

## **Developing Leadership in Middle Managers**

*How do middle managers benefit from formal leadership development programmes?*

*What are the key factors to include in a programme in order to maximise the opportunities for leadership development amongst managers who are in the middle of organisational hierarchy?*

A submission presented in part fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glamorgan/Prifysgol Morgannwg for the degree of Doctorate of Business Administration.

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## **Dedications and Acknowledgements**

This work is dedicated to the troubled lives of Carl Bernard Blakey (1983 – 2009) and Samuel William Fry (1982 – 2011).

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## List of Abbreviations

ROI:	Return on investment
ILM:	The Institute of Leadership and Management
NEBS:	National Examining Board for Supervisory Management.
NHS:	National Health Service
EI:	Emotional Intelligence
EQ:	Emotional Quotient
IQ:	Intelligence Quotient
PLC:	Public Limited Company
UWIC:	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
PSMW:	Public Service Management Wales
SSIA:	Social Services Improvement Agency
NLIAH:	National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Health
NQF:	National Qualification Framework
IPA:	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
PULSE:	Positive United Learners Searching for Excellence
CEML:	The Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership
CMI:	Chartered Management Institute
USA:	United States of America
UK:	United Kingdom
NVQ:	National Vocational Qualification
MT48	Mental Toughness 48 psychometric tool
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
IBM	International Business Machines

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## **Abstract**

This thesis has been prepared over the past five years of Study as part of a Doctorate in Business Administration programme with the Welsh Public Service cohort; part sponsored by Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) on a University of Glamorgan Business School programme, October 2008 – September 2013.

The focus of the research was, originally, the Welsh Public Service but the scope of the research soon widened to view the management of learning in leadership development across both public and private organisations. The focus of the research was a case history on a large engineering company and the journey of four cohorts of middle managers from a wide range of different specialist sections within that international company.

The research has been cast as Action Research (McNiff 2013, Easterby-Smith et al 2012, Morton-Cooper 2000) and as such was designed to look into leadership development practice through co-inquiry, critical reflective practice and researcher curiosity. The approach to the research was based on a social constructivism focus whilst relying on a phenomenological methodology of 'capturing' themes as they emerged from the group activities and wider learning opportunities created through workshops and tutor/delegate interactions and support.

The programmes were run in four cohorts in the Brecon Beacons and were based on a programme model designed to allow the delegates to achieve a qualification in the shape of a Leadership and Management programme at Level 5 on the National Qualification Register, accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. This programme allowed for 32 hours of face-to-face contact, an hour of tutorial support and allowed the registered student access to the learning resources with the Institute of Leadership and Management.

The research focus was on the experience of the programme, which was designed to take into account the latest (Jenner 2009) programme design, and the collection of data was formulated to take in as many views as possible. Place and space were considered important in creation of stimulating workshops. Therefore, the outdoor world, movement and reflective practice were all considered to be of value in the design of the interventions. Of particular importance was to approach the emergence of themes in a way that least intruded into the learning experience of the delegates and one which sought to minimise the role (specifically in terms of power and authority) of the facilitator, other than the facilitation team holding the space for learning to occur.

The data collection reflected this desire to observe the emergence of themes and overarching the whole programme was the technique of triangulation, which was applied to the approaches taken. For example, reportage, workshop available video booths, interviews, reactionnaires and direct observation were all used to glean the themes as they emerged from the naturalistic focus of the learning opportunities.

A wide range of themes emerged that began to reveal the experience and impact of the delegates and allowed for reflective patterns to be established between both the delegates and the facilitators in order to contemplate the nature of their joint experience.

This study has led to contributions to methodology, knowledge and theory as well as practice. In addition, the development of future leadership interventions has been effected by

the wider considerations between the ways in which individuals are treated through development opportunities. Surprising factors have emerged. The role of abstract ideas and the establishment of a wider use of artefacts in development have emerged as unbidden unlooked-for side effects of the development approaches undertaken.

Future research opportunities are open to continue to consider the role of art-based approaches in the management of learning, of how individuals are supported in their learning through interactions with a group or network of learners and how the use of artefacts can improve the experience of the delegates and their impact on the leadership within their companies and organisations.

## **Chapter One: Introduction to the Thesis**

### **1.1 Initial Outline**

The aim of this study is to understand, more completely, the efficacy of leadership development programmes and to discern and maximise the variety of ways in which leadership development, in all its guises, can be made more effective and appropriate. In taking a broad focus, this study will contribute to not only our understanding of leadership theory but will also reveal some of the factors involved in the design of effective leadership development programmes. Whilst this research does cover and outline the role, theories and department of leaders, it is firmly working in the field of leadership not leaders, and covers not necessarily the activities of a named leader at the top of an organisation, but concentrates on the development of devolved leadership distributed amongst the wide variety of a cadre of managers broadly termed as middle managers.

Edward Said's book on Orientalism (2003) strongly captures the approach that I have tried to take with this research. The first part of this quotation describes the design principles whilst the second half captures the feeling of some of the leadership development debate:

*'Reflection, debate, rational argument, moral principle based on a secular notion that human beings must create their own history, have been replaced by abstract ideas that celebrate American or Western exceptionalism, denigrate the relevance of context, and regard other cultures with derisive contempt.'* (2003 p xx preface)

In concurring with Said I have chosen to take a humanistic view of leadership development and take as wide a view as I can of the phenomenon which I have been studying. Whilst the focus is on leadership development in middle managers the research has tangible links to related topics such as learning, exploration of theories around liminality and thresholds, the use of space in human geography, the rise of leaders and organisational development. In addition I have opted for a wider approach still and have appended my own personal reflections taken from history and sourced ideas about the development of individuals set in recent literature, novels, poems and plays (See Appendix Four for detailed reflection from literary sources). As such this represents an action research approach with cyclical reflective and contemplative period, interspersed with data collection and colleague-induced understanding.

Adopting a humanistic approach can be defended from a number of points of view. One way in which this has been successfully done is with the treatment of the countries in the east, so

called 'Orientalism' (Said 2003). Where the east is mis-represented in Orientalism many aspects of leadership are mis-represented in many current Americanised treatments of the topic. Here, as with the positivistic treatment of leadership and its development, is a parallel idea that the western approach to leadership does not adequately explain the phenomenon of leadership and therefore provides scope and promotes change in the way in which leadership development is researched.

This study into the development of middle managers in large, complex organisations will build on existing knowledge. The thesis will help to consolidate a more focused view of leadership development. There is an argument that well-developed leadership skills gained within an overall institutional development programme are the most effective; however, the focus here is upon leadership not leader development (Grint 2005a, Kempster 2009a). This is important for two main reasons. Firstly, within the context of a massively changing world (which will have financial implications for large complex organisations and public bodies) many of the skills articulated in these following chapters will need to be useable, accessible and available to large numbers of middle managers. It is conjectured that this development of leadership skills will allow for greater flexibility of approach, firmer and more focused partnerships within organisations, as well as a greater appreciation of other stakeholders (including citizens and customers) in the wider world of work. Secondly, a lot of money and resources (Burgoyne, Hirsh and Williams 2004) are tied up in the development of staff in a wide variety of interventions. There has been little evidence that these interventions are cost effective (Burgoyne 2004). This study could help to contribute to a greater understanding of the return on investment (ROI) and how this can be best written into programmes or development opportunities in large organisations or public bodies. This is one of the ways in which it is envisaged that the thesis can make a contribution to practice.

It is noted that leadership development can be regarded under the general description of a 'management qualification' in this context, although writers such as Kempster (2009 a and b) suggest that this conflagration of management and leadership, at least in the development context, is unhelpful.

The distinction, the difference, between leadership development and management development, is often blurred. There is often unexplained conflagration of these sub-sets of organisational training in research papers (Kempster 2009). More detailed attention to the tensions between leadership and management development is found in chapter two.

The thesis is set out in the following manner in order to construct a text through which it is easy to navigate and one which has a coherent narrative.

Chapter one serves as an introduction to the themes and illustrates the relevance of the study to the wider world of leadership and organisational management. Chapter one also introduces the organisation from which the main case study was taken and outlines the use of the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) as the programme's accrediting body. Chapter two is a detailed literature search which catalogues not only the theoretical material chronologically, but also the literature covering a number of distinct theoretical areas such as leaders, leadership, personal development, organisational development and learning. Chapter three covers the methodology and philosophical background to the study design and covers the author's epistemological and ontological standpoint. Chapter four sets out the data from the various cohorts within the case history used for this research and covers the triangulation of material gathered from different sources such as individual interviews, questionnaires, video diaries, paired interviews and observations using the technique of reportage. A broad discussion and analysis of the data is undertaken in chapter five with the final chapter, chapter six, containing the contributions to practice, methodology and knowledge whilst helping to signpost the way ahead for further research.

Throughout the thesis the author attempts to give a sense of his personal research journey. The next paragraphs begin this narrative, and this notion of the development of the author, both as a practitioner and a scholar, alongside the preparation of the thesis will also be overtly reflected upon in the final chapter.

My personal interest in the topic of leadership has been developing since a 1997 Master's degree in Health and Social Care which examined the interface between health and social care in the elderly services in Blaenau Gwent, Wales/Cymru (unpublished but available at the University of Glamorgan (Now the University of South Wales, MSc Library, Trefforest Campus, Pont-y-pridd) (Turner 1997). That particular master's level study did not focus on leadership but, through a mixture of desk research and focus group work, looked at key aspects of the manifestations of organisational management and leadership such as policy production, procedural development and contributed to the practical debate around joint-working. Subsequent to my study at Master's level I engaged with other health-focused colleagues from the NHS Staff College Wales, in collaboration with Dr Glyn Elwyn (Elwyn et al 2002). This early project marked a shift in my interest towards the way in which professionals learn in collaborative and developmental settings. The role of narrative in this study (highlighted by the methodology of critical fiction, a methodology, described by Glyn Elwyn, in the 2002 paper, that allows for real narrative and organisational description to be 'fictionalised'.) highlighted the need and desire for synergetic approaches to personal and collaborative development.

Moreover, in the intervening fifteen years, interest in leadership in public services and large corporate organisations has grown, particularly the field of the middle management (Nutt and Backoff 1997; Nutt and Backoff 2000, Bolden 2005; Berg and Fransson 2007). My interest in contemporary issues around organisational development has been stimulated by attendance at non-leadership conferences and general development workshops. This attendance has further developed the understanding of organisational development techniques that are supportive in terms of leadership development; techniques such as coaching, mentoring and forms of action learning. The issues of leadership development are considered by many writers and researchers (for example: see Brungardt 2011) to be critical to the survival of organisations at a time when advancements in communication and technology, such as computer and technology based communications systems such as apps and broadband capability, are such that the rate of change experienced by large organisations is determining our collective destinies (Gouden 2007). This predicts and marks out increased competition through globalization and increasing customer choice.

In order to refine the potential methodology I was going to use in the main case study, I worked with many different management development programmes. These programmes were from five learning collaborations: The University Of Wales Institute Cardiff's Leadership for Collaboration post-graduate programme, Eliesha Cymru (as the Welsh Government Training organisation), The Institute of Leadership and Management Research programme with Scandia Life and Nottingham City Council, Integra Community Health leadership programme, and finally the combined Call of the Wild Limited, The Professional Development Centre and the University of Swansea MBA development weekend (for more details see section 1.7.5., page 39)

Exploratory methodological work was undertaken between September and December 2010 in order to expose, more clearly, the practical rather than the theoretical nuances of leadership development. To do this, several workplace projects were undertaken in order to explore, in particular, the research time-line methodology described by Stephen Kempster in his book: *'How Managers have learnt to Lead – Exploring the Development of Leadership Practice'* (2009). The methodology relies on the marking out of a life history, anchoring, pictorially, a set of notable occurrences and notable people literally along a line depicting a career's worth of notable highlights.

The results of these pilot interventions have been examined and interrogated to establish the framework of the subsequent research data collecting system. Of particular interest was the 'anchorage' that Stephen Kempster used along the timeline, that of notable individuals and



notable occurrences. These anchors were described as helping the correspondents to lock into stories and narrative of importance.

Five individual programmes had been selected whereby the author's experience and subsequent reflections, obtained from within the programmes, was taken from a number of diverse yet connected circumstances. All settings were involved with conducting leadership development programmes for middle to senior managers, some in public service and some in private organisations. The standpoints of programme facilitators, course designers, evaluators, researchers or development coaches contributed to a well-balanced view of this topic. This broad spectrum of courses and programmes and a wide range of observational data collection allowed for a variety of interventions to be examined and reflected upon whilst offering me the chance to think ahead to full data collection. The desired end point was a research design that would give the most insight into leadership development for middle managers, amongst whom some participants might be reluctant or cynical about the intervention.

These were not pilot programmes as such but constituted a way in which the final methodology could be established. I wanted to include the role of me, as a researcher, in the co-production of knowledge and to assess how my ability to work with those middle managers already in a reflective space would allow for a greater insight. I wanted to hear and interpret narrative around the experience of the middle manager and their reactions to leadership development possibilities. This approach is easier to explain as an action research method (although many other approaches have informed this research) as detailed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3 Page 104.) in that I was '*about change and intervention*' (Easterby Smith 2012, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition) as I acted as a researcher/practitioner working on a topic that was of concern to me, namely, leadership development in middle management.

The key pre-research interventions that informed and influenced my case history are set out, below, in brief.

The first set of telephone interviews with a pair of delegates from the second cohort of the University of Wales Institute Cardiff's Leadership for Collaboration post-graduate course helped to establish whether either of the delegates had experienced notable people or notable occurrences during the course's preceding weeks. Both delegates, chosen randomly, were questioned for 20 minutes, every two or three weeks for six months, in order to hear from them any significant narrative (Booth et al 1995) stemming from, but not directly about, the programme. This resulted in a compilation of short conversations from notes

made whilst listening to the responses. That set of short notes, linked to the conversations, revealed a fairly timid set of responses that led me to doubt the transferability of this narrative technique of looking for notable things and notable people.

However, a set of longer face-to-face interviews with delegates receiving funding from the Social Services Improvement Agency helped to develop insight into the process. The first hour-long interview identified one story about a notable person. A further recorded and transcribed interview with a manager from Integra revealed a number of notable incidents occurring outside of formal leadership development but nevertheless tied in with, and made more germane by, their current development.

A second element of the programme, namely evaluation, was undertaken. The evaluation was commenced initially by a qualitative process of interviews before, during and after the end of the programme and this was done to ascertain the appropriate amount of support the delegates required in order to embed their learning back into the workplace. The evaluation of the Leadership for Collaboration programme, a post-graduate programme run by the (then) University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC), was supported by Public Service Management Wales (PSMW). In addition, funding was provided by the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Health (NLIAH). Using the concept of notable people and notable occurrences, (see page 14) to a much shorter time span than the original research, developed as a means of elucidating progress in transferring learning to the workplace. Previous work undertaken by Stephen Kempster (see for example, 2009) had used this technique over years not months. In addition, Kempster's research was retrospective whilst these paired conversations linked impact to learning through the reflection of work-placed and work-focused interventions.

For the evaluation of the learning on the Leadership for Collaboration programme for the 2009 – 2010 cohorts, an extra component was introduced: a triangulation process, which mixed both quantitative and qualitative findings by incorporating a web-based statistical software framework and drawing on both numerical scores (on a scale of one to ten) and elements of extracted narrative. The programme and its scores were then related to and compared with other, purportedly similar, courses, most of which were conducted in the United States of America (Mellahi 2000). Several problems were related to this methodology, not least of all the poor response rate (at times, and for some sections, as low as 12%), but also the lack of comparability of the data. Although the narrative was interesting it was curiously abstract and removed from the reality of the programme - nothing like the richness I had envisaged from a research project looking at development that was as intensely personal as the development of leadership skills. This abstract script; distracted in that it

pulled the reader away from the real experiences of the delegates, felt this way because, perhaps, of the remoteness of the evaluation methodology rendered the experience of evaluation distant, less close to the human experience, too.

One course, a three-day Eliesha (Eliesha are a British training and development company based in Newcastle with a more recent remit to run management and leadership programmes for the Welsh Government) programme consisting of a management workshop centred around Adair's three rings model (Adair 2007), used a scoring system at the beginning and end of programme to try to see if delegates had recognised any greater understanding against externally created and organisationally linked objectives. The figures created usually indicated a move from lower scores to higher scores on a scale of nought to six (where nought was a complete lack of awareness to six which indicated complete understanding). This approach revealed nothing more useful than that for every person, in every work-shop, some movement towards greater understanding was theoretically achieved. The exercise did reveal some potential changes and in some personal development of theoretical understanding yet it remained much more difficult, if not impossible, to understand where the change in behaviour might occur. The scale did not prove helpful in determining the learning of leadership skills and as a potential triangulation methodology, was low in value.

Eliesha Cymru's Equipping Leaders' programme revealed several leadership development approaches which were ineffective in the translocation of learnt skills and insights back into the workplace. A key concern in locating the main thesis work was to design an intervention which was, in the best possible way, to develop leadership based on strong academic foundations and an overlap of complementary ideas.

The Institute of Leadership and Management commissioned research into existing programmes of development, running under an accredited institute banner and qualification, in several companies including Scandia Life. The idea of interviewing delegates and their line managers was a design that firmly linked leadership development to line management functions. However, the technique of inviting delegates to share a story and then allowing the line manager to respond was not predicted and arose spontaneously. Nottingham City Council's Leadership Development programme was visited for research purposes in the same Institute of Leadership and Management research, although this was a non-accredited programme. Further conceptual design was undertaken formally to link conversations about notable people and notable occurrences with paired line manager and delegate interviews.

A linked leadership and coaching programme with Integra Community Living Options Limited further produced clues as to the efficacy of probing real-life experiences by the simple hooks

of notable people and notable occurrences.

Finally, further impact of the focus on words and dialogue was confirmed through involvement in a Swansea University MBA programme experiential workshop. Eighteen non-native speakers of English responded very positively to the use of story circles and the power and meaning of their experiences being captured in single words and phrases. These five leadership programmes have in their different ways, represented and highlighted methodological opportunities that could be utilised to capture delegates' narrative, comments and stories.

After the initial outline above, the second section sets out the background to the study by defining the conceptual gap, the unknown area between other established theories and ideas, and establishes a short chronology to explain the topics of leader and leadership. A third section briefly puts the study into a global perspective then introduces, in section four, Babcock International, the company that provided the delegates and cohorts for the main case study and The Institute of Leadership which provided the leadership curriculum, before moving onto the fifth section for an example of leadership within a specific context. The context of public service is used, in the beginning of this study, as a proxy for large complex organisations within the broad cultures of the Western World. The sixth section ties together the issues of people within organisations and where the theoretical landscape is in the context of leadership development. From a mass of overlapping leadership theories which often hang in their own cultural and generational spaces, there is a description of seven relevant complementary, contemporary theories and leadership models. The seven leadership theories are picked in order that key themes, which resonate with the methodology and philosophy of the study, can be distilled from their current form. The chapter concludes by reflecting upon potential benefits of this work.

## **1.2 Defining the Conceptual Gap.**

Organisational development and leadership are regularly coupled together (Cacioppe 1998 , Wood and Gosling 2003; Burgoyne 2004; Jackson 2006; Leadership & Management Wales 2012) and at the same time the propensity and the need for learning is also recognised (Senge and Scharmer 2001; Joyce 2004; Spillance 2005; Rooke and Torbert 2005; Wallis and McLoughlin 2007). However, the literature is fairly light on the practicality of the individual coping with and applying the learning involved, particularly when that learning is focused on the individual and facilitator's awareness of the bio-geographical depth (Dulewicz and Higgs 2005) of each individual (Kuhnert and Russell 1990). The notion of a conceptual gap is helpful in trying to focus more clearly on a concept which is less clear from the evidence so far presented (Maitlis and Soneshien 2010). The way of retrospectively making

meaning about people's behaviour is more like conceptual leaping and an action research approach allows for an iterative development of the leap beyond the gap (Klag and Langley 2013). Therefore these insights lie between the manner in which leadership can be developed and how to understand more clearly where and what constitutes a productive focus on the individual learning and the depth and originality that lies within every individual. The research questions evolved from this conceptual gap. Zaccoro and Banks (2004) described the way in which they had discovered that research itself:

*'[research] ...proceeds independently of the kinds of issues, needs and challenges being voiced by practitioners' (p 367)*

Many other current leadership development programmes (examples of which are described between pages 21 and 24 of this thesis) have revealed the comparative lack of success of programmes that focus primarily on themes, models and theories. Understanding individuals in any group leadership development programme leads to what Zaccoro and Banks describe as allowing the:

*'discovery of principles is left to them, not delivered in formal presentations by the trainer.' (p 368)*

An action research approach acknowledges the evolution of ideas and insights. The structure of the Doctorate in Business Administration required the outline of a research question in the early 'assignments'. An initial question, articulated in March 2010, highlighted the tentative nature of this commencement of the research journey. The embryo question was:

*'How do managers, who do not perceive themselves as leaders, benefit from formal leadership development programmes?'*

Sub-questions were added:

*How is leadership perceived in the workplace?*

*What do individuals understand by leadership?*

*What form does leadership take?*

*Why does leadership take the form it does?*

The conceptual gap was highlighted as the manner in which leadership can be developed and the intensity of focus of that development on the individual, as an individual, when regarding the handling of emotion.

To develop this further, chapters two and three describe, using an action research overview, the way in which the research question responded to the incremental and cyclical nature of the research.

### **1.3: Contemporary global issues**

As outlined briefly earlier, the organisational context for the issues addressed in this thesis is changing rapidly in response to a number of strategic drivers of change, many of which operate at a global level (Kupers and Pauleen 2013)

Leadership skills development (Fricke and Totterdill 2004) is high on the agenda of companies and large organisations which, by their very nature, are complex and complicated entities (Doolittle and Hicks 2003). Leadership is required in order for companies to compete on a global scale in response to the added turbulence of the current world economic crisis.

Large complex organisations are currently experiencing a rapid amount of change and are under threat from bankruptcy and closure in a way not experienced since the Great Depression (1929/39). Three 'household name' companies in various markets: Lehmann Brothers, Vauxhall Motors and Woolworths, all suffered either bankruptcy or near financial failure within the last four months of 2008 (Wearden et al 2008). 2008 will be remembered as a landmark for change in business and the development of public services across the world. The closing months of 2012 were no better with political, national and organisational leadership being stretched by national, global crises, European fiscal problems (Sapir 2006) as well as personal scandals and disgrace. These pressures are bringing the spectre of changes and wild fluctuations to the economics of public services and the stability of large complex organisations. This instability is not a new phenomenon but is linked to previous generations where Government departments have called for the need for change in the way 'things' are done (Welsh Assembly Government 2004). Improved leadership skills amongst middle managers throughout large complex organisations, public and private, was, even two decades ago, viewed as one way in which the economy and the public bodies that depend on the economy's success, can overcome and prepare for the challenges of the future (Rucci et al.1998).

Organisations, in particular large complex organisations, are currently receiving heightened scrutiny as more and more previously-solvent organisations are going out of business. Against this backdrop it becomes very important to view the trends within the development of middle managers. This closer scrutiny, for many, puts leadership into a finer focus. Various researchers and observers (See, for example, in the education sector, Blackwell and Preece

2002, with the debate about management and gender, Davies and Thomas, 2001 and Robyn Thomas and colleagues' explicit work with middle managers, for example, Linstead and Thoams 2002) of the recent dialogue about the development of organisations have seen the role of 'softer' skills in the leadership development field, and learning within organisations grow. This has given greater credibility and visibility to the development of leadership skills both within individuals and throughout organisations (Taylor, Templeton & Baker 2010).

#### **1.4: An Outline of Babcock International and the Institute of Leadership and Management**

Babcock International is the main organisation that provides the primary data for this thesis and the Institute of Leadership and Management provided the formal accreditation of the programme in the sphere of leadership development for middle managers. Babcock International is a world-wide organisation based in Britain which, through the provision of support services for a wide range of engineering projects, has revenue of circa three billion pounds and an order book of thirteen billion pounds. The training division supplied the cadre of middle managers all of whom were involved in the management of teams of trainers dedicated to the provision of vocationally orientated qualifications and school improvement services (Babcock International 2012).

The people populating the four research cohorts were drawn from services that had been built up from school improvement teams, newly acquired training providers and specialist providers in the automotive industry.

Although a few of the delegates already had management qualifications, the majority did not. The programme was accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. The Institute of Leadership and Management is Europe's leading accrediting body ([www.i-l-m.com](http://www.i-l-m.com)) based on the number of accreditations and its reputation to provide strong management and leadership qualifications for staff operating in Europe and the Far East, for qualifications in and around the topics of leadership and management. It is also a membership-led organisation, which promotes excellence in leadership and management through member events. As part of the City and Guilds group the Institute develops new and relevant qualifications through curricula tied to national management standards and has a large spectrum of qualifications ranging from level two to level seven on Britain's National Qualification Framework (NQF). Created in 2002 from a merger between the Institute of Supervision and Management and an accrediting organisation called the National Examining Board for Supervisory Management (NEBS), the Institute has specialised in leadership development for over a decade.



## **1.5 A brief introduction to the theoretical context of leadership**

This next section provides an overview of leadership theory whilst the literature review in chapter two critically explores this context in more depth. This section mainly covers those conceptual ideas which might be termed as grand theory. Although much of this published material does not focus on empirical findings, the terminology and the names of theories casts a long shadow over popular opinion, much of which is heavily used to define and extend development opportunities. This theoretical background will be explored more fully in chapter two. This preparatory section prepares the theoretical ground and establishes a pathway through the huge theoretical field. More generally there are problems with trying to link theory with practice in this field.

A review of current leadership research and theory has shown that well-established leadership models are still recognised by both academics and practitioners as valid and relevant to today's leadership challenges (for example two empirical studies: Vaccaro et al 2012; Yang et al 2011). Two of the most important, and linked, conceptual ideas are Burn's Transformation and Transactional Leadership research (See, for example, Joyce 2004; Rooke and Torbert 2005; and Wallis and McLoughlin 2007). A further adaptation of that theory of transformation and transaction is the so-called 'Situational Leadership', (Hersey and Blanchard 1997) model where successful leaders are able to respond to, or are shaped by, the situation in which they find themselves. Although situational leadership theory has been widely popular, it has also undergone many revisions and critical insights (Graeff 1997).

Transformational and situational leadership will be dealt with in more detail in chapter two. Further detailed data was reviewed in 2004 (Crompton 2004) by undertaking a state of the moment review of leadership by the ILM and the former NHS Staff College Wales. Although Sally Crompton was looking specifically at the leadership in the health service in Wales, her work revealed that leaders at all levels are constrained within the context and culture at work, in which they find themselves. This finding can be applied across all organisations.

Much research was undertaken in the 1990s examining and studying large complex organisations (Anderson and West 1998; Ford, Harding and Learmonth 2008; Iles and Sutherland 2001). Their collective studies have revealed that up to a quarter of the variation in performance is due to an aggregation of appropriate leadership behaviour in peers as well as supervisors, whilst it has already been seen that many leadership scholars consider leadership to be an abstract idea and one that is socially constructed.

At the heart of leadership (Buss and Kenrick 1998, Schein 2010) is a fundamentally human process because:

*'evolutionary psychology places social interaction and social relationships squarely within the center (sic) of the action. In particular, social interactions and relationships surrounding mating, kinship, reciprocal alliances, coalitions, and hierarchies are especially critical, because all appear to have strong consequences for successful survival and reproduction.'* (Buss and Kenrick 1998 – p 994)

As a number of contributors suggest, Organisational Development Theory has had a long history of trying to apply some useful frameworks to the way in which organisations develop (Koontz 1987, French et al. 2000, Ladkin 2010 and Schein 2010). The tendency to promote a certain and uniform organisational response to change, (an example of this trend, during the early 1990's in Britain, was the discipline of Total Quality Management), has been largely discredited as fads and trends take hold and inappropriately sweep changes through organisations (Mole 2011). Total Quality Management was promoted in the early 1990s in the Health Service in Wales and England and the huge effort and cost did not necessarily lead to the improvements predicted, given the size of the investment (Pershing 2006). Large and complex organisations are internally very diverse and the lessons from one do not necessarily translate across sectors or even geographically close organisations with similar aims and objectives. What can be more difficult is that researchers may only seek to learn from success yet so many messages and ideas can come from the study of failure. Christensen and Raynor (2003 p 67) suggested that:

*'many management researchers are so focused on how companies succeed that they don't study failure.'*

The grand theories can only be one small part of the development of leadership. Although transforming organisations can be viewed as a theoretical issue (French, Bell and Zawacki 2000; Storey 2006) the backdrop to leadership development can be usefully described by articulating four interlinked factors:

1. A set of theories or values in a strategic and development setting
2. A planned change of delivery
3. Stimulating cerebral change in individuals that leads to more appropriate behaviour
4. Stimulating shifts in thinking that lead to a better organisation more in keeping with its environment or future environments.

These cornerstones of good development practice, outlined by Storey in 2006, fit together with the need to increase creativity (Eisenbeib and Boerner 2013) in organisations and

produce more employee empowerment in the workplace (Hakimi, van Knippenburg and Giessner 2010). Development opportunities, however, appear to be disproportionately focused on sets of theories and a planned delivery change to the detriment of mechanisms and approaches to deal with a way of stimulating cerebral change and precipitating elegant shifts in thinking.

In focusing on a western perspective, arguably too much emphasis is placed on the philosophies of Socrates, Aristotle and Plato, and certainly among these ancient philosophers, Plato explored thoughts on what makes a leader (Takala 1998). In addition, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) set out some foundations for the approach that culminated in the idea of the great man theory.

Leaders and leadership have fascinated the western world since Carlyle's essay on heroes and hero worship (Van Vart 2003) and, somewhat later, Shackleton's famous exploits on and off the Antarctic ice over one hundred years ago (Morrell and Capparell 2001). At about the same time as Shackleton was leading the way in Antarctic discovery writers such as Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol were investigating the world of management in the comparatively new world of industrialisation (Pardey 2007). Much of the development of an understanding of leaders throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century stemmed from men and the study of men (Garvey and Lancaster 2010; Kane and Patapan 2012). This view of leaders was inevitably linked to and informed by masculinity and the improvement of humanity through great deeds and male-led ingenuity.

There were few dissenting voices although Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) began to muse about the potential for organisations to work better when power was dissipated through others in the organisation and her work provided a platform for the work around collaborative leadership (Miller and Vaughan 2001), which was key to new ways of working for middle managers (Garvey and Lancaster 2010).

There is a clear and obvious link between leader and leadership beyond the 'leader' that the two words have in common. Moreover there are those who argue that part of the job of a leader is to decide how far and to whom leadership can be devolved (Covey 1992). Despite this relatedness, focus away from the concept of the leader as an individual, exhibiting appropriate traits and competences, towards leadership being claimed by virtually anyone one in any context, is on the rise (Schein 2010).

*'Leadership as a distributed function is gaining ground, which leads to the possibility that anyone who facilitates progress towards some desired outcome is displaying leadership. (2010, p x)'*

Whilst it might be theoretically clearer who or what a leader is, leadership has the position of being a variable abstract that depends on complex interrelations between the individual self (Ford, Harding and Learmouth 2008), the follower and the specific context in which leadership is being enacted (Moyles 2006), with many contested definitions (Grint 2008).

The development of leadership development theory will be covered in much more detail in the literature review in chapter two.

## **1.6. Leadership development in context: The Welsh Assembly Government**

This study does not specifically attempt to link any sector of the economy to leadership and leadership development; however, the devolution process in Wales/Cymru provides an outline that illustrates the development of leadership as an integral part of organisational development and modernisation. This background description includes looking at the pressures to improve leadership in Welsh public services. Within Welsh public service, through various documents such as 'Making the Connections' (Welsh Assembly Government 2004), there has been a re-focus on the efficacy of the work of managers who have leadership potential and a call for investment to improve leadership within the work of large public bodies and across public services generally. Work in this sector helped form my own understanding of the main research issues.

Although transformational leadership is often cited (for more detail, see chapter two) as the leadership style or skill required for the modernisation of large complex organisations, other writers and academics have isolated many other skills and attributes that leaders (or managers using leadership skills) need or need to develop. Recent work in Wales/Cymru notes that there are many ways in which leadership can be developed across large complex organisations and Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) has been successfully using collaborative approaches such as Action Learning / Action Inquiry (The 'Connect4Cymru' consortium 2004 - 2008). Further institutional efforts have included suggestions about the consolidation and re-focus of leadership development energies, (for example: in 2009 conversations and proposals were mooted about a Leadership Academy in Wales/Cymru that would have, potentially, pulled together efforts around leadership in both the business world and national public bodies). Launched in September 2012, Academi/Wales will focus on great leadership delivered by learning. Already established in the service are the development of the individual in schemes and structures such as Public Service Management Wales' (PSMW) annual summer school, The National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Health's (NLIAH) 'Enquire within' initiative and Cwm Taf Health Board's 'Positive United Learners Searching for Excellence,' 'PULSE' scheme.

In August 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government issued a delivery notice called: 'The Leading Edge for Welsh Businesses - Enhancing Leadership and Management Skills'. In the text of the delivery notice is a leadership study from the Chartered Institute of Management from which is quoted this telling sentence:

*'For all types of management qualifications, a clear majority of employers agreed that productivity gains, staff attraction rates and professional reputation are improved.'*(p 7)

It is not doubted (Grint 2005(a); Grint 2009; Storey 2011) that the fascination and academic interest around development of leadership acted as a backdrop to the topic of leaders, leadership skills and skills training for devolved nation states. The Welsh Assembly Government (Welsh Assembly Government 2007) called for, in the context of a new Governmental system, a workforce with much better management and leadership capabilities which would be enhanced, over and above what was apparent at that moment in public service in Wales /Cymru.'

One of the key changes which was required and enacted to complete the vision of the Welsh Assembly Government, was the creation of a document, 'Making the Connections' detailing the vision of promoting improved services through a mixture of accountability and leadership. This type of leadership is suggested as playing a crucial role is the development of services as an outreach of social services departments over the past decade. (Welsh Assembly Government 2007). The leadership that is required in public services, currently related to care and the provision of public services (provided mainly, but not exclusively, by the NHS and social services provided by local government), is markedly different to the style of leadership required only a decade ago. The 'Making the Connections' agenda calls for a more open and collaborative style of interaction, in order to engage the workforce and the citizens in a programme of co-production of services relevant to the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Various factors or strands related to leadership in public service and the evolution of new services and standards have led to a re-thinking of leadership within public service. Factors such as listening and reflection, use of narrative, inter-agency collaboration, communication (inter and intra-agency) and co-production all require the development of managers and leaders that are, or will be, markedly different to the current leaders in the service. The idea of the local council as 'a community leader' too had its evolution in the late 1990s. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation paper of 2002 entitled 'Community Engagement and Cohesion' (Blake et al. 2002) argues that there is a need to:

*'...[provide] democratic leadership in relation to civil renewal and community engagement and – more recently – place-shaping. This latest role has particular relevance to the issues of diversity, population churn and community cohesion (p 9).*

A decade later improvements in both leadership and engagement are seen as being paramount to this effort. Furthermore, the skills that are required to bring about these changes are many, but one of the most key attributes that a leader can develop and refine is

building a compelling narrative that produces and sustains the vital relationships required for initiating restructuring and guiding service transition (Hosking 2006).

Leadership throughout Wales/Cymru (Wales Management Council 2005) has been recognised as a key element to the promotion of change with the assertion that all managers have a key responsibility to become change leaders. However, change leadership comes with a warning, because if the services are to change, there will inevitably be long periods of transition and during that period of transition, the hierarchical organisation has strengths that may be lost in the pursuit of a more transformational style of leadership.

All public bodies in Wales/Cymru are tied up with a rapidly changing agenda, articulated in the 'Making the Connections' document which is governed by four stated principles related to providing and co-producing better services. This means that, in the future, even more so than now and as a platform for future development, service development must have the citizen at its centre, be designed using the principles of equality and social justice and must harness the energy of working together as one Welsh public service to provide the taxpayer with real value for money. An example of a very large complex public body is the National Health Service in Britain (NHS). It is the third largest employer in the world and, for some, represents a much-fractured system of interdependent professional groups in a very sophisticated world of treatments, relationships and inter-professional rivalries. It is an organisation that has a large number of subcultures and dysfunctional consequences occur (Foucault 1991) in organisations whereby the policies and procedures of the organisation bear little recognition to the informal culture or rules that exist in practice.'

Therefore, the interface between health and social care is exactly the place that McDonald, in 2002, described as being characterised by a whole plethora of competing objectives, uncertainties about goal setting, targets and the link between cause and effect. Within Welsh health and social care fields (Welsh Assembly Government 2004), it can be argued that it is across the interface between health and social care that the leadership challenges will be, amongst other close partnerships and dependencies, most focused on the needs of the citizens and ways in which those citizens can be included in the joined-up work of professional teams of service providers. There are several apparent reasons for this. Firstly, the organizations involved come from different histories and have different backgrounds and cultures. The second challenge is that the agenda for organizational development is changing from one which was hierarchical and mistrusting (or ignoring, broadly speaking, the views of the clients and other non-stakeholders) to one that is seeking to embrace those stakeholders as equals. Thirdly, the professions within this area are not well adjusted to take on the more demanding role required of leaders within a more democratic service. Fourthly,

the pace of change for public organizations in health and social care is high and accelerating. A new Permanent Secretary for the Welsh Assembly Government civil service – Dame Gillian Morgan – was appointed in June 2008, and with this appointment came a change of style and direction. The central thrust of this change is a policy shift surrounding an attempt to articulate the vision of an ‘Enabling Government’. The ‘Enabling Government’ agenda/model of Gill Morgan highlights, in the shape of a butterfly, (enabling government as the thorax supported by the twin wings of ‘valuing people’ and ‘achieving excellence’) some tangible links between collective leadership and the organization’s ability to deliver results. This level of change envisaged the increased service efficacy between encouraging a local leadership that values people, balanced by ability of the government to deliver on both the strategic and performance agendas in the maturing governance of the devolved administration. Leaders in specific public sectors such as Social Services (Leslie 2008) echoed this stance and a similar call for leadership development sat against the pressures on services to improve and flexibly respond to change.

Transformational change in large complex organisations (Rashman Withers & Hartley 2009) particularly in public service organisations, is not easy and not productively reduced to simple models or ideas. This is because of the complexities of the interactions of many people in many different types of relationships (Joyce 2004). The fundamentals of this idea are articulated by the research of Joyce and by the theoretical and practical drive embedded in the leadership and ideas of Gillian Morgan. Both projects, around the development of public service leadership, looked at change in large complex organisations (both public service organisations), at times of great upheaval. Actual change was analysed with a view to looking at the way in which improved leadership skills throughout the organisations led to significant and lasting change.

Although the Health Service in Wales produced a programme of learning, which was evaluated by The Welsh Institute of Health Social Care (Griffiths and Llewellyn 2008), that encouraged networking and work-based projects, not all interventions have been so well thought through.

An example of the response of the public service in Wales/Cymru to this challenge is the mandatory training that was given to the managers within the Welsh Assembly Government between 2008 and 2011. This three-part training programme consisted of two workshops and a 360-degree appraisal questionnaire with feedback from a qualified coach. The first workshop focused on John Adair’s action-centred management theory (Adair 1988) and the second was a workshop entitled ‘Equipping Leaders for Delivery’. The second part of this training is based on the leadership work of John Kotter (quoted in Raelin 2004) and his analysis of the difference between management and leadership. I was involved in the



delivery of some of the workshops, which were generally characterised by a lack of engagement from a majority of the delegates.

Despite these complexities, as exemplified by the examples, above, taken from Welsh public service, this recent, urgent and more modern call for better leadership is not uniquely linked to public service. Public service in Wales /Cymru is not isolated from the national and world factors that press against large organisations be that, for example, financial viability, staff motivation and stakeholder engagement across a number of thresholds. Establishing leadership dispersed through organisations is thought to be the best way in which to make those organisations successful and socially fulfilling (Parry and Hansen 2007).

The factors involved in the development of leadership and my own growing understanding of the field led to the continuous and on-going development of a research question, which had multiple iterations. This question arose through months of personal inquiry and expresses the questions that guided both the research philosophy and the pragmatic elements of research management and administration. By working through a series of programmes, as described in section 1.1, and by using an action research approach this led to a continuous series of 'interconnecting circles' (Eden and Huxham 2007) of understanding and reflection. In this way interventions were pre-understood and the resultant reflexivity, with colleagues, applied to push explicit theory development. What follows, in concluding the section, is a more detailed description of the six pre-research programmes interspersed with the sort of thoughtful reflective activity that led to informing other contexts, specifically the four-cohort research into leadership development at Babcock International Limited.

Prior to these described programmes, there had been a very explicit movement to include leadership in the qualification offerings from accrediting bodies such as the Institute of Leadership and Management. Conversations with colleagues in the years prior to 2009 highlighted the growing difference between leadership and management as concepts and how managers needed to learn leadership in order function more effectively. More detailed descriptions of these programmes interlaced with researcher reflections conclude this section.

## 1.7. Other influential programmes

### 1.7.1 Eliesha Cymru's Equipping Leaders Programme

Facilitating the early cohorts of managers working within the Welsh Assembly Government's mandatory 'Equipping Leaders' programme revealed that many managers within the Welsh Assembly Government did not believe in managers having, or existing with, a leadership remit. Indeed the relevance of developing leadership skills within a relatively hierarchical organisation was questioned by some delegates despite the value they saw in working on their leadership skills informed by their revealing 360 degree appraisal feedback. The seeds of the programme had emanated from the changes that were being outplayed as a result of the establishment of the Welsh Assembly Government itself. (Prosser et al 2006). Distributed leadership was called for to help with the changes in government that was occurring, although it was clear from the contact with various cohorts of the Assembly's middle managers between 2008 & 2010 that some were not clear where they themselves could exercise leadership. The workshops are evaluated using a fairly complex evaluation sheet which does seek to understand the 'movement' of the delegates in their understanding of key leadership development objectives. Progression against these objectives always occurred and, in some cases remarkably, against a six-point scale. However this did not really give any understanding to either the impact of renewed leadership skills in the workplace, or the individual impact on thinking and leadership within work and project teams. Discussions with the course commissioners regularly highlighted a mis-match between the evaluation scores and a negative belief, emanating from the delegates, that leadership could be strengthened given the political and bureaucratic nature of the Welsh Assembly Government. A number of questions arose:

1. Is the delivery of the material interesting enough to capture the imagination of the delegates?
2. Does the structure of the three-workshop programme lead to the feasibility of change and improvement? (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson 2012).
3. Is there a possibility that changes will occur in the context of each delegate's work place or has the programme been written purely based on them acquiring knowledge?

### **1.7.2 Scandia Life**

Three visits were undertaken to the headquarters in Southampton to review, initially the design and theoretical underpinning of the programme and also to meet with the three pairs of manager/delegates. In addition the lead trainer was interviewed about the progress of the programme and the current design challenges brought about by a massive re-organisation of functions and team in order for the company to cope with the impact of the 'credit crunch'.

All pairings of manager and managed reported improvements in the performance and the programme was consistently reviewed and adapted.

The very act of evaluating the programme allowed for increased learning and understanding in both the manager and delegates. My meetings with the lead trainer, and the leadership and management development adviser, led to some frank exchanges around the delivery of the programme and how to make sure that the optimum learning took place. Materials and ideas were exchanged, particularly where there were challenges experienced in increasing the capacity of the delegates to learn.

Some of the ideas for further research methodology were un-covered during the Scandia research project. The focus was to work together with the participants and their line manager to produce a coherent narrative about the impact that the programme was having on the work of the teams. These were broadly speaking call-centre teams with the delegates managing small 'pods' of teams who were in direct contact with the company customers. I had already experienced the use of story circles in some wider programmes of Action Learning and Appreciative inquiry (Connect4Cymru 2005-2009). In order to encourage conversation and understanding between the pairs of managers and their line-staff (delegates on the development programme) I focussed on areas that they had identified as weak or in need of further development. I encouraged them to tell stories that helped to illustrate a point. In one or two pairings I then asked both line manager and delegate to tell a story, away from work, concerning the topic not that they were initially discussing but one that was emerging from the conversation. One particular conversation sticks out in my mind. A pair had identified time-management was an issue and that the delegate needed to improve in that area. However, the impact of the poor time-management was that trust was eroded within the team. I asked the delegate to tell a story about trust. She told a story about a Christmas present of a piano that her mother had promised her when she was seven. The mother continued to insist that a real piano was coming as a present but when Christmas day came the piano turned out to be a miniature toy. This episode completely eroded the trust between mother and daughter. The telling of this story had a profound effect on the time-keeping of the delegate as she now understood and she had experienced her own

learning much more because of the power of the story. This improvement on a basic managerial issue that of time management, gave rise to deeper understanding of a leadership trait: improving trust, The encouraging of stories helped, in this case, to unearth leadership development opportunities. A methodology that harnessed the power of the individual story seems to add more value than one, such as a detailed questionnaire, that is less focussed on individuals' experiences.

Discussions with my research colleagues on that team posed questions about both the power of narrative, the relationship between the ownership of emotion (past, present and future) regarding everyday events, such as being late or working in leadership environments of eroding trust.

### **1.7.3 University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC), Leadership for Collaboration programme Cohort 2 2009- 2010**

The University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC) and the University of Bangor have been jointly providing the Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership Collaboration for senior managers in public and voluntary services in Wales since 2008. Further support for the programme has been provided by the Social Services Improvement Agency through sponsorship of the course. The supervision and support of delegates in two centres in North and South Wales has facilitated delegates' learning across Wales, providing access to resources such as library services and coursework reviews from lecturers in both locations.

The course provided a series of modules covering leadership theory, collaborative approaches, innovation and governance. The course is aimed at increasing leadership skills to deliver innovative and co-ordinated solutions in public services to benefit service users. The learning approach includes a combination of region and national workshops supported by action learning sets, individual evaluation with psychometric testing and performance feedback with coaching. Completion of the course leads to a Post-graduate Certificate in Leadership Collaboration with credits to contribute towards a Master's degree.

This evaluation of the programme has been commissioned by Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Health (NLIAH) to obtain feedback from the course participants to inform the course organisers and providers in UWIC.

The evaluation adopted a 2-part approach, aimed at obtaining feedback through a series of module and post-programme evaluation for all delegates, and interviews with a selection of the delegates inviting them to comment on the programme in light of several evaluative expectations. The module evaluations included delegates' observations of:

- Expectations and learning requirements
- Overall satisfaction with course
- Learning Effectiveness
- Learning Environment
- Business Results including the job impact
- Return on Investment – financial gain
- Quality of support and coaching
- Commentary on most and least useful parts of the course

The interviews also covered similar areas in more depth including:

- Course structure and content
- Impact on the Individual – personal gain
- Impact on the Individual's competence
- Impact in the workplace and working with others
- Support and Coaching
- Impact on the organisation including collaboration and partnership

A programme of pilot analysis was undertaken in order to inform the direction of the research. I had already studied in-depth the research of Stephen Kempster and his notion of the impact of notable people on the development of leadership (Kempster 2009). Quoting from the research of McCall who had identified that management learning occurred in up to 80% of the time through key experiences in the work place and up to 20% of the learning came from contact with notable people (Kempster 2009), I am again attracted to the experience of the individual. In order to test out a methodology to research the phenomenon of Leadership Development – it was decided to 'track' a number of the delegates for twenty minutes every fortnight to three weeks and for them to tell a story related to the period of learning they had been undergoing. At first the responses were fairly muted and only focussed on issues related to specific aspects of the course that were being articulated elsewhere in the evaluative process. This was odd because the research of Kempster (2009) suggested that leadership development occurs when individuals can experience notable occurrences or notable people. His findings were based on interviews he had undertaken with managers who were undergoing leadership development. Was the impact of programme not alerting the delegates/candidates to these ideas of notable people or notable occurrences stimulating learning? Interviews undertaken at the end of the programme with the seven delegates who had been sponsored by the Social Services Improvement Agency led to a greater insight into the impact of the programme. In particular one delegate was

able, unprompted, to re-tell a story of a notable person who had had significant impact on her leadership development. (For detailed transcript: See Page 9 of Appendix One).

#### **1.7.4 Integra Community Living Options Limited**

The Integra leadership development programme commenced in December 2009 and sought to underline and support various management and leadership competencies. The company managers were being encouraged to be positive and more committed to the community causes that broadly speaking dictated the company ethos. The skill base of the managers needed both leadership development and coaching support so that they increasingly offered solutions not problems. It was the wish of the Integra Board that the leadership developed should be an open discussion that sought to share problems as they arose and that this ought to be accomplished early on and before company problems and challenges got out-of-hand. Integra required its managers to display leadership in keeping with the idea of them being ambassadors for the service, ensuring that the managers expressed leadership utilising words and body language that were both professional and sensitive to the needs of the team. This meant that the managers led by example and, in doing so, became a positive role model for all staff in shaping these expectations. The managers in a leadership role were expected to be responsible for all client and staff-related issues, including even when the interaction was shared with central team, having full responsibility for ensuring agreed actions occurred. In being an active member of the wider Integra team the manager, re-cast as a leader, had to help to make the home team to feel part of the wider team. Open discussions regarding leadership style were held with staff and, through encouraging discussion, the managers were more likely to be able to review own role in the home. Coaching others, with their newly acquired skills, to identify potential problems and understand how they could generate solutions and turn problems into opportunities was seen to be a way of distributing leadership throughout the organisation.

Two transcripts from pilot coaching sessions with the same middle manager between November and December 2009 revealed a high level of attachment to the theory of notable people. It was the same interviewee who consistently reflected on each coaching session as the sessions progressed into 2010. The leadership development intervention required a close attention to the context and history of the company and this particular delegate. Using, with permission, the transcript of the coaching sessions at various coaching training events, allowed for a multiplicity of views about the interactions to take place. Strong reliance on the coach and the coaching system was reflected upon; the role of notable people and notable occurrences seemed a very important method to access positive leadership in its own right. The way in which leadership development is keenly linked to narrative further identified self-

awareness and the role of the individual and individuality as being key to leadership development in middle managers.

### **1.7.5 Swansea University MBA programme**

The detailed timetable shaped the morning to respond to the need of the fairly new, mainly overseas, Masters in Business Administration (MBA) students. The morning's activities were designed to help to interpret the results of a Mental Toughness questionnaire (MT48). The activities were designed to build on the combined effects of confidence, personal insight self-belief as well as to fit in with the overall aims of the weekend to help the students' work through, and experience, in a practical way, theoretical ideas about team-working. The morning's workshop was designed to encourage personal reflection. Once again there was emphasis on the narrative and the search for notable occurrences that would enrich learning and reflection.

The leadership development programme was designed to cover four hours' work both in indoor and outdoor sessions. At the beginning of the morning the students were asked for their name and a word that summed up what they were thinking about leadership at that precise time. Some the English speaking capability was variable but the words used ranged from 'cold' (it was a cold Welsh mountain morning) through 'excited' to 'anxious'.

A power-point presentation was then talked through and the theoretical basis for Mental Toughness was outlined and an interactive question, experience and answer session followed. The students were then given their individual Mental Toughness development report generated by their response to the computer generated psychometric test.

The students were encouraged to read through and begin to understand their reports over a cup of coffee before we transferred to a different room where they students were encouraged to work in groups of three. The chairs were set out in threes like a shamrock and the threes had ten minutes per person (eight minutes being interviewed, with two minutes reserved for feedback by one of the three acting as an observer.) This allowed for each person to be interviewed, be the interviewer and to act as an observer. The observers were, at the end of the whole process, encouraged to feed back to the main group. This felt as if it gave a greater resonance to the group learning and the core leadership skills of questioning and listening were given a thorough airing. This exercise gave each participant time to ponder and reflect on the insight gained by the Mental Toughness psychometric questionnaire.

Another quick break was taken and the group was led out to the space in front of the farmhouse to stand in a circle in the late morning, with its lukewarm sunshine. The

facilitators had noticed that the main areas of concern exposed by the questionnaire were areas of challenge and confidence. The rules of a story-circle (See Appendix Eight) were explained and the group of eighteen was encouraged to self-select two groups of nine.

Two simultaneous circles were conducted with two and a half minutes per story undertaken with everybody, other than the story-teller, standing in silence, listening. One group was asked to tell a story about a challenge and the other group about confidence. Both topics came from the hearing of key words in the 'group-of-three-exercise'. This was a very powerful experience for the delegates and facilitators alike with the learning focussing on the individual experience and groups self-facilitating key points. This served to provide periods of input, activity and reflection. Once again, the use of narrative; in this example, the use of a two and a half minute story circle, seemed to provoke a deeper attachment to the learning in both a group and individual sense, whereby the iterative nature of story-telling formed the basis for the programme facilitators' reflection about the power of an individual narrative.

The theory of the primacy of individuals is entangled in the interactions on the variously described programmes (pages 34 to 41). More questions begged more action:

1. What is the role of the outdoors in the development of leadership?
2. What role has the shape in which people work in creating better and more instructive dialogue?
3. What can be learnt from the revealing of personal examples and stories that aid both leadership development in the individual and in the group?

#### **1.7.6 Nottingham City Council Leadership Development programme**

In December 2009 I started a programme of research with a colleague which looked at a key area within a new programme of level 5 & Level 3 within the same City Council. Five interviews were conducted on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 with senior stakeholders; these were paid individuals who played a key role in the design, delivery and outcome of the programme. The research, which was supported by the Institute of Leadership and Management, sought to understand the role of course design and delegate participation in the growth of leadership at middle management level. Three researchers met frequently to discuss the findings and, in particular, mused about the significance of older memories that were triggered by a reflective narrative linked to the concept of notable people and notable occurrences already outlined by Stephen Kempster' 2009 research. Some examples of the questions raised through this researcher-led debate that was conducted over several day-long discussions (and which has led to further product development work in 2013 around



materials and workshop designs in middle manager leadership development) were:

1. What is the significance of older memories to the understanding of leadership issues?
2. What does narrative reveal that is less commonly revealed through more didactic approaches to leadership development?
3. How can leadership developers capture the learning encapsulated in narrative and the practice of reflexivity?

Even this preliminary part of research, that came under an action learning banner, developed and created new knowledge (McNiff 2013) of how and why different designs of leadership development programme are more likely, at the very least, to engage the delegates more. This raises the possibility of the interventions becoming more impactful in the workplace (For detail, please see attached final report as Appendix Two).

Various reflective processes, such as reflectivity processes which included walks and silent reflection, were mediated by the six pre-research programmes and this led to a simplification of the research questions to:

*How do middle managers benefit from formal leadership development programmes?*

*What are the key factors to include in a programme in order to maximise the opportunities for leadership development amongst managers who are in the middle of organisational hierarchy?*

However, practical leadership development ideas do not exist in isolation. In the past, these ideas been heavily influenced by grand theories and popularist versions of theory distilled from a wide mixture of empirical research but also of academic thoughts and the development of 'trendy' theory and ideas. Many models have captured the popular organisational imagination, such as the notion of transformation and transactional behaviours or the promulgated ideas of leadership versus management in popular management press and journalistic opinion (Clark 2013).

## 1.8 Eight Significant Theories outlined

In order to identify some guiding theories, this next part of the opening chapter will articulate eight mainstream theories in order to allow the reader to navigate around this deep, complex and challenging discipline. Alongside many other abstract human activities, leadership is a very complex topic. From the wide range of leadership literature, I have decided to focus on these aspects because they illustrate, in a rounded way, many sides of the leadership debate and open up more modern approaches to leadership development that warrant further investigation. Such a plethora of texts precludes detailed analysis and renders a complete view of the research material and any resultant textbook ideas fairly improbable (Grint 2005a; Storey 2011), given time the research and study restraints linked to this thesis. Each model and theory sheds some light upon the work of middle managers and their interactions. This initial focus on eight relevant models and theories prepares the reader for the more thorough literature review in Chapter Two. The eight theories outlined below are stakeholder theory, complexity theory, emotional intelligence, diversity theory, aesthetic leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership and situational leadership.

The first idea is Stakeholder Theory (Freedman 1994 Mitchell et al. 1997; Phillips 2003,). This encourages a more diverse way to view business and to understand a wider view point, suggesting that leaders should not focus purely on a concern for maximising shareholder wealth, but rather should look beyond immediate financial concerns to integrate a wider range of stakeholders (for example: staff, local community, governments and the environment) into their planning. Such approaches would take into account moral and ethical dilemmas and influence decision making in difficult areas such as carbon neutral trading, environmental issues and the need to look at promoting sustainable communities.

Secondly, Complexity (or Chaos) Theory (Cilliers 1998), (Care needs to be taken with these words as chaos and complexity are seen by most as linked but different words and certainly not synonymous) has immediate resonance with the reality of the world we live in in 2012. Moreover, the working world encompassed by leadership is also complex and potentially chaotic. (Denison 2001, Collinson 2006). The theory takes the contextual approach of contingency theory (Spillane 2005) which is that the situation is all important, and extends it to argue that, in the context of leadership, the leader is governed only by the sheer uncertainty of chaos and has therefore two main stark choices (Spillane 2005, p.149). Leadership can adapt to the chaos as it arises, and this has some difficulties for a middle-ranking manager in a large complex organisation, or leadership can attempt to impose order upon that chaos. There are dangers in the rationalisation of situations into reductionist dyads and I do not agree with the view that the options for the leader are as stark as Schneider and

his colleagues (Schneider 2006) pre-suppose. The reality of complex and chaotic worlds is such that the development interventions for the acquiring of leadership skills should not, in their approaches, be either simplistic or reductionist (For more detail: see the methodology chapter, Chapter four).

Thirdly, the field of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Chernice 2000; Palmer et al. 2001) has much to say about leadership. Daniel Goleman (1996) argues that E.I. is a much more important set of skills and attributes than Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.). A leader, or a manager exhibiting sound leadership skills, who demonstrates a high degree of emotional self-awareness, particularly in four key categories – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill – is more likely to be successful as an individual and as a manager or leader or within leadership. These theoretical developments include a description of the type of behaviours envisaged in the model of relational leadership. The leader has to focus on communication processes throughout the organisation and this includes ‘relational’ perspectives outside of the norm. Good leadership in an emotionally-intelligent manner is predicated on developing good communication skills and systems to lead services in today’s complex and partnership environment. Relationships should be nurtured and maintained at all levels of the organisation in a way that is wholly sincere and sustainable. The picture of leadership development will be further explained by the deeper examination of the fourth and fifth leadership theories/models catalogued above. The development of older models based on research and refinement, particularly those engaged in the differences between the transformational and transactional behaviours of leaders and managers, have become linked together in newer theories of leadership (Bolden et al. 2003). This emergent theory base has grown. The emergent theory much more closely reflects challenges that are relevant to the ones facing leaders in the similarly complex organisations that have been the focus of this early literature review and expansion of ideas. Theories four and five, Diversity Theory (Lumby 2006; Lumby and Coleman 2007) and Aesthetic Leadership (Schroeder 2008), have been selected, as examples of ideas that have particular importance in the continuing debate about leadership and how leadership relates to the development of middle managers.

Diversity Theory reveals that the predicted behaviour of leaders is to recruit in their own image, which leads to the growth of an organisation that is diminished by a reduction of the types of ways it can respond to immediate challenges. This has echoes of both Dr Meredith Belbin’s work (Bolden et al 2003) and the notion of ‘Group Think’ which famously led to examples from such diverse organisations as National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) linked to the Challenger Disaster, the American Navy (Pearl Harbour) and, more immediately, the present credit-crunch issues and the loss of huge companies

such as Lehman Brothers. A reduction in the company 'gene pool', by diluting the diversity of the workforce, further undermines the ability of the organisation to monitor and analyse itself objectively. Diversity Theory articulates in favour of continual attempts to recruit leaders, managers and staff with differing outlooks, temperaments and skills to avoid an over-complacent, inward-looking organisation. Chapter two will introduce some further ideas on how differences within teams can be complementary; moreover, different approaches to leadership can enhance the efficacy of an organisation's efforts.

Another way of trying to understand the development of leadership is through the theoretical lens of aesthetic leadership and perhaps Barack Obama is an immediate example of this (Obama 2006). The model seeks to explain an aesthetic perception of leaders, which in turn relates to many aspects of social influence which a successful leader must achieve. Social influence requires engagement of the senses and a focus on the experiential way in which social influence and successful leadership is gained. People who follow leaders develop perceptions of a leader's ability based how much they feel that the leader is genuine. This perception is based on the implicit meaning of the message, or quiet or hidden assumptions and emotions.

Two writers who were instrumental in perceiving the change in the way leadership and management were viewed were Burns and Bass who identified the notion of transactional and transformational behaviours. Stewart, in 2009, emphasised this in her recent action learning paper. This differentiation was made clearer when research (Bass and Avolio 1994, Alimo-Metcalfe 2005) led to the identification of transformational and transactional behaviour. This in turn, led to the view that to be a successful leader the manager would have to learn to be more transformational in character. Burns was one of the first who looked at charismatic leaders and thought that this sort of leader had the ability to raise the performance of followers. In addition, Burns (reported in Alimo-Metcalfe 2005) suspected that the followers would be encouraged to make self-induced changes that would turn them into leaders. Burns believed that the qualities of transactional behaviour and transformational leadership were at either end of a spectrum. Research by (Bass 1985; Bass 1990) refuted that assertion by Burns indicating that the behaviours involved in transaction and transformation were both independent and complementary.

A further development (Blake and Mouton 1964) was to look at the way in which human concern, and the concern for production, could be titrated against these two conceptual dimensions. However none of the theories really gave any clue as to how the leader might behave other than he (and it was then, normally, he) would need to treat situations differently dependent on a number of different factors such as type of task, local environment, team

dynamics and people. Situational Theory then developed to try to explain the way in which the leader might behave in order to optimise the input of the leader. (Fiedler 1970; Hersey and Blanchard 1997). Hersey and Blanchard suggested that as an employee matured and become more trustworthy and independent, then the leadership style of the manager needed to be more supportive and less authoritative.

Beneath these over-arching models detailed above lies research that seeks to explain the important elements or aspects of relevant leadership theory. These research findings can be applied to the long-term development of individuals to equip them for the challenges facing organisational leadership.

Prior to the research programme being undertaken, four distinct leadership behaviour areas: vision, challenge, engagement and acknowledgement of self that might be significant in the design and development of leadership programmes for middle managers, were isolated from current research (Kling 2001; Burgoyne, Hirsh and Williams 2004; Wales Management Council 2008). This links to the final grand theory covered, that of authentic leadership. The initial literature search suggested that the behaviours associated with the linked areas of vision, challenge, engagement and acknowledgement of self, have potential for positive inclusion into development design that would potentially enhance and improve the existing skill base of the participants.

Research suggests, strongly, that this self-presentation (Klenke 2007, Alimo-Metcalfe 2009), within the context in which the leadership is enacted, is a key attribute for a leader, and those exhibiting leadership, to possess. Once again this is based on three principles which have echoes of many of the 21<sup>st</sup> century theories and examinations of leadership traits. These three principles are posed as questions:

1. Does the leader have mastery of his or her self-image; understand how presentation and behaviour, in a specific context, have to be dealt with as they are happening?
2. Is the leader's message coherent?
3. Is leadership expressed in way that matches with the exposed purpose and overall message?

It is therefore crucial, for a company or organisation to be successful, that there is a feeling of authentic leadership created through developing the right image, in order to project the most appropriate presence to employees and partners. For a leader, recognising that one's image as a leader can convey a great deal, is very important, as stakeholders can make erroneous assumptions about leadership authenticity from what they see and hear.

In his book, *The Leadership Mystique*, Manfred Kets de Vries, (2001) coined the term 'authentizotic' organisation to describe the sort of organisation that would be fit for coping with turbulent times. The Greek roots of the expression confirm his meaning (authentic – 'based on fact' and zoteekos approximating to 'vital for living'). These organisations, he postulated therefore, take a more humanistic approach to leadership, which helped to explain the growing call for leadership skills to be disseminated throughout an organisation, not just vested in the leader/leaders at the top of the managerial hierarchy. Characteristics of this activity within the organisation are suggested as being centred on a leader needing to create a sense of purpose and allow, in that purpose, a degree of self-determination. The development of purpose and self-determination, the argument continued, prepare the leaders for the development of sense of their and their team's impact and competence. Kets de Vries (2001) postulated, importantly, that it is how those leadership attributes are acted out that counts towards, what he called, a sense of shared values.

It is argued by some that this development of leaders and leadership within organisations cannot be undertaken in isolation or for only a few in the upper echelons of an organisation. Indeed the development must be seen as long term (Mole 2011), the job of all, but with the vision of a steering team, and have in-built, mechanisms for releasing tensions and creating positive changes for all (Nutt and Backoff 2000); as Nutt and Backoff suggested:

*'A transformation is more likely when leaders delegate these activities to a development team. The team, aided by a facilitator, finds issue tensions, uncovers win-win actions for these tensions, and creates a change circle to implement the vision of what the organisation wants to become.'* (p 382)

Alongside the transformation would emerge the sort of leader for the future, Beatty and Ulrich, in 1991, had predicted and they called for a shift of development emphasis in order to produce:

*'...a third type of leader, the leader of the future, is one who is a designer of work, a teacher, and a supporter of change – in essence, the ultimate change agent companies have been alluding to for years but is seldom seen represented.'* (p 471)

Middle managers have, in the past, largely been transactional (Kotter 1990, Argyris 1998 and Yang 2011 ) in their approaches to work due to bureaucratic and hierarchical structures and they have not been able to expand easily into work that carries its own autonomy. This transactional behaviour has been joined with the notion of more transformational behaviour that gives the middle manager more managerial skills and a softer, more human sort of approach to managerial leadership and organisational challenges. The new middle manager

is evolving into a new sort of leader – a future leader (Palmer et al 2001) - who can, by the long-term accumulation of skills that include self-determination, active listening skills and a more people-focused approach (Pedler 2008) be more effective in the workplace. Organisations seek to accomplish this transition but fail to invest enough and for long enough into the leadership development skills needed at the appropriate level for an effective period of time, sufficient to enact a change.

How could this shift to a new predominant view of leadership be better enacted in development practice for middle managers? The research question seeks to answer a growing awareness of how middle managers may benefit from development programmes and urges the focus on a maximisation of the opportunities for them to do so. The conceptual gap lies between the current understanding of the role of leadership in organisations and the attention the facilitators and course designers pay to individual's history, inclinations and individuality.

The final concluding section of this opening chapter draws together some key strands of this on-going debate and prepares the ground for a more detailed review of the literature in chapter two.

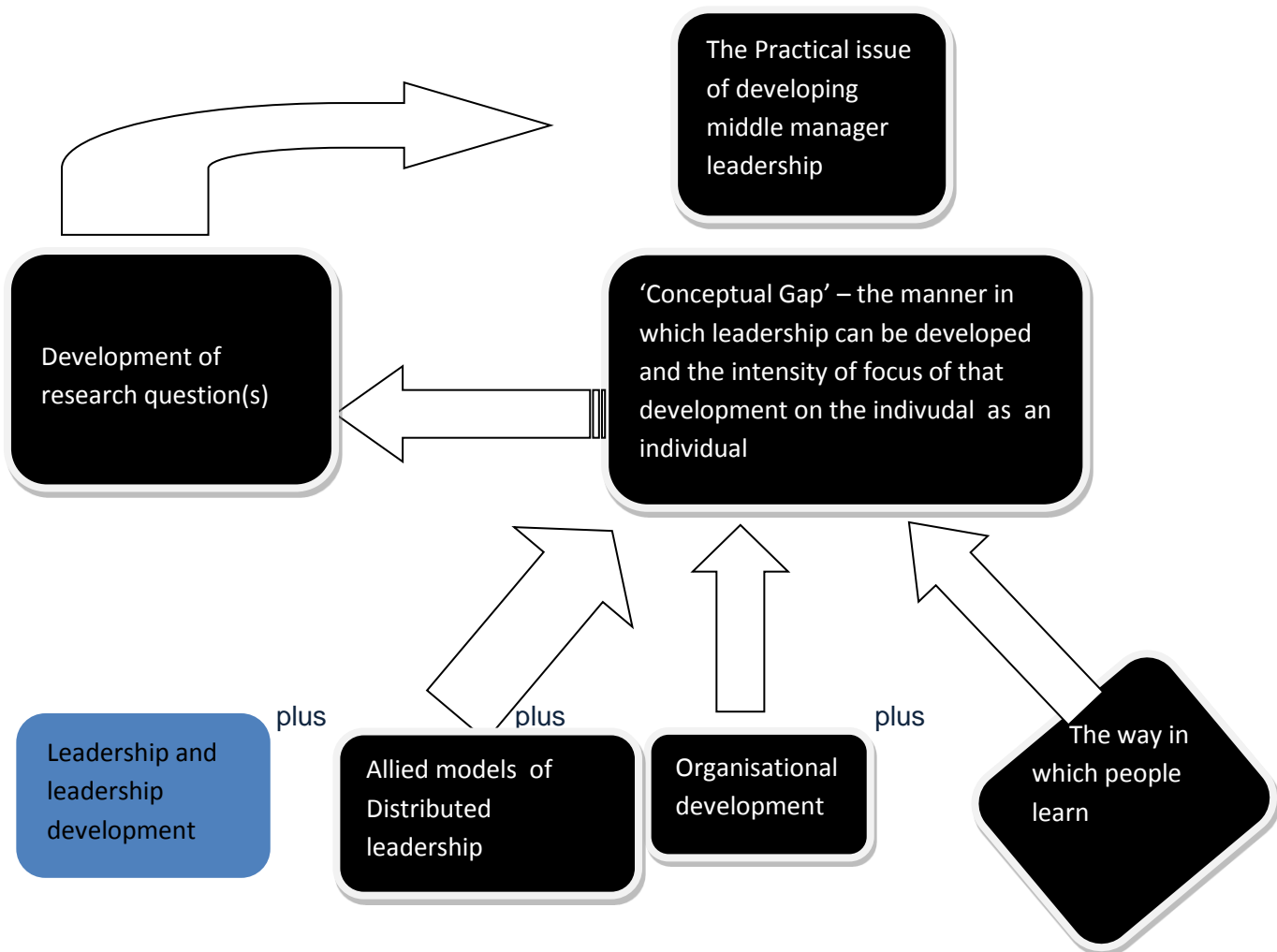
## **1.9 Conclusion**

The initial process of examining the subject of leadership development for middle managers has been to use public service within Wales/Cymru as proxy for any other large organisation. Indeed much of the work that has been undertaken in public service in Wales/Cymru has revealed some of the many different approaches that can be taken to leadership development, from Institute-led qualifications through to coaching and mentoring, from University and post-graduate programmes to innovative interventions for specific sectors and policy areas. The Public Service provision can be treated as a microcosm of part of a large and complex organisation where many of the managers require significant leadership skills (Wales, Department for Education and Skills 2008). The drive for skills enhancement (exemplified by the accreditation work of The Institute of Leadership and Management's work in establishing European-wide leadership qualifications) is pushing through some very ambitious policy initiatives linked to co-production and co-design of services within a significantly different public service world with the citizen being centre stage.

The framework of the research is represented in Figure One. Figure one refers to the various conceptual fields that influenced the development of this study focus. For example, a leadership concept named as distributive leadership provides a key focus. Distributed leadership was initially conceptualised by Gronn (2003), its importance re-emphasised by

Collinson (2006) and yet further developed by Kempster and his colleagues (2010). Furthermore Spillane (2005, 2006) applied distributive theories of leadership as applied to the leadership in schools and then further developed and applied leadership theory rooted in the field of education.

Figure one (below) illustrates the combined approach of a robustly formulated research plan with an overtly practical end-point (the more effective design of leadership programmes).



**Figure One: Approaches to develop the aims and questions of the research**

In summary, therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of current leadership development programmes and direction would lead to a better understanding of the needs of those staff in all large complex organisations, noticing that leadership itself is dependent on context, the individual situation (For empirical research around the difference and similarities



regarding introversion/extraversion in humans see data in Cain 2012) and the self-awareness of the leader (Karakas and Kavas 2008).

Secondly, the study will also be able to gain a greater insight into the three central factors that influence the efficacy of leadership itself. By studying the impact of individuality on leadership, the relative desirability of the workshop approach against a more individualised approach to developments (such as coaching or mentoring) should become clear. A more precise understanding of how best to provide those development opportunities will further shape the work of human resources departments.

Discovering more about the impact of the context upon the development of leaders or managers who require improved leadership skills will allow staff in training departments and human resources directorates of complex organisations to learn if a wider variety of programmes are necessary in order to more closely ally skill developments to various organisational sectors that are visibly different in nature and culture.

The more recent theories articulated in the first chapter indicate that there is a lot to be gained by facilitating learning about leadership to the more self-aware and precipitating an individual awareness in those seeking leadership skills. This study will shed light upon the concept of distributed leadership and the role of the individual in developing leadership skills to make it more likely that distribution can occur. It will constitute another part of an overall picture in helping large, complex organisations to find ways in which, as part of development, key staff can be taught greater self-awareness to the benefit of the organisation.

Chapter two now follows, which offers a detailed critical evaluation of the theoretical context for this thesis.

## **The Literature Search and a Wider Academic View of Leadership Development.**

### **2.0 Introduction**

Trying to draw parallels between countries and cultures, between public and private sectors, irrespective of any dynamic changes within the organisation, environment or society is fraught with difficulty. Current reflections on the role of a leader, such as the notion of a facilitative leader, have given rise to issues of tension and potential conflict between one role, and style, and the more traditional responsibilities and accountabilities of a leader. Furthermore, the leader at a team level will be uniquely placed to attend to such issues as proclivity (regularity) and the building of confidence (Strauss 2009) which makes it more likely that the organisational leaders can meet their aims and objectives. Distribution of leadership throughout the organisation raises the promise that local leaders will be better informed and in a more positive manner be able to remedy and motivate any employee (Gronn 2002).

Leadership development is crucial (Iles and Sutherland 2010)) and is often considered to be an important factor in accelerating the responses to the needs of modern society. Various theories have been developed in the past 20 years that attempt to simplify and codify what that leadership is. However more recent research activities (Joyce 2004) have revealed a much more complex situation and sets of circumstances that demand a new approach to leadership development, particularly in reluctant individuals and organisations.

The development of leaders has long intrigued writers although there has been a lack of depth in the way in which this has been examined. (Rooke and Torbert 2005).

From the design of the programme and the establishing of the ontological and epistemological standpoint it was important to choose the most effective means of data collection. The established approach taken for data collection on the large group of delegates has been using a case history with multiple complementary methods. The analysis of the interviews has been undertaken by close inspection of the texts by focusing on the words and phrases used in responses elicited both formally and informally, those occurring from structured discussion and those arising spontaneously. Other observations and interview/narrative data was used to triangulate the findings with sections of the original text interspersed with researcher observations and interpretations. Although there may be an argument to suggest that what people might say in a less spontaneous way is more measured, people's initial words and comments purvey important things about what they think, as in these initial utterances have a more authentic feel. This emphasis on dialogue is similar to the unmediated dialogue utilised as 'imbizo' by the current South African Government (Gouden 2009).

It was important to show that insight can be developed from a case history approach in the tradition of Yin (2003) and yet, at the same time, provide examples of experimental approach that do not 'strangle' or constrain the data through over-analysis or zealous coding and researcher-led typologies (Eisenhardt 1989).

Another component of the research was work undertaken by Kempster (2009) who used a methodology that is based on the observation that many successful managers can re-tell their story as a part of a time-line. This is the way in which periods of time are ear-marked for particular scrutiny as part of an memory based interview or a discreet period of time, in this case, the length of the programme from induction to assignment completion. The time-line has, embedded within it, discrete anchor points related to notable people and notable occurrences.

In chapter one, there were eight theories outlined: stakeholder theory, complexity theory, emotional intelligence, diversity theory, aesthetic leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership and situational leadership and these grand theories helped to capture the general theoretical trends in leadership theory. Rather like the tendrils of a jellyfish, the main body of theory hides a complex array of other underlying concepts and ideas that were investigated and teased out in the literature review of chapter two. This chapter will review and critique the past and current debates in the leadership literature and help to expose the interrelated tendrils. This review will therefore provide a detailed backdrop which builds on Chapter One and helps to position my research both in terms of the conceptual gap articulated in Figure One and helps to begin to distil the strands of literature that shed light upon leadership, development and middle management. In this chapter greater use will be made of empirical data. This use is as opposed to grand theory as a means of mediating the tendency, seen in management magazines and some non-academic leadership texts, whilst developing ideas around leadership development, of using only popularist notions of leadership or 'trendy' themes and ideas from major academics. An example of this trend can be seen in the articles published by the Institute of Leadership and Management's bi-monthly 'Edge' membership magazine. The five sections of this chapter provide a tangible thread, a bridge, between Chapter One and the methodology in Chapter Three and the research findings in chapter four. Section One provides an introduction and links directly to Chapter One, describing the framework of the literature review and outlines debates, the arguments and the issues to date. Section One also establishes some pointers towards definitions of the categories involved in leadership, management and development. Section Two provides the detailed evidence of a critical and wide-ranging literature review undertaken between March 2009 and January 2012. The data examined in Section Two is gleaned from both public and private sector ensuring a broad sweep of the literature.

Section three develops an even tighter focus on the link between learning and the development of leadership skills, leadership approaches and working around the tensions involved in leadership. The literature review finishes section four with a conclusion, and reflections on the process undertaken.

## **2.1 Section One**

### **2.1.1 Approaches to the Critical Literature Review**

As this thesis is written as an action research document, the development of ideas was on a cyclical basis and much of the literature review built on practice ideas and the use of theoretical development ideas in a live setting. Returning to the literature on a frequent basis re-invigorated those practical ideas and provided a source of reflection and energy to the research. One key direction was orientated within the work of Mary Uhl-bien (Uhl-bien 2006, 2007) and the idea of relational leadership and the importance of social and narrative construction in a complex and changing setting. Leadership development and leadership in general, is an extensively researched phenomenon and, given its wide appeal in business, public service and politics, as well as the sporting world, it is not surprising that papers and academic books are continuously published. (Collinson 2006; Grint 2005a). Amazon UK, at the end of May, 2012 had 22,812 titles, which include the word leadership in it, on its website. The selection of various leadership development strands and topics has been utilised, partly, to represent the development of leadership ideas through the decades and partly to forge the subsequent link to the changing face of leadership development, which is occurring in an organic manner through topics that catch the public imagination.

I will then turn my focus to the definition of leader, leadership, development and middle management, the drawing of core parameters moving onto the methodology and the development of the research proposition. This chapter also covers what is traditionally understood as leadership, including the history of leadership, the role of leadership theories on organisational development and the other, disturbing side of leadership, termed by some as the 'dark side' (Hogan and Hogan 2001) of the leadership debate. This literature review conducts a comprehensive treatment of the most current leadership theories that are critically related to the development of leadership skills.

### **2.1.2 Defining Leader, Leadership, Development and Middle Management**

There has been some agreement about the differences between leadership and management (Kotter 1990). This view, that there are marked differences in leadership and management, that sees the two qualities almost as being two opposites, two sides of the

same coin (Kotter 1990), is still being repeated in other papers (Stewart et al. 2009). Burgoyne, in 2002, suggested that the importance of leadership in the current times of unpredictability, rapid change and complexity means that most people in organisations need to display the qualities of both. In practice, the roles of management and leadership overlap considerably in the function of one person and the reality of the new challenges require people to master both sets of skills and to know how to use them interchangeably (Bolden 2006). There is an argument that leadership is not a permanent feature of any job and that team managers/leaders/co-ordinators must keep a good balance between task achievement, group dynamics and individual development (Armstrong 2004).

There are many definitions of leaders, leadership development and middle management, with many different starting points and considerable potential overlaps. The use of quoted definitions is a type of heuristic device which seeks to simplify complex abstract ideas into 'codes' - more simply stated concepts which have the power to help with reflected practice. For clarity and focus, the concept of leaders, leadership and development, the 'scaffolding' of this thesis, will be broadly covered by the following definitions.

The search for a universally accepted definition of a leader has been elusive, (Bass, 1990) despite over 26,000 articles in 2006 about leaders and leadership being available to study (Winston and Patterson 2006). Many writers (for examples see: Karakus and Kavus 2008, Iles and Sutherland 2010) propose that context is important for leaders to thrive. In addition, there is an assertion that employees are looking for leadership (O'Driscoll, Allan and Smith 2010) and have views on what competencies are the most effective in motivating and encouraging staff members (Wales Management Council). Winston and Patterson have revealed through intensive research, a series of definitions:

*'A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organisation's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission and objectives. (2006 p. 2.)*

This definition is part of a longer, more in-depth definition and it does succeed in exposing some of the key thoughts about the scope of a leader's work. The key notions here are the relationship between the leader and the followers, the link to the context in which leadership is then enacted (organisational mission and objectives) and the idea of concerted and co-ordinated efforts of teams of people in which leadership is jointly held.

Chemers, (1997) and Burke (2002) defined leadership as a social process, where one person, not necessarily at the top of an organisation, is able to persuade and join together

others in the achievement of something they all have in common. Grint (2007) identified, through his research, the idea that leadership was very complex as intra- and inter-personal issues mix with environmental factors in an organisation. Such factors will always be particular to the organisation and its culture. In addition, leadership is influenced by both contextual elements of organisational culture as well as being highly idiosyncratic and individual. Elements of the culture inform the responses of the organisation (Bolden 2006).

A more general point can be made about leadership by looking at the many names given to the leadership movement. Often this naming of leadership, such in this next example, 'charismatic leadership' provides a way of delineating this vast topic into manageable chunks. Whilst not being perfect, Klein and House's 1995 definition of leaders, in an article about charismatic leaders, provides a valid point of reference for this research by suggesting that what sets some leaders apart from others is:

*'Charisma is a fire that ignites followers' energy, commitment and performance. Charisma resides not in a leader, nor in a follower, but the **relationship** (emphasis in original text) between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma...'* (Abstract)

However the complexities of the role of a leader, in whatever sphere, and the changes in focus about leadership in the past five years (Bolden 2006, Hosking 2006, Kwanjai 2011, Grint 2008 and Harle 2009), make the definition of a leader quite challenging. By looking at other sectors, in a global context, requiring the skills of leadership whose academic commentators set about developing concepts of leadership and the development of leadership, there can be a very simplistic feel to the role of a leader. The role of leadership, complex and multi-faceted can, too easily, be trivialised (simplified) by definitions. Spillane, for example, writing from the aspect of leadership in the educational field, somewhat unhelpfully, describes leaders as people that:

*'...typically have interaction (sic) with others. They also have interaction with aspects of the situation including a variety of tools, routines, and structures.'* (2005 p.144)

This definition is not very illuminating as most people in a work setting have interactions with others and many people, outside of a prescribed leadership role, would also have interactions with many aspects of any particular organisation.

For this literature search the definition of leadership, used by Schein, is much more helpful:

*'Leadership comes to be seen as a shared set of activities rather than a single person's trait, and a sense of ownership of group outcomes arises'* (2010 p. 210).

But at the same time Schein's definition opens up other questions about those who choose (by inclination or by choice) work within cultures to get work objectives accomplished.

Ernest Shackleton (in Morrell and Capparell 2001) also reflected that leadership is a potentially daunting role to take up:

*'Leadership is a fine thing, but it has its penalties. And the greatest penalty is loneliness' (p. 215)*

Perhaps a final word on the topic of leadership definition could be accomplished by adopting a more critical approach adapted from a standpoint of critical theory and postmodernism. Alvesson and Deetz recommend a more radical starting point when referring to leadership:

*'We feel that it is important to move from abstract, general categories and efforts to standardize meaning towards an increased focus on local patterns, where cultural and institutional context and meaning creation patterns are driven by participants – or jointly by participants and researchers – rather than being onesidely, indeed authoritarily, decided by the researcher.'* (2000 p. 59)

Grint's assertion that leadership is so complex and so dependent on circumstance that it cannot appear in a purest empirical form, renders his alternative questions as helpful (bullet points and italics as original text):

- *Leadership as position: it is where 'leaders operate that makes them leaders*
- *Leadership as person: is it who 'leaders' are that makes them leaders*
- *Leadership as result: is it what 'leaders' achieve that makes them leaders?*
- *Leadership as process: is it how 'leaders' get things done that makes them leaders?' (2010 p.4)*

Defining leadership is therefore very challenging for practitioner and researchers alike, the next part of this section looks at the development of leadership,

### **2.1.3 Development of leadership**

Development of leadership is sometimes confused with the development of leaders or managers (Day 2000) as researchers and development specialists confuse and conflate leaders with leadership. The development of leaders, Day contends, is one associated with the development of human capital, and two, my focus of interest, the development of leadership, is linked to the development of social capital. Kempster (2009) maintains that development is not only about the formal structures of development programmes but also about recognising journeys of development that encompass elements of accidental learning and learning of a more formal nature. Empirical research in the English Public Health Service suggests that there is a link between incremental learning and organisational performance (Salge & Vera, 2011). A questionnaire-led research programme in a Chinese telecommunication company and a branch of a commercial bank (Yang, Zhang and Tsui) in 2010 also suggests that:

*'...apart from formal education, junior managers' acquisition of leadership skills may come from on-the-job learning.'* (p. 674)

Moreover this journey of development is, for many individuals, depicted as a cyclical or spiral event by Peter Senge, something that has to be undertaken with learning at its core and with a much more radical focus on development. As Senge and Scharmer put it:

*'Researchers there to "study" what is going on are rarely seen as providing much help, so people are not likely to share with them the most important, and problematic, aspects of what is happening. Connecting practitioners' knowledge, much of which is tacit, to developing better theory and method requires a genuine sense of partnership between researcher and practitioner, based on mutual understanding and on embracing each others' goals and needs. This rarely occurs in academic research.'* (1994 p. 10)

The definition of development is well-covered by Sadler-Smith:

*'Development, on the other hand, is less tangible, and is not an 'event' or an input as such: rather it is a result of the process of learning and may be a naturalistic process (for example through experience) or supported by training, education and other work-based activities (input to the process)'* (Sadler-Smith 2006 p. 13).

A further added issue about the development of leadership is that it is more than just a training programme (Reynolds 1997) or a restricted learning opportunity. Moreover, the teaching of leadership skills needs a long transition as cognitive changes are established through an extended period of time and exposure of experience in the work place (Lord and Hall 2005):

This idea of leadership taking a long time to develop explicitly illustrates the growing awareness that leadership development is a complicated and complex process (Burgoyne 2002) which requires time, reflection and a deeper understanding of those complexities in order for such skills to emerge and take root.

The development of leadership may be considered not just the sphere of formal education in Universities or as part of an accredited qualification but something that ought to be related to the human condition and an intervention that closely 'hugs', a term used by David Pardey to describe the closeness of development to the actual reality of the work-place, the context in which the leadership is enacted (Pardey 2012).

#### **2.1.4 Middle Management**

I have decided to focus on middle management for reasons that will be articulated in this section of chapter two. Middle management, too, is often a difficult concept to define. Much of this difficulty is the lack of a legal or authoritative definition (Dopson et al 1992) that can be judged against others. Indeed, the role of the middle manager has changed and



developed over the decades and research describes a shifting definition of a broad role that translates very differently within the context of work and the era of that work. Because of this background of constant cultural and corporate change processes I will be content with a broader definition of middle management (Bäckvall 2007):

*'a manager with supervision and performance responsibility, thus including first line supervision all the levels up to department heads.'* (p. 8)

The development of leadership skills should, it is postulated by some (Ogawa and Bossert 1995, Avolio and Gardner 2005, for example), be present within all layers of the organisation as the development of leadership in particular, in the ranks of the middle managers, and is the key to the success of the organisation (Joyce 2004). By contrast, other leadership development, such as that based on the notion of charismatic leaders (Alimo-Metcalfe et al 2002 p.13) can lead to effectively *'emasculating'* the middle manager. Thus lack of power and authority, exemplified by the term *'emasculating'*, and the stripping from the middle manager of a distinct role, can lead on one hand to disillusionment and on the other hand overwork and frustration. Focus on structure or on senior individuals can therefore reduce the impact of leadership development at this level. Middle managers with improved leadership awareness are even more important to organisations with flatter structures; it is suggested (Iles and Sutherland 2001). Over the past two decades, increasing numbers of organisations have moved towards flatter structures, a move away from the hierarchical management structures that depend on communication and instructions moving up and down the 'pyramid'. Largely this has occurred as companies and organisations seek to improve speed of response and reduce the costs of expensive layers of management (Burgoyne, Hirsh and Williams 2004).

There are challenges with the definition of the middle manager (Dopson et al. 1992) that suggest that this is partially because there is no legal definition of any band of management and Dopson and his colleagues relate this to the, then, situation in the United Kingdom.

Lord Denning, quoted by Kolastar, 1994, suggested that the definition of the middle manager should not be too narrowly defined and is the:

*'... person who in the affairs of the company exercises a supervisory control which reflects the general policy of the company for the time being or which is related to the general administration'*(p 9)

The complexity and variety of the middle managers' role further strains the desire to define this organisational concept. In addition, it could be added that middle managers must recruit and develop new managers in order to facilitate succession planning. There has, also, to be a key role in communication feedback and appraisal, staff and team development. A middle

manager should understand the principle of the development of management competence and know how to deal with under-performance (Hay Group 2007).

Middle managers have been described as being those at a certain rank or position, whose jobs are going to have to change in order to embrace the new drive to deliver better services for the citizen. (Berg and Fransson 2007). Berg and Fransson contended that many contemporary issues face leaders, leadership and the development of leadership skills, particularly amongst people working at a middle management position (or at least aspiring to work at that level). It is conjectured that the role of a middle manager should, though not exhaustively, have the following elements (Inutsikt 2003) in the work that they undertake. They should develop and appoint managers, induce and appraise new staff, be a strong motivator and deal with, through a fair appraisal system, underperformers.

There is a convincing message (Alimo-Metcalf 2009) arising from research that the development of leadership skills in middle managers is not as easy as it sounds. There are tensions between the development of individuals and the maintenance of the status quo of organisations. Freeing people to take on more or, at least, their perception of more, in terms of new skills can lead to a loss of motivation (Hockey et al. 2000) and a strong sense of hopelessness. Oddly this appears to be despite the term 'leadership skill' being closely allied to creating an organisational approach that encompasses learning and personal growth (Joyce 2004). Managing this tension can be a very strong challenge and causes anxiety and stress (Walsh and McLoughlin 2007) for those used to a more hierarchical approach at a time when decisions have to be made at a greater speed.

It has long been realised that animals can experience anxiety when moved out of the environment with which they are familiar (Yerkes & Dobson 1907). In the business world it was Charles Handy, (Handy 1994) who recognised that movement (i.e. progress) in learning can only be achieved through the transition between two states, through a space of disquiet and relative anxiety. Handy, his book, *The Hungry Spirit* (1997), also referred to the development of apathy in learning:

*I have argued that life, for most people, is a process of discovery – of who we are, what we can do, and, ultimately, why we exist and what we believe. It is a circular process, because when we discover what we are capable of and work out why we exist, it changes the way we see ourselves, which can send us off in new directions, discovering new capabilities and new reasons for our existence. This spiralling (sic) journey is the true meaning of lifelong learning, and it remains, for those who pursue it, an endlessly fascinating experience, one which enriches not only the individual but all those around.*

*Those who have tired of the journey, have tired of life. They come across as dull and boring, and can soon infect their friends and colleagues with their apathy. (2002 p. 223)*

This idea has echoes of the liminal space and the way in which people can be guided through transit by a number of rituals and reassurances (Turner 1969, Cousin 2006). Both (Jenner 2009) and (Langkamer 2008) cite the importance of design in taking the delegate into areas where anxiety might be increased but that that anxiety is crucial in guiding someone into an improved state. This remains particularly true of leadership development which better focuses on self-awareness in order to encourage the delegates to steer their own passage across thresholds and through liminal spaces.

This factor of increased anxiety can be matched against the tame and wicked terminology used by Keith Grint. Grint's work (2009) helped to expose the differences between leadership and management where 'tame' problems usually lie with middle managers and 'wicked' problems lie in the jurisdiction of the leader. 'Tame', 'wicked' and 'critical' were initially terms coined by Rittel and Webber in 1973 to signify the difference between problems that require a management role, a leadership role and a commander role, and have more recently been used as headings for a leadership model described by Grint (2009). A particularly interesting 'take' on this new world of leadership has been articulated earlier by Grint (2005) and his melding of two different models. These joined models give rise to the idea that leadership is expressed when the problem is 'wicked'; that is a problem, not a logical puzzle, with no known previous answer. Wicked problems are best solved by asking questions within the organisation that commands more emotional, normative responses that have *'an increased requirement for collaborative, compliance or resolution'* (Grint 2005).

Having now attempted to gain clarity over the definitions of key research areas I will move to a new section which will amount to a critical literature review with links to the conceptual gap detailed in chapter one.

## **2.2 Section Two**

### **2.2.1 Critical Literature Review - Introduction**

Section two details a wide ranging literature review after a brief introduction to processes of fine-tuning the theoretical landscape in order to expose a conceptual gap.

The initial four threads that were created at the inception of the Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) programme for public service in Wales at the, then, University of Glamorgan, now the University of South Wales, were overarching personal issues of leadership and development. Those threads, for this research (circa 2008), were leadership theory, organisational development, chaos and complexity theory and power. These four threads appeared in the initial scoping exercise prior to acceptance on the programme and had been generated through previous pre-study reading and work undertaken for commercial contracts within the public service in Wales/Cymru. Whilst of the literature stemmed from work undertaken in the public sector, and this might be curious to then undertake the research in a private company, the lessons learnt from both sectors is worthy of consideration. Leadership can be viewed of a generic management skill across sectors, both private and public.

Although much of the reviewed literature is following initially wide-ranging topics such as leaders, leadership, organisational development and learning, the eventual focus of the review is to zone into the issues of leadership development amongst middle management staff who do not expressly see themselves as leaders. Initial work on the available papers and academic evidence and literature shifted the focus of search from linking chaos and complexity theory with theories of power in the workplace to the development of learning and organisational development, which is more closely aligned to leadership and leadership skills development, particularly in the context of large organisations. Literature was selected, based on its relevance to leadership development, resulting in a literature review that incorporates papers from a wide range of academic fields.

In this document it is recognised that many organisations, both public and private, are searching for a better formula that would help with more effective ways of developing leaders and promoting leadership throughout organisations (Palmer et al 2001, Bolden et al 2003.) In this context organisations are using leadership and leadership development to promote company survival and growth (Iles and Preece 2006). I concur with the view that individuals within a system have the propensity to change and develop; even within hierarchical systems and that this propensity for development is extremely desirable for the engagement of staff in the development of leadership skills. Alimo-Metcalfe in 1998 thought that the

development of leadership qualities amongst staff is a necessary means of achieving change and the development of the organisation itself. Some doubt, though, if many individuals have the competence or confidence to benefit from development opportunities (Kim 1998). Van der Walle, in 2001, expressed the view that an incremental, longer-term view of individuals suggests that individuals can change and improve in response to identified poor performance. Moreover individuals can learn to cope with changing circumstances by improving their own leadership skills. Kempster (2009) discovered that the recognition of and reflection on, what he called, notable occurrences and notable people. The journey of development can make a significant impact on the development of leadership skills. In this context reflective practice enables some of the great leaps in development and understanding (Senge and Scharmer 2001) and leads to improved reflection.

Pearce, in 2004 noted that the notion of leadership that is dispersed throughout an organisation is not one a manager would naturally recognise as a notion which applies to them. Recent International Business Machines (IBM 2008) research has identified the link between failing to achieve organisational change and the lack of success in changing mind-sets and corporate cultural issues. There are four main ways in which development programmes can fail to optimise their impact on the organisation and the individual. Firstly, not taking into account either the tensions in, or barriers to, the development of leadership in individuals (Lawrence et al 2005), secondly not endeavouring to place leadership development in the context of organisational change, thirdly not supporting individuals as changes are made and finally, Bolden (2007) warned of the need to guard against sending changed people into unchanged organisations.

A further way of describing the role of the middle manager is to formulate competencies that describe ideal behaviour with only a passing reference to the context of the activity. Bolden, (2006), identified that the rigid application of competencies to describe a competent leader is seen to be restrictive rather than enlightening. Grint, (2007) further argues that the focus of development programmes ought to be to develop the individual to work in a way that maximises the chances of them being able to cope with day-to-day as well as extraordinary issues and challenges.

Although much has been made of the earlier social organisational theories, as described by Burrell and Morgan (2000), in attempting to define leadership within organisations, the very rigid frameworks described, for example, by pluralists seeking to describe the many factors in all social situations are unsuitable. This tight theoretical approach is far too mechanistic to be able to describe leadership in the modern day.

### **2.2.2 Leadership and Management: Reviewing the theories**

The theories in this part of section two begin to draw out what is a central theme of this thesis. In a wide-ranging review, the topics covered will be complexity frameworks, the challenges of the development of individuals, the complexity of modern life and those intricacies of the workplace. Work in the University of Exeter has identified a wide variety of leadership styles in western workplaces and a brief examination of the work of David Kolb (1984) reveals how much more contextual and individual learning is compared to his simplistic model. The review also highlights three areas: the regard for the whole person, transformational activities and the acknowledgement, revealed once again, for the individual.

At the start of this research, based on personal experience with groups undergoing leadership development, it was clear that not every participant was a willing participant (see page 34). Although there are many elements to development strategies, such as the empirical studies that suggest that leadership can develop learning and learning develop leadership (Matsuo 2012), more recent research has hinted at a move away from complying with a competency framework (Bolden 2006). This shift has gone towards recognising that those being developed would benefit much more when directed towards the sort of emotional development that occurs through coaching, mentoring and action learning (Bass 1990). The valuing of an individual fits in with the view of other writers (Gardner 2004; Senge 2005; Grint 2005; Jarvis and MacInnes 2008; Grint 2008) who see the development of the individual as a fundamental part of enabling organisations to respond to the pressures of the modern and uncertain world. Leadership development is seen to be a key way in which organisations/sectors and companies move to overcome the challenges imposed by modern ways of working, specifically technology and social attitudes (Grint 2007). It has been suggested that leadership thinking is 'on the move' (Bolden et al, 2006; Harle 2009,) developing more rapidly in understanding with newer ideas permeating practice and understanding.

However some individuals do not see themselves as leaders and are less able or willing to respond to the idea of dispersed leadership throughout the hierarchy. This reluctance to engage in leadership development and to view it suspiciously is perhaps related to confidence and the ability to receive feedback (Kempster 2009). Many programmes do not deal with these important 'softer' skills, choosing instead to deal with frameworks, knowledge and competencies (Brungardt 2011).

Furthermore leadership development is increasingly being described as a complex activity, for both the individual and the organisations in which they work (Edwards, Archer & Turnbull 2009). The myths of the difference between managers and leaders have been perpetuated

by two things. Firstly, research that has suggested that there is a difference (Kotter 1990) and that therefore the roles are exclusive. Secondly, the creation of leadership and management competencies, which are different, (Bolden 2006) further emphasises the perceived qualities of the two roles. However the success of large organisations is not secured by such differentiation and the call for greater dispersed leadership distributed through the ranks of managers has occurred to a manner unimaginable in the 1970s and 1980s. (Zaleznik 1997, Kotter 1997, MacKenzie 2004).

There is an argument that both sorts of leadership are required in modern organisations (Bolden et al. 2007); both hierarchical and dispersed leadership is vital. Moreover there are identified tensions (Bolden et al. 2006; Edwards et al. 2009) in the distribution and development of leadership in organisations throughout Britain and across sectors.

The research of Bolden and his colleagues at Exeter University (2006) revealed that there is a huge variety of leadership styles within organisations. Behaviour varied widely across sections and departments. In addition many leaders, even those who used a more individualistic style, used informal networks to work beneath the official structure and workings of the organisation. The categorisation of three types of leaders - hierarchical, ones with greater inter-personal influence, and a less formal combination of the two, makes the identification of the development of leadership skills even more challenging. Lawrence has recognised there is a distinct overlap (Lawrence 2005) between the needs of the individual, the organisation and the team. Effective interventions are those that do not send changed individuals into an unchanged system (Schneider and Somes 2006). Bolden et al suggested that their model took this into account:

*'The final dimension in our model refers to the ongoing and changing developmental needs of individuals, groups and organisations. Specifically within this field there is an overlap between individual, team and organisational development whereby, in order to be effective, interventions must endeavour to avoid returning changed individuals to an unchanged system or vice-versa. Thus 'leadership development' is necessarily broader than the development of people in leadership positions and organisational development addresses the human as well as non-human aspects of the system (2007 p.5).*

Furthermore simpler models of learning (Kolb 1984) do not take into account, fully, the different ways in which different people develop and learn. The cycle of events, described by Kolb, links learning with the transformation of knowledge by experience. This idea is further supplemented by a leading document in the manufacturing field, published by the Leadership Trust (Turnbull 2005). Once again some leadership factors were identified that fitted into a 'ten triggers' framework, it is not clear, despite the recommendations, how an

organisation might go about putting together a programme or providing a central development ethos, particularly if it is in a different field to the report's focus industry of manufacturing. Knowing what sort of leadership development is required has to be balanced by knowledge of the array of tensions and barriers that exist within that organisation (Edwards 2008). Here again there are important echoes of the need for development to be both contextual and individual.

Some writers in specific fields (for example, in the field of nursing (Govier and Nash 2009)) argue that transformational leaders are what are required to raise the confidence and abilities of managers and staff and to equip them to be more responsive to developments in the workplace; in this example, the specific hospital environment of a ward or department. The seven leadership theories outlined in 1.8 (page 42) provide a clue about the way in which leadership can be developed. What is it about organisational and leadership theories that can help us to reflect upon middle manager development? Leadership is made up of complex relationships and diverse networks. Different situations call for different approaches. Although this seems so obvious, the case is that sometimes difference can be ignored that no one single type of developmental design or approach fits all. Therefore what sort of practice can be given to make it more likely that the middle manager with new leadership skills will be able to be more effective and more confident about being effective?

Although an axiom, i.e. something that is obvious, that human behaviour is complex, theory has suggested that, at the edge of this complexity, peering into chaos, more innovative behaviour and stimulating creativity can be made more likely (Kernick 2004). Therefore any development process should create a tension to enable attention and learning and some 'stretch' that involves movement and action not passive absorption of knowledge. Interwoven exercises should allow the delegates to become more emotional and authentic thus producing possibilities for learning and openness. People are often wildly different in their experiences, qualifications despite undertaking similar roles. It is also true that knowledge and temperaments are disparate and potentially conflicting. The leadership theories covered in chapter one hint at authenticity and individuality. So, for example, charismatic and servant leadership are just two areas where the expression of individuality can be framed by originality and genuineness.

In a constantly evolving field, further research (Kolb & Kolb 2009) continues to emphasise the role of positive and negative experiences, narrative and space.

*To learn from their experience, teams must create a conversational space where members can reflect on and talk about their experience together.' (p. 23)*

George in 2000 noted that:



*'...emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership by focusing on five essential elements of leader effectiveness: development of collective goals and objectives; instilling in others an appreciation of the importance of work activities; generating and maintaining enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, cooperation, and trust; encouraging flexibility in decision making and change and establishing and maintaining a meaningful identity for an organization.'*(p.1027)

Although discussion often revolves around the development of teams in their research, the primary focus of Kolb is the individual; moreover the development of leadership is both about the individual and the other team members. Effective leadership development cannot be undertaken in isolation to the context (Weick 1976, Cousin 2006, McKergow 2008) in which that person works. Inevitably, even the most isolated job role involves others, even that feels sometimes tenuous, residing in loose teams or in team work of one sort or another. One of the clearest emergent themes has been the identity of the individual. Whichever exercises or interventions were designed, in covering the leadership curriculum activity stipulated by the Institute of Leadership and Development, the range of individual response was impressive. The role of the individual, that unique person, has always been wrapped in the notions of agency and community. Gergen observed that:

*'...so central is individual agency to both theorizing democracy and legitimating its institutions that the burden of proof has remained on the critic. Within recent years, however, we have confronted a barrage of assaults on individual agency, from literary deconstruction theorists, ordinary language philosophers, feminist theorists, cultural critics among the most visible. Not only do such arguments demonstrate deep problems in the presumption of individuals as ordinary sources of reason, motivation and moral decision making, they demonstrate the impasse in epistemology and hermeneutics resulting from the dualist presumption of a mind within the body'* (2001 p. 2)

Others, such as Doolittle and Hicks in particular, seeking to explain leadership development of the individual in the context in which they work; *'their community'*, or to put this quandary a different way.

*A central tenet of all types of constructivism, as indicated in the first philosophical tenet, is the notion that knowledge acquisition and meaning making cannot simply be transferred or transmitted from one individual or group of individuals to another, but rather, that knowledge acquisition and meaning making are individually and socially constructed.* (2003 p. 10)

In the sphere of leadership development therefore the role of the individual within a learning group has to be carefully considered. The environment for learning from each other and learning about oneself is centred on practice together, joint and individual reflection and recognition of the individual's place within the group. In 2011, Bonous-Hammarth and her colleagues at the Higher Education Research Institute used the metaphor of an orchestra to explain this:

*'And even when we have people playing the same notes with the same instrument, as, for example, in a violin section of a symphony orchestra, the richness and beauty of the overall sound depends upon the diversity of tones produced by the different violinists. If every player in a violin section produced exactly the same quality of tone, the subjective effect would be boring, if not unpleasant.'* (p. 4)

The guidebook, published by the Higher Education Research Institute, goes on to explain:

*'The leadership model proposed in this Guidebook confronts the same dilemma: it is basically collaborative in approach, yet it purports to value individual diversity. It is easy to say that we "honor (sic) and celebrate" diversity and the "uniqueness and individuality" of each person, but quite another thing to make it work in a collaborative group setting. Is it really possible to achieve true collaboration within a highly diverse group without sacrificing the individuality of its members? Is it possible that collaboration can even be enhanced by diversity within the leadership development group?'* (p. 4)

A short essay by Wood and Gosling in 2003 suggests that it is not the superficial elements of a person that count in leadership development but the whole person, the individual that continuously emerges from this study. Wood and Gosling put it this way:

*...it is short sighted to think that leadership corresponds to certain personal characteristics. This tendency too quickly turns leadership development into a routine hurdle race, quite apart from any question of critical and appreciative study.'* (p. 3)

The greater attention being paid to the notion of the transformational part of a leader's role or behaviour has been tempered by the developing view that transformational leaders may not sufficiently engage the work force. Indeed their transformational activities could lead to a transformation that, in the end, is unproductive, unsupported or just produces crisis. A transformational leader is just as likely to bring about severe decline as they are to bring great success (Rosenberg and Wilson 1999). Bass came to realise that Burns' view of leadership was partially flawed. *'Transformationality'* is only one type of behaviour which a leader can adopt and is just one of many techniques, aptitudes or behavioural traits needed to enable teams and organisations to function over a range of complex circumstances and over time. The demarcation between transactional and transformational behaviours has therefore become slightly confused. The word transforming has been used to describe both a sole leader, with followers, AND an individual within an organisation who can be a catalyst for changing the behaviour of others. I will explore the catalytic nature of transferring the role of the leader from a central figure in an organisation to the ranks of middle managers - in other words, researching ways in which the more traditionally transactional middle manager can be morphed into a transformational person through the development of leadership skills.

The transformational approach has been seen to be over-optimistic in terms of its achievements and too simplistic. There has been little success in the attempts to sustain the argument that there is a natural division between leadership and management which had the

effect of forcing these mutually supporting facets of a manager's role into two separate roles. It seems a matter of conventional wisdom that one person cannot occupy a transformational role consistently and this over-reliance on transformational leadership (Parry and Proctor-Thompson 2001) runs the risk of echoing too strongly the trait theories of 1950s and 1960s in which the significance of one powerful leader that has all the expectations heaped upon his, and it was usually his, shoulders.

Newer appreciations, such as facilitative leadership, of management and leadership have given rise to other models of successful leadership. A description of facilitative leadership, for example, (Stewart, 2009) includes skill groupings such as interpersonal skills, process skills, understanding in context with accompanying knowledge and clear personal characteristics that engender trust and self-awareness. There is a realisation not only that leadership must be distributed throughout the organisation in order to lighten the burden of leadership on senior staff held in a hierarchy, but also that technology is driving changes that militate against one person controlling everything, knowing everything. Perhaps leadership can both be transformational and distributed in the sense that the new leaders within organisations do need to behave in a way that will lead to greater self-awareness, greater empathy and better networking (Burdett Trust for Nursing 2006).

It is clear from the advancement of technology that there are now many ways of knowing, understanding and working (Sadler-Smith 2006). Understanding the new and emerging technologies has allowed a view to emerge that there is now a greater equalisation of an individual's power and influence through the media of 'tweets' and 'blogs' through a potentially democratising effect of the media (Dionne et al. 2004, Gounden, 2009).

The earlier work of Rosemary Stewart (1999), over 25 years ago, recognised the wider involvement of the team in leadership issues as a reality and conjectured that teams have to be able to 'control' leadership and apply a team-wide approach in the push to achieve their objectives. Even then, at a time when the ideas of strong individual leaders was still current, Stewart postulated that the overall maintenance of team motivation and outlining the managerial and administrative functions of any team within any organisations requires localised leadership and that all staff should carry, in one way or another, the responsibility and burden of leadership.

The development of the individual as a leader is linked to organisational development (Strauss et al. 2009). Individuals who exhibit more pro-activity than others can stimulate and sustain organisational effort by increased employee confidence and commitment. Pro-activity is an important description and broadly speaking it describes an individual who is prepared to take action rather than waiting to be instructed. This has echoes of the work of

Peter Reason in 2008 at the Centre for Action Research, Bath University, who used the word, 'agentic' to describe individuals willing and able to provide momentum in the solving of problems.

Organisation development is an evolutionary process in which a circle of reflection and action can move an organisation forward (Nadler and Tushman 1989) with the environment affecting the organisation and vice-versa. This model of Nadler and Tushman's work views the influence of leadership and style of culture as being 'outside' the process of development that relates to the dynamics of the changes internally and externally. This model has strengths in its analysis of the interaction between the external environment of the organisation but is notably weaker in its analysis of the effect leadership has on that process. Clear leadership within the process and within the team and groups will have a great deal of influence on an organisation and how it can cope with the issues of survival and growth (and this can mean the difference between failure and success or being driven out of business or existence).

It is argued by some writers (Harrison 2005) that even the corporate or executive end of an organisation is not a place for sole (individual) or solo (alone) leadership but that it is important to have strong corporate relationships in order to ensure that messages and, more importantly, ideas and creativity flow not just up and down the organisation but across teams, groups and divisions. Strong teams at the top of an organisation work better when the role of leadership can be shared and working teams fare better with flexible leadership as opposed to a more hierarchical structure (Katzenbach and Smith 2005).

Leadership development has a long history of competing analysis of the efficacy of interventions (and there is obviously evidence that some interventions are better than others. Kempster 2009). Therefore efforts to fine tune these expensive interventions have been welcomed. Movement away from traits or competences (Wright et al. 2000, Bolden et al, 2006) towards a more balanced view of leadership development would be therefore more welcome. Competencies do have a value in the description of the sorts of activities that help frame the activities of a leader. However, given that leadership is so individual and is best understood in the context of the leaders' behaviour not just in the behaviour itself, competencies can be viewed as unnecessarily 'dry and cold' and do not go far enough in describing the complexities of the role at any level.

### **2.2.3. Regarding leadership through the prism of Social Constructionism**

For this research I have assumed a view about leadership and leadership development that can be explained from a social constructionism standpoint (Klenke 2008), as opposed to the

the more traditional positive or scientific analysis of leadership has been shown to be outmoded and out-of-step with the challenges of the modern world (Tierney 1996). (For more details see Chapter three, pages 101 – 105)

One way of looking at the world is to focus on the relationships between people and the way this creates an on-going reality. Another tradition in the constructionist construct is how individuals perceive their reality in terms of their skills, traits and perspectives (Hoskin 2002). The social constructionist point of view, however, does not hold with the more linear type of view of a world, but instead describes the world of leadership as the social interaction between people (Burr 2003). A stream of conversations and dialogues creates the reality of the work-place, albeit in the context of organisational culture and individual responses to the stream of random conversations. Development therefore needs to take account of this and be much more aligned to the individual needs of the manager charged with working towards his/her own leadership self-awareness and potential and within their own organisational context and culture.

A further way of analysing this individual aspect of development is to regard the acquisition of two suitable leadership skills, named in 1999, as being 'technical' or 'social' (Easterby-Smith 1999). The approaches of Easterby-Smith have echoes of transformational (social) (Parry and Hanson 2007) and transactional (technical) leadership (Iles and Preece 2006). Leaders in a data-processing setting are viewed as being good processors and interpreters of information that lies within explicit data (both quantitative and qualitative) that can be shared and promoted within the domain of the general public. Leaders in a social setting are much more in tune with the social parameters that govern the receipt and dissemination of ideas whereby information and data is shared, but is interpreted through the conversations or narrative

Work in the education sector (Gronn 2003; Spillane et al. 2003) has revealed that the ultimate dream of cascading leadership down the hierarchy is a social process, encapsulated by the theory of distributed leadership. Nestled within this social process are often elements of behaviour that is collaborative, often spontaneous, emergent and continually shaped and moulded over time.

Part of the problem with this is that it is an approach that has been drawn out of the education field (Gronn 2003) where management has been demonised by attempts to elevate leadership into something exceptional. At most times managers and leaders need to be flexible and dynamic in their approaches to leadership (See example of a timetabling teacher (Gronn 2003)) and the totality of work that has to be undertaken to make organisations work and develop.

This flexibility described in the above paragraph fits in well with the experience of the educational sector. The lens of education matches with the landscape of the leadership in the public sector and is used here as a way of focusing on parallel systems. The education field reveals some areas whereby the realm of the all-powerful individual (Head-teacher) is being replaced by the growth in a more dispersed role of leadership and writers have challenged the power of this individual. Although individuals may be quite exceptional at times (Gronn 2003) this ought not to be at the expense of management of others. As discussed, the very view that leadership is a simple dualism between leaders and followers or a simple dyad between agency and structure (Spillane 2003) is a false one. The world of organisations is far more complex than that.

#### **2.2.4 Where leadership exists throughout organisations**

Organisations are made up of people, systems, 'hardware' and many other structural functions, although leadership is very much focused on people, both internal and external to the organisation. This section, following the previous section's review of the definitional issues posed by this thesis, highlights the human issues involved. Large organisations often develop around a figurehead (for example: Richard Branson and Virgin). Although the role of a figurehead has an importance of its own, it is acknowledged that those figureheads are extremely dependent on the work of people below them in the organisation. In the different context of cultural change, although no less tellingly, Noan Chomsky in 2003, noted that:

*'...it's necessary to distort history and make it look as if Great Men did everything – that's part of how you teach people that they can't do anything, they are helpless, they just have to wait for some Great Man to come along and do it for them.'* (p. 188-189)

As the specific challenges facing organisations multiply, there is a growing call for something other than the 'top' leader or 'top team' to engage in leadership activities. Acts of leadership are not the sole preserve of the most senior managers, but are leadership activities that spread around organisations so that leadership is a cumulative process, despite being linked to individual activity and situated in the context of that particular organisation at that particular time. The 21st century is predicted to be a challenging place for leaders (Cacioppe 2001) and this has led to greater circumspection about the previous attempts to clarify the roles, skills and traits of a leader. Previously favoured theories (Yukl 1999) about one individual leading heroically have led to doubts about the issues of transformational qualities of a leader as so much of the success of leadership is reliant on factors outside of an individual's control (such as organisational culture or rapid technological developments). Despite these factors perhaps the leadership ideal within middle management can contribute

to the debate about development and/or, to some extent, even help to create a climate of individual and organisational learning and development over time.

Reflections on leadership and the difficulties leaders have faced over the past two decades of radical change are fundamental to the understanding the evolution of organisational leadership. The radically new situations that middle managers find themselves in call for different approaches as well, argues Grint (2007). Leadership is changing (Harle, 2009) and the simplistic view of a heroic leader is now viewed as being unhelpful in the development of leadership throughout organisations (Yukl 1999, Alimo-Metcalfe 2008). If one takes a biological analogy the borders around an organism could be viewed as a barrier, but it is fact an exchange area - a complex set of interchangeable parts whereby exchanges take place and information is spread and reviewed through narrative and conversation. Moreover corporate and non-corporate organisational life is complex (Davies and Dart 2005) (See also page 22) and the complexities of individual behaviour can lie beyond the simple reach of the hierarchical or bureaucratic leaders. (Harle 2009).

The view of heroic or charismatic leaders led to a bias, in development terms, towards the individual and the subsequent growth in Masters in Business Administration (MBA) courses at many Universities (Hornya and Page 2003).

The change of emphasis on leadership began to grow in the nineties with researchers noticing a growing trend towards leadership and away from leader development (Rosenfeld and Wilson 1999). A United Kingdom report published in 2003 sought to review the state of leadership, management and the requirement for adequate training and development (Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership (CEML) 2003).

The CEML report called for a more integrated approach to the development of both leadership and management. Although there was widespread positive feedback to the ideas in the report, from accrediting bodies in particular, (Chartered Management Institute 2003) there has since developed a concern that, in the wider debate about leadership development, too much emphasis was placed on transformational approaches to leadership. Transforming behaviour is seen as the domain of the leader (as opposed to transactional approaches of the managers). This focus on transformation is at the expense of understanding the growth of the individual within the context of the organisation and their work within multi-layered systems (Gill 2003). The transformation of organisations will occur due to a greater emphasis on the role and capability of the individual. The findings of the CEML report were unrealistic (for instance with regard to the speed at which accrediting bodies – such as the Institute of Leadership and Management and the Chartered Management Institute – could have introduced manageable qualifications based on

Unitisation) and were over-optimistic about the impact of training and development based on the numbers of manager annually moving in management and leadership positions (Perren and Burgoyne 2002).

Even though there is no longer a consensus on the idea of the leader as a 'Great Man' (Koontz et al 1987, Grint 1997, Grint 2010a, Storey 2011) the allure of a single strong leader remains in western society. But how could it be that those great complex things happen without the leadership skills of others spread throughout all parts of the organisation even for historical national or international figures such as Gandhi or Churchill? Moreover, empirical evidence relating to various large and complex organisations in modern work settings is of the transformational managers (Avolio and Gardner 2005, Zhang, Cao and Tjosvold 2011) taking on leadership roles leading to radical decisions that drive change within an organisation and its close partners and stakeholders. Katzenbach (1996), who moved away from the notion of a sole leader out 'in the front' of an organisations, developed the theme of relationships between leaders and followers, through a review of the existing literature, registering seven characteristics of change leaders that include characteristics such as having '*a personal initiative to go beyond boundaries*' and '*caring about how people are treated*' and '*enabled to perform.*'

The suggestion is that middle managers, people other than the named leader or the person at the top of a hierarchical plan, do have power to make things happen. The features of this new type of leader have been articulated under the banner of engaged leadership, which was described in an article on the future public services manager/leader, (Wooding 2007) and that also links extensively with the work of Peter Senge (Senge 2006). The sort of leader Wooding describes for the public services is characterised by softer skills than those normally associated with managers. These softer skills include listening skills, a higher degree of self-awareness and the more productive balance between intellect and emotional stability. This emotional stability links to the term Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ) coined by Daniel Goleman in the 1990s that led to a radical rethink into the skills or competencies necessary for people to become successful leaders (Goleman 1996).

Several examples of the different approach of more emotionally aware managers and leaders, often lower down in organisations' settings and hierarchical company charts, having been able to produce greater improvement in organisation performance, can be found in the literature. (Avolio and Gardner 2005, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky 2009(b)) There is an example of work, described by Nutt and Backoff, undertaken with middle managers in the car industry. This example, which involved a Ford car manufacturing workshop, speaks of a configuration which the company termed a '*spoke and wheel configuration*'. The new



configuration gave the staff more control and, in turn, this type of configuration, one of leadership dissipation, highlighted the need, in large complex organisations, for the middle managers to take control of the achievement of an overall goal (Nutt and Backoff 1997).

As this thesis has an action research basis it is no surprise that reflectiveness and reflexivity are key to an understanding of leadership development, both in an individual and organisational sense. A way in which a practitioner, such as a middle manager, whose self-awareness about leadership is gradually but explicitly engaged in (Klenke 2008) works through their learning in non-linear, naturally occurring methodology is through reflection. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), featured in Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson in 2012, elaborated on reflectivity and defined it as:

*‘ continuous awareness and attention to ‘the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written.’*  
(p.159)

There is a view that reflection can help with ideas that are essentially abstract ideas such as leadership (Kolb and Fry, 1975 in Pardey 2012). Strongly linked to this is the focus on more effective ways of learning. It also links to Argyris and Schön’s (1974) identified ideas about theory-in-use and espoused theory and single and double loop learning, whereby learners challenge the context in double-loop learning but not in single. This approach helps learners to view their own prejudices linked to their own individual mental maps rather than an external set of principles or standard practices. Alvesson (1996) viewed reflexivity as the perfect antidote to positivistic views of leadership and and a better insight into the complex workings of the many different worlds of middle managers.

The call for leadership in the middle of organisations has been well made by the volume of writing in various forms from leadership magazines to research articles. To return to Paul Nutt and Robert Backoff in 1997, for an example of writing about transformational change, who suggested that their organisational approach would develop organisations in a structure that ensured *‘leaders in our approach are on tap but not on top!’*

Research activity undertaken, by Barry Oshry and his team between 1983 and 2008 highlights the role by focusing of middle managers within large organisations (Oshry 2007). The theory from Oshry’s team characterises how the middle managers are pressurised, or even sandwiched, between the interactions from their own manager and the more senior hierarchy, and their own staff below them in the organisation. Broadly speaking the results of research from the Oshry ‘school of thought’ are that there are many significant ways that an organisation can support the development of this important cadre of middle managers. The

research describes the setting up of new approaches of working. These approaches include fairly low key activities such as meeting as a peer group, finding imaginative ways of working and committing time to meeting together. These uniting activities provide middle managers with an identified space to work within in order to officially reflect together, and they result in changes of behaviour which are all fundamental to energising and releasing the potential from this group of managers.

Oshry's views on the significance of the middle manager are not isolated ones. People exist in organisations for much of their lives, and the western world in which we operate as adults is usually in an organisational setting, whether it be large or small, old or new, simple or complex. With fewer and fewer senior managers working in grand isolation, and with the organisational structures much 'flatter' and with fewer layers between the top of the organisation and the bottom, it has been postulated that leadership behaviour from middle managers (Useem 2003) – for example, the notion of managing up as well as down – is essential for the survival of organisations in their response to global challenges.

Solutions to the maladies of organisational life in the 21st century, flatter structures and alienation of the individual to name but two, are being built up from the twin base of improved leadership throughout an organisation and are encouraging and nurturing better thinking and awareness. One of humankind's greatest attributes against the continued challenges of the 21st century organisational life is the power of thought and the creation of innovative ideas to solve problems (Joyce 2004).

There are other ways in which to consider these changes in organisations and Howard Gardner and Peter Senge are two influential writers who predict the nurturing of many people not just a few.

Several writers have already postulated the need for newer ways of thinking in this decade. Howard Gardner's 2006 views of intelligence, in the light of significant global challenges, are two-fold:

1. There are multiple sides to human intelligence.
2. There are ways in which the human mind can be put to good use by acknowledging different intelligences.

Influential thinkers, such as Senge, writing in his book 'The Dance of Change', go further and suggest that:

*'Organisations will enter a new domain of leadership development when we stop thinking about preparing a few people for 'the top' and start nurturing the potential for leaders at all levels to participate in shaping new realities.'* (1999 p. 568)

The work of Peter Senge and his colleagues (Senge et al. 1999) has revealed for organisations an understanding into the corporate cycle of human learning and action. The theory of 'U' (Scharmer 2007) describes a change in the way decisions are made by valuing the initial states of observing as well as the second stage of reflecting and allowing 'knowing' to emerge.

Key elements that support this process are that development needs some time to emerge (following the idea of a 'creative cocoon' Senge 1999) – as opposed to the stifling cocoon of science (Keegan 2006)) and that this development is not isolated, but connects across wider communities and organisations. This development should be undertaken in an environment that is supportive, attentive and one in which managers and colleagues give, and give rise to, positive feedback (Senge 1999). Within this there should be an organisational framework, as well, that provides support for creativity and innovation, experimentation, testing of theories and ideas in a manner that is both supportive and collaborative. Finally, there should be a way to share the process and results in connection with an audience who can become part of the process themselves in order to nourish and 'feed' the next phase of creation and improvement.

The two ideas of Senge (1999), built on by Gardner in 2006 are, again, postulated in the light of challenges to society unfolding currently. A brief return, as indicated in the introduction to this section, to public service in Britain as an exemplar, provides a hint at the potential friction between individual and organisation. Beyond this is the principle described by Foucault in 1991, who observed that the moves by governments to turn away from being master institutions, towards ones that lead organisations, creates the possibilities of nurturing a population so that that population can prosper. This principle of transition requires both the formal leaders in services and the covert leaders to move towards a more transformational way of working. The tensions between well-developed leadership and prospective leaders are to be predicted (Edwards 2010). Is leadership development for the masses or is it something that should be tailored to the individual? Is it surprising that managers with highly-developed, radical and innovative approaches to leadership, which are still returning to a largely hierarchical public sector (for this example, the NHS), to find unavoidable tensions embedded in the power relations (Tadros 1998) between the manager and the managed (Alimo-Metcalfe 2005). Newly-developed leadership should be primed to meeting the challenges that exist, and claim a stake in their continuously-evolving, large complex organisation. Alimo-Metcalfe and her research teams understand that leadership in

organisations that are further divided into organisations and specialisms. In a culture of target-driven improvements, leadership can be squashed between people and the departments in which they work. Older mechanisms for leadership can be quite mechanical in approach; still relying on old institutional mores. That is not meant to imply that everything has become redundant with systems and hierarchies, nor is the way in which middle managers attempt to pull their organisations together to meet the complex and diverse needs of the population entirely without merit. However, those organisations and specialisms require an improved, more independent, manager (Prosser 2006) and much attendant leadership in order to tackle the change required to pursue those founding public services principles for improved services.

### **2.2.5. Cultural and gender issues**

The way in which the understanding of the cultural gap can be interpreted in relation to individuals and leadership development is to look at the ways in which nationality, language and the treatment of gender can be carried invisibly within the characteristics of each person. As Kelan observed in 2013

*‘ Women are likely to pick up cues on how to appear as professionals through media images and will constitute their own professional selves in relationship to those images.’ . (p. 46).*

The attitudes and ideas encompassed by the stereotyping of gender, both male and female, are quite persistent and pernicious, despite considerable progress in the work place over the past hundred years. Empirical research with management students who, according to Schein in 2001, have similar views and characteristics as their corporate colleagues, with whom they aspire, suggest that women are converging in style and characteristics by assuming more masculine traits (Bosak and Sczesny 2011).

Many of the models of leadership, organisational development and individual development, and preparation for leadership roles is based on American research and writing (Eagly and Chin 2010). However, the world of academic research has been instrumental in exposing the rapid globalisation of firms operating from a restricted list of larger, more traditionally global countries, such as Britain and Spain (for example). It becomes quickly apparent the diversity of subjects and approaches across the world, specifically regarding the expansion of China and Chinese companies and their cultural predispositions (Deng 2012). The link to the massive publication potential of American (USA) literature can lead to a partisan ‘feel’ to the literature and an un-helpful bias towards USA leadership (Saner and Yiu 2000). This critical literature review takes into account that the literature about leadership and leadership development has, in the past, seemingly concentrated on leadership that was formerly

biased towards a male-centric (Hofstede 1980; Parry and Hansen 2007) and American-oriented view of organisations, human relationships and leadership issues. The development of leaders within organisations was, at one time, focused on the dominant individual (Pearce 2004) whose own competence led to a dual system of leaders and followers (Joyce 2004; Collinson 2006; Van Vugt et al. 2008). As previously discussed in chapter one, the focus on the era of the 'Great Man' (Grint 2005) has largely passed and, as the 'Great Man' theme has a predominantly American bias, it is prudent to look elsewhere for clues about those hidden, background influences. In order to balance this bias (Horton 2002; Hodgson 2007) I have chosen a considerable number of relevant references from United Kingdom sources. Furthermore, the readers of research from the perspective of men and Americans are increasingly acknowledging that the view of leadership may well significantly change with the greater insight and perspective of women. It has been recognised that women tend to be more transformational in their approach (Eagly 2003). This is also true of the cultural differences in leadership in Eastern European countries and the growing impact of Chinese and Indian organisations (Rosenburg and Wilson 1999:).and that cross-national interaction can be complicated by cultural misunderstandings (Gill 2003).

The effect of this cultural bias was, sometimes to deny the possibilities of leadership in a follower and to refuse to see that leadership and followership is often interchangeable. Other forms of organisation are possible including partnerships, collaborations and democracies. The context was an ever-growing human population, inequalities in wealth and the new emergence of powerful nations and grouping of countries (Dess 2000). Even as the ideas of leadership development were evolving to include all of an organisation's staff, writers were still using examples of famous and eminent individuals, often from a global perspective, to illustrate the traits or characteristics of a leader (Garlow 2002). Senge in 2005 identified the trend to view leadership from a global perspective; famous individuals such as Jack Welch and Richard Branson, are two examples, and the fields of politics and sport consistently raise issues of the leadership qualities of individuals and how a team or nation are performing because of that. However those eminent individuals, particularly in using recent business examples, such as Stuart Rose (Binney 2009) can be unable to maintain any spectacular progress or growth in business success or acumen particularly if measured only in terms of financial success.

Since the 1990s there have been marked changes in the ways in which leaders, and the obviously related topic of leadership, have been viewed over the past few decades. Researchers and commentators (Bryman 2004) have reported that a different approach has been growing, with much more emphasis on the possibilities of individuals throughout an organisation having a role in the leadership of an organisation. Leadership should be

dispersed or distributed throughout the hierarchy or, more accurately, throughout the organisation according to Gronn in 2002. This infusion of leadership throughout organisations ought to enable them to be more flexible. Leadership development should ensure that, throughout the staff ranks, individuals can adapt skilfully to the demands of an outside world. An outside world that requires more collaboration and partnership working and greater levels of trust is compelling organisations to be prepared to deliver continuous organisational development and improvement (Jackson 2006; Spillane 2001) This point is supported by the research of Goffee and Jones, in 2006, who emphasised that leadership is about being both relational and contextual.

Organisational culture and the attitude to issues of fairness and equity towards people of all genders need to be taken into consideration whilst considering aspects of leadership development.

#### **2.2.6. Regarding Leadership from the ‘Dark Side’**

This section helps to balance the overwhelmingly positive view of leadership that has been expressed between pages 65 to 78. Workplace bullying, for example, is prevalent throughout Europe and North America (Branch, Ramsay and Barker 2013) and can be linked to leadership and organisational change.

The question that can be raised is: ‘Who or what benefits from leadership development?’ This is because sometimes leadership can be seen as an uncritically good thing whilst ignoring (although this is less easy to do since the western world’s banking crisis which commenced in 2008) the dangers of bad or corrupt leadership. Older theories can be developed from skewed positions. The voices that may be heard in the dominant discourses may not be those whose voices need to be heard. For example, the culturally suppressed, those fighting the continued gender imbalance as well as those from developing nations whose history may originate from sources nearer to the East rather than the West. Reflective approaches to leadership in middle managers allow for an acknowledgement that leadership can be developed to counter poor performance and the resulting ill-consequences for individuals and organisations. This is supported by a very wide-ranging literature search and a balanced first two chapters of this thesis, which lay out the terrain for the research programme that follows.

Perhaps the state that distributed leadership refers to is unobtainable except in small organisations and special circumstances (Grint 2010b). Grint suggests that leadership resembles the sacred in three ways. Firstly in the way in which leaders and followers are often separated; secondly, leaders are often ‘sacrificed’ or expendable when things are not

going well and finally leadership can quell stress and rebellion in followers. If this notion holds true it could explain the reluctance of individuals, over-cautious in the confidence in their own abilities, to take on leadership, baulking at the offer of leadership responsibilities.

It is much more difficult to pin down the leadership issues that are linked with personal mastery as related to people's own direction and emotional control and, for many, the presentation of this focus on life is challenging. The development of the individual can often appear to be at the expense of the others. Previously some leaders in public service have been identified as having a bullying style (Winston 2006) and many still operate within that management style (Hauge 2007; Machell 2009). Some leaders' views, particularly those that are linked to the job undertaken in a laissez-faire style (Skogstad 2007), can release what he calls a destructive form of behaviour that is not in tune with the current era. Expansive changes or a restriction in budgets or an increase in targets does not sit well with a laissez-faire style of management and this can give rise to a fairly difficult culture within which to work.

There is a lot written about the positive side of leadership and the skills needed to encourage a positive outcome and although it is obvious that people like Silvio Berlusconi, former president of Italy and Robert Mugabe, current leader in Zimbabwe, are examples of 'bad' leadership (i.e. one not for the common good) the literature is heavily skewed in favour of role models who are portrayed as people, often men, in all parts of organisations, leading their 'followers' into some sort of promised land!

In order to highlight this, the example chosen is one of bullying (Skogstad et al. 2007), which amongst many negative leadership traits, has been well studied. Bullying is one such organisational feature normally associated with a very negative outcome, which may confer some advantages on the organisations, in the sense of short-term objectives, such that it provides a stimulus to those being bullied, raising both their standards of work but also those of their workmates or 'audience' (Keashly and Neuman 2004). In some work focusing on examples from the USA and Scandinavia, there is the idea that, in some cases, bullying has a (perhaps limited) positive effect on the organisation, individual and the people 'watching or observing' the bullying (the so-called audience) and this is counter to the usual notion that bullying is unpleasant and counter-productive (Ferris 2007).

There are strong negative correlations between constructivist forms of leadership, role conflict and role ambiguity (Skogstad 2007). That is to suggest more socially orientated leadership forms are clearer about roles of staff. Bullying does not need to be overt, active bullying, although the ways in which a form of this is done can be very subtle. Passive bullying has similar corrosive effects for the individual, and, in the long-term, the whole

organisation. Whilst it could be justified that a bullying approach (despite how difficult it is to tell the difference between bullying and assertiveness) works in the short term whilst dealing with urgent organisational issues, there is no evidence that there is a sustainable place where this sort of leadership can be used all the time. Destructive behaviour towards staff may not be regarded as negative and the same person will not use similar behaviour in other aspects of their work or life. (For example, when the bullying manager becomes a customer or mixes with their own bosses in the context of organisation as a whole; (Maak, 2007)). The notion of bullying can also be linked to the ways in which individuals learn in an organisational context, in which leadership behaviours can be linked to Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (1964) which highlights and includes aspects of effective and ineffective production.

Bass (1990) stated that the management of conflict is a management role of high importance; a message later quoted in Skogstad in 2007:

*'Often it may involve transactional leadership to move the conflicting employees, groups, or organisations to accept that the bargain that can be struck with the opposition can bring more benefits and less costs than can continuing the conflict.'* (p. 87)

We may conclude that more researchers, directly or indirectly, support the present finding, which indicates that bullying may be a process starting with ignorant leaders, being mediated through workplace stressors such as role conflict and interpersonal conflicts, with bullying as an end state (Skogstad et al. 2007).

There are interesting parallels and interesting concepts surrounding poor behaviour by leaders which gives permission for the followers to take actions that, in another light, would clearly seem wrong or inappropriate, regarding the issue of time and culture (For historical perspectives: See the industrial revolution and the change from an agrarian society.)

There is an idea that the bullying behaviour of the leader may not just be because of some childhood or psychological factors (Ferris et al. 2007). These factors would not, normally, be revealed to those being bullied, but suspected. Yet the powerful leader may be using bullying types of behaviours to enhance both strategic and organisational ends particularly in the sense of calculated outbursts to overpower objections or to keep staff 'in their place' while rapid change occurs.

This should include ways of looking at the bully that are not always to do with overtly bullying behaviour but might be more passive and subtle, (Skogstad 2007) so that juniors, including those taking care of and supporting colleagues (e.g. listening to more junior staff, attending social functions) suffer from hidden but acutely-felt bullying activities.



## **2.3 Section three**

### **2.3.1. Leadership and learning**

Much of the work of organisational 'gurus', such as Senge (2005), and intelligence analysts such as Gardner (2005), suggests the significant role of learning in leadership development. The significance of this leadership challenge, the transfer of understanding into the work place (as in the application of learning) is further developed by Otto Scharmer's ideas of the 'Theory of U' and attempts to describe the co-evolution of ideas and action (Scharmer 2008). Learning in the management and leadership fields, in the last twenty years, has been dominated, in the practitioner field by the work and ideas of Richard Boyatzis & David Kolb (1991). The development of the concepts of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has also been forged by studies between Boyatzis and Goleman (Goleman, 1996). Writers in the field of learning (See page 63) continue to emphasise the importance in individual experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2008).

The conceptual (See figure one and the start of chapter two) gap between leadership development and the individual as an individual, gains a focus when thinking about how people learn. Learning and knowledge spread is vital to today's organisations (Rashman, Withers and Hartley 2009). Nonaka in 1994 identified the middle manager as being a crucial element; catalysts in the diffusion of learning and the learning processes. More recent empirical research by Matsuo in 2012 suggest that leadership and learning are linked and that reflective practice is crucial to ensure strong learning takes place. Such reflection contributes to incremental learning which, it is posited (Salge and Vera 2013), has positive links to organisational performance. Learning is not undertaken in isolation but can be seen to be a wider part of the middle managers' role of making sense in what is happening in terms of both strategic sense-making (Rouleau and Balgun 2010) but also discursive abilities. Empirical studies of four cases suggest that in order for these skills to be learned and developed, more emphasis needs to be applied to a more narrative-based approach as opposed to an analytical one. Moreover these narrative skills are necessary to capture elements of a dynamic and interrelated mosaic of organisational levels caught up in economic transformation related to company viability (Dixon, Meyer and Day 2010).

Results from an empirical study in Spain suggest that a company's learning capability is intrinsically linked to job satisfaction (Chiva and Alegre 2009). This study links to five key managerial dimensions namely experimentation, risk-taking, interaction with the external environment, dialogue and participative decision-making which can improve organisational learning and development. According to Lord and Hall (2005) leaders need to have staged development as they respond to the rigours of leadership. In the first place it may be

sufficient to rely on only surface learning and to tackle issues that only require short-run responses. This attention to only surface development can lead to following a pattern of perceived and almost prescribed actions that require a standard response. The climate for many leaders throughout organisations is such that their abilities to lead through more difficult and testing challenges would only begin to alter as realistic positive feedback is traded and the resultant confidence starts to grow. This is why the idea of leadership development is reliant on understanding the context in which the leadership is working and the stage that the leader has reached in terms of his or her development. Recent calls for more perceptive leadership (Gardner 2004, Senge 2006) partially highlight the role of the individual in learning. This research highlights the need for different approaches, and acknowledges that there are many different sorts of intelligence; development of leadership can be achieved by inducing individuals and organisations to promote and commit to the encouragement of deeper thinking and wider learning (See, for example, Union Learning representatives in the British Trade Union movement. (Eurofound, 2003))

This misfit between the role of the leader and his or her ability to lead hampers moves to try to encourage individuals to take on and/or develop leadership roles. It is not enough for leadership development to teach new skills and inculcate knowledge; it must also aid or precipitate a change of behaviour in that leader. Evidence from British business schools (Burgoyne 2004) highlights the often weak or non-existent links joining individual learning and impact on performance at work, and even weaker ties with organisational performance and national progress. Schilling and Kluge (2009) identified two meanings for the purposes of development in organisations: Institutional (where it can be viewed as a social system) and instrumental (which is viewed as structures that regulate human behaviour through rules and regulations). Whilst this is not clear cut in terms of definition, it is the institutional definition that links more closely to the role of a leader building learning communities (which has echoes of Senge's work, in the previous decade, on organisational learning).

### **2.3.2. Learning and developing**

The development of leaders is reaching a new stage according to Alban-Metcalf in 2009 and this new vision of development is termed as engaged or, a little more clearly, 'nearby', post-heroic transformational development. Host leadership has been developed as a concept by McKergow (2009), who describes the development of a model that points towards a new, yet ancient, metaphor. McKergow's new model seems to explain a view of leadership which is neither the traditional view of a heroic figure nor the leader as a servant – the work around the servant as leader is quite a different concept (Jackson 2006) as both these descriptions carry negative or unseemly connotations (McKergow 2009). This model of

a leader-servant amalgamates the sort of person that is capable of finding solutions to the 'wicked' problems (Keith Grint in his writing through the 2000s) with the engaged leadership ideas of Alimo-Metcalfe.

The conceptual space is opened between the delivery of leadership development programmes and the integrity of the individual itself. This next section looks more closely at the ways in which individuals might flourish in leadership terms. Binney (2009) identified that working with groups in close proximity of their meetings provides a much better reflection of the role of the leader and led to the idea of a 'thinking space', a contextual space created by facilitation or better use of time, which may or may not be a physical space, being 'integrated into the day to day process of running an organisation'. This is strongly supported by the recommendation (Bolden 2006) that the way to promote greater development of leadership skills is to focus on strengths with a focus on outcomes rather than behaviours (as described in some competency frameworks). This too links well to the ideas of a learning organisation where the emphasis is on learning and developing a boundary-less operation (Garvin 1993). The focus on development, in this case, is much less formal than in many programmes, much better evaluated, constantly refined and focused on the reflective learning of an individual within the context of their role.

There is a point to dealing with development at several different levels: individual, group and organisation - and finding ways in which the development and the individuals within the team can deal with the contemporaneous factors such as feelings, relationships, policies, procedures, strategies and structures. The development of individuals on a number of levels allows for the inquiry into softer skills such as the ideas surrounding emotional intelligence. The development of softer skills has been criticised despite those very same softer skills having been lauded for their role in developing a leadership pertinent to the modern world. A leader who can display qualities such as courage, moral stances, empathetic attitudes and self-belief is better equipped to lead (Bolden 2006). There is also, now, a growing issue around how some of the development training is seen to replicate the busy world of the leader, yet what leaders need is space and thinking time (see the contemporary development responses to organisational challenges such as coaching, reflection, mentoring and action learning.) In terms of their human characteristics those developing competencies and building leadership strengths have to recognise that strengths and weaknesses are present at the same time. There is a lot of credence in the development of an individual through coaching (Goldsmith et al 2000) although sole interventions such as coaching may also go towards mirroring the isolation of a leader. How do organisations, willing to develop individuals, take into account the needs of the organisation so that they are not over-promoting the sole needs of the individual?

What can be done in terms of development? There are key ways in which leadership can be developed by projects linked to development (McCall et al. 1998, Edwards 2005), utilising action learning sets and linking coaching and development to specific organisational needs and development (Cortvriend et al. 2008). Another view is that the development of a wide and supportive network is a way of meeting challenging issues by seeking different points of views and eliciting feedback (MacKenzie 2004). So there are many attempts to explain a way in which leaders or leadership can be more relevant than just transformation, which is not 'safe' anymore.

The whole argument for this section has been that leadership development is complex. Binney (2009) suggests that leading is, essentially, a social process and that the success or failure of a leader pivots on their ability to work within the context of a particular culture or society. The idea that leaders alone are not able to carry out perfect judgement and that this truism can be compensated for by a wider distribution of leadership is also expressed by Binney. A further key point reflects that general experience of life balanced by creative learning opportunities is potentially much more effective than trying to perfect leadership competencies. It is the network and connections of the leader that count so that this web of mechanisms can counteract weaknesses and flaws in an individual. It is postulated (Boyzatis and McGee 2005) that the more you know yourself, the easier it is to be part of providing leadership throughout the organisation and beyond (through sustained partnerships and co-production). Everybody has the potential for leadership although not everybody can be a single leader in the context of leading successful organisations. Development is a long term issue (Yukl 1999, 2002; Bolden 2005; Parker 2006; Kempster 2009a) Leadership development is never a one-off event and that is why interventions that include reflection, feedback and a 'space' in which people can take time to adjust and experiment with their behaviour is vital. As development takes place there are many issues that remain significant; however, two particular issues have been identified as remaining significant (Kempster, 2009a) and these are the influence of notable people and notable occurrences. Those two 'notables' are random but key people (such as a designated coach, an action learning facilitator or an interested line manager may develop relationships that are measured in months but whose influence extends for years) can help the middle manager to see the value in previously hidden experiences located in people and everyday happenings.

Levels of learning of an individual are important when seeking to understand the barriers that can prevent the positive taking up of development opportunities. These levels have been described as intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalising (Lawrence et al. 2005). Lawrence's research has led to ideas about how development opportunities can falter and it is at the '*integrating stage*' (where the individual seeks to influence the rest of the group or

team) that the focus of research is least well-co-ordinated. This area of integration falls neatly into the field of narrative and story-telling, that is, the way the experience of individuals in the middle of leadership development convey their struggles to other key individuals:

Leadership in this context is socially constructed (Tierney 1996, Uhl-Bien 2006) and the link between leaders and leadership is an intermittent stretch of interweaving narrative (Green 2006). This is part of the way in leadership can be seen to be part of a relational perspective rather an entity (something with a solid concrete base) perspective (Uhl-bien 2006). The work of Binney et al (2009) goes some way to re-emphasising the current thinking that leadership is more to do with the social art of conversation or narrative. To be able to engage individuals within teams is a method of distributing messages and influences and once again it is a conception of a pattern of leadership that it is not isolated at the top. The delivery of a key note speech by a formal senior leader has to be echoed by similar narratives by managers and leaders in a hierarchical relationship. That leadership is dispersed throughout the organisations so that individuals within the teams can, dependent on the context of their organisation or team find ways to engage with each other, maximises the impact of that leadership. So, as has been consistently argued in this thesis, transformational leaders are not the only model of a leader despite the arguments put forward (Govier 2009) that, in some settings, a transformational approach, in the described case of nurses in complex clinical areas, is best. However it is the refinement of transformational skills added to by an 'agentic' individual that is vital to improve services and organisational efficacy (Parry 2002). Therefore both transactional and transformational leadership styles can be held in a paradox of practice. Consequently, an individual has to be **both** transformational (looking to the development of the individual, for example) and transactional, when the situation demands. This is vital in leadership terms in order to keep organisations functioning in both an aspirational and a functional way.

A review of the efficacy of the training interventions in the 1980s suggested that many interventions can be successful if they attend to the issues of confidence and not to the pursuit of some over complicated process such as the Fiedler's leader-member exchange (Bass 1990). Whilst Fiedler's model explains the various exchanges between leaders and led, and is a way of describing the transformational interactions between staff, it is not a model that describes organisational reality well. Fiedler's contingency theory is a fairly rigid theory and it does not provide an easy way of taking into account a reliable score for personality traits. In addition, the implication that the only alternative to a certain orientation of a leader, matched with an unfavourable situation, is to change the leader is flawed.

Fiedler's researchers also noticed that category scores can fail to reflect the personality traits they purport to reflect.

The natural focus on leadership, as a result, is on the need for it to be both personalised and contextualised (Hosking 2006). The argument I am developing is this:

1. The individual is unique and prone to expressing leadership development uniquely.
2. Context is infinitely variable.
3. Learning opportunities are not, nor should they be, solely based on the acquisition of more and more knowledge

The three requirements of leadership; personal qualities, leadership competencies and engaging leadership behaviour, I have highlighted, privileged and emphasised from the past 70 years of research (although it might be said that engaged leadership behaviour ought not to be on the list as it has so recently been 'discovered'). Despite this the possession of certain qualities and values is not a guaranteed pre-requisite for success. Competencies, for example, can be seen by overzealous reductionists as stripping down leadership to a list of things that are not part of an integrated whole (Buckingham 2001). Individuals who excel in the same or similar role can display the same or similar sort of behaviours, but however well such successful behaviours can be learned, that, combined with improving one's weaknesses, does not necessarily lead to success.

Consistently studies of leadership suggest there is a need for leadership to be distributed throughout organisations (Gosling 2003). National management standard competencies have introduced leadership as a core management competence. These standards can give an idea of the range of behaviours that are crucial for busy managers who wish to also behave as leaders. It is perhaps without question, that competence in performance is required, but having achieved a set of competencies or being judged competent against evidence from the workplace, does not lead that competent manager, necessarily, to be successful in leadership as leadership can be seen to be more focussed on relationships (See Crossan et al. 1999 ) with others.

*'The process of explaining through words and/or actions...an insight into one's self and to others that links to the process of developing shared understanding amongst individuals and of taking co-ordinated action' ( p. 527).*

In order for the first stage of organisational learning to take place, there has to be a certain amount of power/politics attached to the action (Schilling 2009). This is best described as a linked or paired set of activities so it is unlikely to work unless the person can wield

influence. There are three sorts of barriers that prevent learning from going ahead at the level of interpretation and those are represented as a form of behaviour.

These focal points (Schilling 2009) have been identified as:

- actional – personal (a lack of status for example)
- structural – organisational and
- societal - environmental .

We have a situation in middle management where there is an expectation of an influence on the interpretation of a new idea that gets held up with (or is negatively associated with) a lack of control over resources, a lack of domain-relevant expertise and a lack of culturally appropriate skills (Berry et al 2009).

Yet another potential issue of how useful another metaphor is going to be in understanding leadership is illuminated. Does host leadership add clarity or does it make the field of leadership models over-congested? The myth of an all-conquering leader is pervasive in our western societies and therefore difficult to remove from the collective psyche. However, there is some value in the idea of a host-creating space and this is further supported by the notion of providing a company 'space' in which individuals learn and grow (Bidden et al. 2009). The emphasis is on making or sustaining a shared space for the development of emerging relationships. So is there a difference between the leader as a servant, as one model or the leader as a host, another – or are these simply devices in which the world of leadership is viewed through differing but complementary lenses. If so, does a metaphor describing the leader as a host work for the reality of middle managers and those leadership examples or opportunities diffused through the organisation (for example, this model describes what can happen in small teams but can it work for huge multi-national organisations?).

The identification of a number of traits which can be learnt in order to provide firmer leadership throughout any organisation was at one time thought to be crucial (Elkjaer, 2003). This identification, in order to develop the sorts of individuals that can positively influence an organisation from within, allows for a rather formulaic approach to development rather than an organic one. A rather old-fashioned view of this is articulated by people with a service view of leadership. Adair (2005) cites that confidence and experience are both pre-requisites to growing leadership ability but without any clear evidence of the way in which confidence is enhanced and the right experience is gained. Although some research has identified that

transformational leaders (Bass 1990; Stewart 2009) are key to motivating staff, the differentiation of management and leadership as two very different sets of skills is unhelpful. Most managers and leaders have to constantly move between the two, often in just a few moments, in order to stay on top of the complex world of organisational leadership and direction.

Research (Strauss 2009) links transformational leadership to producing or encouraging a way in which team members or organisational team member activity is linked to commitment and confidence. Using a research methodology which is reliant on self-reporting questionnaires, weakens the claims that proactive behaviour through leadership is the best way to transform organisations. Whilst Adair focuses on experience and confidence, several writers (Gardner 2004; Snowden 2007; Wooding 2009; Grint 2009) have, over the past decade, begun to discuss different ways of thinking in order to prepare the leader for a less-structured, less-stable world and business and organisational environment. This is echoed by work undertaken the UK Academy for Chief Executives (Preece and Iles 2009). Whilst much of this writing does not necessarily have an immediate practical element to it, it does link to how the best leadership can be developed by enhancing the ability to think differently and therefore are those ideas which are more heuristic in nature. It does, however, begin to illustrate that uncertainties can be allayed and therefore progress in leadership development can be made by allowing time for conversation, narrative and challenge.

It is particularly interesting to note that the barriers to improving leadership are likely to be in place in an organisation that greatly needs to promote leadership knowledge and development (Pershing 2003). Anecdotally there are greater challenges in the modernisation of public bodies than might be the case for private businesses who have to be able to work within a more flexible and creative place due to the pressures of profit, shareholders and market share. This tension between the role of the individual and the organisation, especially with respect to leadership development, can lead to problems that can place pressure on the organisation to develop without systemic consideration (Taylor et al. 2011). Although not the focus of this thesis, organisational learning has a key role in setting the tone and background for more effective leadership development (Senge 2005). Schilling et al. (2009) identifies stumbling blocks that exist around the dispersing of leadership learning and development in an organisation that has its roots, if not its present, in a bureaucratic organisation. It is no longer about giving people access to a set of guidelines on how 'to do' leadership but about the development of individual character, values and morals (Kouzes and Posner 2003). This example notes what others have seen (Garvin 1993) - that organisations are made up of individuals and that fostering an environment that is conducive to development and learning (Senge 2005; Senge 2006) takes time to establish and that there are a number of ways in



which the impact of various barriers can be reduced. This would include fostering, within an organisation, an environment conducive to learning which moves away from structural boundaries between individuals and teams and fosters what Garvin called a boundary-less place that will allow freer flowing of information and ideas. This boundary-less place goes some way to capturing and utilising all sorts of unintentional or unintended impacts of development (Gill 2003). These tensions have been identified in the work undertaken by Prosser et al (2006), using a living example of the development of the Welsh Assembly Government in 2009. Prosser et al noted that in a large bureaucratic organisation any small group undertaking leadership development will only be a tiny percentage of the whole and so their 'new' message could be misheard, misdirected or re-interpreted by others, especially those not in direct contact with groups undergoing development.

It is interesting that one of the reasons for the tensions identified by Edwards and Turnbull in 2005 is related to the processes that occur in an individual when accumulating or assimilating information and the processes that underline the transformation of the information into tacit knowledge. As has been acknowledged (Crossan 1999; Gill 2003; Senge 2006; Shilling 2009 and Preece 2009) there are problems/tensions transferring any learning across from an individual to the structures in the organisation (such as teams, departments and directorates). This is why research into effective leadership development is so important in potentially discovering more effective ways of supporting middle manager leadership development.

### **2.3.3. Development of Leadership Skills**

This longer section argues for the positive inputs around the story of leadership development in middle managers. The ideas and theories articulated in the following seven pages highlight the ways in which the enhancement of the individual is at the very heart of the pursuit of improved leadership development opportunities. It is suggested that the growth of leadership can be enhanced by improving the opportunities for leadership development (Alimo-Metcalfe 1998), in and out of work, in a very pragmatic sense. (Rooke and Torbert 2005) reducing the risk of being misled or inflexible in dealing with wide-ranging and disparate issues (Burgoyne 2004). The existing literature deals with some of the considerable challenges of negative leadership behaviour (See brief synopsis on page 78, Section 2.2.6); however, the development of positive leadership skills has received a much more copious academic focus in the past. It would seem that all the key writers in leadership (Goleman 2000, Alimo-Metcalfe 2009, Grint, 2009,) have more or less abandoned the theories that relate to the leader being a unique person at the top of the organisation. Indeed, Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe is replacing her own previous research ideas (with the

focus on the individual) with looking at the way in which all individuals have an element of, or potential for, leadership. This is now no longer a question of following but of establishing some sort of mastery and understanding of self (Bolden 2003, Bolden 2006, Lunnon and Turnbull 2007). This has to be achieved before being able to pitch in with some crucial element of leadership, some sort of small act that enabled them, or their colleagues, or their organisation to grow and counter the changes in the environment in which they work and operate. It has probably never been the case that people have always effectively looked, star-glazed, at one individual or another for the guidance to do something key in organisational life.

Leadership is now more closely under the spotlight. At the same time it is felt that competent leaders and the improvement of leadership skills throughout organisations are the key to surviving the economic and cultural shifts that are now occurring (Welsh Assembly Government 2007). This may be true of public service development, but initiatives, for instance in Wales/Cymru, have called for more leadership within companies to ensure economic growth and prosperity. (Wales Management Council 2007). Having said that, there are considerable doubts (Wallis and McLoughlin 2007) about the impact of the growing acquisition of leadership skills to mitigate future challenges because much of the leadership required is not contained in the straight-forward conventional models describing, or attempting to describe, the behaviours of a leader. The role of the middle manager and more junior staff in maintaining leadership momentum is described by developments (Welsh Assembly Government 2004), for example in the civil service, of a relatively recently devolved parliament such as the Welsh Assembly Government. Conventional theories of leadership have moved on as the more complex modern world requires collaboration rather than instruction and orders. Partly, this change is due to the increased mixture of cultures and creeds and the feeling that the reliance on a single powerful person is dangerous. Conventional models, such as trait theory, leadership styles, contingency theory and transformational leadership, seem only concerned with a formal leadership style that will focus on influencing, directing and transforming an organisation's agenda (incorporating the behaviour of the designated followers). Increasingly, leadership is required throughout organisations where, in dynamic partnerships, junior leaders have been drawn into contested arenas, unknown and unfamiliar areas of learning and deals that require negotiation (Crosby and Bryson 2005). The forces pulling leadership more and more into the lower levels of management are linked to a number of factors. Disquiet with the older ineffective hierarchies, tighter cost controls and the search for more innovative and creative solutions to complex modern problems. Furthermore teams work better with leadership distributed throughout (Alimo-Metcalfe 2009).

Evolution of leadership theory (Schein 1998) has been troubled by the complexities of model formation. Many of the earlier theories have not been thoroughly tested in the work place and these theories seem to deny the complexities of the human beings involved in the transactions between leaders and their followers. Gronn, (2003) working in the higher education sector, challenged the rationale for the dualism of leadership and follower, which seems to up-lift the leader and denigrates the manager. The dyad of leader and follower (Ladkin 2010) has been criticised when, in reality, the imparting of effective management and leadership is essential in all individuals. The tensions between the role of the (Schein 1988) manager versus the leader and the tensions between the individual and the group are apparent in many of the models of the contingency school view. The specificity of the role and circumstance dictate the leaders' approach and then the responses of the followers. However, Schein believed that:

*'There is no consistent evidence that any given position on this dimension of leadership style is the best one.'* (1998 p.132)

Many of the new ways of looking at leadership are being forced by the current situation of international economic and democratic turmoil. Leaders need to be able to collaborate (Johnson and Johnson 1999) and this is nowhere more apparent than within many parts of British Public Service where the call has been to develop partnerships (Wallis and McGloughlan 2007) in order to produce public services that are robust enough to meet the growing needs of the public against the backdrop of a growing, but ageing, population.

Kouzes and Posner reiterated in 2002 that:

*'Leadership is not a solo act, it's a team effort'* (p xv)

In a more global setting, as has been argued earlier, there are a number of factors (Marquardt 2003, Iles and Preece 2006, Karakas 2008) that produce the stimulus for improved leadership and the skills required of a leader to maintain and progress organisations, both public and private.

A collaborative approach requires the establishment of an exciting vision and this vision should be the combined product of work undertaken in collaboration and partnership with others (Lambert 2002). A formal vision might be the by-product of the work of many senior people but, if you believe in the ideas of distributed leadership (Heifetz 2009a), the responsibility for distilling a vision should be cascaded throughout an organisation. In particular the need to establish an exciting vision in small teams with a link to a wider corporate vision is essential.

How then can leaders and managers with enhanced leadership skills establish the collaboration and partnership required? Trust is an important element. Some evidence points towards the establishment of trust (Iles and Preece 2006) as being vital and a major key for the working of teams and which can lead to more staff empowerment and innovation.(Brunard and Kleiner 1994). Establishing trust and the building of the 'right' atmosphere for a team to work in is crucial. Teams that are dependent on each other and learn the power of reciprocity encourage stability in a team and a way in which that team might respond better under pressure and organisational difficulties (Cialdini 2000)

In the age of technological communication, it is important for the leader to consider the ways in which humans have a propensity to behave in certain ways. Human organisations cannot ignore the power of the human network, and encouraging ways of maintaining face-to-face contact (Johnson and Johnson 1989), even if it is using newer technology such as computer-to-computer visual meetings and discussions, is an important economic and efficiency consideration.

There is importance in maintaining communication on a human level and communicating one-to-one with the followers. In a large organisation this may be much more challenging although devolved leadership practices can strive to find ways to make this happen and for others to have chances to communicate one-to-one by, for example, the design of the work space (Kouzes and Posner 2002)

Much of leadership and the skills that good leaders develop are aligned to this ability to relate to other human beings and the work of Goleman in 1996 has been instrumental in alerting organisations that their leaders have to have a working understanding of human dynamics. The conversations between staff, customers and stakeholders need to be interpreted and time spent listening to the richness of human conversation can tell those operating in the leadership 'space' so much about what is happening within the organisation, team or group (Goleman 2000). The skill of the leader, or part of the necessary armoury of the manager exhibiting leadership skills, is firstly knowing yourself and being able to 'read' other individuals more accurately. (Avolio and Bass 2002)

Two things stand out in the leadership literature that relate to the very biology of *Homo Sapien*, namely the need to associate, a social compulsion for many, and that person-kind belong to an emotional primate species. Human beings' reactions to modern life are often as a 'primitive being', whereby reactions to circumstances are linked to emotions (Goleman 2008) rather than to logic or 'cold structure.' One way in which individuals can make an impact on organisations is to make efforts to understand themselves more clearly using the 'Johari window' (Luft and Ingham 1955 and Bolden 2006) - which encourages a look at

areas of self-perception and disclosure. There is a tension identified in that model which suggests (Hersey and Blanchard 2001) revealing a lot about yourself in order to lead people better (and this is engineered by encouraging feedback). Hersey and Blanchard's idea that revealing more of oneself would take leaders and their staff too long and distract them from their roles and jobs does not convince me. Many of the ways in which people communicate, exchange information about themselves, or reveal their points of view, is undertaken at a sub-conscious level.

There is a growing need for leaders and managers utilising leadership skills in the workplace to have a network of colleagues and co-workers within and outside of the workplace. This network is more likely to enable the finding of support, information, access to different perspectives, ideas, networks, bridges to partnerships and many other ways in which leadership can advance collective thinking and produce enhanced success (Cialdini 2001). Leadership development and the development of leadership skills in managerial staff is currently in sharp relief as the world experiences a very turbulent period. Researchers and writers are clear that there are many, sometimes conflicting, theories of leadership and it has become one of the most written-about organisational topics. Yet there is no consensus as to what, precisely, leadership is, particularly within differing levels and layers in both public and private organisations. This lack of consensus about leadership is a key national element to the picture of leadership, despite the global nature of some of the challenges being experienced in the world. Perhaps this is because leadership can be so individual, but that leadership has to be mitigated against the context in which that leadership operates. This phenomenon can be graphically illustrated by the fact that the successes of a football manager in one league or with one club are not necessarily repeated at his next club.

Grint's view of leadership, expanded on in 2009, developed the idea of the leader being someone who can find a way of producing less idealised, less textbook responses to difficult and complicated questions. The resultant clumsy, as in unpolished, often experimental solutions should be undertaken by taking into account the various types of leadership styles such as fatalist, individualist, egalitarian or hierarchical. The challenge about this is that there is inevitability or tension about the improving of an individual and the resultant improvement of the service to which they contribute. Can you prepare individuals to be (Wooding 2009) people who are not intimidated by boundaries and who are less tied to plans that are pre-defined and over prepared?

There is a message, often repeated, (Grint 2009), which is that we have not faced such complex issues before, and therefore we need different techniques and processes for engaging people in the process. Public service initiatives around co-production (Hartley

2007) and participation require those involved to absorb new and complementary skills to find a way through this complex maze. It can no longer be good enough to tell people what to do, although there is a cadre of managers and leaders who clearly have grown up with that way of working. There is an excellent phrase in Wooding's publication which sums up the sort of things those leaders and managers need to be able to do:

*'to manage the tensions and conflicts that often accompany contradiction and complexity' (2009 p 3)*

There are ways in which individuals need to express leadership by rejecting automatic responses to issues. Adopting a thinking process that is prepared not just to obey orders but to be prepared to take a decision, not based on procedure, but on a thoughtful shared plan or reaction that seems the best for the situation, is ideal - ideal in the sense of developing staff to accept leadership responsibilities. There is a myth about being able to plan for every eventuality (Grint 2009). The reality of most modern situations is that there are fractures in the stable world that we thought existed (based on factors such as the environment, for example, or trust) or just fractures of institutions we had grown to expect to be operating in perpetuity (particularly banks and financial organisations). It is all too easy to place the emphasis on yet another model of leadership. However there are elements of newer models that explain more clearly the nuances of this complex topic. 'Engaged Leadership' (Alimo-Metcalf 2009) predicts a four-fold increase in financial effectiveness; this financial claim may be impossible to test but seems implausible. Engagement has, at its core, an idea of basic leadership qualities such as engaging individuals, engaging the organisation, moving forward together and tying these all together within the concept of personal qualities and core values, without giving much thought to the development of those skills within an organisation, across organisations, partnerships or professionally collaborative, settings. Engagement, following this idea, is conceptually interesting and beguiling. However where middle managers are typically still transactional, such as in nursing (Govier and Nash, 2009), there lingers a tension in the field of leadership development, which can give rise to individuals who do not perceive their role to be one of leadership.

Now whether this is called 'engaged leadership' or 'quiet leadership' or 'servant leadership' is to miss the point. Within this development of an individual as a leader or mini-leader, there is the potential for the development of the organisation, in order to choose paths that will ensure the betterment of that organisation (or society, the environment or country). Yet there is a tension in that. Many organisations are huge bureaucratic bodies. Furthermore much of the work that needs to occur to join things together requires those staff to build up strong confident relationships with each other and it is here that the tension arises. At the interface of services or within the departments and directorates of huge organisations people can

struggle to find a way of working differently and a way in which they might challenge the status quo and work in and around bureaucracy and stiff and turgid administration (Du Gay 2005). These factors represent the big challenge to the way in which organisations develop their leadership in a distributed manner. Certainly, within formal hierarchical organisations, the notion of a post-modernist world where the view of instability and complexity leads to the possibility of conflict and tension amongst the very managers the organisation is trying to make more transformational and resourceful, is a concern (Kernick 2004).

This very complexity in large modern organisations has been recognised as a huge challenge for organisations undergoing transformational change. An example of huge transformational change can be found in the movement to devolve government in Great Britain in the 1990s. Such a dramatic change occurred in Wales/ Cymru and the leadership ramifications of that change have been unfolding throughout the past decade (Prosser et al. 2006). Multi-national organisations are often conglomerations of discreet and distinct smaller entities particularly where ‘take-overs’ and company acquisitions have occurred. Many leadership models are regarded as being weak and limited in their descriptions of prevailing organisational culture (Rosenfeld and Wilson 1999). In addition many ideas about leadership in organisations are limited by restrictive notions of gender and nationality (such as the predominance of American or Western European writers (Kellerman 2001)) giving rise to an element of uncertainty about the application of their findings (Gill 2003)).

Researchers have identified where there are tensions and barriers in organisations when developing leadership (Edwards 2008) whereby individuals have struggled to impart their new understandings and skills through organisations. A lack of confidence or an inability to drive their learning through the higher echelons of the company has been identified as a key barrier. (Schilling and Kluge 2009).

Despite this, research has suggested that leadership development is usually effective (Bass 1990). Bass’s view was, however, linked to his simplistic view that leadership was best linked to ideas of a prescribed theory of leadership. In addition to this doubt about effectiveness, successful development is dependent on, not surprisingly, the structure, context and quality of training/facilitated opportunities to learn, and the individual and his/her ability to put it into practice.

There has sometimes been too great a tendency to reduce leadership to a set of descriptions and interventions (Bolden 2006). This reductionist approach, whilst useful in some aspects of understanding, does not generally allow for leadership to be seen or experienced ‘as a whole’, specifically in the interaction between the individuals and his/her organisational context (Winston and Patterson 2006). Less commonly spoken about are

managers sent onto leadership development programmes who do not see themselves as leaders. These individuals tend not to see the relevance of leadership development to their roles; that is, for some, it is not a proven reality but dependent on the social construction of leadership, which, at best, is viewed as just one part of the competencies of a manager.

In conclusion, the preceding sections of this section have been building on topics supportive to the arguments that leadership development is a complex activity with many perspectives and angles as well as a shadow side. Topics such as culture, gender and the theories dealing with the 'dark' side of leadership are recognised as being important to the wider leadership debate.

The final two sections of this unit deal with the tensions within leadership development and how that applies to learning.

#### **2.3.4 Leadership complexities and tensions**

This thesis seeks to reflect upon a conceptual gap. This conceptual gap appears through two areas of complexity. Firstly, the complexities of the topic of leadership itself, with many contesting arenas and protagonists, are apparent through this literature review. Secondly the lives and pre-development positions for many professionals can be characterised through complex weaves of experience, education and attitude. The complexities of organisational leadership have been well described (Crossan et al. 1999). Crossan's model suggests, and then describes in clear detail, the dynamic environment, with its three levels of interaction between the individual, group and organisation and the tensions that exist between exploration and exploitation in the work-place. When trying to look at organisations the differences between the public sector in Britain and the business population are becoming less marked (Mumford 2007) although the skill base for the public sector leadership is heavily influenced by factors such as local politics, the role of the citizen, and the increasing pressure to work collaboratively. There is a need for the recognition of tensions between the growth of the individual and the growth of the organisation to be reflected in ways in which the leadership development programmes are created, so that the development can be tailored to take into account these likely tensions.

There is some evidence (Bass 1985, Bass 1990) that there are experiences in early life, such as family position or interest by parents, which may help in later life as leadership skills mature, and those individuals 'find' leadership roles that are made more suitable by their previous, but not necessarily directly linked, experiences. Development of leadership skills has been perceived as a consequence of many unknown influences on a person in their adult life (Raelin 2004). The establishment of an individual's timeline often reveals that the



development of leadership is limited from formal programmes when compared to opportunities that are more natural, incidental or informal (Kempster 2009). On the other hand programmes are not often well-evaluated (Collins 2002). Although knowledge can be seen to be advanced in more formal programmes little is done to increase the desire of companies to tackle a perceived leadership deficit in more imaginative ways.

Much of the of the theory during the past 40 years has been dominated by emphasis on the individual (Bolden 2003) yet Adair (White 2005, Adair 2005) partially made his name developing a complementary three-role model - team/task/individual despite the slow realisation that leadership, particularly under the current world trade conditions, is a much more complex activity. At the heart of this change in emphasis is a focus on the relationships between leaders and followers and the notion that leadership can emerge from anywhere in the organisation. Writers have identified certain factors that need to be acknowledged when developing leadership in an organisation. Leadership develops through, and operates within, teams, by the development of listening skills, through reflective practice (Rushmer, Lough and Davies 2004) and operates in changeable environments where the 'answers' are not necessarily clear (Strauss, Griffin and Rafferty 2009). Hierarchies can no longer be expected, or relied upon, to produce clear answers for the complexities of the modern world (both socially and in the work setting). The spotlight has turned to look at ways of helping employees to improve their confidence and their ability to be innovative, creative, self-starting and motivated. The argument therefore being developed in this thesis and through this literature search is that radically different and more imaginative leadership development approaches are urgently required.

Leadership development has been growing and vast amounts of money have been spent on it (Raelin 2004). Raelin's study, which was conducted in the USA and that paper estimated that up to 50 billion dollars a year was spent on leadership development programmes with little or no convincing information about the efficacy of that development in the workplace. Doubt is cast on how 'far' the leadership development can progress into the less professional ranks of a company or into the wider realms of the organisation and society (Burgoyne 2004). Furthermore the conflagration of leadership development and management development makes it even harder to discern the effective from the not-so effective programmes (Kempster 2009). The training and development that is undertaken is often poorly evaluated and would be undertaken in the midst of three contradictory tensions (Edwards, Archer and Turnbull 2009). Firstly, a tension related to the growth of the individual against the growth of the organisation; secondly, a tension between the preparations of new leaders in a developing organisation against those who may have been there for some time

and finally, the development of leaders around current organisational and cultural issues against the development of the individual preparing to lead a future organisation.

Overall development opportunities in organisations are not well-evaluated (Sadler –Smith 2006) and this is true of leadership development programmes (Kempster 2009). American Express undertook to develop a comprehensive evaluation of a large company leadership development programme (American Express 2008). The project highlighted a blended and supportive programme for 20,000 employees that gave the best results in terms of return on investment and improving the transfer of learning across the teams. Leadership development needs to pay attention to the barriers and tensions within an organisation and team to improve return on investment and the transfer of learning. Moreover the evaluation of any programme should, ideally, start at the beginning of the programme (Wales Management Council, 2008) and rely on a mix of evaluative techniques.

Leadership development is still deemed to be crucial for the survival of organisations in especially challenging times and the focus of this development should not be on the development of individuals who stand out as being highly effective or ambitious (however laudable that might be). Leadership development could be linked to the survival of the organisation (Alimo-Metcalfe 2005) by applying leadership values in all the staff programmes and across partner organisations. Leadership development applies not only to the individual, which might be more like leader development, (Alimo Metcalfe et al. 2009) but also to the collective leadership fostered in strong networking and a co-combatant growth in social capital (Day 2000). In providing an explanation of the difference between leadership development and leader development it is suggested that leader development is not about a growth in social capital but attends more to human capital. This theory, fostering leadership values at all levels, will predict that more individuals will ‘catch onto’ the ethos of development, which is to be distributed throughout the ranks of the organisation thereby getting as many staff as possible engaged. The development should be work-based and appropriate for the aims and objectives of the organisation.

## **2.4 Section four**

### **2.4.1. Conclusions**

The main thrust of this thesis is that leadership is not – necessarily – about an individual or the followers (although this grouping of individuals has been a way in which leadership has been defined) but it is most certainly about relationships. The place in which leadership manifests itself may have an impact on the individual’s requisition of an effective skills base (Kellerman 2001). For example the public sector has potentially more skill requirements and

sensitivities towards politics, the impact of diverse stakeholders and the need for collaborative skills (both official and citizen). Leadership is most certainly about relationships and the network of relationships around leadership. 'Living' leadership and 'engaged' leadership (Wooding 2009) recognise that leaders are part of an organisation, in the middle of the organisation, yet are being shaped by all sorts of other influences such as their own network, the political factors pertaining at the time, as well as the culture of the organisation, trade or business.

The critical literature search revealed that there has been a diverse amount of research and intellectual activity about the notion of leadership and leadership development over the past ten years. Much of the literature, which rather conflictingly and confusingly deals synonymously with management development, attempts to produce competency frameworks corresponding with the development of management standards. Theories and models gain and lose favour as time and change influences research and organisational structures and priorities. However the literature search above details a theme progressing towards more open and self-aware leadership styles. This activity has often been less helpful to the development of leadership because it misses the point about leadership, which is a much more intuitive way of working. As identified within the literature search in this chapter, many of the ways in which individuals are developed, with leadership in mind, could be concentrated in the principle skills of coaching and mentoring (the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) qualifications in coaching assess candidates on the mentoring and executive coaching application to leadership) and action learning which are listening and use of questions. (Gounden 2009). Coaching and mentoring also champions the role of self-development and awareness, confidence raising and the role of language and context in the development of leadership. There are assumptions made in organisations that there would be a general agreement about the need to disperse leadership throughout organisations and to encourage new ways of thinking. Not all organisations and managers are ready for this.

There are tensions identified around the development of leadership, including the reasons why individuals do not become involved in leadership, such as low self-esteem, lack of confidence and cognitive restriction. Much of the literature has been developed in the USA along with models of leadership and development. It is something to be noted that this fact alone is a reason to be less confident of the application of American research to British, European and emerging organisational communities. There has been a shift away from the sole leader, the all-powerful central figure, towards organisations and nations looking to encourage leadership skills throughout leadership development. Therefore, as such, leadership development remains high on the agenda. There is little literature that deals with the impact of leadership development in those who do not perceive themselves as leaders,

be they administrators, or managers of small teams. If the aim of increasing leadership throughout organisations is to be realised then help needs to be given to prepare staff for the use of leadership skills in all circumstances. Academic knowledge will be increased in this little-researched field, using qualitative data. This knowledge then will allow me to research the way in which reluctant managers and administrators are exposed to leadership development. Insights and subsequent advice about the most effective way of developing and creating suitable managers with leadership skills, particularly in public service, will always have a practical element to it. Chapter three highlights the methodology that will bring the phenomenon of leadership development to the fore and this methodology and the data collected and presented in chapter four will amount to the practical element of this Doctorate in Business Administration.

## **Chapter 3 Research, design and methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapters one and two of this thesis highlighted the focus of the research which is, broadly, leadership development in reluctant middle managers who do not, due to their predisposition, see leadership in their middle management role. The aim of the research is to discover better methods of providing leadership development in a way that provides contributions to knowledge, methodology and practice.

The original starting point for this thesis was my being intrigued at the impact of middle management leadership development on individuals, having observed that some individuals in middle management (Berg and Fransson 2007) could not comprehend a leadership role in their work. The methodology for this study is qualitative in nature, based on a social constructivist standpoint. In part, by utilising interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a technique, this research gathers naturally occurring phenomena as the basis for distilling themes, cultures and ideas related to both theoretical background and practical application in the design of leadership development interventions for middle managers.

At the start of this process, it was unclear as to the overall research methodology and therefore the initial approaches, written in some detail in chapter one, were, and often felt, unclear and exploratory. However, without theoretical explanation, I had begun to ponder on the question of improving my own practice. I had wandered into the field of performance development through work in the early 2000s with several accrediting bodies (See Appendix six) and had grown dissatisfied with the way in which leadership development, in particular, was being delivered. This feeling was particularly acute through working with middle manager programmes in the Welsh Assembly Government during 2007 through to 2011 (Chapter 1 page 29).

I had been aware of the processes of action research having been a facilitator on the Bath University-led Connect4Cymru programme during 2005 through to 2008, although I had not fully understood its relevance to personal mastery and the development of professional practice.

Before explaining philosophical positional I will explain my over-arching stance of action research, particularly the angle taken by Jack Whitehead (see papers 1989, 2009 and book in 2006, co-written with Jean McNiff) and the interpretation of action research as a means of, as Whitehead and McNiff explain, asking the question of improvement of personal practice. Enquires of this kind require applied energy and focus, as values and principles are explored

around principles of learning.

This is inductive research but is not taking an unsophisticated stance (Silverman 2001). I am making assumptions that leadership is something that can be developed but have been prepared to take an open-ended stance and make the research exploratory in nature. Married to this inductive stance, I will work abductively (Levin-Rozalis 2004). In that, I am assuming that, as the phenomena emerge and the themes start to crystallise, the understanding around improving leadership development will become more comprehensible to me as a researcher.

The previous chapter concluded with a clear indication that further research is required into the field of leadership development and this relates to the need to explore viable options for interventions. How can leadership development be designed to maximise the impact on the individual within the context of where they work? This chapter articulates and clarifies how the methodological parameters were moulded into an operational design.

What follows is divided into five sections and a short concluding summary. Section one is an introduction, section two deals with the research philosophy and, in turn, defends my theoretical position from an ontological and epistemological standpoint. Section three defends the taking of a social constructivist approach whilst section four details research design leading to the development and evolution of the methodology itself in section five. Section six covers, in depth, data collection and analysis. Section seven outlines views on the questions of reliability, validity and ethics. Finally, there is a short summary to the chapter providing a bridge onto the findings and overall analysis of the collected data in chapter four.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy (Positioning)**

In order to shape a starting point for my view of what might count for knowledge (epistemology) and what is reality and existence I will be building my research on four cornerstones (Doolittle and Hicks 2003). These tenets, which are philosophical starting points, are that knowledge development occurs because of active thought processes, cognition works in developing more manageable responses to achieve certain goals, thought processes serve to help the person understand (but are processes that does not reliably reveal external reality) and, finally, the state of knowing is therefore a triumpherate of neurological, cultural and language-based neural activities. Fay (1996) writes about the need to reject dualism and to see the world as being much more complex and less structured. Dualism arises from the tendency to polarise topic areas (Fairhurst 2001), firstly to gain a clearer understanding of what might be perceived as being opposite (for example: leadership

and management) and to apply a conception of simplification outlined in the concept of Occam's Razor (Meier and O'Toole 2006). The Occam's Razor concept suggests that unless a more complex answer is really convincing a simple explanation is more likely to be firmly postulated.

Leadership development programmes had been observed across a number of years and a wide range of organisations and leadership opportunities. A starting point for my research was the belief that there must be ways of improving that experience for delegates and, in particular, making it more likely that the delegates' behaviour, actions and attitudes to learning, and subsequently to context-related leadership, would improve. However, there is no attempt to try to claim that the findings from this study are anywhere near 'generalizable'.

The position of this research lies within an interpretive paradigm (Burrell and Morgan 1979), which seeks to 'hear' the reality of the participant not that of the observer, whilst remaining subjective and individual. Quantitative approaches and statistical methodology have arguably dominated research activities (Klenke 2008) and have been the bedrock methodology for research into leadership for the past twenty years (Vince 2004; Ladkin 2005; Klenke 2007; Pedler et al 2010). Many recent writers, (for example, see Warner and Grint 2006) have expressed methodological doubts about the over-reliance, by the predominantly American University-based teams of researchers, on quantitative research methods. These American quantitative methods have led to a distortion of findings and a bias, and occasionally a practical dominance, towards their findings. This chapter sets out the argument in favour using a qualitative approach to research the phenomenon of leadership development in a marked diversion from the predominance of quantitative approaches undertaken and reported over the past two decades (Ladkin 2010). Newtonian and linear approaches (Harle 2009) do not allow exploration of the richness that can be gleaned by the more personal and individual approaches contained in the listening and reflection evoked in dealing with a leadership development narrative or the responsive narrative of a line manager. This approach, where an individual seeks to capitalise upon their own unique role within a social matrix and seeks to grow 'social capital' (Leithwood and Riahi; 2003, Maak 2007), relates to developing self-awareness within a unique contextual framework.

There is the view that there is always a potential tension between individuals and the work they undertake in the organisation which employs them (Machell et al 2009). Human beings collectively, and individually, are complex and individual strengths in emotional intelligence or self-reliance do not necessarily create an individual who can respond, all the time, to the needs of a company or organisation. This is particularly true when related to the

opportunities for people to develop and grow in turbulent times (Winston and Patterson 2006). Part of the need for self-awareness comes from the need for managers who can lead themselves and provide support, confidence and motivation to smaller teams and groupings of individuals (Day 2001).

Kempster, in his 2009's doctoral research, and reported in his 2009 book, reached towards this individual focus on development by originally interviewing managers and leaders and looked at a time line through their careers and identifying notable things and notable people along that passage of time. These 'notables' were not necessarily overly positive experiences but that, coupled with reflection, allowed the narrator to self-evaluate why they had adopted a particular path as a leader. Was a negative experience strong enough to convince them to avoid that behaviour or learn different approaches, or was a positive experience key in fine-tuning their own approach or altering apparently negative behaviours? The inquiry into notable occurrences and notable people dovetails well with the view that leadership is highly dependent on both the individual and situation within which they are working – so both are highly contextual and individualistic (Vince 1998; Kempster 2009 (a); Kempster 2009 (b)).

The research framework for this thesis has been developed with an emphasis on qualitative approaches (Spradley 1979; Mauthner et al 2002) with a focus on the experience of middle managers undergoing leadership development. An 'involved' inquiry, underpinned through qualitative approaches, is more appropriate for this sort of study and becomes, Bluhm et al argues (2011) a process of '*reasonable inquiry*'. Qualitative approaches focus on the richness of language and dialogue and seek to get to the core of and an understanding of, the prevailing culture (Alvesson 2002; Holloway and Wheeler 2002). This approach does not ignore the tensions involved in interpreting the results of the conversations in terms of the meaning and understanding attached to language. Quantitative research can superficially provide the reliability and validity of the findings due to the allure of figures and statistical analysis however qualitative approaches provide a depth of material and humanly orientated connections and links (Burgoyne et al 2004).

Kempster and Parry, for example, (Kempster and Parry 2011) contend that one particular method, critical realism, may have the capacity to:

'...strengthen researchers' confidence to place emphasis on an understanding and explanation of contextualised leadership as a scientific goal, rather than the scientific goal of generalization through empirical replication. (Abstract)'

For the research into human activities such as development and human growth in efficacy amidst human systems (such as teams and organisational leadership and management)



qualitative approaches seem more in keeping with the subject of leadership development and theory development (Kegan and Lahey 2001a, 2001b; Klenke 2008; Kegan and Lahey 2009; Corbett et al, 2011). Whilst the recent study of Linebaum and Cartwright (2010), detailing research into the very human experiences of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, is firmly placed in the paradigm of scientific rigour of quantitative approaches, the paper recognises the risks of common method variance. However the authors, surprisingly in my view, still assert that there is a need for a drive:

*'regarding scientific rigour in designing research projects to ensure that results obtained are valid and credible.'* (p 1338).

The approaches described in the rest of this chapter therefore afford a potentially interesting and liberating slant on the topic of leadership development. At its heart, qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning of their world according to the participants, not necessarily the researchers. That is, the interpretation and clarification of the phenomena being investigated is interpreted by those assigning meaning to it (Ayan and Kahraman 2012).

The combination methodology for data collection is unique although has at its core, as previously described in chapter one, elements of tried and tested approaches. A leaning, for this study, towards qualitative approaches ensures that the distinctive voices of the individual participants in the targeted leadership development programme are 'heard' more clearly.

In addition this research focuses on hearing the voice of the participant in the sense of their own narrative or story (Parry and Hansen 2007). A helpful way of considering this approach to leadership development research is to focus on leadership as a human resource (Bolman and Deal 1991). Bolman and Deal use a framework of four perspectives: structural, human resource, political and symbolic to interrogate approaches to leadership development and their 'human resource' frame most closely fits my approach. According to the work of Bolman and Deal, managerial effectiveness was couched in terms of a rational viewpoint and the overriding structure of the organisation, whereas leadership effectiveness could be linked more strongly to organisational symbolism and the existence of sub-cultures. The paradigm of a post-modern approach is very complementary to, and sits well beneath (with its emphasis on human construction being affected by specific conditions, as well as focusing on the complexity and ambiguity of human existence) the umbrella of social constructivism, with the human resource frame, articulated by Bolman and Dean, positioned under it. The human resource frame, characterised by Bolman and Dean (1991), contains the ideas of participation, listening and openness, with a preference for collaboration not competition. Developing an approach within the research workshops has consistently been, what Bolman and Deal's work describes as, supportive *'concerned about the feelings of others'* and participative, *'fostering participation and involvement'*.

Adopting a more qualitative approach allows me to 'see' a less fixed view of the world and adopt a focus that is more intent on understanding the processes involved on both an individual and organisational level (Elliot 2005). In particular, it is argued, (Avolio and Gardner 2005) that the power of individual narrative gives rise to a richer insight into factors leading to an improvement of the understanding and delivery of leadership development programmes. This study of 2005 recognises, right from the beginning, that investigations of this type are, of necessity, highly complex undertakings with many potential interpretations and a complex web of variables (Daft and Weick 1984).

Drawing upon this predominantly European tradition of adopting a more qualitative approach to my research there is not an expectation of finding an overall truth (Grint 2005 (a), Warner and Grint 2006). It is not the intention of this work to seek the truth, '*per-se*' from this research but to provide some insight into, and shed some light upon, the phenomenon of leadership and its development. In turn, this focus could stimulate and explain better ways in which leadership can be developed and encouraged in parts of organisations and amongst staff who may not even perceive themselves to be in a leadership role (Alvesson 2002). There is a need to comprehend how leadership development works and how the core issues are more successfully understood in order to design more effective leadership development interventions in the future. In keeping with the stance described above, this research might be described as maintaining an 'anti-positivist' approach (Hirschleim and Klein 1989). Anti-positivist stance is one which seeks to 'look through' the sheen of numbers and statistics to see the real world of an individual. Simply put, positivism is on one side and anti-positivism is on the other, describing an uncomfortable dyad. (Burrell and Morgan 2000).

This study combines social constructionist ideas with a post-modern approach to qualitative research. Post-modernists (Tierney 1996) focus on five main areas that lead out from the modernist philosophies. Firstly, post-modern observers of development would say that there are no absolute truths and that 'truths', as such, are mediated by social concepts. Secondly, they support the idea that cultures have marked differences, that language has many, often unshared, depths of meaning (Schein 2010), and thirdly that individual constraint and the possibilities for action are played out in a society where each individual is neither totally powerful nor totally powerless. Fourthly, and perhaps more pertinently, we can be seen to be in a world where, despite the irony, objectivity is impossible and where each individual has a view. Finally that those individual views do not, necessarily, add up to a unified whole.

Social constructionist concepts are boxed around four main principles. The first parameter is that a critical view of society is taken; two, that all circumstances have an historical and cultural perspective; three, that knowledge is governed by social processes and finally that

knowledge and social action work together (Burr 2003) This research is firmly placed in a post-modern world whereby the findings could be describing a world which has no uniform consensus, termed as a dissensus approach which allows for findings to be emergent (Alvesson and Deetz 2001). This surfacing seems at odds with the findings of chapter two's literature search which described many theories and models that have the appearance, in some lights, of solid truth. However, the reflective cycle, which is so central to action research, constituted and organised a move away from a view of the world which is sure, to one that is unsure. Therefore this research approach does not seek to confirm the existing consensus but admits and seeks out views which disrupt or contradict the consensus existing around the topic of leadership development.

The observations and accounts of reactions and interactions within the research are framed by using the notion of a lens (to discern detail and depth) rather than a mirror (which would 'see' only a reflection) (Fairhurst 2008). Although unable to undertake long-term ethnographic research, I want to introduce the fundamental strands of ethnography into my study. Ethnography represents almost the opposite to studies based on hypotheses (Edgar 1994).

*'Ethnography is a different kind of research process with a different kind of research logic. It is bottom-up rather than top-down. It emphasizes discovery of a different point of view rather than a structured test of some aspect of a general hypothesis (p 1)'*

I am keen to 'ground' my work and maintain freshness to the world of middle manager leadership development (Watson 2011). Therefore an ethnographic 'stance', for me, which will more completely allow me to look at the more interesting questions of the 'how' and 'why', can be 'counted' against the more quantitative notions of counting (Van Maanen 2011).

This study takes a distinctly post-heroic view of leadership of development programmes. From an ontological and epistemological approach it is accepted that, in this thesis, the meaning of 'being' (as in human 'being') is subjective. There is a relationship between thinking and being and therefore any 'truth', particularly in abstract ideas such as leadership, is subjective. Knowledge is both contextual **and** subjective (Von Krogh et al. 2012) and shifting with time in a natural evolution and expansion that is being stretched and accelerated by human curiosity. This study has, as a central tenet, the primacy of the individual as opposed to their organisation, their title or their grade and status and that therefore people are not objects to be theorised upon. This makes the idea of research much more collaborative and person-focused. As a result of the research the individual should develop and learn as much, if not more, than the researchers (Vince 1998). Any individual

can exhibit leadership. Key markers in their responses will be better understood by working with them, not on them. (Ford et al 2008).

### **3.3 Defending a Social Constructionist approach**

A social constructionist perspective is not, one might argue, a methodological approach (Corbett 2011), although adopting this perspective does produce research that also has an ethnographic, person-centric standpoint. Research into leadership development has been long conducted using the medium of quantitative data. However, much more interest is being shown in understanding leadership development from a more intimate position of social conduct, contact and conversation. Indeed the objectivism of the past now seems to be moving from subjectivism to inter-subjectivism which describes an inter-relational, relationally-embedded experience (Cunliffe 2001). Now, in 2013, many major scholars and academics have adopted or are using elements of social constructionism in trying to understand, more clearly, the complex world of leadership as acted out in reality (Grint 2005; Ford 2009; Ladkin 2007; Cunliffe 2001). Social constructionism has had a long history of evolution and stems from the early work of Mead (1934) who believed that our identities stem from our interactions with others. Both Marx and Engels (Tucker 1978) accepted that human thought had an existence that was held in the realities of society. Berne, in 1964, although couched in impossibly antiquated terms for 2013, nevertheless identified social interactions that often ran to prescribed formulae. Gergen (1973) developed his views of how knowledge was externally produced and that society was in a state of continual flux. Berger and Luckmann (1966) had, a decade previously, articulated the essence of the power of social pressures and of how individuals make sense of who they are. By choosing a social constructivist approach it is conceded that there are multiple interpretations of reality but that our understanding of reality will always be incomplete and vague (Grint 2005(a), Kezar et al 2006). As well as being vague and incomplete, reality comes from a set of 'essences' (Moran 2000) emanating from multiple and complex interactions, relationships and interpretations (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). There is even a suggestion that scientists using a positivistic outlook would only use methodologies that '*protect the scientist from uncertainty*' (Lawrence 2005). Post-modern approaches overlap somewhat; a post-modern focus is more interested in the power relationships that occur in organisations on the grounds that many old hierarchical notions of leadership no longer work in today's modern, more interconnected, world (Kezar et al 2006; Uhl Bien 2006).

Another useful way of looking at the social influences on leadership development is to adopt the theoretical ideas contained in the notion of an entity/relational axis described by Uhl-Bien in 2006. This study favours the relational part of the axis. Entity describes the very individual

perceptions of knowledge as truth and facts. This orientation is very positivistic in nature and denies the impact of the environment and social structures. Relational perspectives, however, create a link between emergent phenomena and the way in which multiple meanings and their linked perspectives can be viewed by the individual. A social constructionist approach focuses much more on the communication aspects of multiple exchanges and relationships which are mediated through conversation, narrative and dialogue.

Narrative is a way of gaining insight into the complex world of the individual. A social constructivist approach to the development of leaders will allow an insight into such complexities whilst not losing sight of the human impact of collective behaviours. For example, although rules and structures of organisations are believed to guide and, to a certain extent, predict organisational behaviour, this structural approach can be balanced against the agency of free-will (Klockner and Hicks 2008). However, it can be conjectured that human beings do not have complete free-will because their actions are often dictated by or mediated by history, culture and routine (Ciulla 2004). All this has to be based on the, partially, blinkered view of reality an individual has to have due to the complexities of human make-up, behaviour and upbringing (Pedler et al 2010). Indeed, the influences of power and confidence on one's own leadership ability, can balance behaviours and responses as individuals in the organisational context in which they operate. (Burrell and Morgan 2000)

A social constructionist approach merely reflects the movement of an understanding of leadership development from a description of an omnipotent individual to an individual who, seeing and construing their world in a particular way, makes sense of a situation or a context in which they operate. More precisely, leadership development ought to reflect greater elements of current thinking about leaders and leadership that implies less reliance on the '*situation*' and more on the '*situated*' (Grint 2005(b) - See page 1492). A social constructionist approach relies on (Alvesson 2002; Gustavsen 2003; Grint 2005(a)), the idea that assumptions and views that an individual has are partially dictated by not one, single reality, but are dependent on the background of an individual who creates a version of the reality based on their own language, culture and other in-built filters. This notion of individualism is similar to the argument that Heidegger puts forward regarding works of art (Inwood 1997)) that:

*'a work of art is primarily a thing and that aesthetic value is superimposed on it by our subjective view of it.'* (p 116).

This is why the research methodology selected should seek to understand the view of the individual by attending to his or her words and by seeking to understand the context in which

those words are used. Moreover the researcher cannot be an objective part of the process but part of the '*inner story*' of the research too (McGill 2004). In addition, working with individuals through this process of narrative allows for a vehicle for the exposure of emotion as a powerful tool of learning within organisations and amongst individuals (Vince 2004). The researcher at this level, therefore, is not an empty vessel but can co-create the very honest and trustful relationship that allows for the deeper reflection on the impact of the development and echoes good practice that reflects a coaching stance (Clutterbuck 2005). The highly complex nature of developing leadership makes this a complicated area to research with many superficially similar individuals (Bolden et al 2005) behaving within leadership and yet regarding leadership in entirely different ways. It is therefore unlikely that causal elements can be found. However, by listening to the narrative of individuals, a lot of general ideas about the ways in which to offer development opportunities can align research findings, not only in advancing of knowledge but also to providing insights. Subsequently, this methodology hints at the ways in which the development of effective public and private services leadership development can be positioned, organised and presented.

### **3.4 Research Design**

The main programme for research was one with a large leadership development programme with an international engineering company. The programme experienced several changes in format and time from the starting point in March 2011 until it was extended to a final workshop finishing in October 2011. This entailed running the final cohort with much larger numbers and with more facilitators. However, the essence of the programme was retained through using the same venue and Brecon Beacons' backdrop, core facilitators, the Institute of Leadership and Management curriculum restraints and similar, or the same, exercises and ideas. Data collected over the lifetime of the Babcock International middle manager programme, a qualification issued by the Institute of Leadership and Management Award at Level 5, which was run partly in workshops in the Brecon Beacons, South Wales, and partly by telephone coaching and extended tutorial support, was approached using different, but complementary, methods of analysis.

Leadership and management qualifications are issued by accrediting bodies, such as the Institute of Leadership and Management, based on nationally agreed management and leadership standards. Accredited centres are licensed to provide these qualifications by a system of 4-yearly submissions to the accrediting body, I.L.M., in this case. Standards are maintained by a system of verification (both internal and external), inspection, marked assignments and adherence to a code of practice that includes quality assurance, verification structures and mark moderation between levels. Often these qualifications hold

credit transfer points for University courses and degrees. The level five qualifications are generally assumed to be at the academic level of a British A level.

Emergent themes were consolidated and triangulated. Other data, such as the delegates' mental toughness (Psychometric tool, Mental Toughness Quotient MTQ48) (Clough and Strycharczyk 2012) score and feedback and final assignments marks or quotations were not utilised. The impact of the decision not to utilise this more quantitative data is discussed in chapter six. The amount of data available from a four cohort, seventy-five delegate programme was immense and so part of the decision not to include the above data was also essentially pragmatic. An outline programme (See Appendix One) for this research was created in order to evaluate the impact and efficacy of the leadership development. In order to maintain a fair and reasonable approach to the commissioning company and to maximise the possibility of a good outcome to each individual's leadership development, a programme design was undertaken using up-to-date design features (Jenner 2009). Different approaches to leadership development (Spillane 2004) have been tried by various practitioners and the design of this programme has utilised a number of core factors outlined by a survey undertaken by Mark Jenner as a part of his 2009 paper on Leadership Development. Core to our development ideas was the idea of following an up-to-date guide about leadership development programmes. David Jenner's work (2009) fashioned eight design suggestions. Jenner produced an 8-part template that would prepare human resources personnel, course developers, facilitators and trainers with an improved development strategy. Jenner's research looked for signs of creativity and experiential awareness in the design and delivery of leadership development programmes. In the design of the research workplaces I checked my criteria against Jenner's and found that the programme complied with Jenner's overall checklist. Jenner's list of eight positive factors was, in brief: leadership related to work, a coaching culture, having tough conversations, time for reflection, peer coaching and communities of practice, focusing on the positive, a better-balanced delivery of ideas and concepts, and creation of structures in which to discuss leadership. The design principles dictated the creation of the Babcock International programme which looked for ways to encourage leadership in the core of the delegates' jobs. I created a methodology that encouraged coaching techniques, such as the use of coach, coachee, and observer triads so that, integrated into the design, were ways in which the delegates could have and hold critical conversations with each other. These critical conversations were coupled with sufficient time for reflection (often using the open-air, green spaces of the Brecon Beacons). Assimilated into the programme was a buddying system with pairs of individuals working together, often across the organisation, to study and develop presentations. I created exercises that enabled leaders to talk together about the

current challenges of the workplace and to grapple with the vision and values of Babcock International. I encouraged narrative and group learning by also strengthening the networks and bonds between delegates who would be less commonly likely to work with one another other than across a routine meeting or crowded project board. The central part of the data collection was mediated by using, in the main, a linked coaching/action learning approach (Gustavsen 2002).

Care was undertaken to attend to two sorts of understanding; firstly by collecting both stylised (through questionnaires) and random (through continuous access to a video booth) 'emic' accounts (Pike 1956), that is accounts coming from the delegates themselves, unprompted by facilitation. Secondly, by also collecting 'etic' accounts that came from observation from a culturally neutral person; in this case, a reporter 'sitting' outside the facilitation team and the group, observing phenomena arising.

Individuals on leadership development programmes are not isolated from the rest of their lives and therefore influences of their past, partners, circumstances and age often impinged on topics with which they were working. This makes external influences much more important in the context of the learning of the delegates than previously assumed (Kempster 2009 (a)). The aim of this research was to better understand the processes involved in leadership development in middle managers, the impact of other occurrences 'outside' of the formal development, and the ways in which people respond to development opportunities. This will add to knowledge in the leadership development field and potentially provide clues and signposts leading to a better design of programmes in the future. The overall research strategy is to use qualitative methodology to gain insight into live and on-going leadership development in order to design more robust leadership development programmes in large organisations, both public and private. Whilst this use of qualitative methods is a paradigm shift from the overwhelming positivistic angle that leadership research used to follow, in terms of leadership development this makes sense. Case histories and interviews can inquire within systems that are relativistic in nature and where social pressures are experienced in both a local and specific setting (Klenke 2008).

In order to create a research platform that links the philosophical research position of a social constructionist to the methods of data collection, the overall design of the programme had to have these four features. The trustworthiness of the results clings to these four features, those of: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirm-ability and I have used the technique 'scaffolding' erected by Manning (2012), to describe this approach.

So what do Pardy and others suggest one does in order to increase the credibility and authenticity of qualitative data? Six aspects have to be addressed, but of those, four



aspects stand out as being crucial for this research. Firstly prolonged engagement with the delegates so that centralising good relationships are made paramount and that therefore emergent phenomenon are, potentially, more deeply exposed and better understood. Secondly, facilitation is one that builds community and one that is not undertaken in isolation but a situation whereby a set of peers could monitor, challenge and advise. Thirdly, reflexivity is promoted by the researcher and that the research then becomes more open and transparent as biases are controlled by a growing awareness and finally, a triangulation approach (see later in this chapter) that features a number of complementary techniques that inter-lace in order to provide more confidence in the internal validity of the research. (Klenke 2008).

The research design was undertaken in order to fulfil these four criteria. The programme ran for over six months. Strong relationships were forged by not only inter-workshop telephone contact but also by the workshops being arranged as two sets of pairs so that those important relationships in the group, as a social entity, were given time to develop. This might contrast well with a group experiencing a similar leadership development programme through isolated workshops or greater distance learning.

### **3.5 Development and evolution of research methodology**

As has already been examined in chapter two, the development of leadership has lacked depth (See page 50).

Establishing of a pattern of action research, coupled with an element of collegiate support was effectively commenced in 2008 as questions about professional practice accumulated through patterns of inquiry, facilitation and peer support. The research was undertaken as part of a development plan for leadership within Babcock International. The design process was a result of the author bringing a connection between the commissioners of the programme (in the pre-workshop meeting), the company, Call of the Wild Limited who provided the outdoor elements of the programme and The Professional Development Centre Limited who were the delivery partners. Round the table discussions were held in various local venues to test out ideas, gain an overall consensus on the detail of the programme and to evidence suggested changes in direction (McNiff 2103)

Another component of the research was work undertaken by Kempster (2009) who used a methodology that is based on the observation that many successful managers can re-tell their story as a part of a time-line. This is a way in which periods of time are ear-marked for particular scrutiny as part of an memory-based interview or a discreet period of time, in this case, the length of the programme from induction to assignment completion. Embedded within it are discrete anchor points related to notable people and notable occurrences. This

also has parallels in my own journey of learning and discovery. During this period of research into the notable people and notable occurrences of individuals developing leadership skills, it was personally obvious that my own leadership journey was similarly affected by the notion of notable occurrences and notable people. A reflective description of some of these notable occurrences and influential people is presented in Appendix Four.

Although some of the time-lines were of career-length, in the original research, the process of telling the story identified key influences along that career journey. Whilst the time-line might be unsuitable as a starting point for an interview about a career-long leadership development scanning several decades, it may have some merit in looking for evidence of notable people or notable occurrences within a restricted time line imposed by the restrictions of a course or programme. One way of utilising this technique would be to engage in the advantages which result from using narrative (Parry and Hansen 2007), as this brings the potential for access to the individual's tacit knowledge and for the use of the naturalistic tendencies of story-telling to glean a clearer view of an experience or set of experiences. This enables the researcher to move nearer to the core of the situation - Kempster utilises an ancient word for this movement that of *'verisimilitude'* and this is incorporated in the implicit and explicit ideas of resembling the truth in the sense of salience, identity and self-efficacy.

Kempster (2009) emphasises in his research the technique of effective communication through storytelling to convey meaning. There is a sense in which the leader does not necessarily have to formally convey meaning but can do so more informally through narrative and metaphors. To accompany this idea of informal meaning Kempster offers the idea of a 'notable person', which was first described by McCall and colleagues in 1988, which he sees as key to leadership development. Notable people and notable occurrences dovetail with key organisational and personal experiences that draw out learning, but it seems to partially return to the notion of an all-powerful person influencing a follower. However Kempster's findings do not bear this out as it is, I would suggest, the subtle interactions and influences that allow leadership to grow, not the hierarchical or more overbearing leadership-follower relationships implied by that dyad. This claim of influence does not fully explain how a leader can become both right and wrong in terms of ethical decisions, nor is it clear on how leaders develop specific skills or techniques of engagement.

As detailed in chapter one, pages 17 to 20, five individual programmes had been selected whereby data obtained from within the programmes were taken from a number of diverse, yet connected, sources. The standpoint of a programme facilitator, course designer, evaluator, researcher or development coach opens a well-balanced view of this topic. This

broad spectrum of courses and programmes and a wide range of observational data collection, allowed for a variety of interventions to be examined and reflected upon whilst thinking ahead to full data collection.

There is a divergence of opinion regarding the efficacy of leadership development training. (Burgoyne 2004). On one hand, there is the idea that teaching strategic leadership in the classroom can be very helpful as it allows for experimentation and for low-cost mistakes to be made. On the other hand, the classroom is considered by some to be a poor place to learn such leadership skills (Day 2001). Another way in which leadership development can be beneficial is that the 'space' opened up from the programme itself can be deemed to be of value for the social interaction and the learning from others that it provides, as much as for the exposure to theories and models. This approach is felt to replicate, quite closely, the apprenticeship type of approach where learning and development is undertaken over time and with a multi-faceted dimension which seeks to keep within organisational context and is about making choices (Kearns 2005). Decisions, in real life, are not just played out according to a script or pre-planned model.

For this research Kempster's approach has been condensed to cover a shorter intervention. The design of the evaluation took into account the perceived 'live' benefits to the participants and overall organisational effectiveness, through the impact of close development of individuals and the dialogue between pairs of line managers, and the staff who reported to them, who were also delegates.

As described in chapter one, the testing of various stages in the research was undertaken during the autumn of 2010 in order to try out some methodologies and refine the approaches. In order to test the methodology I looked at several different types of middle management development and conducted nine interviews between September 2010 and December 2010. These were not pilot interviews as such but constituted a way in which the final methodology could be established. Refining is probably not the right word as this implies an initial, fixed way of approaching the research. I wanted to include the role of me, as a researcher, in the co-production of knowledge and to see how my ability to work with those middle managers already in a reflective space would allow for a greater insight. I wanted to create the potential for listening to, and interpreting, narrative around the experience of the middle manager and their reactions to leadership development possibilities.

A linked leadership and coaching programme with Integra Community Living Options Limited further produced clues as to the efficacy of probing lived experiences by the simple hooks of notable people and notable occurrences. Selected texts from the transcripts are placed in

Appendix Three in order to provide the reader with the original narrative and to read, for themselves, the narrative and reflect upon that narrative in terms of research techniques in the context of the utilised research approaches, namely social constructionist concepts and interpretive phenomenological analysis.

Because of the case history approach (See page 51) with numerous attempts at triangulating data there has been a rigorous attempt to provide a platform for replicating this methodology in subsequent programmes of leadership development.

Previous work undertaken by Steve Kempster had used this technique of notable people, notable occurrences, over years not months. Focusing on a more immediate reaction to development opportunities seemed appropriate in two ways. Firstly, development opportunities are often tied into organisational and economic performance (Pardey 2012). Secondly, leadership development is linked to relationships, and building improved relationships is likely to increase the impact of development (Jackson 2006). In addition Kempster's research was retrospective whilst these paired conversations linked impact to learning through the reflection of work-placed and work-focused interventions

### **3.6 Data Collection and Analysis**

The data collection was organised to maximise the capture of emergent trends throughout the research. Interpretive phenomenological analysis is used as an analytical tool (described in chapter four) as a means of drawing together the various findings from the triangulated data gathering structure.

The data was collected in the following manner. Firstly, by the delegates using a free-standing open access video camera which captured, in the form of a digital 'stories' or narrative, spontaneous self-directed comments and views as aural and visual material. This video installation was accessed at various random points in the two, two-day workshops. Secondly, by the close examination of a series of independent 'reportage' documents which contained observations, quotations, photographs and descriptions of each of the four distinct workshops, covering the content and material allied to days one, two, three and four of the workshop programme, over all four cohorts. The reportage methodology was restricted by funding so that only one day of each cohort could be so closely covered. However, for the reportage, each workshop day was covered per cohort (Day one with Cohort one, Day two with Cohort two, Day three with Cohort three and Day Four with Cohort four.). Babcock International was undergoing a large number of redundancies as a result of non-renewed Governmental contracts and a degree of sensitivity had to be applied to course delegates

under the direct threat of redundancy. Thirdly, data was collected by the close examination of workshop evaluation forms and the written comments they contained. Fourthly, further data was accumulated by the interviewing of several delegates during the programme using the adapted Steve Kempster's notable people and notable occurrences methodology. Fifthly, four pairs of delegates and their line managers were interviewed together using an adapted paired interview technique requiring delegates and their line manager - again using the idea of relating their learning in the identification of notable people and notable occurrences (Kempster, 2009) – which related to delegate and line-manager experiences across the length of the programme. Finally, further data was collected by using quotations from a complete range on evaluation sheets with each cohort, which gave an instant reaction to each of the two-day workshops.

A strong learning ethos was produced by a close team of facilitators and programme designers who met regularly inside and outside of the programme. Learning and design approaches, which had been earlier forged through previous pilot data collection, continued to be analysed and fine-tuned. Action research cycles were therefore embedded in the process of investigation and design.

This programme was produced through a very personal approach with many opportunities for self-reflection and a growing sense of awareness. Triangulation of techniques mirrored the drive for the research team to be fully alert to the phenomena as they arose across the extended programme of learning.

### **3.6.1 Data Gathering: Structure and Collection Population**

The participants were all from the same engineering company, Babcock International and were all designated as being middle managers within the various off-shoots and specialist areas across Britain and abroad. As managers, the individuals were of a wide range of experience and backgrounds; however, very few held management or leadership qualifications. A number of the delegates did not easily identify with the brand of Babcock having been part of smaller, distinct companies whilst others had only ever been working as Babcock employees. Slightly more men were involved in the programme and the age range, for both genders, spanned three decades. Most of the people were very enthusiastic about training and were entering into the learning with eagerness. A few, obviously, were not and did not try to engage.

Data, which was collected using the principle described earlier in the chapter, was collected in this way:

1. A sheet designed to illicit reactions from the delegates was used at the end of every workshop and these forms were sampled for emergent themes.
2. From day one random participants were be asked to contribute a short video diary which was collected in a library of digital stories.
3. Random samples of delegates were interviewed and the resultant transcriptions analysed in order to observe two things: the impact of notable occurrences and notable people on their leadership development and development activity through reflection and action during the period between the first and the second workshops.
4. A design-neutral facilitator acted as a reporter/observer in order to collect random data for each sample day of the repeated programme (for days one, two, three and four). Thus four reportage documents were produced over the four cohorts of delegates.
5. A number of weeks after the completion of the programme four pairs of participants and their line managers were interviewed together by using topic-related story-telling, invoking notable people and notable occurrences, in order to focus on the impact the training had on the operation of the company and their leadership and managerial efficacy. Following the pre-research phase of the study it was observed that the story-telling between delegate and line manager drew some interesting observations about leadership behaviour. In particular, the nuances of behavioural change echoed through the narrative.

The data collected from the Babcock programme was analysed by using a qualitative technique called Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) whereby themes are drawn out of individual data which allows for a rigorous examination of experiences (Hycner 1988, Biggerstaff 2008). The technique calls for the following process to be applied to the data collected:

- Read transcript several times
- Identify emergent themes
- Order and organise themes into clusters
- Produce table of themes

Phenomenology was my favoured philosophical background as this suited my hope of understanding leadership development issues as they arose in the actual lived experience of

development. Phenomenology is a broad 'church' of ideas centred around the work of Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) and attempts to deal with the issue of 'being' in the moment (Inwood 1997, Collins and Selina 1999). It is also the description of a lived experience of a phenomenon and its meaning to an individual (Starks and Trinidad 2007).

In using a phenomenological approach and by 'bracketing' (Moran 2000) my leadership development experience (See Appendices Six and Seven) I was able to follow a clear methodology or approach. Bracketing is very much a controversial element in phenomenological approaches, with many regarding this as an impossible task. (See, for example, Wimpenny and Gass's nursing studies reported in 2000). 'Bracketing' is an expression first coined by Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) and refers to the idea of discounting but not disregarding what you already know in order to see rising phenomena in a clearer light. Whilst some students of phenomenology have found this concept really difficult in practice, disassociating myself from my previous leadership development experiences aided my insight into what emerged from the research related to this thesis. These phenomena can be strikingly obvious and by deeply engaging in the narrative they rose as discernible themes emanating from the real lived experience of the delegates. It is a real challenge to be able to adopt as neutral a position as possible as, in grounded theory, bracketing also used but this may rob the researcher of a degree of empathy towards their subject and thus contribute to the overall understanding of what is before the researchers (Heath and Cowley 2004). In order to pursue this research utilising the ontological perspective of phenomenology, it was firstly important to attempt to clear my mind of my experiences of leadership development through a long career in the Health Service and an even longer career as a self-employed consultant and facilitator. It was hoped that I would be able to 'see' phenomena arising from the lived-in experience.

The role of a self-employed consultant has been an evolutionary process, which has drawn me further and further into the field of leadership development. It may not be possible to undertake this discipline of bracketing, in its purest sense, as 'clearing' one's mind is not a precise way of acting, as the researcher will always come to the research 'table' with previous experiences or definite views (Allen 2007). However, the process of thinking about previous experiences of leadership development did allow me some precious moments of reflection on the formative elements of my career and to attempt to place experiences out-of-bounds during the research period. (See Appendix Four). Discussions with my fellow facilitators during the planning of the sessions revealed and exposed pre-assumptions I had made concerning some key elements of the programme. Firstly we discussed the place of the psychometric 'tool' (Mental Toughness, MT48). The idea from this discussion was to illicit a range of key conversations and agreed psychometric tools at the start of programmes

which were vital to development. The MT48 acted as a self-awareness mirror and helped us think and incorporate more programme reflection points. Secondly, we wrote into the programme a number of complementary and appropriate reflective and written processes, which increased the possibility of consolidated and engaged learning (Wales Management Council 2008). Thirdly, mainly due to the focus of the ILM curriculum, we pursued a format that confidently reinforced the relevance of knowledge to practical processes at work and finally forged a link between theory and the practicalities of individual change and progression.

Previous papers (Reid et al 2005; Biggerstaff 2008; Smith 2008) suggested that the source of data for an IPA should be a semi-structured interview. For this study I have chosen to widen the scope of the data to include a greater range of narrative which includes delegate self-directed video recordings, interviews, paired interviews and written feedback. This approach is confirmed by observing that the collection of multiple types of data considerably increases the rigorousness of the analytical process and thereby raises the probability of the suitability of the overall approach:

*'In comparison studies, the exploration of one phenomenon from multiple perspectives can help the IPA analyst to develop a more detailed and multifaceted account of that phenomenon.'* (Reid et al. 2005 p 22)

### **3.6.2 Triangulation**

During the early exploratory phase and initial research into methodology there was a desire to strengthen the findings by triangulating the interviews and data from narrative and the obvious qualitative material with a more quantitative style of data collection. The efficacy of using triangulation with more quantitative methods was explored in two leadership programmes undertaken in 2010 which are recounted in more detail in chapter one and early in chapter three.

Triangulation is a tested way (Silverman 2005; Klenke 2008) of gathering more substance from the data and this is particularly so when working with groups and collecting data whilst using a qualitative set of approaches. The strong theoretical basis of phenomenology and social constructionism provided opportunities for triangulation so that the emergent properties of the programme were 'sensed' from different angles and aspects. It is also a way in which understanding is deepened and widened (Olsen 2004).

The use of triangulation is not without its critics (Silverman 2005, Klenke 2008) particularly when the various methods used produce different or conflicting data. However the



techniques used (for example, video booths and reportage) represent sturdy study 'pillars' to the 'roof' of the research, a form of socially mediated activity ((Doolittle and Hicks 2003) under which emergent phenomena would be more easy to spot.

### **3.6.3 Defence of the research methodology**

Increasingly, narrative and the precise use of language is seen to be a way in which leadership can best be expressed in managers with a leadership remit. Success in leadership is not dependent on oratory skills nor is it necessarily related to individual charisma nor force of personality. (Senge 2001; Grint (a) & (b) 2005; Senge et al. 2004; Denning 2007; Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2008; Wooding 2009; Ladkin 2010).

The use of narrative (Ricoeur 1984) is a way in which multiple fragments of an experience, often compiled over many months or years, are pulled together by the narrator in order to make sense of the linked experiences. This skill or propensity to intuitively massage together personal experiences in the forms of narrative, helps to make sense of apparently disparate fragments in order to form new actions and changes, e.g. leadership behaviour. However the use of narrative remains a contentious issue (Fay 1996) as a singular leadership narrative is only one person's view of a situation, making it more difficult to find a common key to development of leadership skills as the interpretation of narrative can have multiple facets.

Notwithstanding the self-selecting nature of each one of the delegates, the idea of a video-booth with free and unfettered access for on-the-spot reflection once again helped to maintain the researcher's independence. As Lomax and Casey suggested (1998):

*'A reflexive analysis of this relationship is therefore essential. Video-generated data is an ideal resource in as far as it can provide a faithful record of the process as an aspect of the naturally occurring interaction which comprises the research topic.'*  
(Lomax and Casey 1998. Abstract)

Video can also be used as part of reflective practice (Knight 2009) and was included in the range of triangulation techniques as it engendered a potential form of reflective practice in its own right. The resultant diaries are provided as a self-generated record, at any particular time in the workshops, where delegates feel they have something on their mind that they wish to share. This use of video diaries relied on the allocation of a private video booth, away from the workshop space, during each day of the facilitated leadership development programme. The delegates could voice their views as to the on-going training and this allowed them time to reflect on their learning so far, allowing for non-directed responses. This method of video use was felt to be the best attempt made to capture some of the 'in-the-moment' details. It was not a guided testament to the day, or the programme, such as

the use of guidance in the form of an evaluation sheet (although the company insisted that they collected evaluation sheets at the end of each two-day workshop) or an end-of-day summing-up. The resultant audio files that come from a sample of all the cohorts have been transcribed. They are not being viewed as being definitive of each separate cohort or individual.

Reactionnaires, a short questionnaire that elicits an immediate response, are often an initial independent way of gauging the impact of specific or more general development opportunities and whilst they may be regarded as unreliable (Kember et al. 2002) they did allow for an immediate, if rather hurried, set of data in order to gauge the position of the group individuals in the context of their learning. Moreover, they can be a quick source of data and can allow the researcher to take an initial gauge of the individuals' reactions and dispositions. End-of-day questionnaires are subjective elements and do not necessarily provide usable or reliable data. However, it was considered prudent to collect such data at the end of every pair of workshops as a very crude indicator of the potential for learning. It increased the ability for the team to understand immediate points of concern and some data on which to base the potential for changing or adapting the learning experience for the following cohort.

The use of an external observer (reportage) was attached as a key methodology in order to move the research to being more valid by not just depending on one researcher's input. This afforded a unique opportunity to see reflections and behaviours of another through the social dynamism of the cohorts and to pick up on behaviours and approaches to tackling problems and challenges (Payne and Williams 2005).

The way in which these various methods fit together, provides the researcher with 'food for thought' and triangulation (Olsen 2004) has the ability to create tensions and angles of perception that suit the view of the more socially constructed phases of development contained within the relevant cultural and social norms (Lee 2006).

#### **3.6.4 Process**

The delegates were undertaking a qualification, a level 5 Award in Leadership and Management and therefore some of the programme framework was pre-set by existing accreditation requirements. The level 5 programme had a total of 83 delegates over the four days (running parallel to this programme was a couple of combined modules at level 3) which was made up of four cohorts (the last one acted as a 'catch-all' for identified staff and was disproportionately bigger than the other three cohorts). The delegates undertook two,

two-day modules in a variety of settings in and around the Brecon Beacons. These were followed by The Institute of Leadership and Management assignments at level 5. The workshops were run by a combination of tutors, including one who was qualified to take groups out into the National Park. The assessment processes were undertaken by a team of assessors and on-line tutors and included, in the background, a verification team and a Centre Manager.

Delegates were invited to attend each workshop and were given full instructions regarding necessary equipment. The first and third day of the programme ran from 11-6 with the second and fourth running from 9.00 to 3.00.

### **3.6.5 Data Analysis**

As a result of study, insights can be built in order to increase understanding through a broadly phenomenological approach. Several writers also add that the development of leadership is a phenomenon requiring a long gestation (Reynolds 1997; Lord and Hall 2005 and Kempster 2009 (a)). Analysis is undertaken using the approaches described by Smith (2001) and the methods of data collection adopted fit in with the major tenets of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which seeks to uncover the detail of individuals' responses to the experiences, in this case, of a structured leadership development programme.

*'The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meaning particular experiences, events, states hold for participants.'* (Smith 2001 p 53)

In this context I was taking a more postmodern view of language than a more conventional programme (Alvesson 2002; Ford 2008) in that the use of language is a human condition full of ambiguity and complexity; and its importance and value, in particular, lies with the stories and narrative of the respondents. These naturally constructed words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs help to build up a view of their experiences in a way that offers different insights into the development of leaders. The conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee are a type of social interaction (Klenke 2008) and the relaying of personal stories is a natural way of building up a robust insight into a human situation. Furthermore conversations are 'iterative and emergent' (Ladkin 2010) and using a narrative technique allows for the nuances and 'shades' of conversation to be examined and interpreted. Whilst this approach allows for the exploration of experiences through the stories and narrative of the subjects and their ways of relating and understanding their own reality, there is some

concern amongst researchers about offering their stories for 'public scrutiny'. (Mauthner et al.2002). Stories are also an important feature of action learning techniques whereby change can be made and understood by the dialogues and reflections around the issues of leadership development. (Pedler et al. 2010). Action learning is a technique originally designed by Reg Revans, (Revans 2011; Reynolds 2011) and it, as a technique, was principally described and utilised on day four in this study although the skills elements described by it, such as listening, questioning and storytelling, are germane to the whole programme of the development of leadership and therefore used throughout. The keys skills of listening and questioning were developed throughout each day culminating in the action learning technique. It is suggested that facts are unable to be substantiated from quantitative approaches because conversations and responses are imbued by meaning and assumptions, so once again the research focused on stories as a means of understanding individuals' responses to leadership development (Silverman 2001).

From the scrutiny of the data collected, in its various forms, themes and clusters of themes emerge as non-prescriptive or predicted reactions to the stimulus of the delivery of learning opportunities. For example, the theme of Individuality was noticed when reviewing and re-listening to the video booth recordings, the feedback sheet and the reportage reports. Individuality was an 'obvious' phenomenon. Examples were two people reacting very differently to the same experience, emergent properties, as a unique blend of the individuals, as the cohorts established a (temporary) group culture, insights that individuals revealed through reflective moments within the groups, were all examples of the theme of individuality emerging from the cohorts. As an action learning project the materials collected were scrutinised many times. This was as part of a whole structure of inquiring into good practice and making cohort by cohort improvement

Discussions were held at the planning stages of each cohort between three or four of the facilitation team. This would often include personnel who had different functions to the rest of the team. The programme commissioner would often seek meetings or sit with the groups of delegates to be reassured that the programme was, indeed, running in a way that looked and felt productive. The administrative staff also took a great deal of interest in the various exercises undertaken with the group and they reflected with the facilitation team. Daily post-mortem meetings when the cohorts met, between workshop 'phone calls and facilitator theory-led conversations led to a constant mix of evaluation, reflection and pondering which created a powerful mix of input and a sense of broadening understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny.

Scrutiny, perhaps, but not however in a direct sense but as part of phenomena rising from the complex mix of environmental, individual, situational and personal reactions to learning

stimuli. IPA, as a technique, does not assume that the researcher can get as close as may be desirable to the world of the delegate. The concepts held by the researcher will impede and interfere with that interpretative activity (Buysse 2010). Therefore reflections on the hermeneutics of phenomenological themes and clusters will be covered in Chapter Five.

### **3.6.6 How the data will be presented**

The data will be presented in the form of quotations and extracts from the transcripts. The themes that built up will also be presented in a pictorial form. The data was analysed by repeated reading and re-reading of the texts, the viewing of the available videos (the activity videos taken throughout the programme), collected reactionnaire details and post programme evaluation documentation and analysis. The themes that emerge will be arranged in clusters and each theme supported and referred to using quotations and interpretive dialogue.

## **3.7 Reliability, Validity and Ethics**

### **3.7.1. Transparency, reliability and consistency, and communicability**

There is not the same measure of reliability and validity vested in qualitative research as in quantitative research. Many leadership studies, indeed the majority of reported studies, are undertaken using quantitative research and this might give an illusion of surety about the results (Corbett 2011). However, studies of this nature cannot easily refer to the experiences of the individuals. In particular, leadership development is a strikingly individual process (Bailey and Kempster 2007) both in the exercise of leadership and in its development. It is difficult to attest to the same sort of reliability that is ascribed to the use of quantitative studies and these concepts of validity as espoused by a positivist standpoint are not directly challenged or sought. When dealing with the development of individuals, a more appropriate measure of reliability is transparency, consistency and communicability (Rubin 2004) This validity describes the focus on meaning and depth, patterns and themes (Klenke 2008)

### **3.7.2 Transparency**

The methodology adopted is transparent and described in depth in this chapter. A wide range of insights can be gained from simple interrogation of the results. This quality requires the detailed descriptions of the research methodology which helps to capture, as far as is possible, the reality of the research pattern and its interventions. Detailed descriptions of exercises, interactions with the delegates and explanations of the evolving nature of these interactions go some way towards the reader being able to comprehend and visualise the

whole research process. In addition, the thesis contains a number of appendices detailing formative conversations, parallel thoughts and ideas about individuality and detail, not contained in the body of the thesis, which shed light upon my individual journey and transformation.

### **3.7.3 Reliability and Consistency**

Reliability is gained by the use of an already practised research approach which is congruent to the aims of the research. In this case, the notable people and notable occurrences approach leads to a surety that the narrative is guided towards revealing interesting and illuminating data (Kempster 2009 (a&b) ) and applies a consistency to the findings. The pre-thesis methodology activity has already found elements of the notable people and notable occurrences having a tangible effect on the development of someone already made more aware by leadership development. The topic of leadership development can be argued to have a really important impact on the efficacy of companies. Increasingly middle managers have been seen to have an important role in the narrative of organisational strategy and the influencing of strategic development. (Rouleau and Balogun 2011).

Within the remit of the four cohorts and operational vagaries the workshops were, as far as was possible, consistent with each other, although the nature of the workshops meant that superficial changes in the timetable had to be made to accommodate number differences, weather and venue changes.

Using a number of qualitative techniques together, harnessed by an ethnographic approach, enabled the observation of ways in which development phenomena can be observed, not in terms of repeatability, but to be able to suggest that the voice of the delegate and respondent will be in every way as strong as the voice of the researcher.

### **3.7.4 Communicability**

The results of this research offer a strong glimpse into the world of leadership development. Therefore researchers following on would be confident of the approaches I took and of how it weaved together as whole. Furthermore the results are not obscured or encased in difficult theoretical ideas despite the fact that formal theoretical scaffolding has been well described. This focus will help to form a tangible message, capable of communication, to human development specialists to inform course design and a better overall alignment of and investment in development resources.

### **3.7.5 Ethics**

The structure for the research is outlined with due emphasis to the ethical issues involved. Previously undertaken research (Bass and Steidlmeier 1999; Bolden et al 2003; Iles and Preece 2006) has highlighted the moral dimensions of leadership development present when trying to change or facilitate a person's approaches to leadership issues. There is clearly a need for clarity, a choice as to whether or not to participate and an overall responsibility of the researcher to understand those dimensions in both leadership and the development of leadership.

The interviewees were told, both individually and collectively, that as part of their development programme and its evaluation, pairs of individuals and their line managers would be asked to undertake some closer research concerning leadership development which would be by recorded interview. The transcripts of those would be used in later data analysis and at all stages of the research the individual had the opportunity to withdraw and to request that their contribution should not be used in the research as a whole.

Each of the delegates was made aware that the materials being collected throughout the programme were part of a research study into the way in which leadership can be developed. The delegates were made aware at every workshop and as part of a wider company policy of on-going evaluation that all the quotations from the delegates would be treated with anonymity. No name would be used in the writing up of the results nor would any coding system make the origin of the data traceable. The videos were all undertaken voluntarily and consent for photographs was verbally obtained although there was no possibility of any photographs, videos or stills being used in their raw state in the research.

### **3.8 Summary**

This study offers the possibility of a broad range of data that could offer the field of leadership development some new insights into both practice and the production of knowledge.

The choices of qualitative methods were influenced by my desire to reach the lived-in experiences of the delegates experiencing leadership development and to try to assess the emergent qualities of the cohorts under review. Features of this approach allow for convincing research (Locke, Golden-Biddle and Feldman 1993) to be described in terms of influential findings. This is an authentic programme of leadership development commissioned in 2010 using a defined body of managers who, despite differences in their job descriptions, were a discernible collection of middle managers. The findings are plausible

as they stem from the emergence of active, not just theoretical, leadership development essences and, owing to an inability to generalise, are critically assessed across the data derived from different methodological families. Moreover, although the bulk of the analysis is undertaken through interpretative phenomenological analysis, aspects of the data are analysed using another of Locke and colleagues' scaffolding insights (Locke, Golden-Biddle and Feldman 1993). The five cornerstones of this approach are inspirational recourses, interpretive micro-process, engaging the data, expanding interpretive possibilities and adopting a positive researcher stance. This will militate against some of the weaknesses of the programme, for example, the possibility of vagueness in the interpretation of themes by taking a very holistic view of each individual reaction.

I was made to wonder when reviewing Linebaum and Cartwright's (2010) research findings into potential links between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership how much more suitable that topic would have been as a piece of qualitative research, bearing in mind the very human processes that are acted out in the emotion, transformation and the human dynamics of the leader – follower relationship (Iles and Preece 2006).

The field of leadership development has been dominated by traditional research methods, which are positivist in nature (Coughlan and Coughlan 2010) and are also confused with the wider field of management development (Kempster 2009a). The thesis does not take the view that the world in which we live and work is deeply tied down by a mechanistic stance, where cause and effect are easily seen and determined.

This is a qualitative study which seeks rich data from the emergent social forces at play through a four cohort middle manager leadership development programme undertaken in 2011. What is most important are the personal reflections of the impact of a programme created through the outplaying of a nationally agreed curriculum? It is recognised that the development of leadership spins around the fulcrum of individuals within the context of their work. Both situations and conditions are highly complex. A deep emphasis has been placed on the use of narrative, words and dialogue with an understanding that extracting meaning from an experience is a very personal issue.

Using a social constructionist viewpoint under the umbrella of a post-modern, anti-positivist stance, this study approaches leadership development by employing diverse methods to gather data. The ontological position is in keeping with the philosophy of phenomenologists such as Heidegger (Collins 1999) who viewed the state of being as a very subjective one. From an epistemological approach the creation of knowledge emerges through a socially constructed set of unique experiences.



There are merits in triangulating the research methodologies and during the pilot phase of this research, methodologies which included both interview techniques and number-based questionnaires were used, which were not, broadly speaking, very effective in shedding light upon the experience of those attending a specific leadership development opportunity.

The design of the research enables the detailed experiences of the separate participants to emerge and for the data to be as close as possible to the real experiences of the participants of leadership development programmes. As articulated in earlier sections of this chapter, this is because of the wealth and richness of data emanating from the interviews, which used the approach of looking for notable people and notable occurrences (Kempster 2010). In terms of the Doctorate in Business Administration this research has to have a very practical leaning, and focusing on individual experiences will give rise to insights, possibly co-produced insights, into the experience of leadership development in middle managers. It may also, potentially, inform the current provision of such programmes and establish a more focused development strategic framework and design for future leadership development programmes.

This qualitative, almost personal, approach also excites the possibility of some reflective legacy for those participating. In order to help those individuals move from a place where they might be operating from the past, or a fusion of ideas centred in the past, to one where reflection enables a 'newly-developed leader' to look at situations afresh and learn '*what is actually happening in the moment*'. (Cacioppe 2001 p. 8,) Although the synergising abilities of groups are recognised in terms of the research, the research process has been to concentrate on the individual (Brooks 2008; Wright et al. 2000), whilst not ignoring the links between organisation, team and individual. I am seeking to expose the contextual elements of the reflection of development which, (whilst being aware of the potential for an unclear voice to be considered in non-linear elements of presentation), gives a clear voice to the narrative of the individual in order to reflect curiosity - their own and that of the researcher, given the restrictions and ambiguities of the spoken word.

Asking, or encouraging, stories or narrative that focused on notable occurrences and notable people experienced by the delegate members of each cohort, allowed for a greater link between the person and the organisation to be forged. This melding, in terms of helping them to comprehend unseen links and connections, and the underpinning of a more knowledgeable individual in the context of their part of the organisation, is key to development. Helping the organisation to notice how much theory in leadership relates to the individual in the context of their organisation may go some way to guarding against what Bolden (2007), observed as an obvious dynamic overlap between individuals, teams and partner organisations, as the plight of unprepared but developed individuals returning to

unprepared organisations. Any development opportunities must hold firm to the view that: *'interventions must endeavour to avoid returning changed individuals to an unchanged system or vice-versa.'* *'Research as learning'*. (Vince 1998; Burgoyne 2002) is another timely process that seeks to use research interventions and interaction as part of an individual awakening via a bundle of integrated experiences

Focusing on qualitative research methodologies allows for a distancing from the generalisations of quantitative research and works in favour of, *'a distributed perspective on leadership, which should assist the overall project of 'visibilising' work and sharpen[ing] our understanding of work practices.'* (Gronn 2003).

The way in which the research was conducted would enable learning (both delegate and researcher) to continue from where the programme started. This develops key learning by encouraging self-awareness that allows an individual to understand the view that to become self-aware requires the engagement with others; the co-production of development will provide this research with extra depth (Ladkin 2007).

## Chapter 4 - Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This section will describe data gathered via the methodology articulated in chapter three. An Action Research approach demands that consideration is given to the development of new ideas that can contribute to new knowledge and new practice (McNiff 2013). In order to make this contribution clearer, action research 'boxes' are included in the text which represent an on-going narrative, taken from research materials, data, records and reflections, staged alongside the four sections of this findings section.

The following sections outline the data collected under these various methodological approaches and describe and analyse, via interpretive phenomenological analysis, the emergence of themes and the way in which those emergent themes cluster and link together. The first section outlines some initial findings from the start of the Babcock programme and is followed by four sections, drawing together data extracted by pairs of similar and related techniques. The data could have been presented in this thesis in a number of different ways. Using pairs of techniques represented a compact way of presenting data in a logical transparent manner. The second section will cover data extracted from the 'reactionnaires' and the post programme evaluation, the third section will examine the data extracted from the reportage and the video diaries and, finally, the fourth section will cover data from the brief interviews during the course and the post-qualification paired interviews with a delegate and the line manager.

The eight themes that emerged through this research period were the following:

Individuality,

Physical Space,

Action,

Assumptions,

Emotion,

Reflections,

Power and Authority and

Responses to Change in the Comfort Zone.

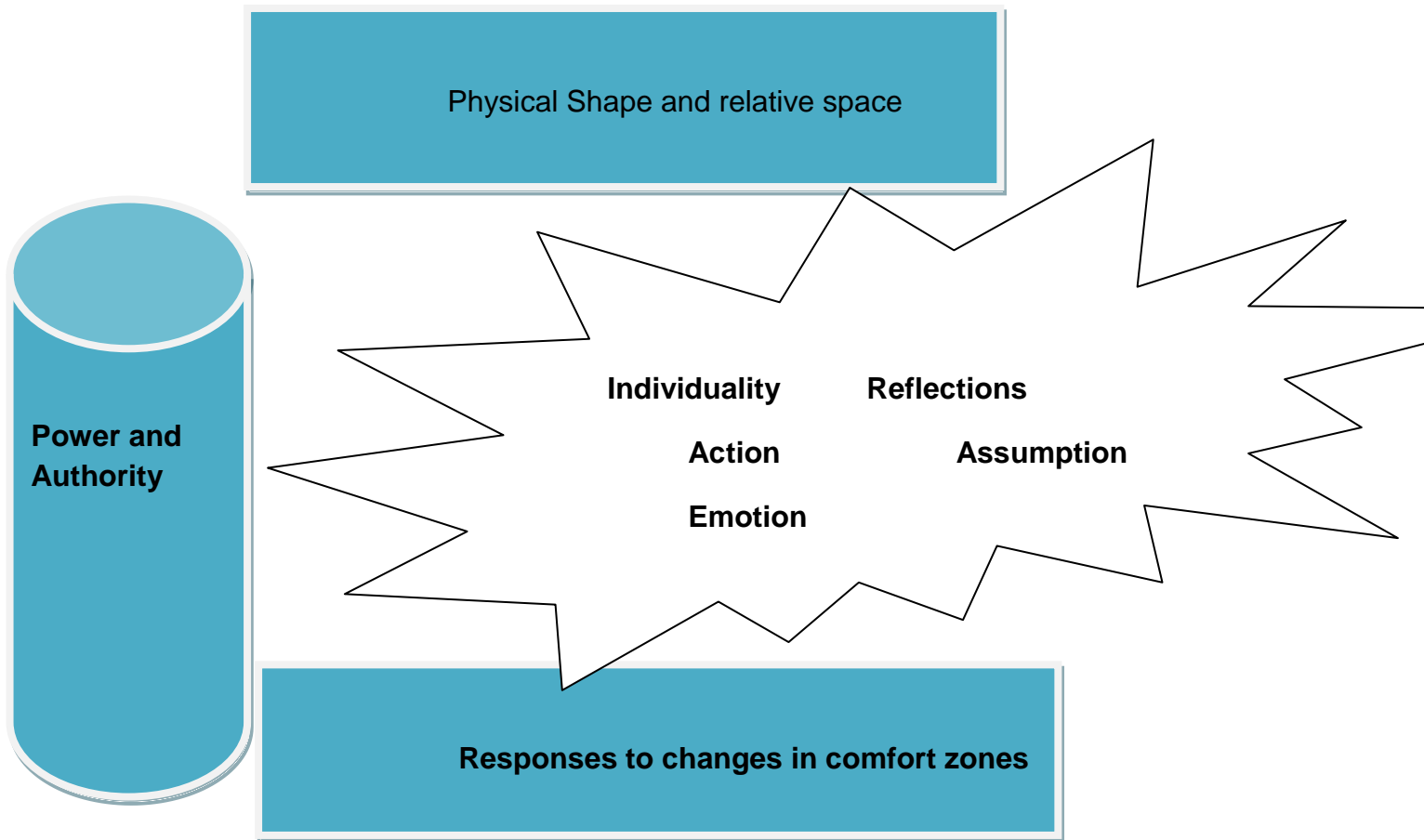
The themes emerged from the interpretive processes of the phenomenological analysis appeared as eight inter-weaving themes. From the commencement of the first cohort, right up to the data from the last post-programme evaluation, themes continued to emerge for which data is presented below in three pairs of techniques. The emergence of these themes was not in any sense a linear progression but themes were emergent, re-emergent often confirming or reinstating or revealing pre-existing clusters.

The research data was processed using a complex weave of activity around these emergent themes. This often occurred at various stages of the whole programme, particularly at the intersection between cohorts. A reflective meeting was constituted with co-facilitators as part of the planning for the paired workshops and this took the form of a quiet, reflective meeting between two people in which our actions, and what we were learning, were reviewed.

Following each day's facilitated workshops the wider team was re-constituted, for between half an hour and an hour, for an informal discussion about the day's work. The key parts of this discussion focused on what the team was observing about the learning processes of the delegates. These findings and observations, or sometimes more like 'sensings', contributed to the development of ideas and future interactions. As well as contributing to future programmes, these congregations of team members (which often included the two facilitators, the person assigned the reportage, the lead Directors from Call of the Wild Limited as well as the outdoor facilitator) managed the less tangible actions of the delegates and their interaction with the design of the programme. Amongst the frequently discussed areas were issues of the local environment and their impact of the delegates' learning, curiosities such as the volume and energy created by some interventions as well as emergent facilitation techniques such as walking in pairs, delegate observation and the impact of shape on the workings of any of the group exercises.

Figure Two describes these themes in a diagrammatic manner. Shaded in blue were themes that related to the environment created by the facilitation team that had direct bearing on the individual. Held, within that 'space' are the themes which represent more individual themes such as reflection and emotion. All themes arose from the collected data and, whilst now artificially separated, were carried to the attention of the author through analysed narrative and observation.

**Figure Two: Clusters of themes**



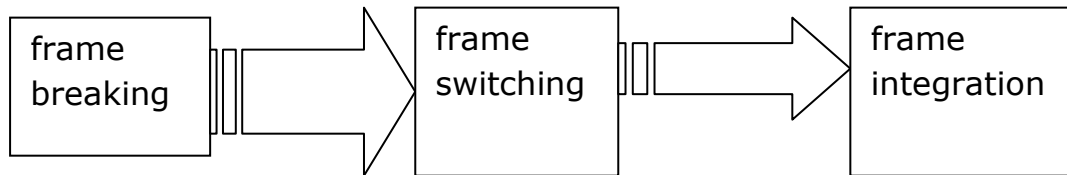
## **4.2 Background of the programme**

### **Babcock International Group plc**

The situation within the Babcock International Group plc called for a new style of middle management/leadership that could break out of routine ways of working, changing to a newer form of leadership based on fewer staff and flatter structures that could be integrated into the unchangeable aspects of the Board's responsibilities and legal obligations.

It was the aim of this middle and senior manager programme with Call of the Wild Limited to promote thinking around the internal company environment to help to move those managers out of their 'comfort zone'. A considerable amount of effort and planning was put into this programme where the middle and senior management learning was bridged by joint feedback from a 360 degree feedback instrument (Turner & Heneberry 2011). The overall aim of the programme was to provoke the delegates to think differently by creating experiential activities which were challenging, novel and had built in a significant variety of approaches (Zaccaro 2004) in order to break current mind sets.

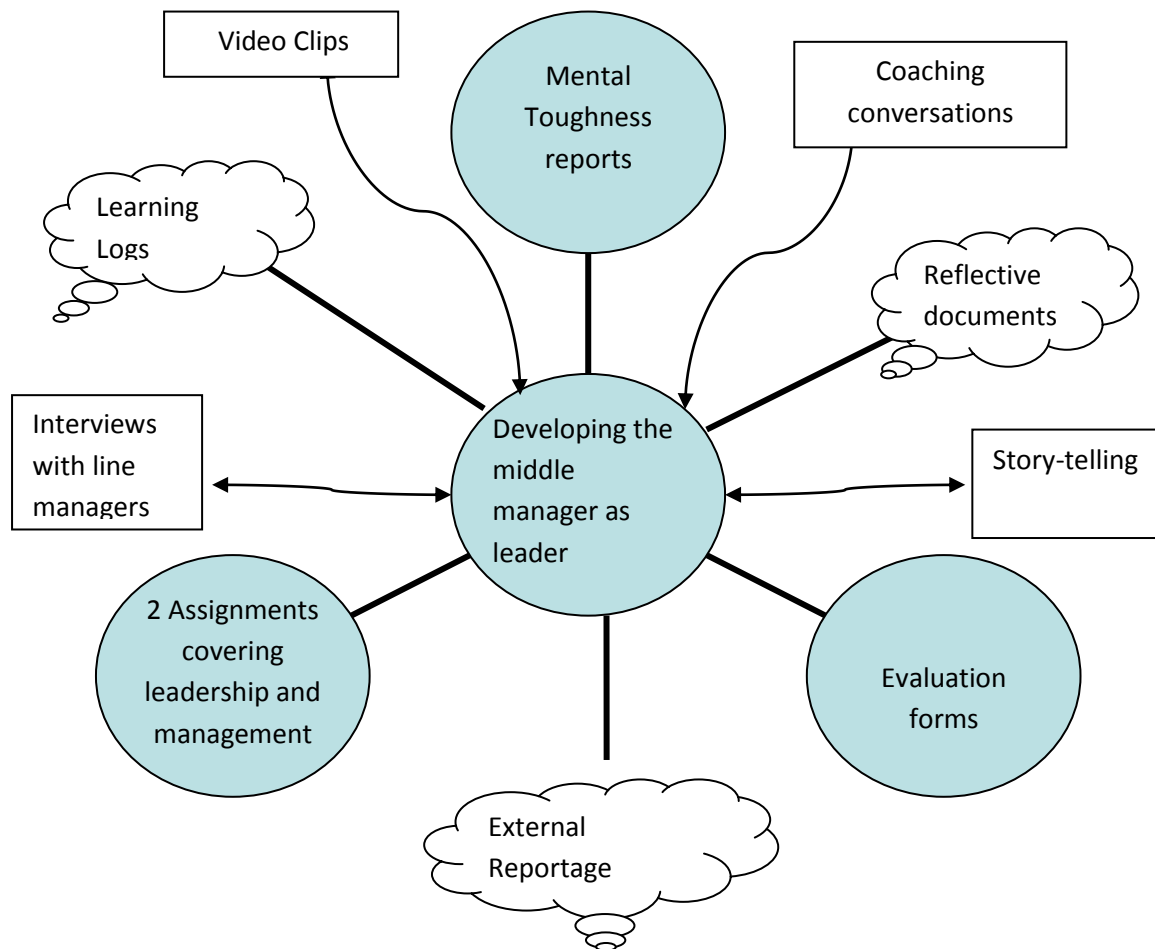
Figure Three simply describes this approach.



**Figure Three. Frame switching (Nelson 2010)**

This Institute of Leadership and Management (ilm) level 5 & Level 3 programmes of study had been commissioned by Babcock International Limited for their middle managers at a time in their company history that required their managers to exhibit greater leadership for their staff. The ilm Level 5 delegates on this study's programme (Appendix One) were linked to another programme whereby more junior managers experienced change management units as part of a Level 3 First Line Manager qualification. These Level 3 candidates were linked to the Level 5 candidates by line management responsibilities across functional teams within distinct areas of the business. The level three delegates were not considered to part of this study and therefore excluded from the data collection.

Leadership, as opposed to the management, was seen to be a way in which the company, in all its diverse interests, could seek to produce better company results (<http://babcockinternational.com/careers/why-work-for-babcock/career-development>). The commissioning company had asked for a complete Level 5 programme leading to an Award qualification that enabled managers to be better informed about leadership and better able to lead. They were specifically interested in elements of the outdoors being used for the facilitated learning. In addition, the company required a multifaceted approach to understanding the impact of the development by focussing on the outcomes of the work from several vantage points. Figure four illustrates the complexity of the programme design and outline and refers to many programme facets that were built into the planning phase. These design features were written into the programme for two reasons. Firstly in order to make the collection of data easier and secondly to provide a framework (Jenner 2009) and 'scaffolding' (Pardey 2012) to support the desirable features of a development opportunity as outlined in chapter three.



**Figure Four. The focus on the impact of the leadership programme**

These participating managers at Level 5, were drawn from a pool of middle managers working for Babcock International, all of whom attended the two, two-day workshops and most of whom (some are exempt as they hold other qualifications that make them eligible for accreditation of prior learning) completed the assignments associated with the Award. The content and the shape of the workshops was designed in conjunction with the Professional Development Centre and Call of the Wild Limited, an established and award-winning outdoor development company based in the Brecon Beacons. Both companies were familiar with the requirements of the programme and were independently accredited centres delivering The Institute of Leadership and Management qualifications in Wales/Cymru. The principle aim of the programmes was to prepare existing managers within the company for the development of leadership skills. Call of the Wild Limited was approached by Babcock International to design and evaluate a Level 5 programme for up to 80 delegates and two linked level 3 Units for 60 delegates. The programme for the final cohort of 24 managers took place over four

days spaced out in two blocks, one completed at the end of June and a final workshop undertaken at the start of October 2011.

Leadership and management qualifications are retained on a national qualification framework (NQF) for all nations in the United Kingdom. For leadership and management, appropriate qualifications can be built up from topics clustered in Units and these Units go towards achieving credit ratings which, within each level, build to qualifications with increased credit requirements, at Award, Certificate and Diploma levels.

The workshops took place within the National Park in Wales/Cymru, an area of outstanding natural beauty; only two venues were used; a converted hill-top farm, Maes y Fron nears the village of Abercraf and the Village Hall at Pontneddfrechan. Both venues are within the Park and have open access to the outdoors which made the use of the natural environment much easier.

### **4.3 Initial findings**

Elements of the workshops such as volume of conversation - some cohorts were generally quiet yet others at similar stage quite vociferous - group energy levels and insight and/or the engagement of various individuals and sub-groups served to continually re-emphasise the role of individuality and the starkly unique group dynamics that affected and influenced all the groups. Cohort 4 was much larger in size and several minor adjustments to the programme allowed the facilitation team to take this into account.

The course design, for its four cohort programme, was based on several key themes which were reflection, better/improved listening, questions and a more facilitated style of presentation from delegates as well as the facilitators consistently re-emphasising those key themes. The power and impact of reflective space and this way of working with the delegates represent a way in which we could help them get deeper meaning and relevance from the evolution of their learning (Costa and Kallick 2008).

The idea that leadership is three-dimensional (Ladkin 2007) was further advanced by a team of researchers looking at a number of key leadership theories, namely: authentic leadership, development theory, transformational, charismatic, servant, and spiritual leadership theories. (Avolio and Gardner 2005). Avolio and Gardner looked at the commonality between the above mentioned theories and found that the only topic areas consistently covered by those five major modern theories of leadership were, under the general banner of leadership self-awareness, the following:

- Personal Values



- Individual cognition
- Expressing or containing emotions

From the design point of view there seems to be plenty of scope to be able to find exercises, topics and ideas that were focused on developing greater self-awareness amongst the delegates. Allowing expressions of personal values, promoting and provoking thought and thinking and exerting care around the emotional elements of all participants' experience remains a sound starting point to any programme.

An example of a set of linked exercises, that functioned in a way that recognised those three commonalities (see above), was structured at the start of the first cohort's first day. The first objective was to set people at their ease. Asking delegates to introduce themselves using their name and a type of bird allowed for the natural anxiety of the start of a programme to dissipate via humour and unusual links. Following that, a short period of contract framing was undertaken using a flip chart with a triangle drawn on it, each corner with a legend on it: 'you to you', 'you to us', 'us to you'. Using 'post-its' the group was encouraged, along with the facilitators, to add their comments, which slowly developed into a document that covered behaviour, values and a longer term view of the impact of workshop behaviour. Finally the group was asked to pick a post-card from a random pile of post cards and work together in the social setting of a 'dinner party' to introduce themselves to each other. In this way values, thoughtfulness and understanding and emotions were allowed to emerge within the group. Key social activity which included people mirroring styles and approaches were starting to be identified and the exchange of social information had begun. Finding a way to start the programme suitably, which relied on a steady and gradual start was challenging. A second objective was to find easy ways of building up rapport and camaraderie amongst the delegates, many of whom did not know one-another and came from different, geographically separate parts of the organisation. The collection of an individual word, in this case a bird species, from each delegate, at the beginning of the programme, helped a feeling of prospective change, started individuals more overtly gauging this feeling and illustrated at the outset of the programme, the relaxed facilitative style of delivery.

The data collection started as soon as the workshops commenced. The exercise described next is an example of the insight that can be gained from delegate narrative. The data in Figure Five comes from the first day of the first cohort in April 2011. This exercise, termed as 'name and word', was undertaken in the first hour of the programme with the first Cohort of Level 5 delegates. The participants were asked to return to the seats after an initial 'warming-up session'. They were then asked to say their names and to state one word which

depicted how they were feeling at that time. The broad headings were chosen after the exercise in order to make some sense of the listings and to give the participants' feedback some greater structure. The response, tabulated in Figure Five, begins already to reveal one of the themes, that of individuality. Intriguingly, on first glance, the words might easily have conveyed similar meanings but a full variety was present from 'un-nerved' to 'excite'. Reflective responses were noted, such as 'chilled' or 'curious' as were the overwhelming number of positive words such as 'interested', 'eager' and 'relaxed'. It was also interesting to note how quickly the atmosphere of the group developed.

This is a table of the word responses form Group one, day one. (Figure Five):

Words and their loosely affiliated groupings					
Negative	Un-nerved	Positive	Reflective	Excited	Odd
	Worried	Happy x 2	Chilled	Excited	
	Apprehensive	Eager	Curious		
		Interested x 2	Hopeful		
		Relaxed x 3			
		Optimistic			
		Looking forward			

**Figure Five:** Words associated with delegates feelings at the first day of the first cohort of the Level 5 Leadership Development programme, April 2011.

## Action research reflective box one – Disproportionate responses

It had never occurred to me that delegates would be so disproportionately responsive to this exercise. It seems logical in one way that each individual would or could respond to the same question differently. But it became more obvious that this sort of approach revealed more than the normal start of a programme, which may focus on name, job title and experience. It reminded me of a delegate of a previous one day programme who said that she 'liked' the normal start of a programme as it allowed her to sit dispassionately behind job title and work experience but left, untouched, the issue of emotion.

The words chosen cover a wide range and illustrate the uniqueness of individuals taking part and how they interpreted their own reality. In addition, group members were able to hear these words and make up their own mind, and even in this short exploratory exercise, process some curiosity and learning around the topic area, by comparing and contrasting words and the responses of new colleagues. This strong awareness of the phenomena of individuality had been underlined by the various responses of the middle managers from the same organisation. Individuals had responded to the programme in many, albeit mainly positive, different ways. The experience of being more in control of their learning had, for some, been an unexpected direct link to the development of leadership skills.

The first noticeable theme that emerged from this intensive research and scrutiny of a co-designed leadership development, was the key factor of individuality. In this first theme, although obvious that delegates were going to respond to circumstances sometimes slightly, and sometimes starkly, from each other; there is a major theme for the research into leadership development for middle managers. This is, that each delegate is individual and therefore programmes that focus on leadership development must take this into account. Even if the focus on the development is on the development of organisational leadership, the reaction to the programme will be on an individual basis.

Further data supported this notion that the precise circumstance that an individual finds themselves in is important to their rate and speed of learning and development.

Delegate 1 spoke of the expectation that he would not be able to learn much from the programme and, on the first video diary, reflected upon his journey, albeit a brief journey, whereby a previous course had over-inflated his confidence and made him believe that he could achieve a lot:

*Delegate 1 '.....I didn't and so by coming onto this course it has made me think, actually, there is still lots I can learn about leadership and management'*

In relating this quotation to the course, this begins to emphasise that reflection is an important skill where the learning from previous experiences can take years to percolate through. Stimulus to provoke that reflection is also clearly required.

The delegates were drawn from around the company and did not necessarily know one another; this fact led them often to refer to their 'bit' of the organisation, their professional background, their geographical status or the previously 'bought' part of the Babcock 'empire'.

The facilitators had commented that each of the four groups, so far encountered on this programme, had 'felt' very different. Moreover, this goes some way to understanding the need for each group to establish a common ground before learning could occur. Within each group the facilitators were keen to provide with both a space to learn and a mechanism for elucidating group and individual differences before learning could be achieved.

This individuality has been underlined by the various responses of the middle managers from the same organisation. This is not one organisation that has a homogenous feel to it. It is an organisation that is huge in terms of individuals – 27,000 employees who had been drawn from several different spheres such as training (NVQ programmes) education, the automotive business – and as such job titles, roles and responsibilities lie as a broad spectrum beneath the middle manager title or description. Much of Babcock's size relates to acquisitions not organic growth. Individuals have responded to the programme in many, albeit mainly positive, different ways.

There were quite marked differences between the cohorts, cohorts on particular days, and indeed individuals within each cohort. For example, the first cohort was smaller and had had considerable individual difficulties reaching the farmhouse on the first day. These difficulties included a puncture and an engine failure plus some timorous individuals who found the journey to and from the workshop venue, along the sheep-littered steep mountain road, quite scary and intimidating. The members of this group were quiet (although not withdrawn) and were also very engaged in the process. However, the noise levels of the group as they worked through the exercises were noticeably lower than the subsequent groups and this quietness was repeated on days three and four. The second cohort was really engaged from the very start and the energy of the group was abundant in all the exercises, and the subsequent engagement, and remained at a high level throughout. The third group was, in contrast to both groups, incredibly loud with noise levels that fiercely crescendoed and this was noted on the reportage (See Appendix Nine) undertaken on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 on their first day of the four-workshop qualification at ilm Award level 5.

## Action research reflective box two – Groups are different

Here was another seemingly obvious reality that groups and people are all different and their reaction to stimuli or inputs has to be, at least internally, different. People's minds are obviously closed to researchers but the external response is at least observable by facilitators of learning programmes. The question started to emerge about why so much effort is put into the more 'traditional' programme outline to ensure consistency when every individual and the groups they make up will be unique and respond very differently to the same material. One reason, perhaps, is the operational demands for the commissioning Human Resources' department)

### 4.4.0 Reactionnaire and (Babcock) Post Qualification Evaluation

All the delegates were asked to fill in a Babcock company evaluation form at the end of each of the two, two-day workshops. This represents an attempt to gauge reactions to the programme, as close to the end of that intervention as possible, using Kirkpatrick's model at level one. A simple and quick way (but not the only way) to look at the reaction of the delegates in order to inform the design and setting of the next workshop, was to ask for these to be completed at the end of the day.

Looking at the results of the third cohort evaluation, two main themes were clearer. The first one was of the individuality of the delegates and this was mirrored in two ways. Firstly, delegates would show opposing approval or disapproval to the same task, activity or question. For example:

Delegate A on page one said to the first question: Which part(s) of the training did you find most beneficial?

*'I really enjoyed the reflection from the activities' (p 1)*

The use of this modifying adverb, 'really' places a greater degree of emphasis on the reflection although the delegate was not saying anything other than an enjoyment of the process.

However, Delegate B did not agree, and used the more negative feedback section to question the use of self-reflection because of his perception of learning his own learning came best, he felt from '*challenging conversations.*' In his answer to the question: Which part(s) of the training did you find least beneficial? he wrote:

*'Individual self-reflection as I feel I learn best from challenging conversations around my learning' (p 12)*

Some topics were chosen as a means of being able to respond to need to make this programme highly engaging. Many of the delegates were involved in education, youth development and schools and so would have been very familiar with standard techniques of delivery such as power-point. So, for some, the Active Listening Circle (See Appendix Six) was not conducive to their learning (although added the *'at present'*, - see quotation below - in order to illustrate, perhaps, a more open mind, was interesting): To the question, which part(s) of the training did you find least beneficial?

*'Storytelling was difficult and, at present, hard to see overall benefit.'* (p 4)

A further delegate responded to the request for information which included the most beneficial. The question was: 'which part(s) of the training did you find most beneficial:

*'Opportunities to try out new techniques, which can be applied to the workplace – Circle and listening exercises.'*

This delegate ties two things together by using the phrases, *'opportunities to try out'*; *'can be applied to the workplace'* puts a practical exercise, conscious of the experimental nature of the techniques towards a tangible link to the workplace and the application of a new skills of critical listening.

Individuality continued to surface. This included one very senior (and previous head of a school) who professed not to be expecting to learn anything about leadership from the programme. However she, at the end of the first two day workshop, found herself telling the facilitation team that she was:

*'humbled by the amount she was getting out of the programme'.*

What she said on the evaluation form under the heading, 'Any other comments' was:

*'I didn't realise how much I would get out of it, having had significant training and twenty year plus experience as a leader. Thank you!'*

The use of the phrase *'thank you'* underlines the sincerity of the comment and ties in very well with the previous use of the word *'humbled'*. It seems likely that a programme that sought to deliver mainly knowledge would not have induced a *'humbled'* or *'thank you'* from this particular delegate!

Four to six weeks after the programme the delegates were asked, by questionnaire: *'what were the most beneficial elements of the course/enhancement of leadership skills?'*

Ten individuals specifically mentioned the importance of recognising individuals' differing perspectives and looking to turn weaknesses into strengths. A delegate articulated this as follows:

*'It has helped me view things from a different perspective and to questions myself.....I have also learned there are benefits to using different management styles to suit the individual you are managing. I think this programme has provided me with the tools to be able to carry out my role more effectively.'*

The design of the programme lent itself (deliberately) to working with all the individuals on many different levels. Even so, the post-programme evaluation repeatedly emphasised the value of reflection, specifically the reflective walk and many delegates reported the on-going value of stepping back and critically observing a team at work rather than stepping in to run it. A delegate commented:

*'Learning how powerful and effective it can be to change your surroundings (the reflection walks exercise to discuss problems).'*

### **Action research reflective box three – Reflective spaces**

What had not been clear is how the place of learning had such an impact on learning and how the facilitation team had a responsibility to attend to the place where the learning occurred. The discussions post workshop dwelt on observations whereby delegates were seen to find reflective spaces of their own. The observations of short walks, for example, led the team to ponder of the value of learning in the outside, and through movement, and how to optimise this opportunity in conventional training and development.

The post-programme evaluation also sought to find out about the impact of the programme from the aspect of the line-manager. Generally, the Line Managers who responded had many positives to say about the impact of the course on the returned delegates.

Examples of the effects of the programme include these managers' comments:

*'He is more business-focussed and a lot more aware of what his team need to do to achieve its targets and different ways to enable them to achieve the targets required. An example of this is how he integrated two teams into one and how they now motivate each other.'*

*'...she has used the problem-solving techniques to good effect and is applying coaching methods for staff to find the solutions rather than giving them the answer.'*

Several line managers noted an initial scepticism in the delegates prior to attending the course, which was overwritten by enthusiasm following attendance.

Although the word assumption has not been used in these quotations, there is a hint at the way in which, previously, managers would assume much of the leadership aspects of their work. However, the programme was designed to encourage more awareness and to stimulate fewer assumptions. Phrases such as: *'to enable them'*, *'how they now'* – in respect to their staff – *'applying coaching methods to find solutions'* indicate that this has been successful in some cases, particularly as these examples are the **line manager's** reaction.

From a review of all of the responding delegates' feedback, it is clear that the overriding opinion of the courses was a positive one as regards the content, and of the courses' on-going efficacy within the workplace. Delegates' comments included:

*'The learning taken from the team builds exercise was brilliant – an effective way to demonstrate the theories. The assignments also allowed the main learning points to be related to the workplace and for ideas to be generated on how to further use at work.'*

One Level 5 delegate's line manager stated, regarding examples of his changes in practice on return to work, that the delegate is:

*'...now wanting to involve all staff at staff meetings, consideration of staleness of 121's, (sic) importance of positive feedback to individual staff reinforced.'*

Importance was placed by several delegates upon their increased self-awareness and reflective abilities. The Mental Toughness questionnaire (MTQ48) appears to have been instrumental within this self-development, particularly with regards to an enhanced appreciation of their colleagues and teams' individual strengths and a knowledge of how to best utilise these skills within the workplace.

The group dynamic appears to have impacted on several individuals' appreciation of the course.

*'I found we had a very interactive group which helped immensely. I think the instructors also picked up on this and got the best out of the group.'*

*'The experiential days were also good fun and the activities were well-planned. I felt that we had learned things without realising that we had.'*

Many of the delegates specifically responded that they enjoyed the every aspect of the course, would not have changed any of it, and from it obtained a large amount of valuable and practical information. Here are some examples:

*'One of the best courses I have been on. Extremely worthwhile doing. Please pass on our thanks to all the staff; I hope they enjoyed it as much as we did.'*

*'The course has benefited 'J' as it really has made her think about different methods and made her reflect on her own performance. She has been a manager for a long time and this course has made her stop and think about different ways of managing.'*

*'This training has had a greater resonance for me than most. I am still learning from it.'*

The course impacted on the delegates' pleasure and enjoyment and it can be reflected that human beings are emotional animals and that engagement in learning has to be, to a certain extent, an emotional experience. Phrases such as *'extremely worthwhile doing'*, *'really made her think'* and *'a greater resonance'* all point towards an emotionally uplifting process.



#### 4.4.1. Summary

This first section of data covered some immediate feedback from the delegates and helps to identify both individuality and emotion as key factors in leadership development. Any facilitative programme needs to be able to take these factors into consideration when delivering curriculum-based programmes of leadership development in order to increase the likelihood of buy-in. Understanding the non-immediate processes of learning and that the encouragement to reflect is unlikely to bring a delegate to a set point, reassuringly opens out the scope of development to a more long-term view.

#### Action research reflective box four – Emotion

It was worth passing comment on the obvious work that had already been done about emotion (and power) in development opportunities but it seemed that this academic work was not available to course designers who tended, perhaps in collusion with accrediting bodies, to look only at knowledge imparting (specifically through power-point and detailed lesson plans) and structure. The more we worked with the Babcock groups, the more we realised we held, outside of structure and without lesson plans, clues to how delegates can be prepared for learning

#### 4.5.0 Video diaries and reportage themes

##### 4.5.1 Video Diaries

Emergent from the first three video diaries from each cohort are further insights into the theme of individuality. These freely-given narratives helped to confirm the first theme of Individuality.

On the first and second day of the first cohort in April 2011 four people had taken up the offer of providing the programme with an un-scripted 'video booth' recording which culminated in four recordings of varying lengths linked to the participant's individual view of the programme at that stage (during or near the end of the second day).

Initially the video diaries from the first cohort were analysed by repeatedly re-reading and listening to the recordings and their transcript and as a consequence, the theme of individuality was reinforced.

The first delegate using the video booth seemed very diffident, serious and contemplative.

**Delegate:** *'...my initial thoughts on what we're doing and the course, is, err, a bit mixed at the moment.'*

The 'err' in the middle of the sentence highlights this delegate's lack of surety in his absorbing of the programmes direction. He also was not verbally negative, yet the phrase '*a bit mixed at the moment*' suggested quite a high degree of mental processing of the material.

This would be of no real surprise particularly as the facilitators had been offering a different type of programme to the delegates, one that was not dependent on power-point or a more didactic delivery style but one that encouraged reflection and the development of personal awareness. His view of the programme seemed very much defined and his thoughts seemed pre-occupied by another programme he had attended some four or five years ago.

This Delegate continued to doubt the experiences he was having although did not discount the possibility of reflecting purposefully on his experience of the first few days and changing his practice as a result.

A second delegate seemed to think that he knew what to do and when confronted with a slower, and more definite reflection, from the facilitators he became somewhat puzzled:

**Delegate:** '*So we all went out to reflect and Arthur had said, 'Okay, we're going to reflect,' and it all went silent. And I stood there and I thought I've done a reflect (sic), I think about that and I thought okay, what's next?*'

This reaction seems to be very work orientated as many of the delegates referred to their mode of operating as high-powered, rapid with frenetic activity all day. Such phrases as: '*I think about that*', followed by '*okay*' and immediately '*what's next*' conveys in the written language almost a deliberate or familial haste!

In the second recording, a third delegate, seemed much more concerned about the practicalities of the joining instructions and the worry caused by presumptions that came to her attention by the complex 'outward bound' scenarios painted by the joining instructions

**Delegate:** '*... I suppose I wasn't knowing (sic) what to expect, so actually, came prepared, to, to expect possibly some outdoor activities.*'

Comparing the first two named delegates with second delegate, delegate two was focussed on the practical aspects and perhaps her reaction hints at need to help delegates to prepare for their learning by being clear about the practicalities of programme and by eliminating, as far as possible, ambiguities and doubt.

Phrases such as: '*I wasn't knowing (sic)*', '*so actually*', and '*to, to expect possibly*' seem to echo such doubt and it seems likely that doubt about the programme and apprehension about the sorts of activity would delay or postpone the ability of that delegate to be receptive to learning, reflection and development.

Delegate two revealed a very different pre-occupation from the other three delegates so far cited. She was made more aware of her own responses to the exercises the participants were asked to do on the day. This change in awareness is one of the overt aims of the programme but this delegate wanted to offer ‘to camera’ her own growing awareness of her own ‘condition’. She was very introspective in her feedback highlighting already (in respect for the future programme) the impact her learning could have on her work.

**Delegate 3:** ... *‘I was also very interested in the way that I had ideas but I didn’t have the confidence to bring them forward, which fits into my weakest area on the mental, erm, err, resistance, resilience testing.’*

Video booth recordings from the second cohort and particularly one delegate offered an expression of individuality and her growing awareness of her own approach that was proving less effective in the workplace.

Again this recording was made near the end of the second day.

Delegate said:

**Delegate:** *‘The other part which I found interesting was learning about, not learning about but thinking. I always know, everybody’s different, everybody does things differently from being a chef, you could make a soufflé in ten different ways, as long as it came out the same way. There was no right way, it was just the end result. I do know that and actually having thought about it, I do like change, I like a challenge. I don’t like change for change’s sake, but I do like a challenge. I do try and see the positive side of everything. I do see improvement and development and from being a verifier, I always try to develop others as well. So as we got to a good stage, there was always what we can improve in doing this and I suppose from yesterday actually realising that some people would actually feel threatened by that approach. That they don’t like change’ they not exactly fear it, but apprehensive about it (sic)’*

The words are starkly open; *‘I always know everybody’s different, everybody does things differently’* and this is where the obvious – that individuals are different, can be so clearly revealed as a major theme. It is not just about making the programme free-flowing and interesting, but bringing exercises that are pertinent and that reveal potential for learning that can pick up on these ‘home truths’. This shows that for this delegate, although people may be aware of difference in individuals, it does not necessarily mean that they work towards acknowledging or working with that difference. The difference in delegates gives rise to other challenges whereby individuals are frightened by changes. This realisation stems, in this delegate’s words, with a growing deliberation that team members can feel threatened by change and awareness: At first a hesitant *‘I suppose’* then *‘actually realising’* & *would ‘actually feel threatened’*, *‘they don’t like change’,... ‘not exactly fear it’... ‘apprehensive about it’* articulates to me a clear warning for programme designers to include safe areas, and the

establishment of a safe area in which to 'hold' delegates to work at facilitating trust and producing an 'order' that served to minimise any anxiety that might prove to be a barrier to learning and development.

### **Action research reflective box five – Receptiveness to ideas**

This point was made in reflective sessions that the facilitation thrust had been to try to find ways, in some cases deliberately and in some cases sub-consciously, of finding out how to prepare the delegates to be more receptive to ideas. The feeling was that exercises that were personal and individual gave rise to trust within the group (however that group was constituted). Part of this idea of using a story of about an individual's name came from work with other groups in Wales/ Cymru whereby people who were Welsh, with Welsh names, often had a story linked to their name emanating from their environment, their Welshness and their own perception of uniqueness AND connectedness.

The fourth delegate recording a message at the end of the second day had had some challenging car issues on his trip to the venue. However, his recording ranged across several topics many of which were to do with his team and how he could be more effective.

***Delegate 4** ...I think my own personal network has just grown and, and, and doubled in size from what it was, because I've got a better understanding of what some other members, erm, do within their roles, and people that I could call upon, in terms of support, in terms of , erm, being there and, and, possibly providing advice to me as a colleague, so yes it's been interesting and I hope that...that I can call upon some of these people, and they will gladly respond, 'cause it's...it's been...erm...easier than I anticipated*

The programme that had been designed for Babcock International was full of 'spaces and places' whereby delegates and facilitators alike could ponder upon their learning with or without the help of their colleagues. This meant that the delegates were deliberately given physical space away from the delivery centre of the programme – different rooms – there was a mezzanine area available, for example – to think, to ponder upon the leadership issues that were being explored. Using writing, doodles, art work or nature walks, the delegates and the facilitation team were encouraged to look into their own perceptions and views in order to be able to express their learning (and doubts about their learning). Cornerstones of reflection were placed in and around the fabric of the delivery. Sometimes these were overt, such as the notebook called a reflective log, sometimes less obvious, such as the working in the outdoors amongst the very green, varied, often open, sometimes enclosed sort of terrain. There were references to reflection constantly – periods of reflection were built into most of the exercises and time given to the thoughts and growing awareness of each individual. Feedback was requested and sought, whilst many of the practical exercises were 'interrupted' by the facilitators to allow the groups and individuals to stop and think. The

role of an observer was given to many of the delegates and this too was promoted as a way of feedback and reflection. The role of reflective practice in the programme was therefore large and there were many opportunities for the delegates to use reflective practice between the exercises. Some exercises such as the 'Leadership Walk' were purely reflective where each delegate was encouraged to walk with partner or in a small group and reflect upon either what they had learnt or reflect upon a topic, such as stakeholder engagement, whilst walking.

### **Action research reflective box six – Space and Place**

The partner deliverers in this programme were Call of the Wild Limited who specialise in outdoor delivery of many learning opportunities. This development of the notion of a space for learning in a different place was caught by their marketing department who created the strap-line of 'A Space, Place and Pace to develop'. This line recognised three emergent properties of successful development programmes which lie at the centre of individualist learning. The triad of words, space, place and pace, conjured up the facilitative efforts that matched the most optimum circumstances in which a development group can learn actions, skills and behaviours to enhance their own personal development.

Providing opportunities for reflection helped the delegates to be more reflective; a condition they often commented is not standard in the day-to-day rush and hurry of work.

Delegate one seemed to be using the video diary itself to reflect, 'in action' and had drawn to mind issues from an old and previous course and started to unpack the learning in front of the camera.

*'...and that was sub-consciously and it wasn't I must do this now so we have learnt that and we have to put that into practice it just happened that the things I had learnt and I actually sub-consciously started using the point that we had picked up on.'*

In twice using the term; sub-consciously, Delegate One seems to be trying to re-call why he was able to apparently discard any immediate learning and help himself to re-call things he had learnt previously.

*'Going back to that and suddenly some of the negatives on that last course was that on reflection, I, erhm, I wasn't as good as I thought I was as a leader/manager and merely leader...'*

Here Delegate One goes further into his experience of past courses and, using expressions such as 'going back, 'suddenly' and the actual words of 'on reflection' appears to have been triggered by the video diary for his leap in learning to dawn on him and its relevance to the workplace. This feels like a breakthrough moment for this delegate and conjuring up mental

images of previous learning is what can help to support delegates' learning and progress in producing leadership qualities reflecting on self.

Delegate Four mused on camera and this seemed to be something that she had already worked out. (During the programme the delegates are given a 'reflective' book to write in and have minutes allocated in order to create these reflective moments) that she was often too hurried in understanding the impact of her actions,

*'And there was still silence. So I thought, okay, maybe I need to reflect some more.'*

Further consideration of that verbal line reveals more.

*'So I started to think about it some more and I thought well, actually, one of the things on the mental toughness was that I don't review enough of what I've already implemented, and that was exactly the case yesterday when I was eager to move on to the next thing which was another of the mental toughness which did say I very much like a challenge and I do move on very quickly and take on something else which may not be completely necessary and maybe if I had more time and actually took more time to reflect and review what I was doing, that would stop the movement so quickly.'*

In the course design we had applied the idea of the value of a psychometric text. In this case we chose the MT48 – Mental toughness tool – being used, at the beginning of the programme to allow, and in some case induce, a framework of reflection. Delegate Four uses this insight to good effect bringing her thinking, linking her thinking, to a greater sense of insight.

Although, at this stage, we can only conjecture what this meant to her phrases such as: 'So I started to think' and 'I don't review enough' and 'I was eager to move onto the next thing' and 'I do move on very quickly' and 'which may not be completely necessary' and 'if I had more time' and 'took more time to reflect' mean the language she used is reflective in nature (her words such as 'review', 'started', and 'reflect' possibly indicates the possibility of some learning in a created manner that could induce change in the workplace.)

One of the techniques for instilling the idea of reflection is the story circle. A number of delegates pulled this out as an exercise and technique that fulfilled a number of different criteria for an outline of the way in which to run story circles. (The idea of the story circle as a part of leadership development has been used by the University of Bath's, since disbanded, Centre for Action Research and Professional Practice as one of the workshop tools for the Welsh Assembly Government's collaborative partnership programme with a consortium of companies using the overall title of 'Connect4Cymru' an Assembly-funded programme which ran in Wales /Cymru between 2005 & 2009.)

The video diaries transcripts highlighted areas concerned with power and authority. One delegate felt comfortable out of her 'comfort zone' and described how, on a few occasions, she has felt seriously challenged:

*'Just finally, a few reflections on the course generally. Enjoyed it very much. Out of comfort zone but that's good.'*

The use of the phrase, 'enjoyed it very much'...'but that is good' further emphasises the role of the facilitation team to provide enjoyment with one hand and stretching exercises, on the other. The course material and exercises must complete and compete for learning opportunities and part of the way in which this can be done is to produce safe, careful and thought-provoking facilitation in an area that is conducive to reflective practice.

The same person said that usually at work she has the greater knowledge amongst her team and therefore could say that:

*'I've got the automatic power and authority'*

The use of the word 'automatic' renders that statement fully charged with the potential for dictatorial behaviour toward others as a starting point, yet the facilitated sessions appeared to be exercising a counter argument and a persuasion to change. The exercises the managers went through were complex and of a problem-solving nature and it was interesting to observe how quickly people lost confidence in unfamiliar settings and unusual tasks.

A second delegate enjoyed the story circle and the feedback from tasks in a circle because he said that:

*'A lot of it is done as a circle, which is great because it just shows that nobody's got the dominance.'*

This illustrates that power and authority still 'rule the roost' in many organisations and learning different skills, to combat the very human inclination to lead from the front, is essential to provide a counterbalance to hierarchy and to encourage a way in which leadership can be dispersed throughout a staffing structure.

A third delegate spoke about the idea of loosening power and authority because he was normally 'in charge'. The central word for this description is 'loosening' and this delegate shows a growing awareness that this is not a question, in leadership, of absolutes but a way in which a growing awareness, critical self-awareness, can help the delegate manoeuvre between tight control and looser delegation in the context in which they work.

A fourth delegate exemplifies this and was ruminating on the balance between a leader and a follower and he offered some interesting reflections about the building of trust as part of this balance.

*'I think it's starting to raise questions about what the balance is between, aahm, the role as leader, as someone with you know with aims and vision with a desire to go places and to take people places and at the same time, aahm, developing that trust that enables you to take people with you.'*

A fifth delegate offered the camera his thoughts:

*'...about the way I manage my time, aahm, the tasks that I ask people to do and the effects it has on their time.'*

This is another well-balanced view of leadership which illustrates well the responsibilities of delegation and empowerment.

### **Action research reflective box seven – One technique with another**

One way in which the learning about the learning occurred was through the positioning of one technique with another. The post workshop review looked extensively at this phenomenon. The story circles in woodland proved to be very popular (and often very emotional) places in which to work. The calming surroundings, the background noise of a river babbling and sound of bird-song seemed to help to accentuate silence and listening in comparison to the normal work surroundings. It was noticed that delegates began to seek to replicate these physical surrounding (such as parks and nearby green spaces) in their workplace routines such as one-to-one meetings and reflective 'thinking' walks .

Descriptions based on the Reportage documents clearly relate to the mood of the groups and it is interesting to see this echoed in the comments of A and the use of the word '*flow*' hinting at the dynamic processes occurring within organisations and, in the case of development, within groups.

On the third day of the workshop for cohort two there was an exercise undertaken which was called: 'The Many Faces of Hilary Clinton'. The same montage of photographs was distributed illustrating the different facial expressions of the current American Foreign Minister. This was an exercise that was linked back to a reading that had been set for between workshops related to the topic of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman 2000). The group was asked to get together in threes to consider under what work circumstances they might see these expressions and how they feel about each, positively and negatively. Each individual was to focus on only three of the faces.



This sort of exercise provokes an emotional response and the group was challenged to think about the role of emotion in the workplace. An example was given of the way in which the running of a school with all its teachers is very often a hugely emotional place as teachers grapple with their own emotions, often related to issues outside work. Each delegate was asked to say, in thirty seconds, something about their view of the role of emotion at work.

This is the collective response of the group as a whole but illustrates, once again, for each person, a very individual view of emotion in the workplace. A Delegate with a school background recalled the impact of a Head Teacher on a school establishment.

*'Yes. A head teacher's emotions will flow through the school. It is imperative that they role-model the behaviour that that they want to see.'*

From the use of an abstract collection of pictures, clues emerge as to the importance and attention that need to be paid attention to in development programmes.

Emotion is part of the human repertoire and this is why the self-development of an understanding of emotions and their impact is so important. J. reflects this in her comment of:

*'Emotions affect us all. We're each affected by the emotions of others and are constantly picking up on cues from body language.'*

Her acknowledgement of this *'affects us all'* and *'constantly picking up cues'* highlights the dynamic influence of our primate ancestry. The legacies of our emotional life in a leadership development setting, particularly in a workshop, reminds us of the importance of our facilitators' role which is a fulcrum upon which the experience and learning pivots, despite the fact that as adults in a work setting we can become very closed to our emotions and seek to shield them from our colleagues. S. observed that:

*'We only ever get limited views of people's emotions: what they allow us to see.'*

A cluster of comments reveals not only the importance of emotions but the complexities of judging them, dealing with them and working with them, particularly in the context of the differences between work and non-work. In particular (and this point is drawn out by the emphasis in bold type) it was noticeable that delegates were conscious of the link, and both the negative and positive impact, between their own feelings and emotions and the link that that had to others in and around their teams.

*C: 'Managers' feelings do impact on staff and a manager's negativity will be adopted **by others** so we have a responsibility for how we relate our emotions.'*

*V: 'I reiterate the need to be genuine and to try and understand **others'** emotions.'*

P: *'Be accessible and tolerant of mood and behaviours. Know that when you smile and reflect positive emotions **others** feel that too.'*

J: *'Understand your own emotions first. Know what frustrates and annoys you and how this comes across **to others**.'*

This field of emotions and work is reflected by many of these particular delegates. The outward-looking delegates comment on the role of other people and the inter-relatedness of emotional relationships, not specifically in the context of leaders and followers, but the link between feelings and impact. The words used here suggest a link between emotions and behaviour 'do impact on', 'adopted by others' allied to managerial coping behaviours such as 'we have a responsibility for how we relate', 'need to be genuine' and being 'accessible and tolerant'.

#### **Action research reflective box eight – Varying Emotions**

The issue of emotions had been discussed before but the issue of individuals in varying degrees of emotional states is not often openly discussed. However Homo Sapiens is an emotional species and therefore simple emotional influences and emotions themselves are never too far from the surface. Emotions are therefore an important factor in sustaining the learning within a group and have to be mastered by, it was reflected, the facilitation team who 'guard' the team's emotions' boundaries and patrol the group for sightings of emergent emotions.

#### **4.5.2. Reportage themes**

The reportage document of the workshop events for the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 begins to hint at a number of themes.

As part of the triangulation process for the research, a series of external observations were made by a research assistant who, whilst the workshops were being run, stayed 'outside' the group in order to make observations of the groups and capture conversations, actions, reactions and responses from the delegates. The following themes have been taken from the reportage of the first, second and third days, one from each cohort. These sessions were held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June. The final reportage will be conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup> October with the final group on their fourth day.

For ease of reading in this section, the responses from each group are encoded as such: 'R1' = Report 1 – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April and 'R2' = Report 2 – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 'R3' = Report 3 – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June, Report 4, - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011).

In keeping with the data collected by the video diaries, the theme of individuality arises. However, although the range of responses was very varied this did not seem to be odd or a

peculiarity of the exercise. The theme of individuality once again arose from the group. For several of the exercises, such as the vehicle design and engineering exercise (R1) there appeared to be a range of responses to exercises from different individual participants, but this often didn't appear to be beyond a normal distribution of responses. In this vehicle-design exercise, it was also highlighted that there was a reluctance to take charge, although this should not be considered unusual among a group of people who are new to one another. This is yet another facet of individual confidence and responses and it can be noted that whilst each individual had the same instructions there was great variation in their individual confidence and reflection.

However, there were several exercises and parts of the course, which elicited even more interesting individual responses to their own development and to the course precipitating individual actions and change.

Several of the participants expressed that the opportunity for individual reflection was one of the important things that they felt they had gained from attending this sort of programme. This individual reflection is something that people valued and for which they often didn't get the opportunity in their normal, fast-paced working life. Ja., from Scarborough (R2) who works for the Adult Careers Services is one such participant. This view was also expressed by Ju., an accountant from School Corporate Services (R2). A lot of the learning from the course could therefore be seen almost to be done individually in the reflection time or using a reflective journal.

Several of the examples that participants volunteered as changes made as a result of their learning from the programme, were quite individual ones relating to their specific circumstances. This would imply that general lessons/approaches which are learnt at the course are then applied by individuals in their own workplaces, and that it is the approaches that are learnt at the programme rather than specific lessons.

This would reinforce the need for individual reflection to see how people could use the lessons in their own workplaces. Examples of this include:

N. (in reportage R2), who said that he had moved his desk closer together to his team and walked with staff which he believed helped to create a sense of 'we together'. It is interesting to note the odd use of the phrase 'we together' and the way in which this runs counter to a more hierarchical view of a working team. N.'s verbal account of his reflective diary showed another aspect of his individual approaches to leadership issues.

N. said:

*'I have moved his desk so I am physically closer to my team'. 'I am included in office conversation.' 'I feel my move has removed an invisible barrier'*

These actions relate to a very personal sense of awareness; *'I have', 'I am', 'I am', 'I feel' and 'my move'* all these short phrases contribute to the feelings of self-awareness and personal responsibility in contributing to a change in behaviour as a leader.

Further examples of this personal ownership of his actions included:

*'I had a tendency to continue working at my computer whilst holding a telephone conversation. I realised that my callers could sense my distraction and that this was plain rude as I was clearly not giving them my full attention. Now, when talking on the telephone I consciously turn my back on my monitor so I can engage fully.'*

Themes do not just emerge by themselves but are often entangled in other themes as ideas. Emergent in this reflective diary set of extracts by N was the expressed idea of a greater use of space, outlined tentatively in the way in which N. records his progress. (Expressions such as *'my move', 'I have moved'* and *'walking with'* highlight this). Further ideas of his previous lack of movement are elicited by phrases such as:

*'I started to walk with colleagues...it is effective in breaking down barriers...I also occasionally sit in on my manager's one-to-ones'.*

Furthermore, a lot of these responses, and others included in the Reportage (particularly R2 & R4), were based very much around the use of physical space and the way that changing something about physical space changed the dynamic of the group and the interactions between the team members. It gives the leader an opportunity, particularly before performance reviews, to converse on a very human level about broad issues and a chance for the other person to get all the gripes 'off their chest' before the review meeting, then they can then settle down and get to grips with detail and figures. It appears that the subtle changes in N's behaviour at work have really helped him to improve his effectiveness.

The theme of geographical space, arising out of the leadership programme is somewhat surprising. Many leadership programmes would only be undertaken in rather passive workshops and recognising space and place as an important constituent of formulating change is an emergent constituent in successful leadership development programmes.

The ingredients in this geographical mix were circles and lines in many of the exercises. The concepts of abstract ideas, such as leadership and influence, as represented by cubes, dodecahedrons and movable, multi-sectional cubes such as a Rubik-cube, walking, the use of the outside and even abandoned mining systems, was key. It seems that the more

stimulating and different the leader or workshop facilitators can make the interactions, the greater the possibility that the delegate or follower will engage in that process.

Other delegates, again highlighted the individual way in which the leadership development can be appreciated and taken 'on-board' by the person, focused, in their personal reflections, on other changes.

C. (in reportage R2) had focused on encouraging staff to have fun, using animal masks and throwing balls, which although they were reluctant to do at the beginning, they warmed to it!

G. (in reportage R2) said that he now made a point at his team meetings of sitting at the side, rather than the end of the table, which he felt had made a difference to the group dynamic.

Action featured across the programme in all cohorts, from the idea of including walks as part of reflective practice, having activity as part of the exercises such as moving from inside to outside or between shapes and different room settings or introducing the technique of action learning to the group.

What emerged was not indiscriminate action, action for action's sake, but the idea of the action-in-activity percolated through to work and the way in which work is organised and led.

S., from the final day from the final cohort articulated what he had assumed to be the impact of the previous three days of the programme. He said:

*'I'm not necessarily attributing this to the programme, but, since June, I've given myself permission to take time out, to take a walk or whatever, when pressure starts to build... I also tell people that I will do what they're asking but it'll be ready in 2 hours not 1 hour as I consciously manage my priorities. I know when to draw a line and now will do so... I always leave work by 6pm on a Friday - whatever - and I'll drive home the country - not motorway - route: my treat!... I used to spend a lot of time in the country, enjoying the landscape, but now work mostly at a desk: how did that happen?'*

This revelation seems to be rooted in S's own ability to see action and activity as something slightly different from that which he had before. He seemed to indicate that his conscious thought about his time linked to his efficacy was sufficient for him to change his approaches to what sounds like a more measured approach to time planning – 'I give myself permission', 'I always leave work by 6pm', 'I know when to draw a line and now will do so' speak of a leader taking more for himself by being more aware of himself.

This description of self-reliance is not the only way in which action was elicited through the cohorts. The introduction of the action-learning technique gave a way in which facilitated,

work-related, action could, at the very least, be discussed openly with peers. This is a place where changes could be 'confessed', as it were. Here is a multiple example provided by, not a story circle but an action circle. The facilitator asked the group to think about what they individually might do, in the form of a publically 'confessed' action point.

- L.: 'I'm going to develop a communications strategy.'*
- B.: 'I'm going to showcase my new expertise in team meetings.'*
- S.: 'Meet with my team in small groups.'*
- K.: ...'focussed'*
- S.: 'The player/coach article has shown me that I've lost my balance and that I need to be more of the player and be outside more.'*
- L.: 'I'm going to be out with my team more and observing them.'*
- K.: 'More team building.'*
- A.: 'more development planning and delegating.'*
- C.: 'a positive meeting to improve relationships with another team.'*
- S.: 'introduce a white board resource to my team.'*
- N.: 'produce a visual action plan.'*
- M.: 'Like S., the White Board ...'*
- L.: 'legacy planning.'*
- D.: 'change culture, performance and behaviours.'*
- J.: 'rethink strategy and write a new business plan.'*
- M.: 'my assignment and amend my business plan.'*
- B.: 'have a meeting with line managers to start a conversation about selling.'*
- A.: 'introduce a buddy system.'*
- M.: 'team building.'*
- Z.: 'produce an action plan with deadlines.'*

One thing that remains very striking is the variety of the responses and the way in which many are anchored by active verbs: 'doing', 'going' 'produce', 'change' highlighting the very action-orientated activities contemplated by the delegates. This does not prove anything but the words are conveying a positive view of contemplative thoughts about work-related action.

Being outside of your zone of personal control often inhibits participants. Personal control and order often helps to managers and leaders to mitigate the vagaries of the workplace. However, keeping too tight a control might lead to a stifling lack of creativity and innovation. Loosening control too much in a development setting can lead to anxiety and a barrier to learning. Holding on to too much structure might allow for apathy to envelop the learning opportunities.

This point was emphasised in the narrative contained in the reportage for day four, fourth cohort. The narrator pondered on the tight and loose nature of the workshops on the way back from a reflective walk to a local waterfall:

*'The assignment session this morning is reflective of the tight, it demonstrates the tightly controlled aspects of the programme and the prescriptive nature of its requirements. It's highly focussed, whole group and intense. This walk reflects the loose part of the programme where the candidates are reflecting broadly in their work and the applicability of the theory to that. They are encouraged to delve deep (sic) into their unconscious mind and to use imagery and metaphor to help them.'*

The use of role play, for example, in a development setting is often cited as a dreaded exercise which has little in common with the 'real' world. By planning to undertake the workshops in a way that supports individuals, whilst at the same time taking them to a place that is slightly uncomfortable and challenging, is a calculated risk. A supporting atmosphere that encourages positive change is, in itself, a positive way to channel learning and development.

An incident on a leadership walk highlights this in a very graphic manner. An exercise called Stakeholder Engagement (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997) was introduced for the whole group as a way in which leadership could be explored in the context of interested 'others' both individuals and organisational. (This was an exercise that had resonance in the workplace and it was suggested that candidates use this exercise back at their workplace with their colleagues.)

This part of the programme was intensively documented in the reportage and the extended re-telling of the story allows for a wide range of themes to emerge, such as emotion, power and authority, space and individuality.

Candidates were then given 10 minutes to consider who their stakeholders were and what effective communication with them might look like. The second part of this exercise was another example of the way in which 'place' could be applied to good effect. The delegates were then asked to get themselves ready for the walk (which was to be 15 minute walk, there and back, to an old mine through re-covered mountain vegetation near a gorge of international importance for its fauna and flora (mainly lichen and bryophytes.) A qualified hill-walking instructor led the walk and was accompanied by another qualified guide and three facilitators.

The group gradually left the training venue in twos and threes as soon as they had put on the appropriate clothing. The Walk leader, D., explained the route and the purpose of using the walk to reflect on the Stakeholder exercise and to discuss in pairs or threes the issues related to that growing stakeholder awareness. The three facilitators ensured that the group followed the correct path and two of the facilitators walked at the back of the group. The first leg of the walk involved an ascent up a relatively steep rocky incline. The first part of this track had a hand rail on the left.

It was soon apparent that, as the facilitators caught up with the last few candidates, one of the delegates, 'Ni', had stopped on the path and was holding on to the stem of a leafy plant. When I asked if there was a problem she didn't look at me or reply, or again when the question was repeated it was suggested the others went on ahead.

When we were alone 'Ni' was asked again what her concerns were. She was very upset and shaking and was saying that she couldn't go any further. She was asked what was stopping her from doing so.

'Ni' said:

*'I'd looked to the left and could see the tops of the trees and knew there was a deep ravine. I didn't know before now that I had a fear of heights but it had hit me out of nowhere now.'*

She was told that there was no-one forcing her to go on and that she was free to choose to return to base if that was what she wished to do. One of the facilitators then caught up with the last delegate. They moved on and the facilitator asked if everything was okay. The facilitator then informed her that she could return to base if that's what she wished to do.

'Ni' confirmed that that was what she wished to do. One facilitator remained with the delegate and two moved off towards the cave and the collection area.

At this stage it was curious that an exercise that we had undertaken before (although not quite in the form of this reflective walk) had given rise to a number of allied fears from four delegates although the reaction of 'Ni' was by far the most severe. This outlines some really key issues about the ideas of providing development that is stretching. Interlocking themes of confidence, assertiveness, challenge and reflection overlay the experience of the workshop and development opportunities and further outline the lack of predictability of any one delegate reaction (for a full description of this incident please refer to Appendix Ten).

On the return leg, 'Ni' walked through the woodland and she confessed that in the 13 years of her working life she had never experienced such paralysing fear before: and she has faced some significant challenges.

She said:

*'It was reassuring for me to know that should it ever happen again I knew I had the personal resources to overcome it. I have learnt about self-imposed limitations and how to challenge myself to overcome these. I felt for the other 3 group members who hadn't conquered their fears and had returned to base without completing the exercise.'*



'Ni' was supported, to a lesser degree, to descend the same rocky path that had caused her the distress on the ascent. We led the way and as we approached the base we saw the three ladies who had returned early, sitting on the bench outside. They were very sullen!

The relating of that story highlights the way in which individuals can respond to various challenges and how a leadership development scheme should be able to support the delegates' learning.

### **Action research reflective box nine - Unpredictability**

This incident on the mountain side was a great surprise and reflected how unpredictable delegates can be. However, it taught the facilitation team two things which were drawn out after a post-workshop review. Firstly, assumptions about the capability or underlying foibles of groups can lead to exercises that become less useful to development or learning. Secondly, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, that all situations and reactions can be put to 'good use' when facilitating learning. Some delegates will be unable or unwilling to start the journey towards action, change and development but that, with tight and imaginative facilitation, learning points and emergent phenomena can be used to illuminate developmental opportunities

Initial exercises in a workshop, particularly when people do not know each other at all, can often be a difficult time for people, and is often a time when people are beyond their 'comfort zone'. This doesn't seem to have been the case with the hopes and fears exercise. This is perhaps particularly surprising since personal information about their own expectations (and linked to perhaps their weaknesses – if they are their fears) can be something people are reluctant to share. It is perhaps unusual to embrace such an activity so emphatically. The report states that there was *'a deafening chatter and high energy...No-one set themselves apart or was disinclined. All entered into the spirit of the exercise'*.

In a similar vein, in R3 there is a summary of an exercise where each participant was required to tell a story for one minute. Although of course it is possible that people happened to come up with similar themes for their stories, many people (assuming the order of the stories in the report is the chronological order of them being told) seemed to "feed off" the previous story told. A story about children was often followed by another story about children, or a story about elderly relatives was often followed by a further story about elderly relatives. Again, this is perfectly understandable. People assume that others have a standard in their mind of what sort of story *should* be told, but feel unsure of what it would be and not confident enough to say what they want to say regardless. I would further postulate that this might be a sign of a group not being comfortable or familiar with each other despite having been working together for a whole day previously. For example, one participant in

this group asked the reportage writer how she had found the homework the previous evening, not recognising that they had never met before.

The 'Mental Toughness Exercise' (R1), which the delegates had already completed, however, appeared to have quite a different response. People were keen to try and find out others' results – a few were seen to have attempted to see others' scores, and as is suggested in the report perhaps to establish 'a norm' so that people could see how they stood in relation to that norm. From the group that was observed, people did seem eventually willing to share this information quite openly, but there was certainly an initial reluctance to do so.

As perhaps would be expected, one of the times when people seemed outside of their comfort zone was when they were told they were going outside for an activity. It is reported that a lot of questions were asked – perhaps this could be characterised as trying to prepare well, although it could equally be thought to express a lot of discomfort. Some weren't dressed appropriately for the outdoor activity. It seems that the facilitators perhaps anticipated this because when they explained the activities, they recognised that the outdoors was outside of some people's comfort zones because they felt the need to explain that the activities stemmed from recognised ideas.

This was manifested, particularly in Ni's difficulties (R3), in continuing to walk without a handrail. Her attitude to the situation, despite her initial, almost overwhelming, urge to go back, was overcome, with significant help from the writer of the reportage. What is particularly impressive in Ni's attitude is her ability to rationalise both the fear that she feels, for example by considering and answering the question '*What would help you to continue?*' and by thinking about how she would feel if she did go back before completing the activity. Her unwillingness to submit to an inclination that she '*just can't do it*' is an interesting response in someone who is obviously quite severely out of her comfort zone. Although she needed some help to do so, thinking through the problem and believing that it was something solvable and within her control seem to have paid dividends – see her joyful reaction to being able to reach the top in the end. Her attitude is in sharp contrast to three other participants mentioned in the same report, who all were unhappy about the walk and less engaged than others in the activities. Perhaps they were out of their comfort zones from a variety of perspectives, but their response appears to be one of not fully participating and of consequently "giving up".

One participant (R3) explicitly stated that one lesson they had learnt from the course was not to make assumptions, which is an important lesson undoubtedly, but a large amount of what is noted in the three reports could be solved / helped by people not making assumptions. Or,

by people stopping to think about the perspective of someone else and incorporate the possible perspectives that the others involved in the task might have. In the exercise (R3) where the participants have to make a model vehicle, many of the participants did not stop to consider what the other people in their team could be doing, such as the workers who (jokingly) threatened to strike. Those participants also didn't consider how this would be perceived by the others in their team, assuming their humour could be transmitted by writing, yet knowing that the workers and managements were both working without full knowledge of the situation of others in their team. Behaving without considering the perspectives of others, and not stopping to question one's assumptions, happens repeatedly in the model vehicle exercise.

Many of the general lessons (R3 Page 8) seem to reflect this broad idea. Often it is not phrased in explicit terms, but often the issue at the heart of it is about the importance of assumptions. Lessons included *'Listen'*, *'Follow up and Clarify'*, *'Don't assume'*, *'Ask Questions'* and *'Be certain of the task parameters'*.

#### **4.6.0 Interviews and paired interviews**

Two delegates were interviewed from the Babcock International programme in cohort 1 and were asked, on the morning of third day to reflect about notable people and notable occurrences following the 'leadership walk' This walk was a guided walk in the hilly waterfall filled gorges near the village of Pontneddfrechan and was an extra feature of the programme which individuals could volunteer to undertake. The small group was led by a qualified hill walking instructor and the exercise, which lasted an hour, was started by the reading of an extract taken from Stephen Covey's work on his research into highly successful people. (Covey 1990). In order to link the exercise with the interviewed responses from the delegates the detail of the story is explained before documenting the delegates' responses when interviewed.

*'The story from Chapter seven of Covey's book, 'Seven habits of highly effective people' related to the axe-man who was less and less successful in completing his quota of trees to cut because he neglected to take time out to sharpen his saw. The metaphor implying that time taken away from the job at hand is not wasted but allows for a more efficient use of time, regularly breaking from the task in order to prepare the next phase of activity.'*

It is interesting to note that the various triggers to greater insight emerged from a mix of current leadership and management activity, significant change within the interviewees' core business and activities and insights in a workshop setting. All these things set against the context of a story (narrative), a walk in a National Park and an area of natural beauty.

Interviewee 'C' responded to the request for insight into notable people and notable occurrences. In the first place he referred to the short reading from Stephen Covey's book that was read out prior to the walk.

*'It was the reading .....I thought immediately about what my manager had said about my guys'*

And he was able to add that the link from the reading to his experience had allowed him, in his own meetings, to:

*'...to walk them through that similar experience'*

He went on to explain:

*'I have had two temporary managers in the past four months. In a recent review meeting I listened openly to what people said and I was willing to listen again. In the last workshop it was highlighted how important it is to take time out to think'*

'C' continued that theme:

*'On our next management meeting (with another new temporary manager) it went absolutely fine and I think it came down to me listening openly to what people were saying and taking it on-board and processing.....'*

Researcher: *Are you referring to the way you might have behaved before?*

'C': *Yes, I think, in the last workshop it highlighted how important it was to take time out, and I didn't get to go for a walk or do group work, it was just thinking time in the car.*

Researcher: *Okay*

'C': *And using that time for the experience I had in the meeting to think about it when I was driving and I did it over several days just to see what, actually, was my opinion of the meeting, what were the things that were said that were said what did I need to do going forward and use that thinking time to reflect on that experience.*

The way in which connections were being made for 'C' perhaps hint at the manner in which individuals, within the context in which they work, can find time in which they can reflect purposefully. They appear to make sense of new ways of thinking and new ways of behaving in a leadership setting. In the context of the induced reflection of the interview the individual here uses some very thoughtful words and phrases, such as: *'to think about it', 'take time out' and 'thinking time'*. This link to the work-place in terms of a pattern of reflection makes strong links between practices – the way that the work culture sometimes resists thinking.....more like obeying! There is an acknowledgement that the new application of older skills of reflection and listening would move 'C' and his team more quickly across barriers and organisational obstacles.

These new behaviours or adaptations of existing human skills, perhaps, are highlighted in the words and phrases picked out in this short 8 minute interview. The workshop had, for example, *'highlighted how important it was to take time out'* which led to, *'.....listening openly to what people were saying and taking it on-board and processing.....'* and then moving this learning on to his team, *'to walk them through that similar experience'*

A second delegate, 'M', was also interviewed after the same leadership walk and related afterwards his response to the question about notable people and notable occurrences. He described the impact his new line manager's manager had had upon him and her approach to recent contractual performances. This in contrast to the general approaches of serially senior managers who had ploughed on with replicating the previous manager's approaches that of relying, without change, on current contract performance or of ignoring issues of current contracts in pursuit of new contracts. 'M's learning on the workshops had meant that he had been looking for a more detailed, more reflective approach, in the behaviour of the new leaders in his company. His response detailed where this response was different. His new manager's response was:

*'taking stock of what was going on'* which included: *'meeting the team'* & *'in open forum'*..... *'trying to look to bridge the gap'*: *'Her approach was significantly different – very much more detailed'*

The impact of this on 'M', given that on the programme he had been exposed to a less superficial approach, and more reflective, joined-together, approach led to him to desiring more changes in his own approach. He suggested that the more detailed approaches of his manager's manager had given rise to his own leadership changing.

*'It has changed my thinking slightly – it is the element that I want to develop myself'*.

The notable occurrence was the impending threat of redundancy and this had produced a change in 'M' behaviour which related to a more open, honest and clearer leadership style.

*'Had I not been involved with the training and the different style of my manager...I would have kept people in the dark'* now I am *'open and up-front'*

*'as soon as I am aware of the situation I inform; whatever applies'*

*'I have behaved very differently' –I have been much more Up-front and clear – rather than keeping, um, information from being made available to them which may concern them and, from some people's thinking, may prevent them from delivering as it may cause them stress but actually, I think, it is a much more honest approach'*

Researcher: *'and have you had any feedback?'*

*'Feedback from the team has been phenomenal, they much prefer this approach'*.

This feedback from 'M' relates to the process of leadership which relates to the impact leaders have on their followers and the way in which openness and honesty is craved by people in the hierarchical chain. The influence of a more open approach is highlighted by the openness of his language using words and phrases such as *'open and up-front', 'up-front'*, seeing his role as a bridge between the company information and workforce he managed. Stimulated by his new manager's manager taking so much more interest in the teams as people, he used words that conveyed this new more open approach such as: *'taking stock', 'meeting the team', 'in open forum', 'bridge the gap', 'very much more detailed'*

### **Action research reflective box ten – The Leadership walk**

This was one of the first times that a structured walk had been undertaken with this group. It was a voluntary exercise that attracted fewer than half of the delegates (some were unable to get there early enough). The facilitation team had conjectured that walking and reflecting on a topic selected that morning would give rise to a space where people could reflect back to their workplace. Attaching Steve Kempton's use of notable people or notable occurrences gave rise to much more in-depth reflection than had been assumed could happen. The idea of walking as part of management practice and as part of leadership development programmes began to take hold from this first 'experimental' approach conjured from a chance delegate comment about using the outdoors more

The programme, as a catalyst, had providing 'M' with a greater awareness of the behaviour of his own management, very much in the context of the work situation, and the confidence to alter his own approaches As well as the renewed ability to receive feedback of his own.

The impact of the programme could only sometimes be reached by someone else. It was notable that paired evidence, such as that between delegate and line manager, perhaps forced much more open dialogue and paired reflection and that this has a greater impact on progress and process. Here are two examples from the Babcock cohort that suggest that heightened awareness through shared narrative has value in elucidating leadership action in the work place.

*Delegate S: 'I think um, for me, that person, I wouldn't allow them that amount of control, because I think they're destructive, and I'm just thinking of a scenario where you're in a meeting, and if one person like that is there, it means that the other people who are quieter don't get an opportunity to air their views where sometimes, the quietest mouse in the room can also have the best ideas. So that person, I guess, really would have to say I take your point but can we move on, they'd have to use a lot of tools like that with them, or "this isn't really for this forum, can we discuss this on a 1 to 1'*

*S's' Manager A: 'Yeah – we talked about the differences and yeah, it would be more reflective and looking at the bigger picture and coming back and saying, so instead of picking the phone up, think about it overnight and come back in the morning. And talk through the process; we've always talked through the process but sometimes, your*

*reaction was quicker and more negative then, would have a more negative impact, whereas actually, sometimes when you take stuff away, think about it and come back, you can deal with the situation better. And then really I suppose it's things like the communication, working with the team, going out ...less.....yeah....you know like you were saying about understanding, that things aren't being done right because you can't see it; looking at how you give a better message probably, and working with what you've learned from that.'*

Further emphasis is linked to learning from others and the impact of well-structured programmes can have on reflective practice as individuals titrate their own experience against people in their lives. An example of this multi-faceted impact is contained in the following conversation between a delegate and her line manager.

*Delegate: 'Yeah, um, I have a danger of just jumping right in there right away, so I actually will stop and think is that the right thing and questioning the way as well. Also, from a mentoring point of view, it's all very well saying, oh I'll just do it myself, but you can't do that, and the danger is you want to be able to just do it yourself but you have to teach them to do it because it makes your life easier in the long run.'*

*Delegate: 'You're giving them accountability and ownership of the situation. Taking over, that is the danger. And that's worked sometimes and it hasn't worked some other times but erm.....also, actually, it spans outwards of work as well, my husband's got a really demanding job and he comes back home at night as well and says "you'll never guess what's happened at work" and I've found I'm coaching him as well! You know, in this situation, because he's a manager as well, he's got 20 staff, he's got some horrendous situations, but the techniques are the same. And not every night, the occasional night, my sister's also a lecturer; she thinks she knows it all...'*

*Researcher: 'I remember her.....'*

*Delegate: 'So I've had some healthy debates with her, because I'm still seen as the little sister that you know; she's got no idea what I do, because she's just a really bad listener, so we've had some healthy debates with her, about her, so yeah, I suppose it has 'erm gone outwards.'*

*Researcher: 'That's good. So, the next thing is for A. to respond to what you've just said.'*

*Delegate's line manager: 'No, I would really support what you said about the assignment, we've had excellent feedback as well, but it's the bigger thing about writing, and writing reports, you write them whereas before it would be "I can't write that, I can't possibly respond to those sorts of things, so that's really good to see that level of confidence. What's also really good to see is you being engaged in learning. You had never not read books on management styles and things but it's ignited a passion for learning more which is lovely to see and hopefully that will continue...'*

There are many influences on the delegate's learning in the above example including team members, a line manager, a husband, a sister and authors of management and leadership books. The dialogue gives an insight into the complexities of how an individual, in the context of he or she works and the outside life they have experienced, gains insight into leadership development. Change seems to be occurring here through a couple of interesting processes. Firstly behaviours are being self-challenged which appears to be having more

impact than previous outside influences. Secondly, much of what can be learnt requires practice and re-assurance and many management and leadership skills are related to domestic and non-work circumstances as well.

### **Action research reflective box eleven - A personal journey**

It had not been clear as to the impact personal contacts and colleagues make to understanding of interventions, but this dialogue emphasised the personal journey in leadership terms and how pondering and reflection can hasten learning and awareness.

Processing information in a post programme phase is also very important and is a very complex, yet apparently superficial, thing to accomplish. One interviewee in the presence of his manager summed it up in this way.

*'Ok – well one of the most important things for me is from the Level 5 programme, from all the conversations we had, and having the background that I have, or the way that I kind of learn and then operate, one of the most important things is practice. I'm quite a practical person, so I do think a lot, I do reflect a lot.*

*I do look at things I've tried and then say that's not quite working, let's shape it, move it and I get to a point where I've kind of gone, that's now working that's doing something significant and that's making a positive contribution to it. And I'm very proud of that – I suppose I kind of think my kind of certificates and medals are not actually certificates and medals but they're actually things that are happening within a team of people or they're things that we're actually now doing as a consequence of an idea that's come to fruition. So I'm a very practical person, I like to apply things and try things that are new and see if they work and if they don't work, shape them and move them on.'*

His view of the world he had experienced was multi-factorial in nature and illustrated the complexity of his world. This from his account is not just a cerebral effort but one wrapped up in activity: *'all the conversations we had..... learn and then operate, one of the most important things is practice....I do think a lot, I do reflect a lot, I do look at things I've tried.....that's not quite working, let's shape it, move it'*. Encouraging this type of introspection leads to a much more thoughtful and careful approach to the distribution of leadership throughout.

### **Action research reflective box twelve - Insight from mistakes**

The approach just presented through the last co-respondent was not lost on the facilitation team in that the guidance of this style of learning can sometime be seen to be short of facts and figures. However, the process of this type of aesthetic facilitation also required a cyclical learning journey and a way in which errors or mistakes can be mulled over in an attempt to find insights based on the experience of a wide range of people



#### **4.7.0 Final discussion.**

The purpose of bringing together these research strands was to observe and chronicle the rising phenomena emerging from four cohorts of participants in a leadership development intervention viewed from many different angles and perspectives. Leadership Development, it could be argued, fits into a complex and dynamic business/organisational set of interventions, which, in their broadest sense, are endeavouring to add a positive, self-reflective element to enhance individuals within the context of their work.

Positivity allows for individuals and teams to flourish and grow and encourages questions and inquiry rather than self-absorbed advocacy of their own view point (Fredrickson & Posada 2005). The exchanges (pages 163-166) between the pairs of managers listening to and then responding verbally to that narrative highlight the links between individuals both in learning new skills; but also, putting them into organisational and relationally historical context, has echoes of the relational-systemic perspective of distributed leadership (Fitzsimons, Turnbull-James & Denier 2011) which emphasises the social processes and psychological links between individuals.

The themes that emerge are, perhaps, slightly artificial, owing to the complexities of human behaviour but presenting them in this way helps to shed light upon the very process of leadership development.

The emergence of eight themes (See Figure Four, page 133, at the start of this chapter); those of individuality, reflection, power and authority, emotion, physical shape and relative space, responses to changes in comfort zones, action and assumption seem critical in the development of an understanding about interventions. The eight themes woven and clustered into two, represent a weave of human issues that are, it could be conjectured, much stronger together than separately. The interweaving of these themes as an emergent whole (there may be even more themes yet to be uncovered by this methodology) to produce a leadership development intervention, that remains cognisant of the human impact of such work, remains the object of the research. This area of human development and advancement is a very complex undertaking. (Davies & Dark 2005, Smith & Osborn 2007, Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008)

The process of reviewing an overlapping and interweaving a selection of data, triangulated by the various methods employed, (specifically interviewing, video diaries, external reportage and post workshop evaluation forms) has given rise to a number of themes clustered into two 'strands'. By focusing on one central programme, acting as a stand-alone case history (Babcock International Group plc) has enabled the themes related to this

particular leadership development to emerge. These emergent themes are supported and emphasised by preliminary data from several other middle management programme in Wales/Cymru and England (Referred to in chapter one).

The emergent themes have helped to identify the complex human processes tied up in learning and development. Facilitation of this learning is crucial in order to take into account, and seriously value, the human expression of emotion (nervousness, anxiety and fear as examples) and the incipient influences of power and authority that exist within many organisational structures. Leadership development can be a dynamic and progressive experience for managers wishing or needing to adopt more of a leadership approach. Variety of presentation, encouragement to reflect, extolling the virtue of change in a safe, but stimulating, environment are all key elements to that development. However leadership development is often instigated by senior managers to influence and improve the leadership performances of middle managers. Paired interviews have illustrated the role that can be undertaken by the creation of platforms for action, by shared stories and linked understanding.

## **5.0 Chapter Five – Analysis**

Analysis of the findings of this research, outlined in Chapter Four, is the result of an on-going action research cycle. Reflections on the programme and the subsequent modification of the course material and presentation techniques were all tuned into improving personal practice. Chapter five, following a short introduction, is set out in two main sections, one dealing with the issues that confront leadership development interventions that stem from external factors and the other the issues revealed through the data collected and presented in chapter four. Both sections introduce supportive and revealing literature and the chapter then ends with a concluding section that acts as a bridge into the final conclusions outlined in Chapter Six.

### **5.1 Introduction**

As an action research approach this research had a lot to offer my own professional practice (McNiff 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2013) as I mused, observed and puzzled my way through a large, long and intensive programme of leadership development. The overlap between cohorts and individuals led to the imposition, on my own thinking, of a series of action learning cycles running concurrently (Coghlan and Brannick 2009). These cycles have been represented in the text (see chapter four) as eleven discreet boxes of reflection and conjecture. Obviously there were other cycles on-going at the same time not reported in this way but inferred or still working their way through subsequent programmes to the present day. In working like this, I tried to follow the 'rules' of action research. At all times, through intensive observation, reflection and open debate with the commissioning team, co-facilitators and other stakeholders I tried to follow the tenets of good practice. In being authentic (Coghlan and Brannick 2009) I endeavoured to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. This was to be able to counter any unexplained pre-judgement, the obvious danger of role duality and the weighing up issues of company politics.

In the programmes researched for this thesis, it was observed that individuals in middle management positions rarely have had a chance to decide for themselves what it is required for their own development. Some evidence has been found that cognitive style, ownership and assertion all have a link to leadership effectiveness (Busari & Spicer 2010). However there have been signposts for a number of decades regarding the efficacy of a 'sheep-dipping' approach. Rice in 1965, in his book 'Learning for Leadership', recognised that individuals, or more importantly, their own individuality, cannot be ignored in the design of programmes.

Research findings have been widely and deeply analysed and laid out before the reader in chapter four and the rise of two clusters of themes, external factors and internal factors, point to an insight into the way in which leadership development can be best undertaken.

The first set of themes relates to the external environment - broadly speaking, what lies 'without' the person.

The two clusters are an heuristic device, that seeks to simplify the way in which outline data is presented. In doing so these clusters illuminate the process of leadership development (Kaiser and Overfield 2010) that has emerged from the research undertaken with the Babcock International Development Intervention described in chapter four and conceptualised in figure two, page 133.

Central to the field of development is the ability to accelerate meaningful learning that translates into action in the workplace and to equip delegates with the understanding of the power systems at play, within the best tenets of productive leadership (Michelson 2002, Vince 1998). Although Michelson's work can hardly be called post-modern it does adequately describe the challenges of, and the intermingling power structures around, modern complex organisation that require positive leadership in order to flourish.

## **5.2 External factors**

The experiences of the delegates and their external environment is represented as a feature of this thesis, as the structure of the leadership development programme unusually put a lot of emphasis on the external environment - such as green paths, formative walks overlaid with theoretical topics and the wider use of space in around the workshop area. The starting point with external factors in this thesis was the work of Schein (2004) and his definition of artefacts in organisations:

*'Artefacts include any tangible, overt or verbally identifiable elements in an organization. Architecture, furniture, dress code, office jokes, all exemplifies organizational artefacts. Artefacts are the visible elements in a culture and they can be recognized by people not part of the culture.'* (Schein, 2004) p.23

As another starting point there was an awareness of the role of, what Michael Reynolds's described as, critical reflection in management education (Reynolds, 1999) and the need to craft programmes that had radical content and radical process. Nord and Jermier (1992) suggested that, amongst other artefacts:

*'Literature should be introduced outside of mainstream management thinking, more use of novels, short stories to illuminate socio-economic conditions and processes.p. 203*

It was felt that using organisational artefacts in a development setting were too charged already with meaning that stemmed from organisational life and therefore of less use in provoking or promoting delegate reflection

Since this starting point of stimulating externality, there had been a search for the sources of such stimuli, and through the use of that stimuli, a way of embodying movement, narrative and delegate interaction.

A theoretical starting point was using the ideas of Donna Ladkin (2010) of visualising leadership and followership as a cube and moved that idea to work with groups using a Rubik's cube. It was observed that the cubes elicited a tactile response and proved useful to feeding back ideas and allowing delegates to position and describe abstract concepts. Expanding the idea of a 3-D external artefact that led to an individual's internal discovery, the use of a 'net' of a dodecahedron provided more glimpses into the way in which artefacts helped to explain and materialise abstract concepts. Sara Ilstedt Hjelm, in her recent 2004 paper, suggests that ideas can be transformed into solid artefacts and when this happens something really important happens. She contests that some issues need this embodiment in order for that topic to be able to be discussed.

In trying to help to explain the leadership issues of power and authority other artefacts began to be used such as political cartoons, non-abstract postcards and wildlife magazines. This approach fitted in with the work of Stephen Zaccaro (2001) in that it created a sense of experimental variety.

It is no surprise that power and authority is one of the themes as they are a remarkably pernicious force in organisations and cannot therefore be easily over-ruled or ignored (Rooke & Torbert 2005).

A delegate from a paired interview alluded to this use of power:

*...so it would never have been a question that I would ever have asked "where is this information going?", because to me it was a learning curve, so I think, and I could safely say, it was the most notable person I've met in the past 2 years, 3 years, because within the negativity, the fact that they had this power to control and, I say, at one stage spoke for me and my colleagues, and we actually had to say "that's not my opinion".'*

Another delegate spoke to the video diary and suggested:

*'...and it's interesting because in a work setting that's never an issue partly because I've got the automatic power and authority because of my position at work, but also I'm working in areas where I know I've got greater expertise, and that the rest for a range of reasons... So it was slightly uncomfortable, but it's given me time to reflect and review and again, it's shown the importance for me of getting everyone's skills on board and respecting everyone's skills.'*

Both cited delegates began to express seeing a different way in which to view power and authority to the improvement of their team's work and function.

Michelson (2002) cites a link between leadership and the development of a power-base and this fits in very well with the way in which the stakeholder's activity in the workshops (see chapter four) exposed who is powerful and why. This sort of activity, which closely adheres to reality, gives a work-related exercise a lot more credibility. Manipulating the physical shape and space (Schein 2004) of the learning environment, power and authority within that space and changes in comfort zones around the space, in the way that presumes people on a development programme are equal, yet experience learning and development differently, appears key. (If you offer artefacts to people in a developmental setting there is an immediate implied power differential in the very fact that the facilitator has chosen these. The delegates will assume that these have been chosen for a reason and therefore it would have some significance. The use of artefacts will be doing exactly this. Some delegates might think that sculptures or paintings are insignificant to leadership and the offer of an artefact can represent a huge shift in power and help to create a slightly disquieting move which is out of the expected (Holmes 2008)). Authenticity can be found in the human story of leadership (Parry & Hansen 2007), which can engender a positively-shaped psychological state (where rapport is improved and made more likely) built around non-verbal patterns of behaviour that establish psychological safety and a greater likelihood of the delegates being receptive.

How can this new state of rapport be created? It appears that differentiation in workshop delivery is high on the agenda of many delegates. Examples from the research data indicate that this level of rapport was enjoyed by some of the delegates some of the time!

For example: the following delegates picked out different key pointers in the programme. Interactivity was valued by 'Z'; 'N' looked to using different techniques, and a different approach was valued by 'S' which encouraged further experimentation and the use of silence and listening. 'K' valued the thought-provoking extension into enjoyable interventions.

Building skills for leadership to develop often centres on the capacity for individuals to cope with uncertainty and the way in which negative capacity (Kupers and Pauleen 2013) is developed and nurtured (Weick 1976, Simpson et al 2002, Grint 2010).

The Romantic poet John Keats (1795-1821) coined the phrase 'Negative Capability' in a letter written to his brothers George and Thomas on the 21st December, 1817.

In this letter (Source: The Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends) he defined his new concept of writing:

*I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.'*

A delegate from Cohort 2 summed this up slightly less prosaically but with nevertheless a strong hold on why uncertainty increased, not decreased options.

*'So it was slightly uncomfortable, but it's given me time to reflect and review and again, it's shown the importance for me of getting everyone's skills on board and respecting everyone's skills 'cos we've all got different skills and sometimes batty ideas or ideas that don't initially make sense come from unexpected quarters...'*  
Delegate from Cohort 2, May 2011

In a more modern context, particularly in leadership terms this Keatsian idea implies a capability of operating beyond prescribed boundaries in ambiguous spaces providing confidence in being able to operate outside of one's comfort zone and sphere of personal control. There is a way in which this is synonymous with Otto Scharmer's idea of staying in a space where the future is emergent (Senge & Scharmer 2001). Often that is a space that is tense and not completely informed; absent also, are clear, codified models of thinking and acting.

The research findings, highlighted in depth in chapter four, directed attention onto the external factors that had impact on the group(s). In cycles of learning and raised curiosity, what was going on within the groups was debated and reflected upon. The cohorts were continually being 'checked out' as issues were raised and observed. The questions raised during this process were along the lines of McNiff's plans for action research (2013) what was happening, why and wherefore were the groups being interacted with and asked to do 'things', what were we achieving and, in line with our values, how well was the evaluation coinciding with the outcomes?

### **5.3 Internal Factors**

The second set of themes can be clustered around the internal life of the delegate and couples together emotions, individuality, action and assumptions. The bridge between the two themes may lay in the emotional reaction to artefacts, the individual interpretations of meaning and the underlying assumptions about, perhaps, cultural artefacts and their significance, importance or legitimacy. In this chapter, the main themes will be laid alongside the existing literature and what is known now. The comparison is used to provide a framework for the development of improved approaches of leadership development, as well as outlining a contribution to theory. In organisations' attempts to provide more relevant leadership development interventions, design, not substance, appears to be the way in which that effort can be more regularly rewarded than is currently the case (Jenner 2009).

We have already learnt that good development in human beings cannot take place remotely from their work context or, for that matter, from their own lives outside the work setting (Weick 1976; Cousin 2006; McKergow 2008). However it is that very unique individual alone that can mobilise their own community and apply their own agency in any leadership opportunity (Gergen 2001). Of course, it is never that simple, as the interaction between the internal feelings and external pressures is complex and unique.

This is how one delegate pondered on the behaviour of one group member who tried to dominate and how this notable person's behaviour made her think about her own in her work-place setting.

*...but everything that they were, I would never want to be in my working life. And that's me being brutally honest, because I would never want to go into a room and control it that way, without giving...and speaking for others when it wasn't their opinion.* ' 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort member interview post programme in January 2012.

Some elements of how learning groups come together to find and discover applied leadership practices are articulated in literature reviews (Avolio & Gardner 2005; Bennis 2007; Kempster, Cope & Parry 2010). The theme of individuality was so strong that it would be easy to forget the role of colleagues and community in the learning journey. Conversations with colleagues, triumphs with teams, less than savoury interactions with others all can lead to learning in an individual (Kempster 2009). Community and development can be offered by such techniques as Action Learning (Pedler et al. 2010) which can seek to describe the tension incumbent with independent leader within their own working context. What are the dynamics at play here and in the orchestra analogy (Higher Education Research Institute 2011) that describes both room for compliance and individual's creativity and flair.

The primary data does link to the idea of self-awareness within a particular context and that this process is emergent, flexible and based on the chemistry (the reactive mix) of reflective opportunities and tendencies (Wood and Gosling, 2003).

The way in which people respond to development is not to be engaged in set ideas of what works and what doesn't work but to set into train a flexible learning vehicle that links to the postmodern view of individuals that:

*'...are not unified around a coherent self; no fixed, essential or permanent identity, contradictory and partial identities which are continuously formed and transformed'*  
Wood & Gosling 2003 (p 9)

Kolb's work about a learning cycle however, apparently universally accepted, does not, perhaps, reflect reality. Many writers have criticized that model for its over-simplicity and the



way it isolates the individual in a cycle of learning (Miettinen 2000). This social isolation denies and separates the multiple and synergetic ways in which people learn from each other and in response to evolving and emergent contemplation (reflection) and action (Reynolds 1997). In addition, the notion of sequential learning denies the basis of deeper learning (as opposed to mere retention of facts) and understanding, forged in the individual in a collaborative (or not) association with others (Holman, Pavlica and Thorpe 1997; Kempster 2009). Further observations have been made that relate to the disembodiment of the learner from social and power constraints in Kolb's model. Furthermore, the place of learning, the circumstances as part of the act of learning, which are auxiliary to the learning processes are left in a neutral place by Kolb, seemingly ignoring the context and activities in which the learning takes place (Seaman 2007)

The data collected from the four cohorts clearly describes the dynamic link between the individuals and their group. Experimentation and manipulation of the group's macro and micro environment by attending to geographical space (such as green spaces) and the individual space (by the creation of measured tensions) is key to maximising the potential for development. The place of learning, indeed the places of interaction, the very rooms and buildings, are crucial to the ability of an individual to learn and develop (Bachelard 1994). In the research described for the Babcock International cohorts, the outside space is also important and the reflections and feedback from the delegates mention often their new awareness to the outdoor space. This new awareness allowed for the possibility of the use of walks in open spaces as a tool of leadership. A productive space is created by the 'patrolling' facilitators that can gauge (George 2000) the emotional feel of individuals in a group context by being able to maintain the optimism and enthusiasm to flourish.

The advances in understanding toward leadership development in the literature have been to question the current approaches (Grint 2009; Kempster 2009(a) and call for an entirely different set of criteria in order to provide better results. In adapting a research model that stays at the heart of practice (Senge & Scharmer 2001) facilitation or a team design that can provide practical but more learned interventions to the leadership development field.

Much of this development centres on the mantra of self-development/self-awareness within the context of that particular person. Leadership development is keenly focused on the individual. This needs some explanation and can be viewed from three ways. Firstly the focus of leadership development was on the individual formerly with the emphasis on leadership being embodied within one person (Bennis 2007). Secondly and subsequently there was an impersonal emphasis on individuals with a search for competencies that individuals need to be able to adopt a more leadership manner (Higher Education Research

Institute 2011). Finally, and this is what the data collected here seems to support, there is a need for development of individuals taking into account the complexities of their personality, their experiences and pre-dispositions in order stimulate awareness and consequently more subtly in their overall understanding and approaches (Kempster 2009(b)).

Support for this third approach comes from many sources and many fields. In many ways it begins with echoes of therapeutic work in that the focus needs to be on the individual (Rogers 1951, Rogers (1975).

One of the seminal works in this field was written by Rogers and Roethlisberger (1952) and reproduced in a later edition of the Harvard Business Review.

It is with some prescience that Rogers wrote in 1952;

*'The biggest block between two people is the inability to listen to each other intelligently, with understanding, and skilfully. This deficiency in the modern world is widespread and appalling. We need to make greater efforts to educate people in effective communication – which means, essentially, teaching people how to listen.'* (p 111)

Even more interesting than that is, the skill of mentoring relying on relationships and the way in which learning can be enhanced, by attending to events and coming into contact with others (Grint 2005; Trehan and Pedler 2009).

*Relationships are a major source of learning. People do much of their learning through communicating with others.'* (Trehan and Pedler 2009, p 2)

The close examination of the activities around a Leadership Development Programme refers back to the idea that the delegates who are undergoing leadership development are enjoying an experience in which they and their experience are interconnected. This is what the philosopher, Merleau-Ponty, describes as the 'living-in-the-world' (Belova 2006). The programme and the research seek to examine the relationship of those connections in 'living-in-the-world', by close attendance to the individual's experience within the context of language and narrative, the outdoors, and the role that space and place play in learning and development (Allen 2007).

Development of the programme was undertaken with a view to creating an opportunity for deeper and more significant learning around the abstract idea of leadership development. Acknowledging leadership's very 'abstractness', it seems fitting that the stimulus for learning and development was to include 'the abstract' in the form of unrelated artefacts to stimulate conversation and narrative-stimulated development on leadership

Here is an extract from the information sent to the company prior to the start of the programme:

*'Pam and Arthur have been working together for the past decade in perfecting tailored approaches to leadership development that has its roots in accreditation and management standards. Recent developments have included the use of narrative in evaluation and the closer links of experiential out-door programmes to theoretical input and workplace efficacy. This developmental approach has evolved to include innovative and creative methods of deliver dovetailed with a people-orientated evaluative approach that ties in the impact of the development to the workplace.*

*Their programmes, neatly allied to the experiential expertise of the Call of the Wild staff, are fun, informative and greatly valued for their ability to change work-placed individual and team behaviours.'* - Programme notes written by Pam Heneberry and Arthur Turner – Tender Application 2011

This description fits in very well to the notion of liminality (Cook-Sather & Alter 2010) which is described as being a sort of *'inbetweenness'* that allows and encourages challenge to deep-seated assumptions about society and community.

Original work by Arnold van Gennap in 1908 (published in English 1960) suggested a way in which rites of passage follow a pattern of development, moving across a liminal space into a new state. The programme itself was bounded by a huge variety of different settings, different materials and different individual learning opportunities based around group working. The development of leadership was being stimulated through the medium of the abstract and using artefacts to stimulate thought about leadership. The following are a couple of examples of how powerfully this difference has been expressed between tutor and delegate in the 'phoned support calls sessions that took place between workshops or as part of the video diaries.

One delegate was amazed at the impact an exercise had which was based on a team creating model racing cars.

*'Massive learning curve re. Clarity in the car 'game' 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort Delegate, August 2011*

This delegate was talking about a leadership exercise taken from Donna Ladkin's work on leadership and followership which includes pairs of partners taking it in turns to guide a person who has his/her eyes closed around, by touch alone,. This exercise culminates in both partners co-guiding, both with their eyes closed.

*'...the one we've just done was about trusting a partner and partnering up aahm, one was a leader, one was a follower, then we were both followers and it was really interesting because it does get you thinking and then you can relate back to what actually it's like in your workplace.'* First cohort delegate, April, 2011.

Creation of a pre-state of preparation leads to a passage through an element of transition and onto a further state of change. These stages: *preliminal rites* (or *rites of separation*), which can be characterised by breaking with previous practices and routines *liminal rites* (or *transition rites*): that allows for a feeling of starting again in preparation for a new future

state. This middle transitional phase implies a passage through something recognisably different – a liminality. Finally a *post-liminal rites* (or *rites of incorporation*): during this stage, the person (termed as an initiand in the earlier work by van Gennap) is re-introduced to, in this case society, with a new, improved identity and way of behaving. Great efforts were made to replicate this journey across various thresholds into a liminal space throughout the programme.

Following on from van Gennap's work Victor Turner (1975 p. 95) described a liminal space as:

*'Liminal spaces are between phases of estrangement/separation and integration/belonging'*

A clearer definition exists in the field of education and refers to liminality in the terms of a threshold concept. This is particularly important in the reaction of a space (distinguished through innovation in online learning through the Japanese concept of 'Ba' (Bryceson 2009)) where delegates are held in a space of learning that can feel uncomfortable and stretching, but one where it is necessary to allow for doubt and uncertainty and protecting the delegates from 'harm' as they process across recursive and excursiveness (Cousin 2006). More importantly this is a space in which delegates are far more easily able to reveal

*'3. Another characteristic of a threshold concept is that it is integrative in that it exposes the hidden interrelatedness of phenomenon. Mastery of a threshold concept often allows the learner to make connections that were hitherto hidden from view.'*  
p. 4

Several respondents in the telephone coaching between workshops highlighted how the difference of approach in designing and constructing workshops can produce a different impact.

*'Enjoyed the course, Good Balance liked the way we stopped and reflected'* Notes taken from April's first cohort member's telephone interview

The facilitation needed to be able to construct a different place for learning. Establishing rapport is part of the processes undertaken in action learning or coaching and mentoring approaches (Clutterbuck 2005). When rapport is high, delegates are, generally, more cognitively receptive and perhaps more open to considering new thoughts and self-generated concepts which challenge current patterns of understanding. In echoes of Zaccoro's work (See Chapter Two) in understanding frame breaking, frame switching and frame re-integration, reported in 2001, forms of close interactive facilitated support can be the catalyst that enables the following of a pattern of establishing rapport, breaking rapport and re-establishing rapport which are critical skills in the work environment.

There was a deliberate choice to include reflection in the programmes with all the cohorts. What was a surprise was that so many of the delegates found it such a revelation and unusual leadership behaviour, in their experience. Reflection, according to Reed and Koliba (2001), suggested it was:

*...reflection is so critical; there can be no higher growth for individuals or for society without it. Reflection is the very process of human evolution itself (Section 1.)*

Reflection acts as a powerful way in which thinking is self-challenged and the use of the outdoors, abstract ideas and artefacts, both created and natural, further enable such challenges. Whilst in terms of the technique of action learning (Pedler 2009) the thinking has to be challenged by deep and relevant questions (Paul & Elder 1996) and inevitably aligned to action, of one sort or another, from subtle changes in approach or language to much more major shifts in work-place behaviour.

The programme was designed to have a simple linear approach to ideas of good practice to seek ways in which the individual delegates could 'find' their own compelling way of reflecting. One delegate summed this up in her narrative in creating the video diary.

*'Just finally, a few reflections on the course generally. Enjoyed it very much. Out of comfort zone but that's good. Enjoyed meeting the group. It's been well structured and lots of mixed bits.'* 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort member, May 2011

Paul and Elder in 1996 suggested that no one person would like to be judged about the quality of their thinking (and therefore in this context their reflection) with it being considered as: *'unclear, inaccurate, imprecise, irrelevant, superficial, narrow-minded, illogical, and trivial'*.

The axiom of designing leadership interventions to include sufficient quantities of reflection, reflective time and reflective moments are deemed to be crucial for the development of ideas. The creation of knowledge from component stimuli is key to the production of interesting and effective leadership development interventions. This would be addressed through innovative and creative application of already existing academic theories and models.

Much of the writing about reflective practice stems from education and teaching. Previously the work of Dewey before the Second World War outlined very relevant description about reflection and reflective practice (Larrivee 2000):

*'Typically, the terms reflective thinking, critical thinking, reflective judgment as well as critical reflection have each been used to define a way of thinking that accepts*

*uncertainty and acknowledges dilemmas, while ascribing less significance to the role of self in the reflective process (e.g., Dewey, 1933,1938; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991; Zehm & Kottler, 1993, King & Kitchener, 1994;). In Dewey's (1933,1938) writings, he asserted that the capacity to reflect is initiated only after recognition of a problem or dilemma and the acceptance of uncertainty). The dissonance created in understanding that a problem exists engages the reflective thinker to become an active inquirer, involved both in the critique of current conclusions and the generation of new hypotheses. According to Dewey, reflective thinking requires continual evaluation of beliefs, assumptions, and hypotheses against existing data, and against other plausible interpretations of the data. Resulting decisions remain open to further scrutiny and reformulation. Similarly, King & Kitchener (1994) posited that one operating at the highest stage of reflective judgment knows that a solution is only a hypothetical conjecture of what is, recognizing the temporary nature of any solution. These definitions of critical or reflective thinking seem to suggest that it is primarily cognitive problem solving.'*

Delegates show this in many differing ways. One of the paired interviewees pondered on this cognitive problem in this way:

*'So the other one is kind of a personal kind of thing that's happening. I've kind of gone ok, that's different, and that's the first time that's happened. And I'm trying to link it back and thinking that probably it's from some of the things we went through.'*  
Cohort 4 delegate, October 2011

This availability of reflective practice has resonated with the Babcock delegates. Some of the post programme feedback suggests that the transfer of learning occurring sufficiently to ensure a change in practice.

For example, S's manager suggested that she had adopted a more reflective view of team support and she had seen S retreat from joint solutions to more distant support stances to good effect. (Notes taken from S.A. – Notable people notable conversations transcript). Another, A (delegate, not line manager) thought that the provision of reflective time was good..... *'good balance - liked the way we stopped and reflected.'* N suggested that she was: *'still reflecting'*, which felt appropriate and a lot of energy had been put into stimulating the delegates to think that progress in the field of leadership development would not be instant. Progress is matched across time and moving in relation to real and random occurrences. C really appreciated the reflective space... *'surprised at start – really good reflection on others' experiences same people usually. Learning from others'* ... when linked to his other colleagues.

The first theme of physical shape partially refers to the environment throughout which the development process occurred. By extension this also relates to the human needs of the delegates and the way in which human beings react to circumstances through their animal self. (Neal & Peters 2007)

*'It is also important to remember that despite all the nice clothes and perfumes that we use, underneath beats the heart of an animal – a highly evolved animal, but an animal none the less. And this animal is not well suited to the modern world of office stress, such as emails, instant technology, family, dislocation, international travel, electric lights, sitting at a desk for hours, sleep deprivation and constant insecurity.'*  
(p 76)

The design of exercises that link theory to practice augurs well for the development of leadership, as it seems more likely to precipitate changes in insight as much as changes in approaches to certain situations.

As previously explained, (See conclusion section of chapter 4) the emergent themes are artificially divided and it is interesting to see that one emergent theme crosses over and blends with another. The delegates on the programme often showed that they had made assumptions about the programme even before they had arrived. Creating assumption is a natural human response to the very complexities of life. From one delegate who had assumed that the checklist sent prior to the programme meant that she would be on an outwards bound sort of programme, to the delegate(s) who assumed that any presentation had to be delivered by power point. Trying to foster a learning environment that challenges assumptions should help to establish a degree of critical reflection. The definition of assumption, according to Paul and Elder (2006):

***'Assumption:*** *An assumption is something we take for granted or presuppose. Usually it is something we previously learned and do not question. It is part of our system of beliefs. We assume our beliefs to be true and use them to interpret the world about us.'*

This example highlights the way in which un-challenged delegates can bring significant barriers to the learning experience and therefore the role for experiential variety to play (Nelson et al 2010) is key to being able to confront those assumptions that are held in the way of individual development. For example, in leadership development terms, the role of the follower has, in the past, been described as a rather retiring, muted role. However, the work of many writers and researchers has led to there being a greater understanding of the leadership qualities and impact of a motivated follower (Collinson 2005). Assumptions are also made about leadership, Ogawa & Bossert in 2000 reflect upon the impact that assumptions have on how leadership is viewed:

***'Arguably, four basic assumptions underlie most treatments of leadership. They attend to four dimensions of leadership: function, role, the individual and culture.'***

Leadership development courses need to attend to these assumptions as these four stumbling blocks can impede the deeper learning that is often required when grappling with the development of leadership skills in the workplace. These assumptions, if properly and

positively challenged in the leadership development forum can turn to being building blocks for the learner. (Scharmer 2001).

Another human characteristic is that we are emotional beings. Often this is not taken into consideration when planning leadership development programmes although those that are aligned to the technique of Action Learning (McGill & Brockbank 2004; Trehan and Pedler 2009) acknowledge the power of human emotion in creating barriers to learning.

Group emotion is also key to the working of a team and even a large organisation therefore the emergence of emotion as a key determinate on success in learning about leadership is of no surprise. The findings support this in the exercise described in Chapter Four whereby individual emotions interlink with that of the group. Descriptions from the reportage relate to how the positive emotion of a group set the tone of how the group working and how that emotion contrasted within each eclectic cohort.

Pescosolido (2002) suggested that *'individual group members take leadership by providing certainty and direction during times of ambiguity'* (p 1). Further on page two of this article he suggests that an *'emergent leader is able to set the "emotional tone" for the group, and influence how group members will interpret and react to events that impact the group'* (p 2). Furthermore he suggests that the role of individual emotion and moods could be researched more deeply by the way that a leader gauges the emotion of the group by the titration of his or her own emotions. In this research, emotion has emerged as a feature of leadership development and therefore is not only an important factor in the field, but also in the developmental context. Both situations are ignored at their peril. Although other writers and researchers have written about emotion in leadership development (For example: Vince 2004; Turnbull-James and Arroba 2005) this thesis has added a significant contribution to the theory by exposing the delegates' expressions of emotion as they go through the development. From the point of view of the Doctorate of Business Administration it also provides practical clues as to how emotion can be challenged and channelled for positive learning experiences.

Emotion was also experienced by the delegates in a way that interfered with their learning:

*'I am coping with it feeling quite fragile – emotional months no TUPE no redundancy First day I was still there .....having to deal with .....felt negative Deflated on arrival emotional experience – more positive at the end of it'. Telephone support call. April 2011*

Notes from another July delegate reveals more of the work of emotion in learning and adapting:

- *Pushed out behaviours personal development coaching conversations*



- *Hybrid with the contract*
- *Own behaviour both emotionally and technically – good but quiet.*
- *Didn't highlight or push – 2 day development day – reflective session – time and gather evidence*
- *Reflective learning on the Academy*
- *Running a workshop this week. They don't feel safe – emotional or safe.....reflective journal 35 notepads from Tesco's – personal development*

Interestingly Markus's work suggests that emotion is not just the province within an innate human response but is also socially and culturally framed and promoted through dialogue.

Lutz quoting Markus in 1988, suggests that:

*Emotion 'can be viewed as cultural and interpersonal products of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other. Emotional meaning is then a social rather than an individual achievement—an emergent product of social life'* (Lutz 1988 p. 5).

Gross (1998) contended that emotions, far from being in a form of their own, can be moderated and influenced by the people themselves. Gross's research discovered that often people prefer to be in a neutral emotional state with a stranger. This state is preferred so that the stranger is less likely to pass judgment on that person. The emergent theme, captured by this research suggests that attending to the emotion of a group makes it more likely they will be able to commit to learning within a cohort or group (Baumeister 2008).

The widespread view of the importance of emotion suggests that the facilitators of leadership development need to be able to tune quickly into a group. Bechara et al propose (2005) that there are two changes going on in an individual and the individuals within that group, using the somatic marker hypothesis.

*'Emotions are manifested both internally (unobservable to other people) and externally (other people can tell that you are experiencing an emotion). Internal physical changes in the body include an increase in the heart rate, endocrine release or smooth muscle contraction, while external, visible, changes include changes in facial expression, posture and particular behaviors.'* (p 336)

In the design of the programme we endeavoured to counter the five considered innate reasons for a lack of movement on ideas or thinking (Paul and Elder 1996; Contu and Wilmott 2003). The first of these innate categories was *innate egocentrism*'. This characteristic was challenged by providing excuses for movement of the delegates as different sets and groupings. These then became a continually shifting set of different pairings and collections of delegates in which an individual's view was gently aired and massaged throughout the length of the workshop.

Innate socio-centrism, the second category, was more easily challenged as many of the delegates, despite their middle manager status, came from different areas of the business, and had often been in smaller companies bought out by Babcock. One example of this, however emerged in the visioning exercise because the delegates as a whole knew that one of the Babcock's visions was encapsulated in the phrase; *'get home safely'* Yet work within the group which precipitated a close defence of individual and small group perspectives, enabled views to be shared that were not company provided or encouraged.

The facilitation team was particularly keen to stretch delegates in this programme and to challenge the third category of *innate wish fulfilment*. This became quite apparent when individuals were physically challenged on an outdoor walk, for example. On several occasions, when less fit delegates would try to rationalise their desire to turn back, it was by encouraging the rest of the group to believe that the whole group had done too much, or that time was being lost and therefore their attempt to curtail that activity was justified on group needs alone.

By using a regarded psychometric test at the start of the programme the delegates were challenged about their *innate self-validation*, the fourth innate category, and by using the coaching approach of using triads to feedback the results of the Mental Toughness questionnaire the finger-hold each delegate might have had on their long held views was loosened through questioning and observer feedback. The final category that describes the potential resistance of an individual, that of *'innate selfishness'*, did not overtly surface during the workshops but the design of the programme focused on working together on key themes and so pairings (and sometimes threes) were expected to work together to research topic areas. There were therefore fewer opportunities for each individual working in the group for only selfish reasons.

The programme design concentrated on two main areas: Firstly involving the delegates in tough aims and objectives enabled 'stretch' to be put in place. The construction of the learning space was also left very low-key and flexible (Jenner 2009) so as not to over-extend the speed of the delegates' passage across thresholds and through liminal spaces.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Many of the ideas that emerged through delegate narrative were complemented and explained through academic materials and ideas. It is conspicuous that the sort of reflection process that is undertaken by the delegate, predicts and encourages action within a wide range of possibilities. However, in combination, new forms of understanding have begun to emerge. Rigorous blending of approaches seems to be stimulating to most delegates. Melding or blending of approaches created tensions that allowed for accelerated learning and heightened awareness and participation. In addition the use of more unusual ideas and artefacts led to the materialisation of those very abstract ideas leadership envelopes. All forms of development require action to take place and one of the recent concerns about development programmes in leadership is that whilst action can occur during the workshops, managing transfer of learning is much more difficult (Reynolds 2011). Certain design features of this development programme related to making it more likely that the delegate gets used to, and is prepared to contemplate, serious and considered action. This action took many forms. Many of the activities were action-orientated with delegates having to move between chair configurations, different rooms and moving between shelter and the outside. Physical activity intertwined with cognitive processes was the norm and there was very little passive absorption of facts and figures or conventional course knowledge or materials. Proactive activity was encouraged through pairing people together to undertake a research and presentation development. Reflective processes provide the stimulus for action. Action learning, as a technique, relies on the delegate to base new action on reflection. Although the (rapid) teaching of action learning only occurred on the fourth day of the programme the principles of action learning applied to leadership development very closely (Pedler 2009; Boak 2011).

Action as a word has a wide number of meanings and forms. Providing space and time for thought was an important precursor to action, although thinking can be viewed as an action in its own right (Pescosolido 2002). Action can be seen as a physical attribute and there was a lot in the programme that tried to reverse the passivity of other similar programmes. Paired development work, as well, ensured that the receiving of knowledge in the programme was not passive but linked to peer-review, peer development and peer learning. The facilitators took a lesser role in this whereby more active delegate participation could be ensured (Higher Education Research Institute 2011). The use of movement in the workshops and a focus on providing '*experiential variety*' (Nelson 2010) led to much of the design of the programme as being as action-orientated as possible. Whether it was by promoting greater thoughtfulness, to engaging the delegates on a leadership walk, action was a deliberate yet multi-faceted part of the design process.

The conceptual gap, first introduced in page 48, tries to highlight leadership development and the intense focus of those delegates as individuals. Whilst Chapter Four focusses on both internal and external factors and eight overlapping themes, much of the literature is known and used. However, something new has emerged and the contribution of this thesis, to knowledge, is this:

1. The ways in which facilitated development can handle the emotions of those middle managers experiencing the development
2. The use of programme design to handle those emotions
3. The way in which an understanding of the liminal space can dictate programme design and facilitation.

The following and final chapter will now focus attention back on the original research question and set out the contributions to knowledge, practice and policy and methodology made by this DBA thesis. In addition, Chapter Six will outline where further research effort may be undertaken and articulate the limitations that the research programme experienced. Finally, this forthcoming last chapter will link to further reflections held in the epilogue, which charts some significant post-research developments, and to the appendices, specifically appendix two which details some non-academic sources of inspiration and appendix five which annexes career-length leadership and development suppositions.

## Chapter Six Conclusions

### 6.1 Introduction

This introduction provides a short synopsis of the research focus and detailed inquiry into the phenomena arising from close scrutiny of one leadership development programme, which was concluded in 2011. This thesis looks to the distinctiveness of middle management and this led to the development of a pair of research questions.

The research questions are:

*How do middle managers benefit from formal leadership development programmes?*

*What are the key factors to include in a programme in order to maximise the opportunities for leadership development amongst managers who are in the middle of organisational hierarchy?*

This final chapter provides a commentary on the findings of the research and highlights areas of interest, areas of concern and areas of potential development. The research questions were developed from a keen interest in the leadership development of middle managers and a growing understanding of the conceptual gap (see page 20.)

The succinct paragraphs following the introduction include a short synopsis of each chapter, contributions to knowledge, practice and methodology, personal reflections on the impact of this long six-month study and observations on the process.

Chapter one attempts to set out the basis for the study and explores the theoretical ground involved in the whole literature of leadership. Chapter two engages in a wider-ranging literature search and review which expands the focus from leadership to the discipline of learning and the wider repercussions of leadership development on organisational development. Chapter three articulates the research approach and rationale using the complementary approaches of social constructivism and phenomenology. Chapter three also places emphasis and explanation of the choice of qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research laying out the argument for choosing the most appropriate methodology for the subject in question. Chapter four selects data that provides insights into the emergent themes and builds together in two clusters of key ideas related to the potential efficacy of development programmes, as well as reflecting on the processes of design and delivery. Chapter five seeks to draw these themes together in light of the existing literature and to provide insight into the relevance of leadership development approaches. Contributions to knowledge, practice and methodology are articulated and explored. In

addition, these contributions to practice, knowledge and methodology are inextricably linked to limitations, boundaries and unexplored questions and unexplored possibilities of the research. A final paragraph concludes the thesis by exploring the topic of 'what next?'

## **6.2 The contributions to knowledge**

The contribution to knowledge centres on a greater awareness of the individual's reaction to development stimuli and the way in which the abstract and the use of artefacts encourages individual interpretation and application of key leadership development skills and behaviours. Part of that knowledge centres on the descriptive conceptual idea of three ways of looking at leadership development, through the lenses of an individual (termed as the 3 'I's). Previous trends in development of leadership have been focused somewhere fairly different. Firstly through the development of individual leaders, this trend was then superseded by a focus on competences and behavioural norms and finally, the third 'I', which this thesis has more clearly revealed, the focus on development of each unique individual.

Previous research has indicated the various reactions to development around the ideas of corporate and organisational leadership. The final 'I' of the three is not the same as the individualism that is described in more controlling societies (Alvesson and Deetz 2000) but is more firmly linked to the individual focus described in action learning (Edmonstone 2011). The basis of this, outlined in chapter two, focuses initially on the individual 'I' which relates to the all-powerful individual that the organisation looks to for inspiration but this is one theory that is now largely discredited, particularly as those types of individuals can lead organisations into extreme or nefarious paths without restraint. A middle ground might be the second 'I' that largely becomes a product of selfish egotistical behaviour, placed there by personal development and drive and often devoid of a link or association with others, other than a tight group of individuals representing a powerbase or influential networks. This research however has identified a third 'I' which is viewed from the outside – a more rounded individual, one that would benefit from a leadership development design that accepted those individual starting points as being unalterable and inviolate. Therefore the facilitator's job of development is more keenly felt by focusing on the individuals before them and not on a hypothetical individual described by the deeds or competences of others. This individual (and they all share this characteristic of uniqueness) will be bringing to the leadership development arena a completely original set of tendencies and interpretations. The facilitators' work is not aligned to pushing knowledge, or the blanket acceptance of common models, but to stir and cajole the delegate towards reflection and critical thought. The acceptance of the third 'I' creates a very different starting point to other development opportunities. This approach is much less to do with title, grade or position, fact or

knowledge but more to do with presenting far-reaching and challenging exercises and learning formats that provide the individual with the possibility of extending their own comfort zone. Starting with the individual, and persistently taking into account that unique person within the context of their experiences (and within the context in which they work) is the contribution to knowledge. Moreover, elements of design, and an awareness of how to handle emotions, have led to three clear contributions to knowledge. Firstly the ways in which facilitated development can handle the emotions of those middle managers experiencing the development, the use of programme design to handle those emotions and a way in which an understanding of the liminal space can dictate workshop design and facilitation.

### **6.3 Contribution to practice and policy**

The contribution to practice is to help with the re-design and re-conceptualisation of leadership development opportunities. As a doctorate of business administration (D.B.A.), a contribution to practical knowledge is both encouraged and expected. This thesis commenced with a desire to find out more about the reactions of middle managers to leadership development, particularly in the context of the individual. Through a series of pre-research interventions - which included pilot interventions and approaches with individuals on other 2011 programmes - the topic was opened out to closer scrutiny. A methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (I.P.A.) was used to observe, reflect and capture the actual experience of individual delegates on a specific course.

This Institute of Leadership and Management course with Babcock International, followed a curriculum that prescribed certain content parameters, but the development of the learning and the presentation of ideas, models and related topics were open to interpretation. The use of a broad range of presentational ideas and concepts, however, was encouraged by the Institute's regulations. Whereas in some of the programmes, that were not part of this research's primary case history but which contributed to the methodology, accreditation was not an issue or desire. In these cases, a lot of energy and time was spent on the rationale and design of the programme to suit the needs of the commissioning body. Often researchers or evaluators do get deeply involved in the design or delivery of a programme but in the Babcock International programme, as the researcher, I was deeply immersed in all facets of the programme. During the length of the programme, and beyond the workshops and as assignments were completed, data was collected by focusing on individual(s) reactions to various stimuli during or outside the workshops, by a mixture of methods and approaches. These approaches included interviews, free-standing video diaries and paired

interviews with a delegate and their line manager. Much of the rest of the research activity was centred on narrative and observation.

The practice of developing leadership has been an accelerating phenomenon in modern organisations. The evolution of policy under which that can be progressed varies from organisation to organisation. Many programmes have been created piece-meal and often outside of the context in which people work. Often these programmes were associated or linked to specific ideas or models, often centred around the work of very few individuals, the majority of which would retain an American (Western) centric view of leadership (For example the training programmes undertaken by staff in the Welsh Assembly Government in the years following devolution in 2001 were firmly linked to the approaches espoused in Steven Covey's book, 'Seven habits of highly successful people'). This, of course, does not mean that leadership initiatives in the past are entirely ineffective (individuals may change their approaches through the absorption of knowledge about themselves, but also through knowledge of various ideas and models of leadership). However, this research has highlighted the way in which leadership development can be improved in both its design and its development. Leadership development can be understood more clearly by paying closer attention to the phenomena rising from the group and individuals - as it transpires in a live reflective context. Being able to understand the emotions in the group setting and observing, minute by minute, what is going on within the dynamics of the group, is a vital facet of any programme. Leadership Development can be gained by emphasising the responsibility of the individual to be prepared to accept challenges, however oblique and subtle, to their own practice, within the context in which they work. Leadership development programmes can have impact upon the very fabric of an individual's working life to the betterment of organisational life and efficacy. The practice of leadership development for middle managers could be improved by paying attention to a number of interlocking factors. Policy and practice could benefit from the following:

- Further identification of the fragments that make up improved leadership development and the writing of a coherent development policy that maximised the human potential for insight and behavioural improvement
- Encouraging complementary techniques such as coaching and action learning that specifically develop confidence and reflective practice in order to strengthen personal accountability and contribution
- Design features of specific programmes that take into account design constraints such as space and style of delivery so that elements learnt can be internalised and



personally re-packaged into changes in approach, often requiring very subtle changes in behaviour or style.

- Incorporating evaluative procedures at the beginning of any leadership development initiative so that the programme can be adjusted and fine-tuned to both the individual and organisational needs as the programme advances.

#### **6.4 Contribution to methodology**

The contribution to methodology is by the fusion of approaches that allow for emergent properties of development opportunities to arise. The data collection is unique, drawing a wide range of contemporary research methodologies, used in combination for the first time. Owing to the methodology adopted, there was no prescribed or articulated hypotheses used nor were particular answers expected or prescribed. The research basis was therefore emergent, however, as starting point (and the evidence for this is highlighted in chapters one and two), previous work by a cross-section of academic researchers, from different but co-related disciplines, suggested that leadership development for middle managers was often poorly received (See pages 44). However, an initiating research question - *'Bearing in mind the notion that middle managers may not perceive themselves as leaders, how do they benefit from formal leadership development programmes? What are the key factors to include in a programme in order to maximise the opportunities for leadership development amongst managers who are in the middle of organisational hierarchy? – guided the research and the methodology followed suit. I worked out methods that were, as far as could be tested, the best way to find themes or answers that are emergent in terms of the design and function of overall programmes of learning as opposed to single or shorter leadership development interventions.*

Although there was some quantitative data collected as a result of the programme of evaluation, for example: the regular end of workshop reactionnaires or the scores from the mental toughness questionnaire, the marks from the mandatory assignments and from the post-programme evaluation designed using a questionnaire, this thesis utilises mainly qualitative data collected but includes quotations and figures from the 'reactionnaires' and the post qualification questionnaire. Instead, the majority of the findings are drawn from a rich of triangulation of narrative and independent observational notes. This combination shed light upon the efficacy of the learning experience, both by regarding the workshop and intra-workshop factors, linked to the development of leadership. The encouragement of individual regular self-assessment and self-reflection set in the context of the combination of micro and macro organisation was a key adjunct to the data collection.

Detailed thematic analysis using a triangulated theoretical format, revealed many interesting phenomena, which have been represented as themes; themes that appear to directly affect leadership development. Themes such as emotion, power and individuality could be classified as being more to do with the way in which people learn than specifically about leadership development. However leadership development overlaps at this point and consideration of emotion and power, as two examples, should allow for parallel learning and real experience of these topics as revealed through a groups exercises, not just as a taught subject. The design of workshops and the official, formal and informal, opportunities for learning the complexities of dispersed leadership were monitored, assessed and considered.

The understanding of the development of leadership has, previously, largely been researched by using quantitative methodologies. This factor has led to the over-development of written categories such as skills and behaviours, purportedly, the sorts of behaviours required by developing managers, in particular, to lead and influence organisational development and change. In reality, individuals obviously experience any development opportunities differently and researching to discover the most appropriate 'climate and temperature' of development can only really be undertaken using more humanistic approaches.

For this research programme the use of video diaries, paired line manager/delegate narrative, reportage and reactionnaire data provided a unusual clustering of methodologies. This clustering of techniques provides a research technique unparalleled in current literature and should give confidence to subsequent researchers to look for imaginative combinations for future progressive and consolidating programmes.

While the use of stories and narrative helps to understand the way in which people experience leadership development, the role of the researcher, and often the design of the collective methodology, gives a less than rounded picture of the experience. By utilising a more qualitative approach, and by harnessing an approach using a wide ranging triangulation, allows for a less restricted emergence of themes to arise. Principles of phenomenology infer that time is also experienced in a different way with the past, present and future eliding together, at any one time This phenomenon gives rise to momentary opportunities to reflect upon the material presented. Inevitably, each individual has a different reality. Life's pressures bring to bear both emotional and hierarchical interpretations of material (both 'factual' and abstract). Producing the informed responses from these was a new methodology building on Professor Steven Kempster's work on notable people and notable occurrences.

One of the methodologies used referred to Steven Kempster's original ideas about the influence of notable people and notable occurrences over the length of time of a person's career. Whilst this idea of notability provided the framework to the data collection, it had too broad a time focus, in its original form, to be of value for this research. Modification was possible. Kempster's method was tailored for use, using a narrower time scale, that of the length of the course. This was accomplished by inviting delegates, and in some cases their managers, to seek examples, predicated on becoming more aware of notable people and notable occurrences, both inside and outside of their work.

A further use of this technique was on a personal reflective level whereby the research and work undertaken, primarily during 2011, led to the observation that the development of ideas, depended on notable people and notable occurrences too. In the pursuit of creative and effective development ideas certain events stood out and their significance was reflected upon. The creation of stimulating thoughts, centralised around notable people and notable occurrences, relied very heavily upon a multi-factorial array of small, often seemingly inconsequential, events and individuals. These events often led to a greater understanding of the identified and emergent themes and the development of programme exercises and interventions designed to improve the impact and efficacy of the training and development.

Shrinking the timetable from a life-line, to a programme-line of a leadership development programme, provided an indication of the sorts of leadership activities that work. The sort of engaging, stimulating exercises that produce a futuristic realisation from the close examination of a material, prop or idea are key to design. The aim is to reflect on what happens, in order to consolidate learning and to entice learning 'across' a liminal space, with all its anxieties, to the other side of the space, in order to affect changes in the delegate's specific workplace. Transition of the topic is characterised by accelerated learning, improved change management and more positive links from the 'classroom' to the workplace. Building on this reflective practice, slowing down a manager's thought process and providing them with a more solid verbal link or hook to their essential understanding which gives rise to the hope of advancing their chances of positively engaging in change leadership.

## **6.5 Observations on the process.**

Learning and an understanding of the factors and insights gathered progressed as the research moved forward. This was partly because of the research design but also the overall use of action research which promoted an even more intense reflection on the work-in-action. This was not part of a frozen state but was continually emerging. Seemingly unrelated factors arose, such as the use of delegates being asked to observe groups, as part of their learning, constantly readjusting the researcher's understanding of the dynamics

of any group, on any day or any development period. Regularly different groups would respond differently to different days of facilitated learning. Indeed the same group would react differently in each exercise despite an overwhelmingly positive response to the previous exercise or topic. Individuals would show remarkable candour sitting next to individuals who were clearly much less open. The researcher experienced the live unfolding of the complexities of individual learning within the emotional matrix of group interactions. The groups tended to lead the learning and the observational matrix, set out as a framework for the research, substantially led to the emergent themes becoming apparent. An example of this would help to make this idea clearer to the reader. Part of the struggle to understand phenomenology led to a change in the understanding of time as a facet of human understanding and interpretation. The observations by Heidegger that humans experience time differently from scientific time, led to the idea of the co-existence of time as a function of thought, helping to re-established the value of reflective practice. Against this background a number of delegates complained that not enough time was being spent in the Welsh countryside, where the programme was based, on a residential basis. The team of facilitators devised a concept of a leadership walk. A leadership walk would be a guided reflective activity linked to a leadership idea or concept. The walks were organised for those delegates who wanted to be, or were able to arrive at the venue some two hours before the start. In one specific example of a walk of this genre, a leadership story from Stephen Covey was read out (in a similar way to the stakeholders' exercise which was also followed by a longer leadership walk later in the programme for one cohort) and a small team of delegates and facilitators, accompanied by a qualified mountain guide, undertook the walk with the reading (concerning reflection) to contemplate. No rules or parameters were attached to the concept and small groups of delegates paced their walk to suit the rhythm of their conversation. Some people occasionally walked apart from the main group. The walk, in this example, ended in an old mine shaft (a safe one) and a reflection period of five minutes was spent discussing various individual learning points. These ideas and any pre-planning design aspirations were not part of a pre-set plan. They were strongly emergent. They were arrived at through a consideration of emergent possibilities and a deliberate propensity for picking up cues and signals, both from groups and individuals, at what works and what doesn't. However, a whole range of ideas emerged from the close juxta-positioning of observation and movement. Group and individual ideas and the emergence of the most effective practice at the time, took hold as the leadership of the group moved around key focal areas of confidence, outspokenness and the idea of everybody having something to contribute. At the same time, the facilitators centred the growing self-awareness of the individual back to within the context in which they worked. This approach is markedly different to the pre-set, often pre-written programmes linked to formulaic qualifications. It is in this way that contributions

to practice, policy, knowledge and methodology emerged. The next sections in this concluding chapter articulate where these contributions can be found.

## **6.6 Wider reflections**

At the very beginning of this research I resolved to engage with the research topic on a very personal level, for it was my original ignorance about leadership, despite my extensive work-related links to accredited qualifications on that very topic, which led me to this long, four year period of study. It has been important therefore to not only provide research that is robust and relevant but to also allow through some, at times, very personal reflections and enthusiasms. This preparedness to illuminate a very personal side to the research provides a framework to a transparency that feels important in the context of personal development in establishing my approach. In setting out a very personal journey I hope to have been able to counter the positivists' view that qualitative approaches to research leads to a troublesome lack of generalisation and an inability to gain access to the establishment of truths.

I have learnt heavily upon three or four writers who have consistently impressed me by their different, but complementary, approaches (Professors Grint, Ladkin, Kempster and Pedler.– See references). As a main part of my research methodology I have utilised Steve Kempster's 'notable people and notable occurrences' technique (with, it is true, some adaptation to suit my smaller time frame). However despite basing my work of some particularly (potentially perhaps) deep theoretical ideas - such as phenomenology - I believe I have succeeded in writing a relatively straightforward script which is easy to follow with a minimum of confusing or misleading jargon.

It was recognised from the beginning of the research that despite the fact that all the delegates were from the same company and employed at the same level in management hierarchy, many significant differences already existed between them. The company involved had been, essentially, 'bolted together' following a policy of acquisition in the previous few years. Therefore these managers often had a different and thoroughly unique company background and perspective. In addition, the delegates' managerial roles and responsibilities were often markedly different and they were engaged over a wide variety of managerial activities, often in specialist fields of expertise. For example, some delegates ran small isolated teams of training and qualification assessors, whilst others were more familiar with, and felt more confident with, budgeting and recruitment. Due to the aforementioned mergers and acquisitions some delegates were familiar with the auto-trade and others were confident in education and teaching. Furthermore, from an individual perspective, these people were from a wide age range, markedly different managerial pasts and commitments with a huge variety of predispositions, interests, personality types and inclinations. This, of

course, is the reality of leadership. The raw material, the original, raw and unique 'human material' for leadership, has ultimate variety, shape, expression and form.

### **6.7 Personal reflections**

I was already involved in leadership development when drafting the first few thousand words of the initial application to study leadership development in 2008. From this involvement came the kernel of an idea. My working life had already been deeply involved in the development of core skills in various ways. My depth of knowledge four years ago was relatively poor and I felt that my practice, within leadership development interventions, therefore suffered because of this, particularly in front of groups as I undertook a role that I saw as a 'facilitator of learning' rather than a trainer. The pursuit of understanding led to a number of mutually supportive elements. Reading from academic journals which widened my sources of information and, almost immediately, I started to challenge my own (and others') pre-conceived ideas and began to introduce new theories and ideas to the practical work of workshop design and development. Attending, and then presenting papers at, national conferences (Turner 2011a; Turner 2011b; Turner and Callaghan 2011; Turner and Heneberry 2011; Turner, Heneberry and Gould 2011) provided a platform for further discussion and fine-tuning of my ideas. My ability to discover other relevant authors and to be able to following the most relevant themes proved an excellent way of testing out ideas, expanding research questions and from this hesitant beginning I began to metamorphose better responses.

### **6.8 Limitations, boundaries and unexplored questions**

The exploration of leadership development was undertaken using a number pre-research programmes and was itself not a testing of hypotheses, but an observation of relevant phenomena rising from practice, in order to engage with the principles of leadership development. Therefore no generalisations are possible or even desirable from the specific programme that I worked alongside. No truths are searched for here. Therefore it is quite likely that similar researchers shadowing similar programmes would observe different phenomena. This is not to decry the findings or inhibit their use in the future but to advise caution about direct replication.

A rather artificial boundary was drawn around the idea of middle management. Despite efforts to secure a sound and consistent definition, the idea of a middle management position which neatly covering a day-to-day existence is flawed. By using a phenomenological approach, much of the data more conventionally used to discover the essence or answers to the questions of the research, have been collected but not used.

Scores involved in the use of the psychometric test, Mental Toughness, have not been utilised at all, for the reasons stated in Chapter two. Personal scores could have been charted and the ability to score a distance-travelled report (as a function of the test itself which allows a delegate to 're-take' the test in order to discern any favourable increase in the numeric scores) could have been undertaken and revealed interesting numerical data. Similarly the boundary between levels three and four and six and seven, as adjudged by accrediting bodies such as The Institute of Leadership and Management and endorsed by the Management and Leadership standards and also registered on the National Qualification framework, remain highly unclear. This is because there are no generic standards that can apply across the reality of small to medium sized businesses across to large corporate and private and public organisations. Much of leadership can be traced to the self-awareness of individuals based on the context in which they work. Leadership within small businesses can be the province of one person, whereas leadership as a defined middle manager constitutes huge responsibilities whereas another middle manager, within public service, may have a very restricted role restricted by bureaucracy and hierarchy. Although numerical data does exist, such as the post course evaluation which required delegates to score their experience of the programme overall, this only gave a vague idea of the enjoyment of the experience overall (such as intangibles along the lines of inter-workshop support and quality of the hand-outs as two random examples of course elements that could be graded). However this did not give any hint of impact of the programme on the individuals, particularly on the increase of their ability to display leadership in themselves in the context in which they work.

## **6.9 Unexplored possibilities**

Given more time and resources, a more far-reaching research programme could have been undertaken. A more in-depth look at the individual in the group setting, for example, would have broadened the scope of the research and put individual development opportunities, in the context of group learning, further in the spot-light.

Restrictions on time were key. For example, the opportunities for interviews between the delegates and their line-managers were heavily restricted by time and opportunity, as many of the delegates lived and worked outside of Wales/Cymru. The confines of travel between places in England and the lack of availability of delegates and their line managers and non-existent secretarial and administrative support, meant that post-programme follow-up was very restricted. Further emphasis on the relationship between leadership development and line manager responsibilities, is an area of interest and could have been explored by using both a phenomenological approach coupled by the adaptive technique of notable people and notable occurrences. This approach would have revealed more and, perhaps, might have

shed light on the influential relationship between the manager and those managed. Leadership development can occur in the fulcrum of relationships and there is evidence, outlined in chapter two, of the importance of exploring this possibility.

The notion of notable people and notable occurrences is not necessarily restricted to the delegates, because the course facilitators and designers too can occupy the sort of 'arena', whereby their own leadership ideas can be further potentiated by both people and 'things' happening during the life of the programme. For this research many small, yet significant, 'notables' took place throughout the design, delivery and development of the programme as a whole. Two such phenomena stand out.

The first involved the design of several exercises that led to the acknowledgment of the importance of shape to the way in which groups worked and on how energy seemed to be created by the shape and place of the exercise. As the research programme developed, more and more experimentation occurred in the way in which groups interacted, such as using a raised rectangular dias for an introductory exercise based on a dinner party concept of mingling with strangers; straight lines of pairs in close proximity to each other for work on 'purpose' and triads of delegates taking it in turns to observe and feed back what they saw. Secondly, one of the most notable people in the programme, a fellow facilitator, used his knowledge of the geographical area in which we were working, to experiment with reflective practice and his inspired link between the notion of quiet reflection and an abandoned (but safe) silica mine shaft led to an acknowledgment that space and place are important factors in the development of leadership capability and awareness.

## **6.10 Conclusions**

Leadership is ill-defined and even the definition I use in this thesis is flawed. Descriptions of leadership or any other definition of an abstract idea requires an 'other' to help balance the meaning. If the opposite of leadership is management then, through words, management conjurs up routine and bureaucracy and the opposite are non-routine and a lack of hierarchy, perhaps. The distillation of leadership, particularly that which filters down, percolates to lower managerial levels is to do with a conscious and unconscious awakening, a link to possibility of relative autonomy, self-confidence breeding curiosity, innovation and a raft of human collaborative skills and ideas.

In order for the results of this research to be more widely disseminated, I feel a responsibility to present the findings to further conferences and to provide research papers for publication and discussion. In my own work, I currently have ample opportunity to experiment with ideas and concepts (See Epilogue) and to help others to further develop their own leadership skills



and ideas by coaching and mentoring. It would be hoped that researchers following on from me and the ideas and concepts I have unearthed, will pick up a strand of these findings and embark on a similar journey of personal growth and discovery.

The evidence and ideas accumulated through the research and subsequent writing-up have suggested that the relatively modern trend of developing leadership in middle managers is justified by the huge shift in power and authority within most large and complex organisations. Moreover, even the small organisations can be considered complex. Individuals and organisations require support to deal with the complexities of society and organisational managerial life. Keith Grint's extrapolated ideas point to a different set of problems, those unknown to human society, which can no longer be tackled by strict adherence to hierarchical structures and slow bureaucracies. Steve Kempster's research suggests that the key to leadership development lies in the understanding about, and a re-consideration of, notable people and notable occurrences that reside in the trajectory of individual managers of all levels. Therefore managers required to build leadership skills need curiosity not knowledge, confidence, not case histories, constant reflective practice not, necessarily, accredited programmes and qualifications. Detailed examination of courses run by providers, even those in Universities, or by accredited leadership and management qualification providers, suggests that many programmes are less effective at providing a 'training' that leads to any significant change in the performance of that person or persons in the work place. In addition to that, many courses are made available often in isolation to the rest of the organisation's learning and development strategies, which can lead to frustration and a lack of percolation of that learning through the teams and collaborations that middle managers may have. The findings of this research, whilst not being in any way 'generalizable' across all circumstances and industries, strongly suggest that improvements can be made in the efficacy and impact of leadership development in general.

The design of the leadership experience is crucial to its effectiveness. From a phenomenological perspective, consideration of the way in which people experience time becomes one of the keys. Facilitation of an awareness of this allows those delegates to re-position their own experiences in a way that positively lends itself to changes in both thought patterns and work-related behaviours. Human beings are not able to concentrate adequately on new topics for long periods of time. Research suggests that reflection, not more content, is a way in which individuals can process and make sense of knowledge. The way therefore to use knowledge or ideas to influence behaviour is not to give more and apply a policy of saturating delegates with models and concepts. Selected use of key ideas, a way in which access to knowledge can be signposted, coupled with a frequent and consistent support mechanism such as coaching, mentoring or peer support, raises the confidence of delegates

in idea creation and collaboration. Opening an awareness of Action Learning further contributes to the idea of supported learning and reflection. Instead of relying on a curriculum that is overloaded by ideas and the concepts of regurgitating knowledge, more emphasis needs to be applied to the design of the learning experience.

So, what next?

The themes of this research, therefore, give a clue and some starting points for the re-design of the delivery of leadership development. In keeping with the detailed research of Steven Zaccaro, experiential variety is one of the keys to this proposed new approach. This research suggests that Zaccaro's experiential variety can be found in many ways. Firstly, by an acknowledgment that each individual will process any new information and ideas in a different manner and come to a moving conclusion to that idea or concept, irrespective of the views of the facilitator or the cogency of the idea or model presented. Secondly, shifts in understanding come through reflection and therefore reflective practice is something that can be taught as a core skill and attribute. Thirdly, that the environment of that learning, either in the wider concept of outdoor space, or the shape in which that learning takes place (such as works in triads, pairs, lines or circles) is a vital and enjoyable component of learning and development. Fourthly, peer support and the use of the role of the observer creates a more self-sustaining leadership development tool that can be cascaded through that person's subsequent work behaviour, into shifts in performance and behaviour. Building on the work of others this research has outlined some innovative approaches to leadership development in the broad band of jobs that can be categorised as middle management. A loose scaffolding of ideas has been created that remains flexible enough to allow for many organisational constraints, but which can offer a huge stimulus to course designers to radically adjust their interpretation of any curriculum pressures. This approach, and set of ideas, can deliver marked improvements in the impact of leadership development programmes and can raise the confidence of those participants to take on and embrace on-coming challenges and problems.

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## The Epilogue

### October 2012

Several months after the course and the set of cohorts had finished their Institute of Leadership and Management assessments there was an opportunity to deliver a workshop at the British Academy of management annual conference which was held in Cardiff in September 2012. An academic paper was produced in July 2012 to cover the theory behind the workshop idea and the paper and workshop idea was accepted. The workshop was designed to give practical examples of ways in which leadership development could be delivered in a more engaging and productive manner. The workshop design had allowed for a maximum of 30 people to be work together in trying to explore the general question of: 'What more can we learn about leadership?'

The initial twenty minutes of the part of the workshop was undertaken by reading a collection of academic and non-academic books which gave a background to our ideas in order to stimulate an individual's perception of how leadership development might be accomplished.

Following the reading all the academic and non-academic texts the group of 28 people was divided into four equal groups of people. This division was undertaken randomly and the delegates at this workshop were invited to sit around a table on which they would find the following varied resources. One table had a collection of old postcards on the table top; a list of six poems and the poems themselves on laminated sheets were placed on table two. Table three had a collection of porcelain tugboats and models of fish whilst table four had laminated examples of abstract art. The delegates on each table were given an equal amount of time of ten minutes to discuss amongst themselves that answer to the question of '*what more do we need to know about leadership*' within their groups using the stimulus of

the artefacts and abstract materials, that have been prepared before this gave rise to a lively animated table grouping and loud sets of conversations around the articulation of the question. It was noticed that one table, the table with the laminated poems, the delegates were rather quieter and less animated in their deliberations of the question when using the resources we noted that several of the delegates leaning back from the table. It was also apparent that the non-English speakers were struggling a bit with the nuances of poetry. Therefore we started to come ponder on the clarity of our instructions and the individual's subsequent understanding of the task and the role of the resources we put for them. The poems now appeared less useful in trying to answer the question. In the middle of these four tables was a wide empty space enough for the 28 people to mingle. We encouraged people to walk across to the open-space and engage in conversation with a person from another table. It was emphasised that the conversation was an extension of the table top discussion. The pairs of delegates, each from a different table were left in conversation for another 10 min in order to maintain the dialogue. There was no intervention from the facilitators at this stage other than to mark the time and call when half the time had been had elapsed. This meant that there was not a scripted conversation but a whole series of dialogues and narratives which were allowed to grow organically as a normal conversation would. There were mingling of various people from various tables and generally exchange of views co-articulation of people's point of view based from the stimulus of the abstract article but not necessarily the content of the abstract article.

After 10 minutes conferences delegates were invited to sit around a table and each of the delegates were handed a small finger puppets which illustrated Queen Anne, Gandhi and a selection of many other historical figures, real and fictitious.

The workshop details were noted by the chairperson and the responses of the delegates were recorded on paper. The notes encompassed both the basic facts and contributions. Many different reactions were noticed as the individual contribution, aided by the finger puppets, 'traced' across the room in random fashion. Here is a list of the contributions 'via' the finger puppets, as noted by the session Chairperson:

- Importance applying the theory not just talking about it
- The importance of authenticity in leadership
- Persistence as key factor
- Ldsp is a confusing mix of theories
- Ldsp is an automatic thing, you don't plan for it
- Ldsp is a collective achievement, not down to an individual
- The individual is significant in any situation
- We are conditioned into "normal" ldsp patterns
- People need inspiration

- Ldsp is about guidance
- Ldsp is not about personalities
- The more “we” the better, the less “I” the better
- Mutual influence between leaders and followers
- Ldsp is about “sharing” with all stakeholders involved
- Ldsp : is it in the eye of the beholder ?
- Gender is an issue in Ldsp
- Ldsp should not be feared, but understood
- What can we substitute for Ldsp ?
- There are many different Ldsp situations.

Firstly it was clear that a table with the poetry found this process somewhat more difficult as there was much less interaction between the members of the of the group and there was also a lot of puzzled expressions and concern worried about the task. Members of that table looked over somewhat enviously at the other tables who were engaged in fairly animated conversation. At this disquiet was expressed more concretely when the circle that was formed and one member of the poetry group went across to the boat section, selected a porcelain tugboat and placed it in the centre of floor in front of everybody. This action was undertaken silently and without any reference to the group task at hand.

Setting a less formal atmosphere to the formality of a workshop reminded me of the playfulness of humans and how the creation of a relaxed atmosphere allowed for and encouraged the group to be a little more playful (Kark 2011.)

Our original starting point was the work of Schein (2004) and his definition of artefacts in organisations, where artefacts can include any tangible, overt or verbally identifiable elements in an organization. Architecture, furniture, dress code, office jokes, all exemplifies organizational artefacts. Artefacts then are the visible elements in a culture and they can be recognized by people not part of the culture. (Schein 2004)

We felt that using organisational artefacts in a development setting was already too charged with meaning that stemmed from organisational life (Engstrom and Blackler 2006), with the result that organisational artefacts might then be limited in their use to provoke or promote reflection.

Second, we were influenced by Michael Reynolds’ (1999) ideas of critical reflection in management education that suggested to us the need to craft programmes that had radical content and radical process. These ideas stimulated us to find different and alternative materials as a means to generate critical reflection. Nord and Jermier (1992) propose that *‘literature should be introduced outside of mainstream management thinking, more use of*

*novels, short stories to illuminate socio-economic conditions and processes*' (1992, pp 202 – 222)). We purposefully set about to source such material as a means to engage and invite workshop participants to make sense of their reflections in a dynamic and interactive way.

Third, we were stimulated by Donna Ladkin's idea (2010) of visualising leadership and followership as a cube, and we tested that idea by working with groups using a Rubik's cube. We observed that the cubes elicited a tactile response and proved useful for feeding back ideas and allowing delegates to position and describe abstract concepts. Sara Ilstedt Hjelm (2004), in her recent paper, talks about when *'something important happens when an idea is transformed to a concrete artefact that can be experienced ...Some issues need a material embodiment to be raised and discussed.'* We therefore expanded the idea of the cube by using a 'net' of a dodecahedron to provide more glimpses into the way in which artefacts helped to explain and materialise abstract concepts.

For instance, in March 2011 we used the dodecahedrons to facilitate a debate on leadership and followership with a group of senior finance managers. Working in pairs the group were instructed to 'put the pairing of leadership and followership on any surface that makes sense to you, then populate the other surfaces with notions relating to leadership/followership'. 'The phenomenological idea of 'sides' points out that all of those co-intended sides of leadership are vital to its occurrence, they are the always present other 'sides' of the leadership 'cube' Ladkin 2010 p. 22

As the delegates created (with glue and scissors) the dodecahedron shape we noticed how animated and engaged each seemed to become and how they began to express their ideas by holding the shape in their hand, sometimes peering over or around it to view other sides and sometimes passing it from one to another.

Our fourth stimulus was a growing critical leadership literature that recognises leadership as a social and relational phenomenon that cannot be divorced from its social context (Ford et al., 2008; Kempster, 2009; Stead and Elliott, 2009). Such understandings draw attention to values and beliefs that shape power relations in everyday leadership activities and practices. We began to use political cartoons, non-abstract postcards and wildlife magazines as a way to bring power to the fore. This fitted neatly with the work of Stephen Zaccaro (2011) in that it created a sense of experimental variety. For instance, we have noted that the political cartoons were already loaded with cultural and societal meaning and bias so we thought they might provide a point of departure for participants to discuss their meaning in relation to their own experience. The poetry verses in the cartoons however appeared to constrain and inhibit the delegates rather than instigating curiosity, energy and learning, so encouraging us

to reflect on: ...'what social and educational values are reflected in the structures, procedures, roles and relationships within the programme and the methods it incorporates?' (Reynolds, 1999 p.544)

These stimuli and influences from the literature then led us to explore the use of a range of different artefacts and, as observed, some of these seemed to be more helpful than others. As a consequence of these various explorations we have moved towards more 'neutral' artefacts such as models of fish, tug-boats and abstract pictures; these seem to engage the delegates and set up an inquiry into the question or topic being examined. A further artefact that we employ is finger puppets that are used to represent different ideas, for example a particular ideology (for instance a finger puppet of Marx) or a particular idea or genre.

The puppets came from a chance meeting with a colleague who had been given a finger puppet as a company Christmas present. Made in America by the Unemployment Philosophers Guild and representing over a 100 historical figures from around the world. However, although representing famous leadership figures such as Gandhi and Winston Churchill they also include puppets of mythical figures and representation from the world of art. Characters such as Pavlov's dog, The Scream, figures from Alice in Wonderland and Ganesh. These brightly decorated figures fit neatly on to most people's index figure and they also come with an explanation of who, in the form of a quote and some biographical details, or what they are. The puppets provide a 'third' party in the development of clearly articulated narrative and the development of ideas and actions. These props seem to set the delegates free from inhibition, they can use them as a vehicle through which to voice what might be sensitive or difficult ideas, and we have found leads to richer conversation and deeper reflection. Often, if the artefacts are left on the table, delegates will return to them and use them to illustrate other points and perspectives without the intervention of the facilitation team.

I have used these (and other artefacts) in leadership development programmes with:

Cable and Wireless engineers, TUC Cymru and allied Unions, Arriva/Cross country trains, Powys County Council, University of Glamorgan, Babcock International and a number of smaller development workshops in Wales/Cymru and England.

As a result of this activity and the attendance of several academics in the Cardiff workshop I am now a co-author of a development paper awaiting acceptance to present at a management learning conference in March 2013. In this developmental paper we focus on the role of mediating artefacts in management learning. We seek to explore the notion put forward by Paavola et al. (2004) of 'trialogic' learning – a focus on collaborative knowledge



creation. We examine this idea through the vehicle of a developmental workshop that focuses on the use of mediating artefacts in a structured learning context.

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**Post-Script 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

The research and development for this thesis has taken nearly 6 years in the making and has represented a huge part of my independent working life. I set out to see if I could improve my practice as a facilitator of groups and chose the topic of Leadership Development that I was originally drawn to, between 2004 and 2006, when working with The Institute of Leadership and Development.

The results of this study have been really personally vital in many ways. Firstly, I have mastered the idea of in-depth study and proved, to myself, that such things are possible. Secondly I have learnt so much about a topic that I already assumed I knew a lot about! Thirdly I have laid to rest some ghosts about my own abilities to work, in a sustained way, at this academic level. Finally I have unearthed a number of fascinating factors encircling the field of leadership development and along the way found excitement, friendship and wonderment. As an Action Learning Researcher I have little chance of returned to the days of uninformed practice. I hope too that others have already, and will continue to in the future, learn as a result of my past work and my planned future publications and research.

I commit this way of studying, and being in the world, to everyone.

## **Appendix one - Interview with SC – 8<sup>TH</sup> October 2010**

Really there are four areas I want to talk to you about and these questions are just a guide I guess so that the programme itself, the first question, How successful do you think it's been in achieving it's goals, really that's the first one and we'll meander our way through this and try and cover them all by say 9:30, Is that ok?

### **The Programme**

AT – Do you think it's been successful? How successful do you think it's been?

SC – You would have to know what my goals were first really I suppose. I have enjoyed the course very much. Then I am the type of person who, when I decide to do something will try to get the best out of it and I feel that I have a responsibility to take something with me really so I have enjoyed it in the main. There are lots of things that are frustrating about the programme, I will say, but I have enjoyed it. I had done a leadership programme with the senior management team here because the chief executive Joe, wanted to take all the top tier through a leadership programme together, so that was 17 of us went to a leadership programme together, and it changed, they kept re writing it as they went through and initially the first couple of sessions were about leadership models and leadership and then is kind of concentrated on BCBC a bit more and how we were coming together as a team as opposed to putting a lot of the I suppose it was linking the theory to practice but it became a bit more of a practice of how we were operating I suppose, so that was a brilliant foundation I think for me to go into this and I think it was helpful to have that, some of that theoretical stuff around leadership to go into this. In terms of what I wanted, I suppose, I mean I wanted to have something with, because of, I wanted leadership qualification which I could say I had done some leadership, because I recognise that that was important for me and where I am in the organisation and in terms of the future directions and because of the fast moving pace of the change

of public sector services and the integration of health, I thought it would hold me in good stead as well to concentrate on something in relation to collaboration, thought that was really important for the job I do and in terms of my own personal development and future. Little bit disappointed that therefore there were not any health people there because I thought that would have been a good thing, but you know there is a mixture of people. So I think I have benefitted enormously from the focus on leadership and collaboration. Leadership was my favourite module I suppose, because I could practically see and apply that very easily. The collaboration? Yes the same. Governance isn't so interesting but were hugely helpful It's not so scintillating is it?

AT – Yes yes yes! What about there was the innovation as well?

SC – no I yes that was ok, yes probably a little bit thinner than the other modules.

AT - Thinner?

SC – Thinner, what does that mean.

AT- I think I know what you mean

SC – It wasn't as meaty and there wasn't as much depth I don't think in the innovation bit

AT – Do you think there could have been?

SC – Well it's a funny thing I think the course was very disorganised. Perhaps I should say I think the course could be more organised, and I think there are some things that they string out which could be condensed and I think there are other things that they could perhaps do in a bit more depth. I don't know if I can remember all of the things, some of it being a bit repetitive I suppose, so we probably could have covered a few more things in there. I have enjoyed the variety of speakers coming in, I have enjoyed that and I am by nature a kind of reflective person which is why I'm a social worker I suppose but being a female catholic social worker it's the worst I guess but I am, god help my team, I am quite naturally reflective and so I will you know take things back and think about them. I don't naturally hunger to go to the academic books and read and in my busy life that's the one thing I probably wouldn't do, but the fact that the course has made me do some of that it has been a really good thing and I have enjoyed you know looking at it and I have enjoyed the discovery of oh wow I'm actually doing something that is kind of recognised as a technique, as opposed to I may have made it up, or didn't realise that it was and that bit about I need to do more of this and less of that and let me try this element in what I do and there have been some things that have really stuck with me so yeah I do think that in terms of my own practise I can see the impact it's having on me.

AT – OK, you've got the remaining time left so you've got the dreaded 8,000 word assignment

SC – Yeah I did have a moment last week thinking why the hell have I signed up for this and two Sunday's ago I got up early and decided I had to start putting something on paper and I planned it so I decided because I'm a bit of a hurry up driver, I'll go straight in and I thought no, Clive you know planned this, so I did, I planned everything I was going to do, then I really added a couple of hours and so it was going to be really easy then all I had to do was fill the gaps. And then the following Friday when it was my next opportunity to look at it I lost it Arthur, all of it.

AT - On the computer?

SC – Yes! and I rang IT and was almost in tears, but they couldn't find it.

AT – Oh no

SC – So this Sunday I had to do it all again but it wasn't quite as good as the first plan, anyway I'm off the starting block

AT – OK, that's good, you got some support while you are doing that do you? Or is that

SC – In what way now?

AT – Sort of for tutorial support or cause you had this, have you done your what I thought was quite a weirdly named presentation "Accelerator" was it?

SC – Yes it was weird, I was the first one up

AT – You were the first to accelerate?

SC – Yes, and by the time the last person accelerated, I realise I could have done hell of a lot better. We were told you had four minutes, no three minutes I think we had to do it and I can't remember his name now, Alex was going three two one, or was it four minutes, so I just got through it in three minutes, then no-body else looked at him, so everybody else was.....(I listen to this bit three times and couldn't get it sorry) and that's why it's disorganised because

AT – Because the rules change per person

SC – It just drifts, you know, but that wasn't a problem, I can't see how they can judge on a three or four minute elevation, but there is in September, we've got to go and do a proper presentation I think.

AT – Elevation, would you call it that, I call it acceleration, I think I got the word wrong

SC – Elevation, but it was literally stand up and talk for three minutes about what you're going to do, but in September, the project is due the end of September and we've all got a date at the beginning of September and I'm not quite actually sure yet what, but I think it will be a presentation and ask t on what we're doing and the panel will ask them questions so that's a better element. So this elevator business of three or four minutes.

AT – And I think you've got more marks for that

SC – Yes I think so, and I probably have to catch up now and do a better project and I don't know being the first one up

AT – Three minutes is probably

SC – Well I was told three minutes and you know what it's like when the first person gets up, and listen to the rules and so yes Brian Morgan is my Tutor and he's alright. He's ok, the first essay I think he sent me two words back in terms of advice. The second essay he probably sent me four five words and the last essay he was brilliant, I have to say he gave me loads of advice.

AT – Ah ok. So you feel academically you feel you're into the swing of this project

SC – I think my third essay I haven't had the mark yet, it's probably better, I've been very, I've been absolutely delighted with my mark, I got to say you know I mean, when I think about everything that we do, I've been well pleased, but nobody shares their marks Arthur. They just come via email and you never actually say to everyone what did you get? so I haven't got a clue whether it's a good mark or how it's fares with everyone else. Personally, I'm absolutely delighted with my mark

AT – Yes usually if they are academically they're in the fifty's or sixty's their really good.

SC - OK

AT – In the fifty's is OK

SC – Well I'm very happy I had sixty two and sixty

AT – Yes that sounds good

SC – and I think this one is probably a little bit better so yes I'm hoping to see Brian before the presentation, I might have to chase him on that, but he's been ok I can't complain really

AT – Yep he's him, unique and original

### **Impact on You**

AT – So the impact on you, there are four little points and I don't know if you are able to talk about them, sort of the impact on you, sorry I'm just checking that I'm following the same script. Competence gained, personal gain, professional gain and working with others. I mean is there a way in which, you able to sort of pick on each of those bullet points and say briefly because....

SC – Yes competence yes I think so

AT – Any example?

SC – Well everyday there is an example I think in terms of what I do. I lead, I mean I, it's a big job, I have a big job and I lead, the senior management team of adult social care, we've got, huge re modelling programmes going on which is massive. I've been realigning the team in terms of some of the remodelling we have to do we're integrating with health, which is massive. So I now find myself with two, a member of the senior management team here and a member of the locality health board being the only social care person in that team of health managers and you know needing to make sure I have some credibility. So would it have happened if I hadn't been on the course, yes it would happen, but I might have probably more mindful of perhaps some of my behaviours I guess.

AT – Ok, ok I think from Martins point of view the programme should be enacting itself in the work place, so that the balance between theory and the practice.

SC – For me I would say that that is a key aspect of the programme now if it wasn't I wouldn't progress, I don't think I would be the right style for that because I, for me the theory and the practice has to come together, that's what I would learn in that kind of environment.

AT – but that is a nice phrase, mindful of behaviours.

SC – Well only yesterday interestingly enough, I had one of the team in here, and I had to have some difficult conversations about I wasn't sure if she was performing in the way we needed her to perform for this particular post and I was very much, my approach and I was actually I was probably a little bit different than I would have been before in how I dealt with that, I think and so, the thing that stuck with me so much, is some of the leadership styles and how you have to work through some of those depending on where you are at any point in time and the kind of responses that you need really and some of the little phrases in managing, what was one of them it was about managing changing chaos, you know something like that and then there is about the sense of urgency all Cotters steps. I've really, that has helped me enormously in managing a massive change programme here, being able to work through the steps. I'm also very much aware of how I can see the chief executive in some of those leadership models and that has been very interesting, as I've been kind of focusing on that, so yes I would definitely say I've a much greater understanding. I want to get this qualification because I think I hope it will be credible, I hope it will give me some credibility as well and that's important to me, so yes definitely, and one thing I love about my job is that I learn something new every week, any way, you know it's not a boring job and it's never the same although you take everything with you, and almost every day there is something new and every week there is something new to learn and you know the pace is so fast at the moment that sometimes you just think it's overwhelming by how fast it is and you feel that you're not being able to give always enough attention to detail, so being on the course and you have to carve the time to go, but I'm always so glad that I have gone, because it just gives you time out from here with other people you don't necessarily know, completely different environment and it gives you all of that time out to just not be here, I don't want to talk about the job all the time, I'm really interested in what's going on and it's just really really good to have been able to do that and I think it's helped me when I come back in.

AT – yes yes that's it, I mean you're obviously it's coming over that you're very enthusiastic about that

SC – Yes I am quite a positive person, you know you meet some people and the first thing they want to do is talk about the negative stuff, I'm actually not like that and some of that irritates me a bit because there have been a lot of moans and groans on the course.

AT – With the subject matter of with the disorganisation bit?

SC – A bit of both really and I can go there too a bit, to a certain extent, but I get a little bit irritated by that after a while, because I just think well you've signed up for this, you're here now, tough. Which might not be helpful I know really but it's not easy when you got a team of senior managers it can be very challenging. So there has been a little bit of tension at times, that's ok but I can't be bothered Arthur, I got so much on here, I can't be bothered and David Hain is such a lovely person by the way, I think he is.

AT – Yes he's got a very calm persona hasn't he? And that helps quite a lot.

SC – yes I do think though in terms of public sector money and public sector spending and coming back here to the reality to cut 16% of your budget over the next three years and that's five million

pounds and for the first time ever in social care and we're looking at making people redundant for the first time ever in councils, and then you think where there is waste in this programme, we're in hotels all the time, I mean why aren't we in UWIC?, I don't know!

AT – Why aren't we in UWIC

SC - Why aren't we in a building that's already paid for, why are we in hotels and there is so many of the lecturers and the speakers floating in and out, I'm sure the speakers aren't being paid but, you've got a whole range of people, lecturers fellows or whatever you've got commissioned in, you know you count them all up and someone just comes and sits for half an hour, and goes, and you just think oh god I don't think that is an efficient use of money to be honest and there lecturing on the efficient use of resources, so I actually think that. I have a lot of friends who aren't working in the public sector and I remember one when I was saying about this course that I was on saying you know, you're going to a hotel! And I know you do deals and everything with hotels and I have minded going to North Wales twice and I know that North Wales mind coming to South Wales but when we were on the course there was going to be, it wasn't going to be like that, so that's another day out for me because you have to travel up and travel down. So then I would much rather do 10 till 6 o'clock at night or something and have it really full.

AT – You know it's an interesting balance, because the educationalist might say that people don't learn very well when we do that, you know, you need to create a space with

SC – Yes I suppose but you know, I'm used to working 55 hours a week, and I'm sure everybody out there is, when you're having to leave at 3 o'clock on a Tuesday and you don't get back until half past 8 on a Thursday to do this, you want to make sure its

AT – It's compact

SC. – yes but I've also contradicting myself because as I said just now it's really quite nice to have the space. So um I don't know whether the course has made me happier

AT – yes an odd..... but you certainly said that you were reading more for example.

SC – Oh yes but I have to be pushed to read I mean not pushed to read but pushed to read academic stuff, it isn't something that I would naturally read, not when I got WAG papers and all the other cabinet reports etc you have to take the time out to read that. I have enjoyed it and I have bought a few books, actually.

AT – Good yes great. What about working with others, you've obviously done that. The next question was all about professional gain but you've already articulated an idea that it's

SC – Yes I actually think that it is one of my strengths I think is working with others. I don't know if I've working with others differently. I don't know, have I gained, I suppose I have gained from this because I'm, what did I say I'm more mindful of my style and I spend a lot of time reflecting on that and I've spent a lot of time always reflecting on that actually.

AT – But before the course

SC – I think so but I suspect that the course has focused me more on things and I like to think that you know, my personal relationships and how I work with people through that, that is fairly well established but that doesn't mean to say that I always get it right.

AT – OK we're doing ok time wise. So the impact on your work, you've hinted at the thing about mindful of your own behaviour, and you're mindful of behaviours. Is there anything else that you think has made some, the course has helped to make an impact, I know you're building artificial bridges in there.

SC – I think it has because I think the bit about taking people with you on this changed journey and how people, we all find nature can be anxious about it, can react differently to it and I think I have been able to concentrate more appropriately on how I do that, because I understand the theory behind it so muddling through, that's another expression I have equated with really, you know, by leadership by muddling through I suppose. Though I think in terms of any change that any programme that I've been involved with in relations to change I will have muddled through, you know had a pretty intuitive, I think this needs to happen, I think we need to do it this way, but that would have be intuitive. Now I feel more confident because I can understand all the better understand all the rationale behind it really, in terms of the steps that you need to take I suppose.

### **Impact on your work**

AT – Do you actually go back to some of the theory, look at it and say....

SC – Yes

AT – OK

SC – Yes well very much so and when I've been writing the essay's then I have been able to apply some practice to that and that has reminded me then and I think it's helping me in terms of planning the next steps that we have to take.

AT – ok, ok

SC – and one thing I am very conscious of is I kind of talk more about innovation as opposed to change, because I actually think it's far more of a positive word about well lets, you know, do something innovative rather than well we've got to change this kind of thing. It's really funny because I was in scrutiny this week and one of the members was being a bit arsy really and he said "What's this" he was reading the business plan, "oh I see this word innovation and it's down here all the time, oh well it's great because you can innovate here and well what does it mean."

AT – ok he went off on one

SC – He went off on one a little bit really and I just thought well that's interesting really because maybe I need to keep that in check, but you know, I did say to him well it is about innovation isn't it because, I was able to respond and say because you know we want to do something different, that's going to be sustainable in the long term and that's got to be a bit of it, we can change something every day.

AT – Do you feel that you're able to reflect that to the team you're working with that calibre....



SC – I've talked a lot with my immediate team, my immediate direct reports, I've actually shared with them things that I've learned on the course. With the wider team I would like to think that, I mean whilst I don't talk about the course to them, the way I present things to them, I think I have gained from the course. The gap for me is that I don't talk to my line manager about it really.

AT – Do you want to say a bit more about that.

SC – Um

AT – I should have said at the beginning obviously this is confidential, this recording and as you know.

SC- Um we don't have those type of conversations I suppose really, one of the things that came out of the 360 degree appraisal and the facet five was about, you know, the type of, one of the things that comes out is what you want your manager to be and Abbie doesn't, I mean we don't have a lot of time, I suppose, Abbie is very fast and furious, she gets bored very quickly. We have a perfectly good working relationship, but social workers are a bit touchy feely, Abbie's not got a social work background, not really touchy feely, and I just haven't done it yet. I kind of set myself a task coming out of the facet five that I would make an effort to do that, but it just hasn't happened. In fairness to Abbie, she did come, the last session we had your sponsors came and not very many sponsors came and Abbie did come to that in fairness and she did say to me that she didn't realise everything that I was doing and we said oh well, you know, we need to focus on this, but we don't. Is it a problem for me? Sometimes it could be but not necessarily, yeah, not necessarily just about the programme but just about me and developing, but Abbie's a very fast thinker, very bright, very ambitious and attached herself to the chief executive and that's her world really and we're just...

AT – There has been some interesting information coming out of the relationship between the programme and the development of the individual and their line manager and a lot of it is less positive really.

SC – Really

AT - which is interesting, I'm not trying to bunch you into a group.

SC – and I don't want to be critical really because at the same time, I guess I have a responsibility to, you know, well, you know, again, I obviously not getting that from, oh I don't know, it doesn't happen as often as it should and it probably should, but that's not to say it's not of Abbie's skills, strengths either, I don't think.

AT – Ok in that, can I just go off the script a minute and ask you about the coaching?

SC – Well I quite enjoyed the coaching but I wasn't ill during my coaching sessions and the coach I don't know what she made of me because I was a bit emotional in the coaching sessions, and I didn't realise that I was feeling unwell, I was just feeling knackered, completely knackered I am quite an emotional person and I was feeling completely knackered and during that time, I realised that at the time, I was at the doctors where I had a very low iron count, and my iron although I'd been told that a year ago and been taking iron tablets and everything, it hadn't corrected myself and my energy levels was completely low.

AT – Oh right.

SC – So when I was with the coaching session and we were doing all the stuff about the, you know, what your good at your not good at I was a bit emotional actually and this poor women. I think she thought she had a complete wimp with her really, so that was quite hard for her really, I think.

AT – So you think

SC – the second session, did we have three session I can't remember?

AT – Yes, yes. There's a feed back and there's a, from the facet five and there's two or three.....

SC – Yes, so I I the Facet Five I hadn't done before and I found it very interesting, It was a bit shoddy, because, I've got it in here actually, the bit that was shoddy was, they kept referring to Cardiff rather than Bridgend so obviously they have a standard template don't they.

AT – Yes

SC – and they hadn't altered the Cardiff to Bridgend and so you did feel that, I had to think, it only features once twice in the and so the very first time I read it and I pointed it out to her and I said "Is this mine" kind of thing and she said "Oh yes that's a mistake" and then it was there at the end. So first of all I though well I was a bit suspicious of it then, but then realised it was about me, but it came through a couple of times and I thought actually that was a bit shoddy.

AT - Yes cause then you get the feeling that it's cut and pasted and not real, That's very interesting.

SC – I actually can't disagree with what came through on this at all and I carry it around to have a look at it and I haven't had a look at it for ages and at the 360 degree appraisal, I've done one recently. In fact in the last two three years I have been through the mill in terms of psycho tests. I applied for a couple of directors jobs and I was short listed and got through, so I was very pleased with all of that but didn't get the job, which is fine the people who got it deserved it, but through that process I had to do two psyche, that's not the right word, what is the right word.

AT – Um Psychometric, psychometric tests

SC – I had to do two of those and then with the leadership programme in Bridgend we did a 360 degree appraisal and then someone came and gave us all the feedback and straight on that back of that I did these so I think within a two year period I'd done quite a few things and I chose different people for my 360 degree appraisal and I have actually spoken to two of them about it, we went through it and I actually that was really good and one of the people I picked had only worked here as a direct report to the team and had only been here three months, six months and I obviously picked somebody who knew me well and Andy is very honest very competent man and very honest and I had a chat with him and I said "Thank you very much for contributing to the 360 degree appraisal" and I told him a little bit about the process and the feedback I'd had and then he just and the confidence he had to tell me what his impression of me was, what his impression of how I interacted with the team, what other people thought about me and all the rest of it was incredible to be honest Arthur, and we had a great chat and I thought bloody hell the confidence of this chap to come into a head, actually I'm not ..... I don't think. But as a head of none the less, as head of service ... known very well wow I don't know if I could have been able to have done that. 80% of what he said

I took on board and understood where he was coming from and accepted, I mean it wasn't all bad, you know me I just go to the bad bits. 20% I was able to explain to him, well actually that's why I had maybe done that and he found that helpful and that conversation has helped me enormously. I've been very mindful of

AT – That's very interesting, very interesting

SC – What he said about, about perception and I've, actually that has been as helpful I think as a lot of the other stuff because I've carried that with me really and I go and slap him every so often. You know, he said to me that you're a very powerful women and, you know, and I just, I just, I did not actually perhaps comprehend some of that really, so yeah, that's been good really, you know, that has been hugely helpful.

AT – OK, Hum I mean my job really isn't to interpret what you're saying

Sc – Analyse me

AT – No no no I mean

SC – You can if you want

AT – No no no I was just pondering how often there is a branch of research about leadership that looks into timelines and notable things and notable people

SC – Right

AT – that sit outside of the kind of formal development. I think you've just described one of those moments, yes a notable thing happened to you with a notable person but has had from what you describe as much an impact on you.

SC – I think that's right, and do you know I think you move into senior management roles or leadership roles and you don't necessarily, certainly in this trade, you don't, you're not trained necessarily for the next job, you just do it and you do muddle along and you may have role models and I have had really good role models and I've had some bad role models more good than bad and I notice now I see in myself, oh God that's what so and so would have done kind of thing and hopefully that's a good thing. You know is there any formal training because it's almost like a complete drip feed all the time as you go along and I think that's what this course has done as you go along, is brought practice and theory together at the same time which has been great. Um what was I going to say? I was going to say something important. Oh and one of the things I have always been aware of, I think is, but not always been able to either stop myself, or feel confident about it, but when you know, you go into a new role and you're in charge or you are, like I am in charge of adult social care, and everyone is looking at you and you're supposed to know all the answers, or you think everyone is expecting you to know all the answers, and that's really scary. But as you get to a point where you feel confident that actually it doesn't matter if you don't know all the answers, because the other people can know the answers if you can bring it out. Now I feel in a position and it's not just about the course it's just that I'm doing it, but the course has then helped crystallise some of it and put it into where it needs to be. I'm much more confident about bringing the team to

do that and me being able to realise that it doesn't matter if I don't have an answer or if I don't, or if we make a mistake.

AT – Well certainly the modern reflection on the leadership which you think you were excited about when you did that particular module is all about self awareness, it's about innovation it's about allowing people to rise into a gap that you create for them, rather than being able to know, sorry

SC – No I think that I'm better at that, you know, I need to continue but I actually recognise that I'm better at that and the course has been perfect in terms of exactly what's been happening here, it's been , the timing has been really good and I am, that bit about bringing everyone and enabling everyone and the team to do that and of course it's a bit scary and you think oh God I'm losing control, or my God I'm going to do myself out of a job, or so and so will be better than me, all of those things you can't quite verbalise in the beginning as to why you might be a little bit resistant to it, but that's all kind of fitting into place now and I feel much more at ease with it. There still are a couple of characters out there that, you know, I can't allow them to, because we'd just be in a mess, but yes, all of my reflections I suppose kind of take into consideration.

AT – That's fantastic, I think we're

SC – Gosh, it's like confession

AT – It is yes

SC – Well I haven't been to confession for years!

AT – You're right actually, but do you feel you're lighter now that you have told me all of that

SC – Yes, yes it's good

AT – Ok, there are two, in the last sort of 10 minutes or so, there are two things I'd like to ask you. The last sort of set of questions is about the impact on the organisation, I think you're beginning to once I re listen to this probably I'll be able to pick out, there's that but I don't know if there is anything specific you think you could think of this has been a big impact on your organisation.

### **Impact on the Organisation**

SC – Sure, you want something specific, oh on the organisation

AT – Yes that would be helpful and the second thing is to just remind you that part of this process is that I continue to stalk you after the...

SC – Ok yes, if you can find me you can stalk me, Yes Ok

AT – yes that's it, but in order to give you some support there is the day of paid support that you can have that can be anything around, and I've done all sorts of things with colleagues as well, some more coaching, some more specific mentoring, facilitation of team meetings,

SC – Ok

AT - Anything like that or to help you work through the recommendations of your project

SC – Ok

AT – You’ve then got a day’s help and not necessarily from me, because I’ve got a team of experts

SC – OK

AT – So I just want you to keep that in the back of your mind, is that that, I’ve been, for instance, I’ve been up to Caernarfon with Gwen who was on last year’s course and worked with her and did a couple of half days leadership...

SC – Just for her or and her team?

AT – Just for her and her team, she brought a team together and we did a half day.

SC – Yes Ok thats sounds good

AT – and is can be very very specific

SC – OK

AT – I just want you to remember that because that is as far as I’m, I’ll check with Martin, but that was the idea that I follow you through and then as I said paid for a day’s support to merge that into the organisation.

SC – Ok my project, there are two huge, there could have been one of two things really I think. We’re there’s one thing around integration with health, and I’ve chosen not to actually use that in relation to the project, because I’m not sure what would be further on with that. The other thing that we’re doing here is looking at developing a social care enterprise.

AT – Oh right

SC –Very big, The um, we’re very big providers of in house services, we don’t have any money anymore, put the whole thing together, I’ve been researching social care enterprise and we want to transfer some of our multi additional services into social care enterprise model and there are a lot of benefits of that. I’m also hoping that, I have already started to take the members and the staff with me on that, so I could reflect on all of that I think in a project, but we won’t have established it by September and we will still have been doing the kind of understanding what it can do for us and the process of taking people to have a look and talking about it and drip feeding and getting members support and the research as to why it’s important to do, I could reflect in a project. It might be an idea for us to do, for you to come and do a piece of work with the team following that, when we get to the point where we’ve done our service specification and we’re going to tender, that might....

AT – It certainly, it’s available for, when you want it so it doesn’t have to be immediately, it doesn’t have to be in October

SC – No

AT – Um I did, with Diana actually; I facilitated a work shop, for some of, which was a project about the northern mental health services and they, the project was about that, but it was an academic project, that was the rub really. The academic project might get you a pass for the certificate by

then there is a way you've got to translate that into, so facilitating a half day work shop, all those sort of things are....

SC – The other thing is, personally I would quite like to have a mentor and it was something I've been talking to Abbie about, and then I never, you know, I didn't do it, we didn't get around to doing it...

AT – OK

SC – and then I came on this course and it was too much. I want to be in, I want, That is something personally I would like to do a tutoring and a mentoring course with PSMW ( I think)

AT – Ok

SC- for myself and that will be the next thing I do and it's a thing I think I would enjoy doing in the future and , you know, and when I've successfully sold out to health and I've done myself out of a job, perhaps then

AT – you've sold out

SC- well that's another story isn't it, you know, maybe it's something I would like to do myself anyway, you know, when I do decide I don't need to work.

AT – and that's certainly feasible, I'm just thinking if someone

SC – I quite like to have a mentor myself, and I, because and I don't know whether I need somebody. I had thought that I needed a director with a social work back ground was my first thought a year eighteen months ago, whether that's as important now, I mean , I don't know, but I don't, there isn't anyone I report to who was higher up the chain than me, who is a of a social back ground and so...

AT – Right ok, ok

SC – there was something there I don't know at one time, whether that's as important now, I don't know, really

AT – Yes some people have carried on with their original coach, a few people from last year have said that coaching was perhaps a bit light or.....

SC – and mentoring slightly different

AT – and mentoring and I was just going to say that, I you're ahead of me here!

SC – Well and I suppose it would be good to actually sit down with somebody and talk that through in detail as to what would be best for me

AT – Yes so you can have something specific, I do remember somebody not too far away from here actually, got a mentor who had specific experience, something who was in finance, and we found her someone that really specific. Other people have just said no I would just like the coaching because it just helps me to develop an individual, so there is no prescription for this support, which I think is just all praise to Martin because I think it's a really good Idea...

SC – I think, I would like, I think what I would like is the mentoring, I think. We got there are some huge challenges ahead, so I would like to be able to sit and look through how to manage those and the best way to lead those and what my role is in all of that with someone who has got some knowledge, but there would be an element of coaching in that, isn't there, rather

AT – yes, yes

SC – than the touchy feely stuff of coaching I think perhaps I think I would like someone who has got some understanding some of the changes we're going to face I think that's where I am.....

AT I think we, and I'm quite happy to come back and talk you through that, to fine tune that....

SC – That'd be good

AT – If that'll be helpful

SC – Yes, once I if I ever get this project off

AT – I'm sure you will, I'm sure you will. The final question, I mean the thing, um we've talked about the ongoing support, I don't think this is right place to develop a coaching opportunity but the only thing we haven't talked about is barriers and constraints.

SC – Right

AT – About, you've been very positive about that your ..... and about how it impacts on the work place, you perhaps hinted at one thing, your relationship with your line manager. Is there anything else were you think, that is a barrier constraint, and particularly get your mind to look back at the course and how could the course enable you to reduce the barriers I think.....

SC – I think the biggest barrier is time, which I'm sure everybody says to you..

AT – They do

SC – I'm completely knackered and it takes a huge amount of determination to build the time to do all this, I think, and I'm really glad, and I think for me and my style to have targets and to have and if it had been a distance learning, we would never have got together, we would never have coped really, so time is a huge thing, but there has been a couple of, you know, so the organisation of it, then it needs to be tip top I suppose.....

AT – and it isn't?

SC – and I don't think it is really

AT – What if you were, if it was yours, what two things you would think that would help, just two things you think could really help the course hold this fine tunedness if that's a word, that you as a busy person, senior person need.

SC – Yes, well I don't think it matters what your seniority is, or status, or position, when you have a group of people you have got to organise them, haven't you, so if you have a course and you tell everyone, ok go and find and put your selves into groups and get on with it. I'm not sure whether

that actually works because people wonder around and don't quite find a group, it should be in terms of your all in group number one and this is what you're going to do kind of thing, so I think the thing about having a programme set up, stick to the dates, don't try and move the dates, but stick to the year's programme, stick to the venue. Be very clear about start and finish times and hold to them and what's expected while you are there. The one thing I think I mentioned this to you on the phone that, hasn't and I know that and I've spoken to David as well, is the action learning sets, not really being action learning sets. I haven't had a great experience of what an action learning set is, to be honest, but it certainly not what we did, it was just came at the end of a session, have a little chat in the table about what you've, I don't think that's an action learning plan.

AT – No it isn't

SC – No it isn't is it – so I actually think that could have been a lot more organised really. I also think it is hard, you know, you take time out you go on the course then you got to go coaching and then you've got to make time for the tutor and then Arthur as well.

AT – Yes I was just thinking about that

SC – and your brain actually thinks God will all of this add value can I actually do all of this I suppose and that is a bit about when you, us in key posts, I suppose and I'll panic with all of that, I guess. So some of those things being very clear about it. The snow caused massive confusion!

AT – Yes there was that week

SC – and they wanted to cancel something because of the snow, well I understand that, but you can't do that really, because we can't find the time and I suppose, and then a couple of the lecturers were stuck in the, no it wasn't the snow, the snow was one thing it was, the other thing it was the volcanic eruption,

At – Oh the dust

SC - the dust because what happened on that occasion is one of the lecturers was in France and couldn't get back, so they were struggling then to fill that gap so we had a bit of.....

AT – So does that mean from a punters point of view you don't see them as having a fall back plan

SC – Well they didn't no

AT – Ok

SC – So other barriers? no just time

AT – Just time

SC – I think

AT – I'm incredibly conscious of you giving me that time and I know that

SC – Well it's a great month August I have to say, because meetings drop off, because people are on holiday aren't they and it just makes you think did I need to have all of those meetings



AT – In the first place

SC – So today is a lovely quiet day for me today

AT – Good, good, and it was helpful for you to just nudge me into August because it suited me as well, and it's funny really just as much as you've got anxiety's about time and how to fit things in, having seven people to phone and organise....

SC – And you're going up to north Wales

AT – Well Paula has done the north Wales stint....

SC – So you're seeing Carys

AT – Yes

SC - That's been a nice thing that's come out of this, Carys and I have become friends.

AT – Oh good, oh good

SC – and that's nice we actually had something to eat together the other night and that's really nice.

AT – Yes, and I think that, you know, your honesty and your openness to these questions and to the ideas, whether you feel you've been trying to avoid me or not in immaterial now....

SC – I'm very open

AT – and I think that....

SC – Sometimes too open

AT – and that's been really helpful and what Paula and I will do, soon before the end of the month is kind of think about all seven interviews we've had.....

SC – OK

AT – we've already recycled some of that information back into the planning in the meeting that went on, on the 19<sup>th</sup> July and we continue for your colleagues sake who are coming up next, to try and squeeze the course into this better organise, more precise, because the action learning set is one example of and I continually rate this, these are not action learning sets, we're now getting to the stage where there is a concession about that, either you rename them and say that they are for a different purpose, or you make them better, because actually facilitating an action learning set is a very good skill to have.

SC – And I wouldn't know how to do that actually, it's something that would be useful to know, how to facilitate an action learning plan set, but if they would want people to get together outside of the programme to do some of that I don't think it would work....

AT – no

SC – I think they have to work in into the time. I will definitely recommend this course. I have a member of my team and I think it will be great for her, but I also know that she likes things very

clearly defined and some people don't do kind of muddle along and flexibility and go with the flow as well as others do they? It's a different kind of style, a different kind of learning and you know I was thinking there are some aspects of this were she would struggle with and I, you know, looking at my immediate team, the kind of people that I would be presenting I think it was, I can see one of them it would be suiting down to the ground really absolutely love it suit him down to the ground, but I actually want him to be more organised, you know what I mean, I really want him to be more organised, someone else I'd like her relax a bit more and be less stressed about every dot and every crossing every T, so it's funny isn't it, Mark he'd love it but I wouldn't be able to keep an handle on him at all. I really want her to benefit from her and she will, but she'll stress through the ways she would go about it. I know it can't be perfect for everyone but....

AT – It's interesting because actually when you go looking at coaching for example and there are other psychometric things that you can do around coaching and one of them puts you on a kind grid of plus or a minus and the better coaches actually go nearer the middle, so they can cope with extreme chaos and but become more organised and it is a very interesting balance, and I think some people defend their ground too much, so I'm very, as you might have guessed very laid back about these things, but for this I have to be organised and it's been much better for me to know that I can do that and yet I can still present a fairly relaxed...

SC – Yes well you are very relaxed

AT – good it's been a delight to work with you

SC – Thank you

AT – Thank you very much

SC – I'll let you back I always have time for Arthur Turner, I used to work in, was quite the best job I ever had actually, Training staff development

AT – Oh yes,

SC – Loved it and actually taking time out from the service and doing that and coming back in was brilliant. But the hardest job was placing social work students into teams and actually getting team managers to take a student not give them extra money for it or any time but to get them to do it and then if you had a bad failing student it was the worst thing you could possibly do and it was so hard getting people to let me go and see them, because these really busy team managers didn't have time for this training officer, so you know it was just so hard. This is really a selling job, this is what it must be like to sell, you know, to get in the door with people .....

AT – Yes it is an interesting.... and often people need to stop and they play the game of being too busy.

SC – and I recognise that in myself. I'm going to read this back when you've done it and I think there might have been something quite nice about me in there and I could do with a compliment today so....

AT – Ok well I certainly going to stop recording.

**Appendix Two - Final Report - August 2011**

**Nottingham City Council / The Institute of Leadership and Management**

**Key Researchers:**

**Pamela Heneberry & Arthur Turner**

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**Appendix three – Structure of the programme**

**Appendix four – Outline of previous ilm project**

**Appendix five – Questions for Letitia Thompson- Smith**

**Research project looking into the impact of the middle and senior management leadership development programmes at Nottingham City Council.**

### **Introduction**

*Pam Heneberry and Arthur Turner undertook this research project over the first 6 months of 2011.*

This study represented a second 'wave' of research following the successful IMP-ACT project (See Appendix four) undertaken with 6 companies in the UK, during 2009, which looked at the impact of management and leadership training on individuals and their company teams.

### **December 2010 to April 2011**

*Preliminary work was undertaken to understand the context and content of the Nottingham programme and this was discussing, as part of several telephone conference calls, the outline concepts and constraints. This enabled the research team to put into context the original scope and direction of Nottingham's development programme for middle and senior members.*

*Nottingham City Council, a large public body, has leadership and management responsibilities in keeping with their role as an English public body (Staffing figures have been fluctuating and declining in line with the austerity programme first mooted at the General Elections in 2010) . As in common throughout public service in Britain currently, the Authority is undergoing large cuts in funding, with subsequent cuts in posts and personnel. The programme itself has been a victim of cuts and the length, duration and original scope of the leadership and management development programme has been reduced. There is also uncertainty at this stage as to what the programmes will look like moving forward. However there is a commitment that, commencing in September 2011, the Human Resources Department will begin to outline and unfold a less intensive, streamlined, programme of leadership development for the Council.*

### **Scope of the project.**

The key researchers were to undertake a four-stage intervention ensuring that the research itself provided a legacy for the Council, not only in terms of the final report but also as a result of the overtly reflective nature of the research interventions. These interventions included face-to-face interviews and regular contemplation of the impact of the programmes on the individuals taking part in the process (both middle and senior management) and the organisation itself.

### **The outline stages of the research were:**

- **Interviews with the commissioners of the programmes**
- **Interviews with external training organisations who developed the programme( on the back of successful responses to a detailed tender and in collaboration with key stakeholders)**
- **Separate interviews with line managers and course participants. A percentage of the interviews will be recorded and transcribed (the researchers recognise this process was ‘contaminated’ by some course participants being line managers of those either on the middle manager programme or on the same programme but different cohorts or the same programme in the same cohort)**
- **Interviews with randomly selected participants and their line managers in pairs (wherever possible)**
- **In light of the interviews we will seek to examine and interpret artefacts from the programme development and module delivery**

A sample of documents was examined and collated as part of the research, those documents included strategy planning documents, programme *overviews* and structure, evaluation, on several levels (evolution of the impact of leadership challenges, for example) as well as 360 degree appraisal documents.

### **Timetable for research**

1. October/November 2010 – planning and engaging with the key people in the process (gatekeepers) including detailed conference call with Letitia Sims-Thompson and Helen Platts on October 12<sup>th</sup> 2010)

2. Two day site visit to interview the Dave Love, Sean Gibbens, Letitia Sims- Thompson, Helen Platts
3. A further 'site' visit to interview selected pairs of line managers and their designated staff who are currently on the programme.
4. Further follow-up sessions on the 'phone to cover similar material that looked at three distinct areas: Pre-course, during the course and elements, from the course that are providing support and growth in the workplace
5. A planned two day visit to the Council in May to interview pairs of line managers with their sponsored member of staff. This was, broadly speaking, undertaken using narrative storytelling linked to the experiences of the delegate based on the 360 degree feedback and psychometric results. It should be noted that (due to staff changes at the Authority) it was not possible to carry out this final two day visit until June 2011.

***Some insights afforded by the initial interviews (some illustrative quotes are used to emphasise key points)***

*Interviews were carried out, face-to-face, with certain delegates at the January/ February interviews.*

*Not surprisingly there were a wide range of comments about the starting points of the programme. This, to the research team, illustrated that leadership practitioners (middle or senior managers) are often troubled by practical issues.*

*'Interviewer: Right. Right, so. Hm...so...the pre-course material prepared you for...adequately, for what was coming up?*

*Delegate: The pre-course...for me, and I know people learn differently, but to provide me with paper and paper and paper and paper and to expect me to read a load of stuff before I go on a training course is...are few and far between I think.'*

**KEY POINT 1.** *Delegates often attached a different set of values to materials and ideas presented by the development team.*

*Clear attempts were made to engage delegates in the early planning.*

*Here is an early extract with a delegate about the planning, pilot and feedback*

*Delegate: No, they came with outcomes at the beginning and during the three modules, Brian, I wasn't delivering them, but Brian would check in. Particularly with the second module, what we did, and we've done the same here, is we'd ask people to come with two or three really live issues. On this programme we asked people to talk to their managers before they came. I don't know if that happened on the environmental services pilot. I don't know whether there was a prior discussion it was before my time. So there was a clear understanding of...er...what the manager expected from them what the organization expected from them through the manager. They also had their 360, which gave them some key areas in which to operate. So they had their 360, which gave them, as much as it is a snapshot of external feedback. A one to one around that, which firmed up some of*

*their...actually did that happen on the environmental pilot? I don't know...I don't know if that happened but I'm describing what's happening now.*

*Researcher: Yes.*

*Delegate: So on the middle manager programme. From that environmental pilot there were some things I thought could be tightened up and Brian and Sean and I had a talk about it and I sort of took some of that thinking into the thinking about the new programme, and in fact we worked with the group also to think about what they would have liked differently.*

*Researcher: Okay, okay.*

*Delegate: We also took somebody from the programme was involved in the shaping of the tender and the interviewing and the providers for the middle manager.*

**KEY POINT 2 Delegate (or potential delegate) input is vital to ensure a tight fit for the delegate and the organisation.**

*Further conversations with the same delegates revealed a certain amount of organisational assumption about what is common knowledge and what is not*

*Researcher: So, can you give me an example of where that kind of design process worked and on what particular level? What sort of things were you noticing?*

*Delegate: Um.*

*Researcher: It's quite interesting in terms of the evolution of the programme.*

*Delegate: Yeah. I'm remembering now, but there was a lot of discussion about...there was a 'disconnect' between...one bit of the organization. One bit saying new competency framework and the environmental managers saying 'What? Hello!'. So there was a, although we were relating it to the competency framework to some people that was the first time for some people they had put their attention on that, so there was an assumption from our part that they knew about the competency framework and they didn't.*

**KEY POINT 3 Central Organisational staff can make vast assumptions about what is known or used or understood by Human Resources initiatives**

**However there was evidence that the programme planning was quite complex and deeply thought-out.**

*Course Commissioner: Yes, actually, because it acts as a catalyst for the programme, because it's to get them thinking differently from how they would usually think in their more operational roles. There was an expectation that the senior leaders were actually used to working with, er, um, councillors and um sort of portfolio holders and talking to CEOs from various partnerships but there wasn't that expectation that we had for the middle manager group so it's about raising that expectation, um, and this is the challenge when we move*

*forward we're stepping up a gear. What the senior managers are doing we're expecting you to do and show some initiative.*

*Researcher: So was it meant to be symbolic?*

*Course Commissioner: Yes, it was a launch. It was the launch of the middle manager leadership programme. It was, it was, this is welcome to this day is about what will be expected in the roles and these are the roles our current senior managers are...*

*Researcher: And how are people, how are the individuals supported in that?*

*Commissioner: They had the sessions before with their managers. Well, I have to say that would have been patchy. Some have been very good in having discussions with their managers and had that discussion before and their managers were clear about what they wanted to get from it. Others not so much. But their managers would have nominated them to go onto the leadership programme anyway, so they knew that was part and parcel of that programme – the launch of that programme, for people to get together we made sure the teams working together were from the same cohort so they got to know each other.*

***Key point 4 The complexities of the organisation have to be taken into account when planning and the inter-related involvement of line managers and other parts of the wider team is crucial***

#### **Important Emergent Positive factors**

- *The Professionalism of presenters*
- *The choice of Interesting topics*
- *The opportunity to learn new skills – such as Action Learning*
- *The evidence of some delegates taking action and applying new skills in the workplace*

#### **Important Emergent themes**

*The researchers established several themes from the first and second interventions. These themes are signposts for the development team to consider as the leadership development programme in the Council grows and evolves to allow the existing manager/leaders to grow and develop in line with the needs of the Council and the wider challenges of Society.*

*The major themes are discerned as being the following:*

- *The key of having strong links between this programme and the Professional Development system of the Council (although the Professional Development Planning is changing)*
- *The way in which the programme existed without sufficient tangible links to the current economic situation and re-structuring within the authority*
- *The lack of strong links between the two programmes and the missed opportunities of any formal shared learning.*
- *The importance of the engagement of line managers*



- *The impact of the lack of accreditation*
- *The impact of too many handouts (middle manager programme) instead of discerning the best way to effect practice*

The structure of the final visit which took place in June 2011 was therefore three-fold

1 To clarify and corroborate the original identified themes (as outlined above)

2 To establish any other themes not as yet identified

3 To make tentative recommendations based on the findings.

In summary these then are the key themes which have emerged over the course of both the face-to-face and telephone interviews carried out between October 2010 and August 2011

**Positive features of the programme:**

- Clear evidence of visible support for the programmes from the most senior managers/leaders within the Authority
- The time and input at many levels, across the authority, in crafting the original concept and evaluating the options available before constructing the programme
- Myers Briggs and 360 universally praised by all delegates. Feelings emerging around the value of using these tools to instigate and structure meaningful conversations between line managers and delegates and the use of a common language.
- A feeling that because of the use of diagnostic tools and coaching sessions each programme had elements of meeting the needs of the individuals.
- The middle manager programme received many positive comments including the experience and approachability of the tutor, to the usefulness and practical application of the experiential learning activities. Many spoke of the valuable 'tool kit' they were left with at the end of the programme.
- The breaking down of 'silo working' and the valued opportunity to network across the Authority and delegates having a far wider and greater understanding of the business as a whole.
- The 'human face' and support of the training department throughout the programmes
- The professionalism of the presenters on both the senior and middle manager programmes
- Evidence of many delegates actively applying their new skills in the workplace examples such as different approaches to communication, time management, using delegation skills.

**Areas where both positive and negative feedback was collected:**

- Some delegates felt that there was an overload of paper given out at workshops

- Several comments from delegates considered that there was not a clear linking of theory to the Authority's systems and policies and that this would have made the programme more relevant and would have given *the Council* the probability of a better return on investment
- Some line managers and delegates were very engaged in dialogue and in evaluating the benefits of the programme to the individual, team and organisation, where as other line managers and delegates had little or no meaningful dialogue around the programme of development during this time frame. This links to the clear evidence that some line managers had a detailed knowledge of the programme and its objectives where as others were not involved and did not have any in-depth understanding.
- The coaching interventions for the most senior managers was seen as positive by the recipients of the coaching but as a negative by those who were not able to access this facility and it was commented that 'it should be open to everyone'
- The Action Learning sets were seen as initially positive by most delegates but many felt that they lacked direction and impetus once the tutor was removed from the process and slowly delegates became less engaged and fewer attended the sessions
- Some delegates identified the lack of outside accreditation as being a negative particularly in a changing job market

**Areas where improvements were identified:**

- The recruitment process was not clear and transparent. Some delegates felt that they had been selected as they lacked certain skills, some because it was a 'reward'. Neither of these assumptions was evidence based.
- There was a degree of uncertainty from delegates on the future life of the programmes. This was often seen as extremely negative as only some of the team would be 'talking the same language'. Some delegates were trying to deal with this by cascading the skills and techniques learnt on to their team.
- There appeared to be a lack of synergy between the middle and senior manager programmes and within the senior delegate cohort the lack of 'tool kit' was seen as a disadvantage. Some thought that the senior management programme could be more 'like the middle manager programme'

It must be noted that the internal evaluation is still on going and at the date of writing this report was not yet analysed

**Conclusions**

1. Future programmes need a selection process that is more transparent
2. The Myers Briggs and 360 diagnostic has been a catalyst for reflection and a way of beginning a meaningful conversation between trainers and delegates and delegates and line managers. It has also added an element of ensuring the programme was tailored to meeting individual needs.

3. The training has been delivered in a professional manner with efforts made to meet the needs of the candidates both collectively and individually
4. Current changes in the funding available to support the programme has led to uncertainty in terms of its future sustainability, this has been viewed as a negative within the delegate population
5. The mix of delegates on each cohort has facilitated networking across the group and this has been viewed in a positive light by both delegates and line managers.
6. Greater synergy between the middle manager and senior manager programmes would further enhance collaborative working and commonality.
7. The visible support and 'buy in' from the senior leaders and the training department has given confidence in the venture

### Recommendations

1. Provide a set text book(s) to help to alleviate the comments around 'too much paper' and help to create a common language.
2. Provide a more comprehensive briefing for line managers may enhance their further engagement
3. Provide coaching 'across the board' as it has become viewed as divisive - it has not been seen to be allocated equitably across all delegates
4. Strengthen the facilitation of the Action Learning sets as currently they have had limited success as they have dissipated once the external tutor is no longer present.
5. Place the same emphasis and resource on the transfer of learning and the on-going embedding of change as was given to the planning and structuring of the programme in the initial stages.

### Appendix One – January/February 2011

#### Initial Interview timetable

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Director	31 Jan	2pm	1:1
		Area Manager	31 Jan	3.30pm	1:1

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of Performance	31 Jan	2pm	1:1

		Corp Planning Manager	31 Jan	12.30	1:1
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Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of HR Shared Service	1 Feb	12.30	Tel
		HR Admin & Info Manager	TBC		

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of Equalities & Comm Relations	1 Feb	9am	Tel
		Team Leader	TBC		

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of Comms and Marketing	1 Feb	10 am	Tel
		Marketing and Comms Manager	2 Feb	10am	Tel

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of Info & Strategy Security	2 Feb	11.30	Tel
		Team Manager	2 Feb	1pm	Tel

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Head of Facilities	31 Jan	4pm	1:1
		Snr Water Engineer	31 Jan	11am	1:1

Name	Contact details	Role	Date	Time	Tel/1:1
		Director of Sports	1 Feb	1pm	Tel

		Head of Parks and Open Spaces	1 Feb	4.30	Tel
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## Appendix two

Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> June Pam Room LH 4.21			Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> June Arthur Room LH 4.22		
12:00 – 13:00 to meet with both Pam and Arthur <b>Confirmed</b>					
13:15 - 14:15			13:15 – 14:15		
14:00 – 15:00			14:00 – 15:00		
15:15 – 16:00			15:15 – 16:15		
16:30 – 17:30 <b>(alone) Confirmed</b>			16:30 – 17:30		

Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June Pam Room LH 4.21			Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June Arthur Room LH 4.22		
10.00- 11:00					
10:15 – 11:15			12:30 – 13:30		
11:30 – 12:30					
14:30 – 15:30			<b>14:30 – 15:30</b>		

## Appendix three- extract from paper by OPD – September 2010

### Working for Nottingham: building a resilient and responsive organisation - a development programme for senior leaders

#### 1. About this paper ...

This document is based on a number of conversations about the design of the programme between OPM and senior managers in Nottingham, including:

- a session at the May Directors' Forum
- 2 meetings of the programme's Design Reference Group
- a series of telephone interviews with internal stakeholders, undertaken by OPM during June and July
- contributions from other key internal stakeholders, including Ian Curryer (programme sponsor) and Angela Probert (Director of HR).

The paper also includes the thinking arising from conversations between OPM and the Nottingham City Council managers working on the creation and delivery of the programme. It has also been discussed with LaGente, the providers of the parallel middle manager development programme to ensure appropriate connections are made between the two development interventions.

All these conversations have been intended to ensure the programme helps the council to achieve its goals and provides value-for-money by:

- focusing on the “live” priorities and challenges faced by the City Council’s managers
- building engagement with participants so that they are fully committed to the programme and can see how it will help them with the challenges they face.

*Please note: This paper provides an overview of the programme design. OPM, in collaboration with the City Council, will be designing each specific event as the programme progresses within the broad parameters outlined in this paper. In this way we can ensure that the programme is flexible and responsive to both changing circumstances and emerging participant needs and interests. Each component of the programme will have an associated set of learning objectives, which will be linked to the Nottingham competency framework, from which a diverse range of activities will flow.*

## **2. Overall purpose and objectives of the programme**

The Working for Nottingham programme is primarily about helping the City Council to achieve better outcomes for citizens and stakeholders in a changing landscape. The programme is designed to enable senior managers to deliver the council’s political priorities at a time of dramatic financial and service change, which include:

- adopting a “whole systems” approach focusing on service purpose
- emphasising affordability and those activities which create high impact in relation to strategic priorities
- reshaping activities to ensure the Council’s strategic influence is retained
- developing the Council’s contribution by drawing effectively on the diversity of the workforce
- working proactively and innovatively with stakeholders and citizens.

Essentially the programme is a framework to support senior managers taking Nottingham, Council staff and themselves through some very challenging times. It will enable participants to:

- develop a clearer and shared understanding of their individual and collective contributions to delivering the Council’s core priorities
- provide the leadership and management needed to make the most of the opportunities and tackle the challenges facing them, their staff and their colleagues.
- facilitate changes in others’ thinking and behaviour that are needed so that the Council can fulfil its role in the current financial and economic environment; for example helping people to work through what “the drive for localism” looks like in the Nottingham context
- increase and sustain their confidence, motivation and resilience for managing complexity, uncertainty and difficult decisions
- enhance their understanding of their own leadership and management styles and their ability to “flex” their style to have a positive impact on others

- strengthen the internal and external relationships needed for leading Nottingham successfully; including those with councillors, partners and other key stakeholders

### **3. Measuring success**

Because this programme is part of a wider series of interventions to help the council achieve its goals, the success of the programme can be considered at two levels i.e. the impact on participants and its contribution to organisational and system wide change.

#### **Impact on participants**

The programme objectives outlined above imply that participants need to have:

- the “right” (largely external) focus,
- clarity about their personal and their team’s contribution
- a high level of self awareness, with the ability to manage their own behaviour and build effective relationships
- the skills and confidence to act and make their own contribution and ensure the contribution of others

We can get some measure of success from feedback from participants, who will be asked to comment on the impact of the programme on these outcomes as it progresses. Of course individuals will be starting with different strengths and development needs. The 360 feedback and the related personal development plans will provide additional individual and collective data that can be used to contribute to an assessment of progress, especially when combined with the repeat of the process at an appropriate point after the programme.

The key point now is to agree what individual and collective participant outcomes are to be assessed and what data will be needed to do this. We can then ensure that benchmark data is collected at the outset. This could for example be a mix of some 360 items and some criteria based scaling (1-10) against particular objectives.

#### **Organisational and system wide impact**

The City Council is also intending to organise an evaluation exercise after the programme has been completed. This should look at wider impact and what if any organisational changes are needed to support the development achieved by the programme. In order to facilitate this evaluation there are two related issues worth considering before the programme starts:

- As with the impact on individuals it will be important to identify desired outcomes and any intermediate indicators of progress (which may be outputs or processes) and the direct or proxy data that will be used. This will enable benchmark data to be gathered before the programme begins.
- Organisational and system wide impact is hard to assess accurately because of the interaction of multiple causes and the time lags between action and impact. One way of overcoming this is to surface the ‘logic’ of the programme, its anticipated contribution to outcomes, what else needs to be in place and likely intermediate indicators of success. This is normally done through a workshop of key stakeholders, to create a visual representation

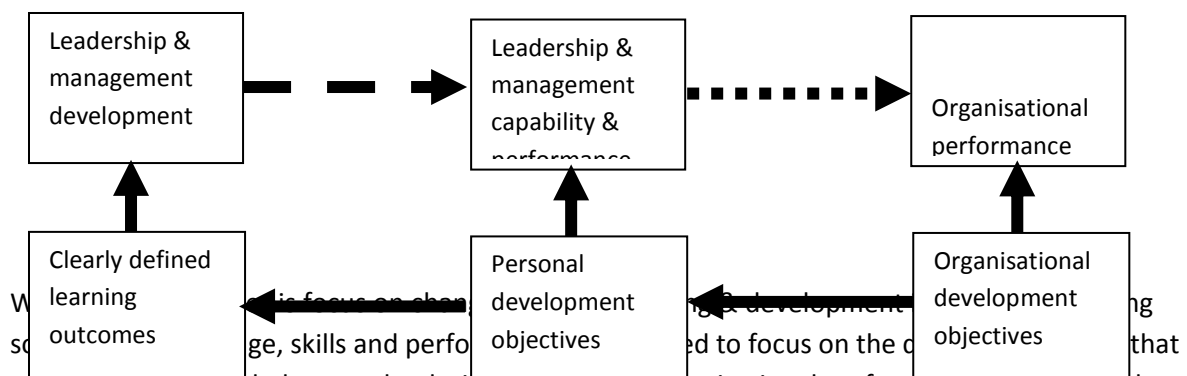
of 'pathways to outcomes' that gives everyone an overview of how everything fits together, with clarity about 'who', 'how', 'why' and 'what works'. This streamlines data collection and provides evidence for intangible goals and allows us to assess the 'plausibility' of impact/outcomes.

## Appendix four

### IMP-ACT RESEARCH PROJECT

#### Introduction

The starting point of the IMP-ACT model is that the ability to evaluate a development programme effectively is dependent on a number of initial design parameters – the more that these are incorporated in the initial stages, the better the chances of both measuring and demonstrating that the development activity has had an impact. Initially, we should identify some crucial measures of the three elements of the causal chain outlined below:



performance and link them to the desired changes in organisational performance. Therefore, the IMP-ACT model makes six basic assumptions:

1. Organisations and their managers must have a clear idea of the performance changes that are being sought in the programme's participants. Where these clearly link to organisational performance improvements, these links must be explicit. In particular, the managers taking part in the programme, and their line managers, must be involved in this process, from the initial discussions about the purpose through the whole development process, so that they are committed to making the learning work in the way that is intended.
2. Measures for these performance improvements must be discussed and agreed before the programme is designed or commissioned. These measures (at both levels – managerial and organisational) should be explicit and be clear about:
  - a. What is going to be measured
  - b. When the performance is going to be measured
  - c. How the performance is going to be measured
3. Benchmarks need to be agreed defining the current state – individual and organisational performance needs to be assessed to establish the 'before' so that the programme evaluation can establish the 'after'.



4. Learning outcomes should be developed and agreed that are derived from this measure of the starting state and the performance improvement objectives, and methodologies for assessing their achievement also agreed.
5. The programme should be designed with these learning outcomes, the assessment methods, and performance and organisational improvements clearly in mind. What needs to be recognised is that without putting in place the necessary requirements for learning transfer outlined above, and without the organisational commitment to the achievement of the programme, it won't have the desired effects.
6. A clear schedule for monitoring the various stages of the programme needs to be agreed, from the initial programme design, through its delivery to its assessment and to measures of personal and organisational performance. In particular, the monitoring should take into account:
  - a. The time lag for performance improvements to appear, which will vary according to their nature
  - b. The 'drop-off' effect as subsequent events draw emphasis away from the programme
  - c. The 'Hawthorne Effect' of the measurement on performance – by observing something we have an impact on it

## **The Action Research Project**

The ILM-Xafinity Skillbase Action Research Project is a joint offer from both organisations to a small and selected group of employers wanting to develop more effective evaluation of their learning and development programmes, especially their leadership and management training. There is no charge for taking part in the project, but there is a requirement that employers commit to supporting the research by recruiting a small number of programme participants and their line managers as research 'subjects' as well as making learning and development staff available for interviews.

“Action research is an interactive inquiry process that balances problem solving actions implemented in a collaborative context with data-driven collaborative analysis or research to understand underlying causes enabling future predictions about personal and organizational change.” (Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

Developed by the highly influential organisational development researcher Kurt Lewin, Action Research involves three steps - unfreezing, changing and then refreezing. In other words, it is designed to have an impact on the organisation based on an analysis of current practice and to monitor the effect that any changes have.

As a result, it is expected that all participating employers will have been able to develop their evaluation processes through being part of the project.

The results of the research will be freely available to all participating employers and they will be invited to occasional seminars to share experiences and review the findings. Both parties will sign a brief confidentiality agreement that respects the privacy of participants and the commercial security of systems and procedures. ILM and Xafinity Skillbase intend to develop products and services as a result of the research but will not infringe the intellectual property of any participating employers or

betray confidences in doing so. Any products or services, or publicity materials that mention any of the employers taking part will be done with their specific permission.

## The Project Structure

What will actually happen? The first stage will be an audit of the organisation's systems and procedures for developing and delivering learning and development programmes, including issues like:

- How does the organisation determine who takes part in learning programmes?
- How are performance objectives set and monitored (eg performance management systems)?
- How are learning needs assessed?
- What relationships exist between those responsible for commissioning and delivering learning programmes, and the line managers of those taking part in them?
- What mechanisms exist to support learning transfer (ie application of what is learnt)?
- How is performance against organisational, departmental or team objectives reviewed?

From this initial diagnostic audit, a process map will be drawn to represent the different elements identified, and two or three individual programme participants and their line managers will be interviewed to explore their expectations and objectives for the programme. Depending on the programme length, these people will be interviewed at intervals during the programme and/or at its end. (Anything lasting less than eight weeks will only involve 'before' and 'after' interviews.) There will also be a post-programme interview with those involved in its design and delivery.

The purpose of this tracking is to explore how well both formal and informal systems help to ensure that:

1. learning meets the needs of individuals and the organisation,
2. learning is transferred into practice, and
3. changed practice leads to performance improvements in line with the identified objectives.

During this tracking, the researchers will identify both best practice and opportunities to develop and improve current practice, and propose new systems or procedures that may be needed to support this. Part of the purpose of the project is try out improvements, and it is hoped that the tracking study can be repeated at least once (ie with two successive cohorts) to test out ideas and suggested improvements.

The outcomes for the employer should be:

- A clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of current systems
- An objective evaluation of the learning programme being studied
- Possible improvements to systems and procedures

Both ILM and Xafinity Skillbase hope to use the experience to develop a set of generic tools and advice for employers and training providers to use, based on the outcomes of this research. Our goal is to have these available during 2010; all participating employers will have access to these in return for their participation.

## **Appendix Five**

Questions for 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010

(See Digital Audio tape D11 (57.55 minutes plus))

What is the difference between the Middle Manager and Senior Manager Programmes?

What is the Leadership Challenge all about?

Can you tell us more about the mini challenge and thinking behind that?

What are the success criteria?

If there is a piece of work that comes out of it

What happens in between modules and is that formal or informal?

What is the administration system?

Question asked out of tract regarding the use of external experienced facilitators.

What is the support structure?

Tell us the ideas behind the senior coaching programme

Who is the supporter?

## **Appendix Three – Programme Outline**

### **Introduction**

Pam Heneberry and Arthur Turner, as Co-Directors of The Professional Development Centre, have been working in close collaboration with Call of the Wild Limited, to research, construct, design and deliver leadership development programmes for public and private sectors clients. They are co-writers of the Institute of Leadership and Management's new Action Learning Facilitators' qualification at level 5 and are both qualified Management and Leadership coaches/mentors at level 7.

Pam and Arthur have been working together for the past decade in perfecting tailored approaches to leadership development that has its roots in accreditation and management standards. Recent developments have included the use of narrative in evaluation and the closer linking of experiential out-door programmes to theoretical input and workplace efficacy. This developmental approach has evolved to include innovative and creative methods of delivery dovetailed with a people-orientated evaluative approach that ties in the impact of the development to the workplace.

Their programmes, neatly allied to the experiential expertise of the Call of the Wild staff, are fun, informative and greatly valued for their ability to change work-placed individual and team behaviours.

Arthur and Pam will be your tutors on this Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management Skills, they will also give you contact details on how to access your tutor support and details of who will be your assessor and internal verifier.

### **Introducing the Institute of Leadership and Management**

The Institute of Leadership and Management (I.L.M.) was formed in 2001 by the merger of NEBS Management and the Institute of Supervision and Management, and is part of the City and Guilds Group, the UK's largest vocational awarding body.

I.L.M. is responsible for the majority of leadership and management qualifications awarded in the UK outside the HE sector. Currently around 90,000 candidates per year register for I.L.M. qualifications, this accounts for well over half of all qualification-based management training undertaken in the UK, at all levels. In addition, I.L.M. currently has around 25,000 active members.

### ***I.L.M. Overview of Award***

The I.L.M. Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management Skills has been designed to give practising or aspiring middle managers a solid foundation for their formal development in this role.

This is a concise qualification made up of two mandatory units. In the first unit, 'Understanding the management role', participants explore the nature of the middle management role and critically evaluate their own managerial ability.

In the second mandatory unit, 'Assessing your own leadership capability and performance', participants explore leadership styles within their organisation, the commitment and motivation of their teams and their own ability to motivate teams to meet organisational goals.

Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management Skills	
Credit value	Minimum 10 credits
Guided learning	Minimum 34 hours
Duration	Completion within three years
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Induction – one hour</li> <li>&gt; Tutorial support – at least three hours</li> <li>&gt; Two mandatory units</li> <li>&gt; No optional units</li> </ul>
Assessment – mandatory units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Work-based assignment, plus</li> <li>&gt; Reflective review</li> </ul>
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements but participants will normally be either practising or aspiring middle managers with opportunity to meet the assessment demands and have a background that will enable them to benefit from the programme

### Understanding the Management Role

This Unit, in summary, will encourage the candidate to appreciate the nature of the middle manager role and assess their ability to perform this effectively.

Topics covered include appreciating the role and behaviour of middle managers in enabling an organisation to achieve its goals, understanding the factors that affect interpersonal relationships in the workplace and evaluating personal development opportunities to improve managerial and leadership ability.

### Assessing Your Own Leadership Capability and Performance

This Unit, in summary, will enable the candidate to develop knowledge and understanding of developing and leading teams as required by a practising or potential middle manager. Topics covered include leadership styles, motivation, commitment and values. Learning Outcomes and Assessment for Mandatory Units are published by the Institute and made available on their web-site ([www.i-l-m.com](http://www.i-l-m.com)).

There are 3 main styles of learning

1. Formal Training Sessions
2. Coaching
3. Action Learning – (with specified course topics: see below)

The Learning outcomes, below, can be addressed using the above styles:

### Understanding the Management Role

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
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1 Understand the organisation's purpose, stakeholders, structure and stakeholders	1.1 Describe the organisation's purpose and its purpose, stakeholders, structure and stakeholders
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functional areas and managerial roles 1.2 Explain the organisation's structure, functional areas and managerial roles

2 Understand the specific responsibilities of middle managers in enabling an organisation to achieve its goals 2.1 Describe the specific responsibilities of middle managers in enabling the organisation to achieve its goals

3 Understand how communication and interpersonal relationships affect managerial performance in the workplace 3.1 Explain how interpersonal relationships and communication skills affect managerial performance 3.2 Identify barriers to communications and effective interpersonal relationships in the organisation and devise strategies to overcome these

4 Evaluate personal development opportunities to improve own managerial performance 4.1 Critically assess own knowledge, skills, personal attributes and behaviour, and their effect on own managerial ability 4.2 Identify areas for personal development to improve own managerial behaviour 4.3 Plan and set priorities for future development

### **Assessing Your Own Leadership Capability and Performance**

Learning Outcome

Assessment Criteria

1 Review the prevailing leadership style in the organisation 1.1 Identify the prevailing leadership styles in the organisation 1.2 Assess the effect the prevailing leadership styles have on behaviour and performance in the organisation

2 Review the motivation and commitment to the organisation's values and goals amongst the people you lead 2.1 Assess the levels of motivation and commitment to the organisation's values and goals amongst the people you lead 2.2 Identify the factors shaping levels of motivation and commitment

3 Review your own leadership ability to motivate people and build commitment to achieve the organisation's goals 3.1 Assess own ability to use different leadership styles, as appropriate to the situation and the people 3.2 Assess own ability to communicate the organisation's values and goals to others 3.3 Assess own ability to motivate others and build commitment to the organisation's values and goals

Your tutors will go through the programme with you in detail during your first workshop.

### **Pre course work**

It is important that you complete the pre-course work prior to your first workshop. You will find all the key documents and supplementary information on the Babcock Learning Academy which has been set up for your use. We will also ensure that this on-line facility will be used and updated throughout your learning programme.

Prior to the first workshop you will need to do the following:

### **Pre course activities**

1. Complete the Mental Toughness Questionnaire which has been sent to you – this needs to be done at least 1 week prior to the start of your learning programme
2. Read the information and complete the activities on the Action Learning Information Sheet. Action Learning will be a key method of learning used throughout the programme so it is important that you have an overview of the concept prior to the start of your programme.
3. You will be assigned a subject topic to research prior to the start of your learning programme. Each participant will be assigned as a 'Learning Champion' for that particular topic from the course list. There will be two participants per group assigned to each topic – to form a "Buddy Learning" pair. Your task is to research the topic – to become the expert on the theory of that particular topic. You should produce a summary sheet of the work you've covered. This will then be distributed to all the other participants. You should be prepared to do a 10 minute presentation on this subject.

Subject Areas:

Ten Topics for Buddy Pair Learning Champions

1. Assertiveness
2. Empowerment / Trust
3. Knowledge Management
4. Managing Difficult Situations
5. Respect for Others / Importance of Feedback
6. Leadership Theories / Management. vs. Leadership
7. Power and Authority / Leader as Coach
8. The Importance of Leaders / Key Responsibilities of the Leadership Role
9. Main Theories of Motivation
10. Delegating Responsibility

Please note you will find information on each of the subject areas on the Babcock Academy, please use this as the basis for your research however, you may wish to draw on other sources and your own personal experiences.

We will be running three programmes over the coming months and your line manager will allocate you a place on the appropriate programme. Dates are as follows:

### **Programme 1 – (20 participants)**

Delivery:



February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Distance Learning

April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>

May 4<sup>th</sup> Tutorial support + 2 additional days support per group (telephone and email)

Assignments: will be given to candidates at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of learning.

Assignments to be submitted on the **9<sup>th</sup> June**

### **Programme 2 (20 participants)**

Delivery:

March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>

March 21<sup>st</sup> – Distance Learning

May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

May 24<sup>th</sup> Tutorial support + 2 additional days support per group (telephone and email)

Assignments: will be given to candidates at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of learning.

Assignments to be submitted on the **6<sup>th</sup> July**

### **Programme 3 (20 candidates)**

Delivery:

April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>

April 15<sup>th</sup> – Distance Learning

June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

June 16<sup>th</sup> Tutorial support + 2 additional days support per group (telephone and email)

Assignments: will be given to candidates at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of learning.

Assignments to be submitted on the **3<sup>rd</sup> August**

We look forward to working with you and if you have any questions please feel free to contact us on:

Arthur: [Arthur@pd-centre.com](mailto:Arthur@pd-centre.com) 07879004925

Pam: [pam@pd-centre.com](mailto:pam@pd-centre.com) 07801538967

## Appendix Four

### Reflective literary observations

#### Other sources of inspiration and reflection

In his 2011 paper on ethnographical rules, John Van Maanen, suggests that culture (by which he means art and written expression) may often shed light on the interaction of meanings and words, and so I have chosen a quotation from a novel; 'A night train to Lisbon' (Mercier, 2008) that seems to expose an interesting slant on the issue of development.

*'Nobreza Silencviosa, SILENT NOBILITY. It is a mistake that the decisive moments of a life when its direction changes for ever must be marked by sentimental loud and thrill dramatics, manifested by violent inner surges. This is a sentimental fairy tale invented by drunken journalists, flashbulb happy film-makers and readers of the tabloids. In truth, the dramatic moments of a life-determining experience are often unbelievably low-key. It has so little in common with the bang, the flash, or the volcanic eruption that, at the moment it happens, the experience is often not even noticed. When it unfolds its revolutionary effect, and ensured that a life is revealed in a brand-new light, with a brand-new melody, it does that silently and in this wonderful silence reside its special nobility.'*

The individual can be a great force for change and development. Literature and artistic endeavours suggest this. Harper Lee, although nearly a recluse in her native U.S.A., has stimulated huge social change in terms of race relations in Southern states through her book, 'To kill a mockingbird' (Lee 1960), which has sold over 11,000,000 copies and so focus on the abilities of individuals to change is justifiable in the manner in which John Van Maanen hinted at.

The phenomenological philosopher, Edmund Husserl, put forward his views on what he called time consciousness as applied to the appreciation of music (Collins and Selina, 1999, Page 77). This is where an individual will not experience music as a whole but encountering this phenomenon as successive notes in the medium of time. The complexities of leadership suggest that simplistic or rigid solutions are less likely to succeed.

This theme of time and individual sensing is reflected by many artists including T.S. Eliot (1944, *Burnt Norton*, lines 84-86) who, in *Four Quartets*, exposes the contrariness of existence in the lines:

*'Time past and time future  
Allow but a little consciousness.  
To be conscious is not to be in time...'*

Another book that highlights the focus (and the plight) of the individual is *The Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, first published in 1952. The opening paragraphs highlight the plight of ignored individuality, reinforced by the lines:

*'You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you are part of all the sounds and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse, you swear to make them recognise you. And, alas, it's seldom successful.'*

So these signposts of literature, regarding fictional but individual characters vindicates an approach that more clearly seeks individuals' responses.

Perhaps leadership development is a bit like the walks of Raja Shehadeh, chronicled in his 2008 book, *'Palestinian walks – Notes on a vanishing landscape'*.

*'In the beginning I did not know my way around. I would stray off the path, scrambling over terrace walls and causing their stones to tumble down behind me. It took a while before I began to have an eye for the ancient tracks that*

*criss-crossed them and for the new, more precarious ones, like catwalks along the edge of the hills, made more recently by sheep and goats in search of food and water. Page 5*

Leadership development feels like a journey with the developers keen to help those individuals involved find their own path through the maze of past, present and future.

One point of leadership development is to increase awareness. This point is neatly captured by an extract from a Doris Lessing book called 'The Memoirs of a Survivor'. Published in 2007, the narrator recalls a turning point in her life as the western structure of our reality begins to unwind:

*Because of this feeling, born of the experiences behind that wall, I was changing. A restlessness, a hunger that had been with me all my life, that had always been accompanied by a rage of protest, (but against what) was being assuaged. I found that I was more often waiting. I watched to see what would happen next, I observed, I looked at every new event, quietly, to see if I could understand it. Page 88*

Reflective practice and the excitement of curiosity are key factors in providing leadership development opportunities. Language and narrative are important to the task of this research and so Anthony Burgess's words fit with the emergent nature of the findings.

*And so we must avoid making hot judgements, laying down the law, nursing prejudices, waving jingoistic flags, bringing a spirit of petty parochialism to the world of human language. Languages are made by the people for the people, and people must use language as their needs dictate. No academy has the monopoly of 'correctness';*

Personal insight and seeking a wider vision are themes within leadership development. Neil Ansell (2011) wrote about his five years of solitude in a Welsh Valley. His interest in Woodcocks led to this startling description.

*I was picking my way along one of those trails on my way to one of my local badger sets, wanting to check if they had emerged from their slumbers yet. And then I caught a glimpse at my feet. It was an eye, and what I had seen was my own reflection moving in a shiny black eye. I leaned in closer. The eye was a perfect globe and in it I could see the entire valley in miniature.*

In this research there is a hope that such insight can be gained by encouraging such close attention to detail and such, as in this quotation, literally, focus on the reflective part of learning and development.

The plea for individuality and freedom could no better be expressed than in the words of the play called *The Heresy of Love* (Edmundson 2012).

‘ The church was aware of the need to control the cloistered women inside the convents and strict regimes...were intended to control the excecse of the female disposition and to ensure the perfection of these brides of christ’ (p.4)

This play, recently performed by the Royal Shakespeare Society examines the plight of a Mexican nun, Sor Juana.Ines del a Cruz. whose individuality and messages bring her into deep conflict with the Spanish Church.

There are many examples of the illuminating of an individual life through the media of art and this, set against the leadership development papers and articles provides a strong justification for pursuing this research in the context of individuality.

## **Appendix Five – Selected Dialogues**

The significant part of the transcript is detailed below and was part of a recorded and transcribed interview at the end of a programme:

The way in which the researcher's bias and potential prejudice can be tempered is by using a more subtle form of reporting and the adapted research approach of Steven Kempster (already discussed in detail in the thesis) (Kempster 2009). The recall, in a form of a two way story, has the advantage of personal recall, optimal non-confrontational feedback and relies heavily on the ways in which stories can carry through valuable insights by extended metaphor and deep descriptions.

During the early summer of 2010, two delegates on the University of Wales Institute Cardiff (U.W.I.C.) were tracked approximately every fortnight and asked two questions: Could you recall a notable person who, during the course of the programme, has helped you consolidate your learning and, secondly, can you recall a notable occurrence that has aided your learning and long-term understanding. Both delegates, consistently, through the central part of the programme, could not think of anything notable, neither person nor occurrence, that had helped to consolidate or reveal theories and ideas about leadership development. This was disappointing as it would be hoped that there is a tangible link between a programme's development aims and practice of management and leadership in the work place.

Subsequently I was able to postulate that, through the other forms of evaluation, this apparent absence of notable occurrences and notable people. Was this then that the programme tended to be delivered in a didactic manner which was less likely to help those individuals find or experience pertinent links to the use of collaborative leadership learning exercises in the workplace?

However later on in the programme other individuals were interviewed and transcriptions made of those sessions. These sessions were designed to hear the

experiences of each delegate with a Social Services background with an open-ended interview, broadly speaking covering four topics: the impact on the person, the impact on their team, the transferred learning to affect service design and delivery, and finally barriers and constraints. During one of these interviews the interviewee offered an unbidden story which related to her learning being impacted by a chance encounter with a member of staff who had agreed to conduct her 360 degree appraisal that was undertaken as part of the programme.

The comment from this delegate (SC) is re-produced, below, and interesting themes and subthemes are discussed.

*'I had to do two of those and then with the leadership programme in Bridgend we did a 360 degree appraisal and then someone came and gave us all the feedback and straight on that back of that I did these so I think within a two year period I'd done quite a few things and I chose different people for my 360 degree appraisal and I have actually spoken to two of them about it. We went through it and I actually thought that was really good and one of the people I picked had only worked here as a direct report to the team and had only been here three months, six months and I obviously picked somebody who knew me well and A. is a very honest, very competent man and very honest and I had a chat with him and I said "Thank you very much for contributing to the 360 degree appraisal" and I told him a little bit about the process and the feedback I'd had and then he just had the confidence he had to tell me what his impression of me was, what his impression of how I interacted with the team, what other people thought about me and all the rest of it was incredible to be honest, Arthur, and we had a great chat and I thought bloody hell the confidence of this chap to come into a head, actually I'm not...I don't think. But as a head of none the less, as head of service...known very well wow I don't know if I could have been able to have done that. 80% of what he said I took on board and understood where he was coming from and accepted, I mean it wasn't all bad, you know me I just go to the bad bits. 20% I was able to explain to him, well actually that's why I*

*had maybe done that and he found that helpful and that conversation has helped me enormously. I've been very mindful of (sic).*

It is interesting to note the impact that this one, fairly junior, person had on the delegate, the language is emphatic and emphasises the impact the conversation had on the Head of Service.(emphatic words in bold; phrases taken from the above transcription)

*'the **confidence he had** to tell me what his impression of me was', the rest of it was **incredible** to be honest, Arthur, we had a **great** chat, I thought...**the confidence of this chap**, 80% of what he said I took on board and understood where he was coming, from that conversation has helped me **enormously**.*

The interview continued:

*AT – That's very interesting, very interesting*

*SC – What he said about, about perception and I've, actually, that has been as helpful I think as a lot of the other stuff because I've carried that with me really and I go and slap him every so often. You know, he said to me that you're a very powerful woman and, you know, and I just, I just, I did not actually perhaps comprehend some of that really, so yeah, that's been good really, you know, that has been hugely helpful.*

*AT – OK, um, I mean my job really isn't to interpret what you're saying*

*Sc – Analyse me*

*AT – No no no I mean*

*SC – You can if you want*

*AT – No no no I was just pondering how often there is a branch of research about leadership that looks into timelines and notable things and notable people*

*SC – Right*

*AT – that sit outside of the kind of formal development. I think you've just described one of those moments, yes a notable thing happened to you with a notable person but has had from what you describe as much an impact on you.*

S went on to reflect on the impact of this notable person in relation to the job she currently does and how she got there.



*SC –I think that's right, and do you know I think you move into senior management roles or leadership roles and you don't necessarily, certainly in this trade, you don't, you're not trained necessarily for the next job, you just do it and you do muddle along and you may have role models and I have had really good role models and I've had some bad role models more good than bad and I notice now I see in myself, oh God that's what so and so would have done kind of thing and hopefully that's a good thing. You know is there any formal training because it's almost like a complete drip feed all the time as you go along and I think that's what this course has done as you go along, is brought practice and theory together at the same time which has been great. Um what was I going to say? I was going to say something important. Oh and one of the things I have always been aware of, I think is, but not always been able to either stop myself, or feel confident about it, but when you know, you go into a new role and you're in charge or you are, like I am in charge of adult social care, and everyone is looking at you and you're supposed to know all the answers, or you think everyone is expecting you to know all the answers, and that's really scary. But as you get to a point where you feel confident that actually it doesn't matter if you don't know all the answers,.....*

This piece of narrative gave me confidence that the 'notable people, notable occurrences' aspect of leadership development could occur across a tighter time-line than Kempster used (his research was retrospective and over a person's career not at the crux or crucible of their leadership development.) The surprise and the impact of the conversation 'S' had with 'A', and drawing this out through the interview process, gives particular credibility to the impact of an individual at a time when someone is learning and made more aware as a result.

A further, more detailed example from the Integra programme came from a coaching conversation with 'H'. H's narrative, transcribed as part of the coaching element of a leadership development programme, echoed this development and once again put notable people and notable occurrences at centre stage of his learning and awareness.

### **H's Moments**

In the first meeting with H. the conversation led to quite a revelation concerning his 'style' of leadership particularly when a member of staff called him at 2 o'clock in the morning to ask what he should do for a client who was not breathing!

Other events have continued to act upon H's attitude and thought processes as notable people and notable occurrences link to his development 'mode'. The next coaching session revealed a further couple of notable occurrences that have led to further and linked personal development.

H was reviewing his attitude to responsibility and accountability.

HO: *Oh right, okay. I think I'm responsible, then, it's a bit like, I always remember something which stuck in my head, because I was having a bit of a dilemma about being responsible for other people's practice. I have this kind of thing in my head at the time, not that long ago, I think it was a year ago, if I had to say something at that time I didn't like about my job, it was being responsible for other people's practice and for things that happen outside of your control. So like a client becoming well, but then I realized, there was an interview with Sir Ian Blair, the Police Commissioner, and it was about the Jean Charles.*

HO: *And, and, that answered a lot of questions for me, not that I particularly agreed with him in that situation or like him or anything else, but I think it answered a lot of questions for me, and a bit of a light went on really, um, that if someone becomes unwell, I'm not responsible for them becoming unwell, but I am accountable that there are things in place and that they have the right support and all the rest of it and that's the kind of light that came on for me I think.*

*That thing stuck with me, even though the person saying it wasn't a particularly good example of it, they probably pulled it out of a Christmas cracker or something. She did say that actually. And that stuck with me. And I was always aware that that was something I wasn't particularly strong on, and I was always aware of that.*

Some weeks later H. confirmed his progress by reporting two transforming stories:

HO: *We talked about doing them now like a lots of things that could be shelved until after the New Year.*

*I spoke to few staff and asked to give me what would be the most frustrating thing about I did not asks for the positives. I just asked you that so*

*I did not ask for the positive I just asked for that 360 degree ideas about what is the most frustrating thing about me. One staff said (tried it with the four but that didn't really happen) I think I did it with three she was just a bit shy she didn't really want to do anything*

*You were glaring at her (laughter) come into my office, I asked for that. I remember my sister doing it whilst she was it at College she had to do it with a peer, a junior member of staff who would be the lower and a superior. I can remember her doing it.*

HO: *So what they said was, the development points they said, on the two that came up with both people, um, they said it had improved in the last four months and the development points were, um, kind of, over-rules, you know, like for example.....um*

AT: *Can I just ask: do you mean over rules or overruled?*

HO: *Overrules, I overrule, have overruled staff like, for example;*

HO: It was un-known to me that this client had asked to go up the shop and could he go in the car, Jason quite rightly and sort of said well, you know you can walk up to there, I am sure you went up yesterday and encouraged him to walk as it is not far.

HO: Then he came to me, and he said, it is classic....

AT: I can almost hear what you are about to say.

HO: I am a little bit tired today and wondered if I could have a lift to the shop. Yes, of course, you can – just a kind of flippant remark

HO: So that was it he said, HO said that I could have a lift up to the shop. They did not tell me at the time...and then

HO: and the other one was a similar sort of thing really, with David, a care worker, a strong care worker, and, um, I had said something and we had had a conversation about a key client. I don't know - he didn't say what it was what it was he was going to 'ring the CPN – Oh, there is no need I was going to Leah next week he felt – he may have felt sidelined, I suppose but on both occasions and Phil very similar things and on all the occasions they said it has improved they felt I was more relaxed felt...right...so that is as far as I got – that is my preparation.

### **Laughter**

At: Well no - That is great 'cos you could have come here without.

HO: Um

AT: Um

HO: The other thing we talked about towards the end of the last session, I remember, was the sort of middle people I don't know if you remember, we talked, to try to address **that** I spoke to what I consider to be the more Senior people when David had said he thought it has improved, and he knows about the coaching sessions and the next stage now is for it to be handed-on to other people.

These two linked narratives highlighted the impact of naturally occurring incidents at work when the recipient leader has been alerted to the possibilities of applying theory (in this case, notable people and notable occurrences) to everyday conversations and incidents. This narrative suggests a potential for change and learning to occur that relates to the development of key leadership skills such as building trust and developing staff.

## **Appendix Six**

**Arthur Frank Turner**

**01633 244652 / 07879004925**

**Specialist in Leadership Development**



Leadership specialist working as an independent consultant in a wide variety of settings, both in the private and public sector organisations; having particular success as a coach, mentor, action learning facilitator, researcher and programme designer with emphasis on experiential variety as a sound trigger for learning.

Experienced in course evaluation & staff improvement programmes. Established expert witness and independent complaint investigator. Complementary skills as a mentor, coach and management consultant with a wide range of knowledge and qualifications.

**Co –Director of The Professional Development Centre with Pam Heneberry 2010 - 2013**

**Ongoing contracts with:**

**The University of South Wales, The Care Council for Wales (Cyngor Gofal Cymru) – Leadership Development programme. Powys Council, Finance Leadership Wales and Arriva Trains (Winner, 2012, The Training and Developing Staff Award (Western Mail and Institute of Welsh Affairs awards)) - as part of, and in conjunction, with the University of Glamorgan Commercial Services Department and The TUC in Wales/ Cymru, The Institute of Leadership and Development and Magstim Limited.**

Current Clients: Call of the Wild Limited, Social Services Improvement Agency (Wales/Cymru), Cwm Taf Health Board & Integra Community Living options (Coachee won the Gold Medal in the Welsh Care Awards 2012 (Leadership and Management in Supported Living or Small Group Community Living)), The University of Ulster, University of Glamorgan Humanities

Department, Dorothy McKee Consulting, Lifemapplanning, (Cardiff) and Leaderful Action Limited

**(In collaboration with Call of the Wild Limited) – Panasonic (Eastern Europe), The University of Falmouth, Devon County Council (Early Years Settings). Educ8 Limited, Essex County Borough Council and Enfield London Borough Council**

**Previous Clients (2010 - 2012) include:** Call of the Wild Limited (including **Panasonic (Scandinavia), Volkswagen Engineering, TNT parcels, PHS Limited, Cable & Wireless, Babcock International & John Lewis, Coca Cola (UK) Limited**), Public Services Management Wales (facilitation and workshop development), West Midlands Probation Service, 4warddevelopment Limited, Fix Training Limited, Pi Associates (Newport City Council), The Fresh Baked Group, The Bushey Academy & Eliesha Training

## **SIGNIFICANT RECENT ACTIVITIES**

- Occasional Lecturer at the University of West of England (Undergraduate and Masters' level) Lead Tutor Leadership Modules January – July 2013
- Book reviewer for the University of West of England's business school
- Key note speaker at Swansea Social Care Conference, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013
- University of South Wales's Webinar entitled Action Learning and Leadership (with Pam Heneberry) June 28<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013
- Care Council Leadership Webinar (with Susan Elsmore) June 24<sup>th</sup> 2013
- Chair for the British Academy of Management (B.A.M.) conference academic workshop chair plus reviewer for leadership track draft full and development papers (2012 – 2013)
- External Examiner for the University of Ulster (Advanced Diploma in Civic Leadership and Community Planning, 2010-2013)
- Design and Delivery of Early Years facilitated managerial development in Exeter, Oakhampton and Barnstaple 2012-2013.
- Working with Call of the Wild Limited to develop pre-employment workshops and interventions in the Welsh Valleys, in conjunction with clients of Working Links Limited.
- Commencing a second leadership programme for Wales TUC with the Professional Development Centre, while currently working on a new programme with the Scottish TUC.
- Working with the University of Glamorgan in the delivery of ILM qualifications in leadership and coaching and delivering a leadership module within the University of Glamorgan's Humanities Department.
- External Consultant to Cwm Taf Health Trust's PULSE and Learning Leaders project (2012-2014), which concerns the application of innovative approaches for creating a learning organisation.
- Key researcher with the University of Bath's Welsh Assembly 'Appetite for Life' guidelines programme 2008 – 2010
- Total Course evaluation with Transformation Partners (2009 – 2011) for University of Wales Institute Cardiff's Leadership for Collaboration programme dovetailing with the evaluation and feedback for the delegates supported by the sponsorship of the Social Services Improvement Agency 2006 -2013
- Establishment, with colleagues, of a working online training tutorial system, development of bespoke management & leadership qualifications

- Five independent investigations (2008 – 2010) with the City of Newport and a series of care reports for Cartwright Black solicitors in Cardiff
- Design and development, with a colleague, of a Sabbatical Officers' development programme 2009-2010
- Associate Consultant of Bristol Business School, University of the West of England (by tender)
- Development and delivery of a programme for Corporate Social Responsibility
- Project manager for the planning of a Pan-Wales (Cymru) leadership development programme for the principality's social services
- Active member of the award winning (Public Service People Management Awards) University of Bath team providing facilitated appreciative enquiry
- Registered consultant for Public Services Management Wales

## **CURRENT STUDY**

- 2008-2013 - Commenced November 2008, Doctorate in Business Administration - University of Glamorgan. Viva passed, March 2013. Final manuscript due to be submitted in September 2013

## **SUCCESSFUL MENTORING AND COACHING ASSIGNMENTS**

- Delivery of Integra Community Services coaching programme as part of leadership development 2009 – 2013
- Co-Tutor for Coaching qualification level 3 with Newport City Council (in conjunction with Pi Associates) 2010 - 2011
- Co-tutor for a Level 5 award qualification (in conjunction with Palladium Training) 2010 - 2011
- Executive coach for Welsh Assembly Government 2010
- Development Coach (in conjunction with 4ward Development Ltd) Magstim Medical, Whitland, West Wales December 2009 – June 2010/ November 2010 – on-going
- Coaching and Leadership development programme for Integra Community Services Limited (2010 - 2011)
- Coach for Public Service Management Wales June 2009 – Current time
- Mentor/Facilitator for 'AimHigher' mentorship programme for young adults and university undergraduates. University of Wolverhampton 2009
- Co-tutor for Level 7 Diploma in Executive coaching and mentoring in Birmingham, commencing September 2008 - 2009
- Monthly business coaching and individual mentoring programme for a company board (2005-2009)
- Mentor and Coach for Cardiff Students' Union Board – 2005 – 2009
- Monthly mentoring support of the Chief Executive of MIND, Newport (2001-2007)
- Coach for Senior manager in Social Services for the City of Newport (December 2006-September 2007)
- Co-tutor for Coaching/Mentoring qualification 2007 programme for South Wales programme
- Co-tutor for Coaching/Mentoring qualification 2007-2008 programme for North-East Wales programme
- Co-tutor for Coaching/Mentoring qualification 2008 programme for South Wales programme
- Coach for four participants of the Management Academy programme for Picture Finance Ltd, Newport (2006)

- Author of successful application to run Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) coaching qualifications at Levels 3 and 5 (2005)
- Mentor for Principal of a Bath-based computer company (2004)

## **SIGNIFICANT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROJECTS**

- Lead consultant for City of Newport "Management Passport" scheme 2006 - 2010
- Key facilitator in the Public Service in Wales Middle Manager Development (Connect4Cymru) programme 2005-2008 in conjunction with the University of Bath Centre for Action Research and Professional Practice
- Co-ordinator for a management and leadership training programme for Cardiff and Vales NHS Healthcare Trust 2005-2007
- Member of Welsh Assembly Government team undertaking a whole review of palliative care in Wales - December 2006-March 2007
- Facilitator for Swansea Local Health Board re-design programme - 2006
- NVQ management advising for Levels 4 & 5 in Newport Social Services 2005
- Health Service Development, Part of Consultancy team for the Republic of Armenia 2007
- Co-Design and delivery of a participation and co-production programme for Learning Disabilities Directorate

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Management Qualifications**

- 2009 - Level 7 Diploma for Executive Coaches and Leadership Mentors (The Institute of Leadership and Management)
- 2009 - Mentoring (N.V.Q. Level 2) for children and young people. Menfa, Cardiff
- 2008 - City and Guilds Graduateship Award in Management (GCGI)
- 1992 - Diploma of the Institute of Health Services Management (Dip. I.H.S.M.)
- 1991 - Diploma in Management Studies (Health) University of Glamorgan (D.M.S.)

### **Academic Degrees**

- 1997 - MSc in Healthcare Management, University of Glamorgan (M.Sc.)
- 1986 - BA Open University (B.A.)

## **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- 2002 - External Verifier for Management NVQs and Vocational Qualifications Institute of Leadership and Management D35
- 2001 - National Vocational Qualification Assessor. Institute for Supervision and Management D32 & D33
- 1991 - Completed the third specialist certificate to qualify for the Certificate of Professional Practice (Certificates are: Teaching and Assessing in Clinical Practice, Care of the Older Person and Continence promotion)
- 1983 - Certificate of District Nursing No. 30164
- 1978 - Registered General Nurse No. 0545206

### **Other training and development**

- 2006-2010 – Welsh Language Studies - National Open College Network Cymraeg i Oedolion
- 2011-2012 – Arabic for Beginners – Cardiff University

### **Membership of Professional Bodies**

- 2009 - 2013 Member of the British Academy of Management
- 2002-2013 - Fellow of Institute for Leadership and Management (FinstLM)
- 1999-2002 - Membership of Institute of Supervision & Management (MISM)
- 1978-1990 / 1996-2013 - Member of the Royal College of Nursing
- 1991-2008 - Member of the Institute of Healthcare Management (MIHM)

### **Current Managerial Responsibilities (2010 - 2013)**

- Trustee for Lifemappanners, Youth Charity, Cardiff/Caerdydd Wales /Cymru, 2013
- Internal Verifier for Dorothy Mckee Associates
- Internal Verifier for LeaderfulAction Consultancy

### **Previous Managerial Responsibilities (2001 to 2008)**

- Active Approval Panel Member for Institute of Healthcare Management from October 2002-2008
- Non-Executive Director for Fix Training Ltd (Appointed May 2009 - April 2010)
- Director Online2U (2003-2008) - Company specialising in blended online accredited management training and personal development opportunities
- Associate Director, Pi Associates (2001-2008)
- Non-Executive Director Fresh-Baked Training (2005-2008)

## **SIGNIFICANT TRAINING**

1993-1995 General Management Training - NHS Staff College Wales

## **RESEARCH**

- 2011 - 2012 – Research Assistant for ‘First Hundred Days’ project, with the Institute of Leadership and Management. The research was focussed on new managers.
- 2011 - Middle Manager Development, Babcock International (with the Professional Development Centre, Call of the Wild Limited, supervised through the University of Glamorgan)
- 2011 – Institute of Leadership of Leadership and Management - Nottingham City Council in Conjunction with The Professional Development Centre
- 2009 – 2010 Institute of Leadership and Management Level 3: Return on Investment programme
- 2009 – 2010 Research into Management training at Skandia UK (The Institute of Leadership and Management)
- 2008 - 2010 Appetite for Life (Blas am Oes) Welsh Assembly Government
- 2008 - Co-author of Public Services Management Wales booklet: "Learning from each other" published for the PSMW "Expo" event 29th & 30th January
- 2007- 2008 - Leadership capacity and capability for Social Services Directors
- 2001 - Professional & Practice Development Planning. Centre for Health Leadership, Wales



- 1997 - Health and Social interface in the care of the elderly. UniGlam

#### Articles published (2013):

Action Learning: Research and Practice Manuscript ID: 759392

ACCOUNT OF PRACTICE The Impact of Action Learning: 'What difference are we making in the world?' By: Arthur Turner and Pamela Heneberry

#### Article awaiting publication (2013):

- **Dreaming fairness and re-imagining equality and diversity through participative inquiry** **Dr. Margaret Page**, Faculty of Business and Law, University of the West of England **Louise Grisoni** Business and Management Faculty of Business Oxford Brookes University **Arthur Turner University of Glamorgan**

#### Conferences: Papers presented and workshops run

- 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013. **Leadership and Management, Wales/University of Glamorgan Commercial Services Department**. Keynote presentation with Pamela Heneberry. 'So... you think you can lead?' Future Inns Cardiff, Cardiff
- Development Paper Accepted at the **Management Learning Conference at Lancaster University, March 2013**. Entitled: The role of mediating artefacts in knowledge creation
- **Arthur F. Turner** (University of Glamorgan, UK) *The challenges of leadership development* **Bristol Policy and Politics Conference, September 2012 Panel Presentation 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 Policy and politics? No. The practitioners call out for honest conversations that cut through the mustard** Panel organiser: **Clare Butler** (Newcastle University, UK)
- Workshop at the **British Academy of Management Conference, Cardiff/ Caerdydd Wales /Cymru September 2012** (in conjunction with Pam Heneberry) Workshop entitled: Artefacts in leadership development
- Development Paper: 'Leadership Development in Middle Managers' **British Academy of Management Conference, September 2012**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> International Action Learning Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Ashridge Business School**. Paper: 'Is Action Learning Purity Essential to be Effective?' (with Pam Heneberry)
- **British Academy of Management, Annual Conference 2011: Building and Sustaining High Performance Organisations in a Challenging Environment 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2011, Aston University, Birmingham**

Development Paper: 'Leadership Development Workshops: Design, Structure and Evaluation'

- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Developing Leadership Capacity Conference. University of the West of England 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

Papers: 'Nottingham City Council Leadership Programme Evaluation' (with Pam Heneberry), 'Evaluation of Leadership for Collaboration Post-Graduate Programmes' and 'Middle Manager Development'

Workshop: 'Creative Leadership Programmes' (with Pam Heneberry and Kevin Gould)

- **AGR Limited Innovations in Coaching Conference – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011, Newport, South Wales**

Workshop: 'Experiential Leadership Development Programmes' (with Pam Heneberry & Kevin Gould)

- **2<sup>nd</sup> International Action Learning Conference Action Learning: Assessing the Value. Henley Business School. 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010**

Paper: 'Developing Leadership skills in Middle Managers'

## **Appendix Seven**

### **Arthur F. Turner – Bracketing for Leadership Development**

In order to pursue this research utilising the ontological perspective of phenomenology, it was firstly important to attempt to clear my mind of my experiences of leadership development through a long career in the Health Service, and an even longer career as a self-employed consultant. The role of a self-employed consultant has been an evolutionary process which has drawn me further and further into the field of leadership development. It may not be possible to undertake this discipline, in its purest sense, as 'clearing' one's mind is not a precise way of acting as the researcher will always come to the research 'table' with previous experiences or definite views (Allen, 2007). However the process of thinking about previous experiences of leadership development did allow me some precious moments reflection on the formative elements of my career and to attempt to place them out-of-bounds during the research period. Discussions with my fellow facilitators during the planning of the sessions revealed and exposed pre-assumptions I had made concerning some key elements of the programme.

1. The place of the psychometric 'tool' to illicit a range of key conversations
2. The appropriateness of reflective and written processes
3. The relevance of knowledge to practical processes at work
4. The link of theory to the practicalities of individual change and progression.

I had had a fairly rapid move into the nursing profession once qualified and sampled management as a ward Charge Nurse within 18 months of qualification in 1981. Leadership in Nursing was not as well defined as it is now and so I was learning and developing managerial skills in a clinical ward setting. Further developments in my nursing career lead me to more specialist clinical areas, specifically District Nursing and Continence Promotion. Further specialisation in community nursing, becoming a Community Liaison Nurse in 1986, sustained my clinical development and personal management skills but did not promote any further understanding (perhaps even promoting misunderstanding). Further career development was thwarted by the probability of the community posts being likened to a career 'cul-de-sac' and more career progression would be unlikely without significant insight and more senior managerial experience.

I was accepted onto the Gwent Health Authority training scheme which was designed to identify and help progress key members of the clinical staff into more senior managerial and leadership posts. This opportunity was a revelation to me as I had not been able to (or indeed know how to) self-reflect. One particular part of that progress still has resonance today. The final feedback was given to me by an experienced manager and his final ink written comment on my appraisal form:

*'can have a tendency to be a bit of a lone wolf' (NHS - Assessment Centre Abergavenny, 1989)*

struck me with a force and that began my journey into leadership and management as being a verbal and written focal-point to nearly all my subsequent developments into the current time. I had, through this process of workshops both been able to recognise my own potential through the psychometric testing but also, perhaps for the first time in a leadership and management context been able to reflect on what I needed to do next.

Partly as a consequence of this new insight into my managerial potential I started the Diploma of Management Studies at the University of Glamorgan studying, for the first time in any depth, the ideas, modes and theories of the management of leadership and management. In the main this was conducted in a very traditional manner whereby the lecturers spend most of their time at the front of group dictating pre-prepared notes. The focus of the group was not generating ideas but to learn and absorb facts and figures, theories and the names of leading gurus who have influenced leadership and management development.

This approach was balanced by an appropriate assignment linked to the workplace and also had a 10-day study tour of Canada which theoretically allowed for deeper insight into systems in order to consolidate learning. Several experiential workshops linked to the programme also allowed for a freer style of learning.

Successfully passing this and during the programme obtaining my first 'real' management roles allowed me to embark upon several key learning opportunities in a four year period ending in redundancy in December 1995.

My period of practical managerial experience coincided with a marked change in management style for the new Health Trust whereby clinicians (mainly Doctors) were elevated to roles of Clinical Directors. During this time I was greatly influenced by one Director who said of me, when comparing others:

*'you continue to make mistakes but at least they are not the same ones.'*

Of all the people in my career Dr D. S., Consultant, Physician and Geriatrician, made the most impact of my development and seems to have held a role such as those described as a 'Notable Person' (Kempster 2009).

**Chronological listing** of leadership experience as a means of 'bracketing' or sidestepping, for the period of the research, previous experiences.

1989 – 2 day selection workshop (Gwent Health Authority, Neville Hall Hospital, Abergavenny)

1991 – 1993 Diploma of Management Studies, University of Glamorgan

1992 – Management training (University Hospital of Wales)

1992 – Diploma of Management Studies the Institute of Health Care Management

1992 – 2-day interview and selection for 'Widening Horizons' NHS Staff College Wales

1993 – 1995 – Widening Horizons graduate programme for Health Service Managers

1997 – Masters degree (M.Sc.) – University of Glamorgan

2005 – 2008 Action learning training as facilitator (Connect4Cymru programme) – University of Bath

2008 – 2012 – Doctorate in Business Administration – University of Glamorgan Business School

2009 – NVQ 2 – Mentoring for younger people

2009 – Graduand Status with City and Guilds

2009 – The Institute of Leadership and Management Executive Coaching and

## Appendix Eight

### Story Circle Guidelines

1. **Sit in a circle**; make the circle a “good” circle”, not oval or jagged. Being in a circle is important. In a circle everyone is in an equal physical place to each other.
2. The facilitator of the circle should introduce herself/himself to the group, and then moving clockwise-wise from that person, **each person states their name and gives a VERY BRIEF introduction of themselves** (where from, what organisation they are with).
3. **Be aware of how much time you have for the whole story circle process**: the stories themselves, the cross-circle talking and the report creation; make sure you know what time your circle is to re-join the larger group (if there is one), and what time the whole session needs to end. The facilitator should re-cap these time factors to the circle.

4. **Decide on the number of minutes for each story;** we suggest three minutes. Choose the method of time keeping; will there be one timekeeper or will you pass the watch around the circle. Decide on what the signal will be when the time is up; the storyteller doesn't have to stop abruptly, just finish up the story.
5. If there is to be a theme given for the stories, the **facilitator explains the theme** and answers any questions about that theme or about the process itself.
6. **The facilitator calls for the first story;** anyone on the circle may begin with a story.
7. **The story circle will proceed clock-wise from the first storyteller.** Any person may pass when their time comes; people who pass will have a chance at the end of the circle to tell a story.
8. **The stories you tell should be STORIES,** not political theories, general histories, or your opinion on the theme, or your opportunity to lecture. A story can be your story or the story of a family member, friend or acquaintance.
9. **The essence of story telling is the listening.** Listening is more important than talking. Don't spend time thinking of what your story will be; just actively listen to the stories. Trust that the circle will bring you a story. If several stories come to you as you are listening, go for the one that is the "deepest", that you feel comfortable telling.
10. **Do not take notes while in the circle.** Do not hold books or papers in your lap. Concentrate on listening.
11. **Silence is OK,** in fact it is good. As the stories pass around the circle it is OK for there to be silence after one story is complete and before the next person begins; this gives that person, and the circle, time to reflect on the story they just heard, and it gives the next person time to land on his/her story, or decide to pass without pressure.
12. **You don't have to agree with someone's story, but you need to respect his or her right to tell it.**
13. **As the circle proceeds, there will be no "cross circle" talk, questions or commenting on the story just told.** After the circle is complete and everyone that might have passed has had a chance to tell a story, then there will be a "cross circle questioning, commenting and dialogue" time.

14. **At the end of the circle, proceed, again in clockwise fashion, to ask the people who passed if they now have a story.** They may, or they may pass again. Then, after everyone who is going to tell has, open the circle for the “cross circle questioning, commenting and dialogue. You need to have decided how long you have for that phase of the circle and keep to that time.
  
15. **If the circle you are in will be joining a larger group, then your circle needs to decide on how to “report back” on the essence or themes that emerged from your circle.** This should be a collaborative undertaking, and can be as creative as the group desires. Again, you need to keep to the allotted amount of time for this phase of the circle. Finally, join the larger group, and report on your story circle.
  
16. Finally, if your circle has time for more than one circle of stories, begin the process all over again.

With acknowledgements to Theresa Holden, Leadership for a Changing World Project (Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University) and Managing Director, Junebug Productions/The Color Line Project.

**TH@Holdenarts.org**

## **Appendix Nine**

**Taken from Babcock Programme Reportage about sessions on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June.**

R1 = Report 1 – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April and R2 = Report 2 – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May R3 = Report 3 – Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June

### ***Individuality / Individual Responses to Development:***

For several of the exercises, such as the engineering exercise (R1) there appeared to be a range of responses to exercises from different individual participants, but this often didn't appear to me to be beyond a normal distribution of responses. In this engineering exercise it was also highlighted that there was a reluctant to take charge, although this should not be considered unusual among a group of people who are new to one another.

However, there were several exercises and parts of the course, which elicited interesting individual responses to development and to the course.

Several of the participants expressed that the opportunity for individual reflection was one of the important things that they felt they had gained from attending this sort of programme. This individual reflection is something that people valued and that they often didn't get the opportunity for in their normal, fast-paced working life. Jane from Scarborough (R2) who works for the Adult Careers Services is one such participant. This view was also expressed by Julie, an accountant from School Corporate Services (R2). A lot of the learning from the course could therefore be seen almost to be done individually in the reflection time or using a reflective journal.

Several of the examples that participants volunteered as changes made as a result of their learning from the programme were quite individual ones relating to their specific circumstances. This would imply that general lessons / approaches which are learnt at the course are then applied by individuals in their own workplaces, and that it is the approaches that are learnt at the programme rather than specific lessons. This would reinforce the need for individual reflection to see how people could use the lessons in their own workplaces. Examples of this include:

Nick (R2), who said that he had moved his desk closer together to his team and walking with people which he believed helped to create a sense of 'we together'.

Corrine (R2) had focused on encouraging staff to have fun, using animal masks and throwing balls, which although they were reluctant to do at the beginning, they warmed to!

Gavin (R2) said that he now made a point at his team meetings of sitting at the side, rather than the end of the table, which he felt had made a difference to the group dynamic.

Furthermore, a lot of these responses, and others included in the Reportage, were based very much around the use of physical space and the way that changing something about physical space changed the dynamic of the group and the interactions between the team members.

### ***Positive Responses to 'Comfort Zone' Issues:***

Initial exercises in a workshop, particularly when people do not know each other at all, can often be a difficult time for people, and is often a time when people are beyond their 'comfort zone'. This doesn't seem to have been the case with the hopes and fears exercise. This is perhaps particularly surprising since personal information about their own expectations (and linked to perhaps their weaknesses – if they are their fears) can be something people are reluctant to share. It is perhaps unusual to embrace such an activity so emphatically. The report states that there was 'a deafening chatter and high energy...No-one set themselves apart or was disinclined. All entered into the spirit of the exercise'.

In a similar vein, in R3 there is a summary of an exercise where each participant was required to tell a story for one minute. Although of course it is possible that people



happened to come up with similar themes for their stories, many people (assuming the order of the stories in the report is the chronological order of them being told) seemed to “feed off” the previous story told. A story about children was often followed by another story about children, or a story about elderly relatives was often followed by a further story about elderly relatives. Again this is perfectly understandable, people assume that others have a standard in their mind of what sort of story *should* be told, but feel unsure of what it would be and not confident enough to say what they want to say regardless. I would further postulate that this might be a sign of a group not being comfortable or familiar with each other despite having been working together for a whole day previously. For example, one participant in this group asked the reporter writer how she had found the homework the previous evening, not recognising that they had never met before.

The ‘Mental Toughness Exercise’ (R1), which the delegates had already completed, however, appeared to have quite a different response. People were keen to try and find out others results – a few were seen to have attempted to see others’ scores, and as is suggested in the report perhaps to establish ‘a norm’ so that people could see how they stood in relation to that norm. From the group that was observed, people did seem eventually willing to share this information quite openly, but there was certainly an initial reluctance to do so.

As perhaps would be expected, one of the times when people seemed outside of their comfort zone was when they were told they were going outside for an activity. It is reported that a lot of questions were asked – perhaps this could be characterised as trying to prepare well, although it could equally be thought to express a lot of discomfort. Some weren’t dressed appropriately for the outdoor activity. It seems that Arthur and Pam perhaps anticipated this because when they explained the activities they appeared to recognise that it is outside of people’s comfort zones because they felt the need to explain that the activities stemmed from recognised ideas.

This was manifested particularly in Nicola’s difficulties (R3) in continuing to walk without a handrail. Her attitude to the situation, despite her initial, almost overwhelming, urge to go back, was overcome, with significant help from the writer of the report. What is particularly impressive in Nicola’s attitude is her ability to rationalise both the fear that she feels, for example by considering and answering the question ‘What would help you to continue?’ and by thinking about how she would feel if she did go back before completing the activity. Her unwillingness to submit to an inclination that she “just can’t do it” is an interesting response in someone who is obviously quite severely out of their comfort zone. Although she needed some help to do so, thinking through the problem and believing that it was something solvable and within her control seem to have paid dividends – see her joyful reaction to being able to reach the top in the end. Her attitude is in sharp contrast to three other participants mentioned in the same report, who all were unhappy about the walk and less engaged than others in the activities. Perhaps they were out of their comfort zones from a variety of perspectives, but their response appears to be one of not fully participating and “giving up”.

### ***The Importance of Assumptions***

One participant (R3) explicitly stated that one lesson they had learnt from the course was not to make assumptions, which is an important lesson undoubtedly, but a large amount of what is noted in the three reports could be solved / helped by people not making assumptions. Or, by people stopping to think about the perspective of someone else and incorporate the possible perspectives that the others involved in the task might have. In the exercise (R3) where the participants have to make a vehicle, many of the participants did not stop to consider what the other people in their team could be doing, such as the workers who (jokingly) threatened to strike. They further didn't consider how this would be perceived by the others in their team, assuming their humour could be transmitted by writing, yet knowing that the workers and managements were both working without full knowledge of the situation of others in their team. Behaving without considering the perspectives of others, and not stopping to question ones assumptions, happens repeatedly in this exercise.

Many of the general lessons (R3 Page 8) seem to reflect this broad idea. Often it is not phrased in explicit terms, but often the issue at the heart of it is about the importance of assumptions. Lessons included 'Listen', 'Follow up and Clarify', 'Don't assume', 'Ask Questions' and 'Be Certain of the Task Parameters'.

## **Appendix Ten**

'Ni' was asked if she was absolutely sure she wanted to go back and she informed us that she did. I told her that she would miss out on the cave experience. I then asked her how she would feel back at base having given up at this point.

'Ni' said she would be very disappointed and let down by herself. She was asked what it would take for her to take just five steps forward. She replied "*A handrail*". The facilitator then noticed that the handrail was ending and asked 'Ni' what security the hand rail gave her. She said it was a physical barrier between her and the drop. 'Ni' was asked if she could move forward the five steps if I took the place of the wooden barrier. I would remain on her left, she needn't look anywhere but at her feet to her next step and she could hold on to me if she needed support at any time. She was thinking about this as the third facilitator approached. It was suggested he/they didn't wait for us as we may or may not join them at the cave.

'Ni' asked him what was at the top of the path that she could see. He advised her that it was flat ground, not a ledge, but some woodland, at the end of which the path descended again. The third facilitator left. 'Ni' reflected on this for a few seconds and then agreed to try a few steps. We did those steps with me at her side and 'Ni' looking at her feet. The remaining facilitator checked she felt all right and then suggested another five steps. We carried on this way until she reached the top. She was delighted! As we continued through the woodland she reflected on what had just happened. How she could so easily have given up, but how worthwhile it had been to find a way through by just breaking down the issue, looking at the obstacles, planning strategies to overcome them, utilising the resources available and sheer focus. It was discussed how people like being asked for help and are usually more than willing to do so.

We also discussed how we can often personally achieve more when we have good support from another. The conversation even moved on to couples we know where, for example, the man may be successful because he has the support of his wife/partner. This partner's strength and contribution to their success is often not appreciated/recognised until the partner parts company and suddenly his career stalls or takes a dive as well.

It was clear that where the path descended again, 'Ni' needed support once more which I started to give until the second hill walker instructor arrived to offer his assistance. I could see 'M' sitting on a rock at the edge of the path. She was asked her if she had already been down and was on the return leg.

Sarcastically, she said she had and was now racing ahead of the others... before admitting that she wasn't going down. She was asked her if she wanted to come with me and she firmly said "No!"

She told me she had walked down a similar path a few years back; had badly damaged her ankle and that she had no intention of risking putting herself through that experience again. She said she'd be all right if she had suitable equipment e.g. a walking stick. For a moment I considered offering myself as her replacement walking stick but her emphatic "No" was still ringing in my head and so I turned to walk on as 'A' and 'M' came towards us also returning to base. The group was collectively joined by the others who were gathered outside the cave. 'Ni' was asked how she felt now she was here. She was extremely pleased with herself. I asked her how she felt about going into the cave. She had no concerns about this at all. In the cave, we walked some distance over some uneven and occasionally rock-strewn ground. The only light came from the occasional mobile phone. The first Hill walking instructor had a torch and signalled that we had joined the whole group. Everyone was

asked to turn their lights off and, finally, the instructor also turned off his torch. The instructor led a reflective session on the day's activities/learning.

Feedback included:

*'I've learned to think before I act'*

*'I've learned not to make assumptions'*

*'There are ways to overcome your fears'*