of limited relevance
4	In discussion I felt able to:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Enter fully	Enter a little	Enter with difficulty	No involvement
5	<p><u>Further Comments</u>, including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <u>Examples of project planning through to completion.</u> <u>Accurate statistics from SS. to inform discussion and problem solving.</u> <u>Better overhead projection (handouts to look at instead were v. useful.)</u></p>				
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross:				
	Poor 0 1 2 3 4 <u>5</u> 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent <hr/>				

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: *Quality Projects Management Development Programme*

MODULE: *2*

DATE: *11/4/01 - 12/4/01*

TUTORS: *Jenny Redden Ivan Gray*

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Acceptable</i> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <i>Considerable</i> <i>Adequate</i> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <i>Relevant</i> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <i>Enter a little</i> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <i>No involvement</i>
5	<u>Further Comments</u> , including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <i>It might have been helpful to have been given some work to do after 1st session in preparation for this - i.e. some reading or identifying project (This apart from time analysis etc.) It seems a long time since 1st session might be helpful to not have 2 months</i>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 <u>6</u> 7 8 9 10 Excellent <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: OP NVQ 4 Management Development Prog.

MODULE:

DATE: June 13/14

TUTORS: Ivan Gray / Terry Pedder

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i>
5	Further Comments, including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time. <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><i>Clarification about submissions and possible changes for future courses was valuable.</i></p>
6	Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross: Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>8</u> 9 10 Excellent <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: CP Development Programme

MODULE: 2

DATE: 13/14 June 2001

TUTORS: Joan Gray, Johnny Peddar

1	The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Poor</i>
2	The interest and stimulation generated was:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Very considerable</i>	<i>Considerable</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Little</i>
3	In relation to my work setting the session was:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Very relevant</i>	<i>Relevant</i>	<i>Fairly relevant</i>	<i>Of limited relevance</i>
4	In discussion I felt able to:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Enter fully</i>	<i>Enter a little</i>	<i>Enter with difficulty</i>	<i>No involvement</i>
5	<p><u>Further Comments</u>, including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time.</p> <p><i>Enjoyed the development of thinking with regard to projects and Hants S.S. policies.</i></p>				
6	<p>Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross:</p> <p><i>Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent</i></p> <p align="center">_____</p>				

NAME: [Signature]

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CARE, INDEPENDENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

COURSE: MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT / NVQ 4

MODULE: 3

DATE: 13-14/6/01

TUTORS: IVAN GRAY

1	<p>The learning opportunities offered and provided in relation to both skills and ideas were:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excellent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Good</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Acceptable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Poor</i></p>
2	<p>The interest and stimulation generated was:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very considerable</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Considerable</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Adequate</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Little</i></p>
3	<p>In relation to my work setting the session was:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Very relevant</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fairly relevant</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of limited relevance</i></p>
4	<p>In discussion I felt able to:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter fully</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter a little</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enter with difficulty</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No involvement</i></p>
5	<p><u>Further Comments</u>, including any suggestions about how this module might be improved next time.</p> <p><i>Module for more structured and for myself identified learning.</i></p>
6	<p>Please rate the session overall by making a score with a cross:</p> <p>Poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>8</u> 9 10 Excellent</p> <hr/>

NAME:

NB: If you would rather, we are happy to accept anonymous feedback.

Appendix Nine:
Review/Evaluation 30/10/01

Appendix Nine - Review/Evaluation 30/10/01

ISSUES RAISED BY STUDENT GROUP FOR EVALUATION DAY 30/10/01.

- 1) Could files be distributed before introduction so people could prepare.
- 2) A residential would allow a flying start and help the group to gel.
- 3) Clarify at start that course is 18 months.
- 4) Time management and PCR could be done before intro.
- 5) The intro. could be split with a week in between.
- 6) Part timers find the release and study time very hard to arrange.
- 7) SM's should avoid interrupting people on the course days.
- 8) Mentors should be considered given pressures on Service Managers and they could go for TDLB awards
- 9) Pre-course prep should be scheduled as submissions and the pace of submission increased. Too much discretion doesn't help given pressures.
- 10) Could there be separate supervision sessions for the course. Normal sessions are too filled up with everyday issues and crises.
- 11) Could the group be used for departmental consultation, eg re-modelling, dept communication problems etc. First line managers get left out.
- 12) Could there be a 'project bank' of departmental priorities. It would be nice to work on a departmental issue. Line managers don't often get the chance.
- 13) Link between QP objectives and first line managers is tenuous can this be tightened up? Discussed with the group?
- 14) Can the group be briefed on TCPSS agenda
- 15) Does the course need a learning contract between student, line manager, dept. and University?

QP EVALUATION OPTIONS

METHODS

1. Correlation and analysis of evaluation forms.
2. Questionnaire - to Line Managers/students.
3. Do evaluation exercises in the session.
4. What happens post 31 October?

CRITERIA

1. Strategic? Link to QP agenda and map.
2. Empowered Line Managers.
3. Helped students take control.
4. Developing the service.
5. Student friendly re-release assessment etc.
6. Responding to Hampshire Social Services Department needs.
7. Encourages personal development.
8. Process ie -
Selection.
Introduction.
Teaching.
Assessment.
Management.
9. In-keeping with TOPSS Agenda.

BROAD STRUCTURE FOR THE EVALUATION DAY.

- 1) Everyone will be sent a summary of session evaluations and proposals from the student group and PAP in advance.
- 2) Discussion in small groups to the following structure will be opened up into full group discussion and action planning led by Steve.
- 3) Does the course meet the needs of:

THE DEPARTMENT?

- Is it contributing to strategy?
- Is it contributing to the QP agenda?
- Is it producing service outcomes?
- Is it responding as departmental needs change?

STUDENTS?

- Encourages personal development?
- Student friendly re-release, assessment etc?
- Students have control? Issues raised are responded to?
- Relevant content?
- Quality of delivery?
- Career development?

SERVICE MANAGERS?

Have they sufficient involvement and control ?

Can they influence service outcomes enough?

Are they briefed properly?

Does it meet their objectives?

Does it assist with appraisal and development planning?

Appendix Ten:

Development Options

Appendix Ten - Development Options
QP MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME -

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

1. Incorporate current in-house training.
2. Extend to Diploma/Advanced Award.
3. NVQ5.
4. Registered Managers.
5. Specialist NVQ3.
6. NVQ4 Care.
7. Workforce planning approach.
8. Use of IT, website.
9. Associates.
10. Integrate into post-qualifying.

Appendix Eleven:
Feedback from Commissioning Manager

Feedback to Ivan on his PhD Thesis.

1. Some thoughts about description of process.

Agree with statement about tendering for two different programmes at the same time. Have now stopped doing this (p149). Too confusing and difficult to make decisions. Also contravenes HCC standing orders.

Agree with comment about service managers (p152), their interest and involvement has been the key to a successful programme (or not). This can be seen on both an organisational and individual basis. Those candidates with supportive SM's have been most successful on programme.

Good analysis of what was going on in the organisation. 'Turbulence' is perhaps too bland a word to describe it – but it was a very difficult and challenging time for all staff. Then to have MD programme and PQCCA as 'compulsory' programmes was a further problem to manage. It would have been easy to delegate the development, planning and implementation to CCIPSM. Fortunately you kept us involved.

Also, you were very responsive and supportive of our demands. The CDG and steering group may have been diminished, but those of us left certainly knew what we wanted! Even when you got little response from the department, you maintained focus and commitment.

Agree about lack of senior management commitment to strategic approach (p156). Not only because of disengagement though. The restructure was having a considerable impact on working methods and styles. Though I would not see this as an excuse, it is a contributory factor.

Agree that insufficient consideration given to the release issues by people being on programme (p159). Despite discussions at senior level this was not really considered a 'serious' issue by managers until the programme had begun. By then it was almost too late to engage anyone in the discussion. This does show lack of strategic approach and understanding. The problem was never resolved over the three groups. A lack of workforce planning – sure was. Also shown in the disruption of learning when some learners were expected to deal with issues during university sessions.

Overall a good summary of the process, well documented, fair and representative.

2. Comments on conclusions.

Project leadership well sustained in early stages, agree though that the department need to focus on other projects was a limiting factor in maintaining this leadership.

Whilst there was verbal commitment to strategic approach of this programme, this was difficult to sustain, particularly without support for a dedicated project lead.

Things started well, but tailed off with increasing workloads – these were influenced by restructure and other changes taking place. Also the focus on QP was beginning to tail off as the subsequent programmes began. Significant in maintaining momentum.

Programme was very student and organisation centred. This positively influenced learning outcomes to large extent.

Agree about long term issues (p168), difficult to quantify the changes brought about by the programme. Although, three candidates from first programme have gained promotion internally and one externally. Whilst this was not a planned outcome, it is an indicator of the development of their management skills.

Also new managers are expecting to do a management qualification/ NVQ.

Figure 6.5 – good way of clarifying structure and planned outcomes. Would provide useful planning tool for future programme consideration.

3. Comments on strategic impact..

Key messages here; high level sponsor and commitment, tight project team, need to establish firmer power base. These can be implemented into new MD approach.

4. Comments on Conclusions.

Restructuring had significant impact – project team were aware of this, but were but were unprepared for scale of these changes.

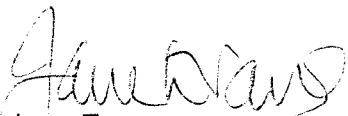
Agree about planning timescales needing to be sustained over a long period. I would suggest five years is minimal and ideally should be longer.

Senior management commitment is essential, although would be cautious about political sponsorship – as this can be subject to sudden change. For

example, when HCC changed from Lib Dem to Conservative control, a number of key strategies were thrown out.

One personal concern about government strategy. There is a drive towards effectiveness and efficiency but little direction for how public services may do this. There is a distinct lack of guidance. Are we supposed to follow private industry? We know that is unlikely to work. It would be good to have some kind of infrastructure support for efficiency.

Workforce planning has focussed on recruitment rather than retention support and ways of keeping existing staff in place. This is potentially the case for first and middle managers. The MD programmes we have run are the only positive mechanisms for most management support.



Jane Evans

Learning and Development Adviser