A process model for entrepreneurship education and development

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Keywords Entrepreneurship, Education, Business schools

Abstract There has been a significant reawakening of interest in the applicability of action learning as a paradigm for management development, particularly as a pedagogical device in both classroom and executive development contexts. This development has occurred against a background of a wider re-examination of the theory and practice of management education and development. Fundamentally, this re-examination has been stimulated by criticism of the static, content-oriented approach as inappropriate to the changing environment of the 1990s. In particular, there is a shift required for effective management: business schools will have to focus on the day-to-day realities of the business world, develop communication and leadership skills and emphasise continuous attention to the links between theory and practice. The implications are twofold: first, the range of teaching techniques must be extended to include process-oriented approaches; second, and more fundamentally, there is a need for an expanded definition of the learning arena itself, and of the role of management schools within that. Renewed interest in and attention to the concept of the learning company, and to processes of both individual and organisational learning, redefines the context within which these changes are taking place. Reviews a number of key developments in this understanding of contemporary management education and development, and presents a summary of a new programme built as an action-and-implementation oriented approach to entrepreneurial senior executive development. This programme aims to support the development of leadership in both large and smaller, growth-oriented companies, in a partnership which breaches the conventional separation both between the encapsulated learning arenas of the university and the organisation and between management and entrepreneurship education and development. This partnership emphasises the impact of intra-group and inter-organisational learning on both the participants and on the context of their organisations.

Introduction

The nature, relevance, content and appropriateness of entrepreneurship education has been subject to increasing scrutiny in recent years (Block and Stumpf, 1992; Gorman et al., 1997; Young, 1997; Kourilsky and Carlson, 1997). In particular, a three-stage model of the evolution of entrepreneurship education has been suggested (Harrison and Leitch, 1994). The first, and earliest, approach characterised entrepreneurship education as simply a sub-set of general management education; the second approach reacted to this as...
entrepreneurship grew in importance as a focus for academic debate, and was based on the argument that entrepreneurship education (and education and development for smaller businesses in particular) must be qualitatively different from conventional large company-based management education which dealt with essentially different problems, organisations and contexts (Vesper et al., 1998; Filion, 1991). The third stage in the evolution of approaches to entrepreneurship education is an emerging reconceptualisation of the field, based in part on a renewed interest in the nature and role of leadership in changing organisational structures, which provides the basis for the reintegration of management education and entrepreneurship education.

In parallel with this, there has also been a growing interest in the processes by which individuals and, increasingly, organisations learn (Argyis and Schon, 1978; Pedler et al., 1991; Senge, 1990; Dixon, 1994; Edmondson and Moingeon, 1996; Easterby-Smith, 1997). This interest has begun to influence the entrepreneurship literature (e.g. Gibb, 1997). For example, Block and Stumpf (1992) draw on the earlier work of Cooper (1982) and House (1982) in discussing the learning needs of entrepreneurs; Slevin and Colvin (1992) parallel, without directly referring to, the emphasis in Senge (1990) on team learning and team development as a key entrepreneurial process; and Guth et al. (1991) address specifically the relevance of models of experiential learning, and of the learning from failure in particular (Brehmer, 1980; Janoff-Bulman and Brickman, 1982; Levitt and March, 1988; Sterman, 1989), to entrepreneurial cognition and enactment. As Day (1992, p. 137) argues, “all organisations must be able to learn if they are to move into new businesses. In fact, virtually every aspect of organisational learning has relevance either directly or indirectly for entrepreneurial management” – a point reiterated in the growing literature on organisational competencies and learning in strategic management and entrepreneurship (McGrath et al., 1993; Dubini and Paulato, 1993; Leitch and Harrison, 1993).

As in other areas of management research and practice, research into entrepreneurship education has followed a number of distinct avenues (Block and Stumpf, 1992; Vesper et al., 1988; Gorman et al., 1997). Within this range of interests and approaches, however, “the most difficult and costly research on entrepreneurship education will involve the examination of different program content pedagogical methods used to accomplish educational objectives” (Block and Stumpf, 1992, pp. 38-9). In this paper we begin to respond to this challenge by discussing the design and outcomes of an entrepreneurial development programme (which has a particular focus on leadership development as a bridge between conventional management and entrepreneurship education and development – Harrison and Leitch 1994). The paper is structured as follows: following a brief summary, for contextual purposes, of recent developments in management education, the paper briefly reviews the basic principles of action learning which underlie recent discussions of the learning company concept (Lessem, 1993; Pedler et al., 1991) and which have informed the design of the programme under discussion. Following a presentation of the key features of
and background to this entrepreneurial executive development programme, the paper presents an initial evaluation of the impact of this programme on the development of personal leadership, operational organisational development and strategic business development.

Changes in management education

Many analysts and commentators seem to be in little doubt that the era in which we currently live is marked as one of great significance, characterised not only as a turning point, but also as a time of transition and radical change (Smart, 1992). Morgan (1990) elaborates on this point that change is the defining characterisation of present times by indicating that the pace and complexity of change is more likely to increase in the future than decrease. Vaill (1990) has suggested that the metaphor of permanent white water can be employed to describe modern organisational life. Whereas in the past organisational life could be compared to the flow of a river, with both periods of calm and turbulence apparent (Cunningham, 1994), Vaill (1990) argues that increasingly organisations experience only conditions of permanent, unremitting turbulence. However, although change as a feature is increasingly articulated in various bodies of literature, it must be remembered that radical change is not necessarily a unique characteristic of present times: indeed it may “not be the rule but the exception in social life” (Heilbroner, 1961, p. 195), a fact reiterated by Spender (1994, p. 388) who agrees that it is “stability that is unusual rather than turbulence”. Smart (1992) also warns that caution has to be exercised when analysing and assessing current patterns and permutations of change, because of the extent to which we are vulnerable to the assumption that our own time is somehow special or different. This point is reiterated by Foucault (1983, p. 206) who observes that “… I think we should have the modesty to say to ourselves that, while the time we live in is not the unique or fundamental or irruptive point in history where everything is completed and begun again. We must also have the modesty to say, conversely, that … the time we live in is very interesting; it needs to be analysed and broken down, and that we would do well to ask ourselves: ‘What is the nature of our present?’”. Indeed, Smart (1992) suggests that the idea that the present is distinctive may be exacerbated as we approach the end of the millennium and he cites Williams (1985) who observes that the “millenarian spirit” “continues to exert a potent and seductive influence upon our understanding” (Smart, 1992, p. 5).

In an early recognition of the pace of change and its consequence the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) published a report in 1982 on the education and development needs of the manager of the twenty-first century (AACSB/EFMD 1982). Based on an analysis of the data in that report, Finney and Von Gunlow (1988) have identified five critical issues. They are:
The move from relative abundance to scarcity of natural resources impacting on the cost of raw materials.

The increasing need for managers to understand foreign cultures and adapt accordingly.

More claimants and stakeholders making demands on business.

Continuous external change necessitating greater flexibility of organisational structures.

An interdependent global economy leading to international and domestic business vulnerable to political and economic instability.

It is apparent that management approaching the twenty-first century faces formidable challenges both nationally and internationally necessitating the need to accept uncertainty, an ability to cope with change and a quest for creativity (Peters, 1987; Handy, 1989).

With particular reference to the areas of strategy and management studies Prahalad and Hamel (1994) and Hamel and Prahalad (1996) highlight the fundamental structural transitions, which have occurred in a wide variety of industrial sectors as a result of major catalytic occurrences, such as global competition and technological advances, which have impacted upon both the practitioner and academic communities. While managers search for new approaches to management in an ever turbulent environment, academics also have to search for new approaches and methodologies (Prahalad and Hamel, 1994).

As Grey and French (1996) indicate, management education is an activity of growing significance and influence, which has recently attracted extensive attention and criticism, partly because of the rapidly changing context in which it is located. The established understandings of managerial practice and education are currently being reassessed, and increasingly doubt is being cast upon “the relevance and efficacy of established nostrums about the work of managers and about how they should be educated to do it” (Willmott, 1994, p. 105). In essence, as Spender (1994, p. 387) notes, “management education ostensibly designed to equip managers to deal with the world seems to have changed little in recent years”. This concurs with Hamel and Prahalad’s (1996, p. 257) belief that, “as we career from the machine age into the information age the more questionable become the traditional practices and precepts of management”. Given that orthodox management education appears to have failed, by producing managers who cannot manage adequately in the modern world, this has led to a questioning of the intellectual inadequacy of the content of management education itself. Indeed Grey (1996, p. 8) poses the question: “how should management education proceed in the late twentieth century?”. In an attempt to respond to this question it is necessary first to consider the historical framework of the development of management education, in order to discuss the genesis of the current approach.
Although, as Forray and Mir (1994) note, there are certain historical conditions which influenced the establishment of management education in certain localities, it is the American model which has been most influential in the formulation of management education internationally. Prior to the 1860s the English model of education, which emphasised the liberal arts and pure science was the most common design for higher education in the USA (Calas, 1987, cited in Forray and Mir, 1994). However, after the American Civil War, the need to stimulate economic development was paramount and thus the German model of scholarly specialisation, and technical and professional education was imported. This model, which was considered an appropriate means of sustaining economic development, provided the basis for the development of business education. The development of business schools in the USA is, therefore, a relatively recent phenomenon. As Forray and Mir (1994) indicate, a number of schools were established in the period c. 1880 to the First World War (1914). Pierson (1959) observes that, during this period, many of the schools found it difficult not only to achieve an acceptable status in academic terms but also to develop a clearly defined role within the university. Forray and Mir (1994, p. 204) suggest that one reason why these schools may have been isolated from the rest of the academic community was because of the emphasis placed on a “strong practical orientation with a ‘techniques’ orientation”. During the period between 1914 and 1940, when nearly every important public university in the USA established a business school, increasing emphasis was placed on a managerial perspective in course content. The emphasis placed on the case analysis method in coursework was welcomed by the business community, which as a result, accepted the delivery of management education by a teaching-oriented faculty (Forray and Mir, 1994).

After the Second World War and, in particular, following the recommendations presented in the reports sponsored by the Ford Foundation (Gordon and Howell, 1959) and the Carnegie Corporation (Pierson, 1959), a solid foundation for US business schools, based on a management science, was established (Snell and James, 1994). As a result, business schools eliminated the highly specialised industry-specific courses, such as transportation and banking, which had been a feature of their curricula since their foundation (Sass, 1982). To replace these, as Spender (1994) notes, a core set of subjects aimed at ensuring that all students were equipped with a common body of knowledge was introduced. A reas of study within this new curriculum included:

- business policy;
- organisation theory and behaviour;
- marketing;
- finance;
- accounting;
Forray and Mir (1994, p. 204) observe that “the solidification of the management curriculum occurred” in six major areas, namely:

1. accounting;
2. economics;
3. finance;
4. management;
5. marketing, and
6. production.

In addition, they observed that a shift of emphasis from the undergraduate to postgraduate took place. Spender (1994) notes that the work being done at Carnegie-Mellon University during the late 1950s, when the foundation reports were published, contributed to the widespread adoption of the professional model in management education. Thus the intellectual rigor of management education was upgraded and a professional model developed in order to ensure that the field measured up to its counterparts in other academic disciplines (Raelin, 1994). The main characteristic of business schools during this time (the 1960s and 1970s) was that increasing emphasis was placed on developing scientifically rigorous knowledge “more in line with its affiliated disciplines of psychology, economics and sociology” (Forray and Mir, 1994, p. 204).

The pedagogical model of professional education, which was adapted essentially to develop the MBA programmes within US business schools, adhered to “a modernist format” well established in preparing students for the learned professions (medicine, law, the ministry, for example) (Raelin, 1994, p. 302). Such a model is based on the premise that knowledge in a particular field may be substantially learnt before entering that profession (Raelin, 1994). The pedagogical approach, adopted in the professional model, was traditional with the lecturer or teacher providing the theory which the student used as a guide to on-the-job training and decision making (Spender, 1994). This model also emphasises the manager as decision maker (Harrison, 1987). As Spender (1994) explains, the adoption of the decision-making model with its emphasis on analytic methods replaced the earlier “leadership” or Harvard model (Barnard, 1938). This new approach was adopted because of a concern that the faculty teaching under the auspices of the leadership model lacked rigorous research methodologies (Rumelt et al., 1991). The decision-making model was based on a formal theory of managerial activity which effectively separated process and content. Content was determined by the rigorous theoretical model considered relevant to the situation while process was analysed without reference to content. Spender (1994) notes that this approach was convenient for faculty in that the focus could be placed on the efficacy of rational decision making without considering students’ backgrounds and histories. Meanwhile, students...
were left to connect abstract theories to practice, and assess their relevance themselves. While the relevance and efficacy of this approach has since been questioned the development of this professional educational model within management education proved to be so attractive that its “educational dynamics convinced Europeans that they had to follow suit or fall hopelessly behind in managerial know-how. Consequently the 1960s and 1970s brought rapid and profound changes to European educational systems” (Locke, 1989, pp. 163-64). The next milestone in the development of management education occurred in the early 1980s when the professional model faced a plethora of criticism.

In the US context Hayes and Abernathy (1980) specifically linked the decline in competitiveness of US industry with the effects of the traditional professional education model on management graduates. Their critique of this model asserted that graduates in management education learnt analytic detachment over insight, and that methodological rigour prevented them from learning from their experiences. Peters and Waterman (1982) also identified a clear relationship between the orthodox model of management education and the inability of American managers to mobilise their companies’ resources – in particular their human resources. Cheit (1985) echoed these criticisms in his work, many of which Raelin (1994) believes are still pertinent. In a review of more than 200 articles, Cheit (1985) identified 13 major complaints which have been made against North American business schools. These were subdivided into four groups. First, the wrong pedagogical model had been emphasised; second, important work had been ignored; third, society’s needs had not been met; and fourth, undesirable attitudes had been fostered. Cheit (1985) concluded that graduate business education at that time was not adequately preparing for the challenges of corporate life. Porter and McKibben (1988), reviewing management education, also concluded that for MBA students US business schools were emphasising the wrong model. They suggested that management education was not providing managers with an appropriate education because at that time success had “turned the nation’s business schools into complacent, self-satisfied institutions that are in danger of becoming ossified and irrelevant” (Porter and McKibben, 1988). Porter and McKibben (1988) echoed Hayes and Abernathy’s (1980) and Peters and Waterman’s (1982) comments that the dominant professional model in management emphasised quantitative, analytical and rational approaches. Porter et al. (1989, p. 65) note, the professional model which accredited management education has resulted in turning “business education into something of a standardised product (and) we now face the claim that we have too consistently produced narrow, short-term oriented, manipulative, number-crunching technicians”. Some years earlier Mintzberg (1975) had suggested that this was an approach which was useful in producing staff specialists but not managers. Beck (1994) observed that too much emphasis was placed on cognitive learning with a particular focus on theories, models and facts, and not enough on the development of interpersonal skills which are relevant to managers. This concurs with Porter and
McKibben's (1988) concern that MBA students are not being equipped with certain key skills and values which are necessary for all modern business graduates: “we believe ... that there are a number of increasing expectations and societal trends which business schools will need to take into account if they are to avoid aimless drift and possible eventual irrelevance” (Porter and McKibben, 1988, p. 311). Beck (1994, p. 235) notes that if the criticisms made by these commentators are an accurate reflection of the traditional professional model emphasised in current management education then “it suggests that the dominant paradigm is rational, positivist and empirical”.

Both Cheit (1985) and Porter and McKibben (1988) identified certain central key elements as missing from the curricula of many US business schools, in particular those associated with MBA programmes. For example, it was noted that international business issues have been neglected, which engendered “parochial and insular attitudes at a time where there is burgeoning growth in international business” (Beck, 1994, p. 235). Although these concerns were expressed more than a decade ago they are still relevant today (Raelin, 1994). For instance, the Dean of the School of Management at Boston University (debate, 1992, p. 128) recently commented, with regard to the professional model of management, that it “was adequate when most competitors were North American but it is inadequate in a globally competitive environment”. Another element identified as missing within business schools’ curricula was the lack of focus on entrepreneurship, with, in some instances, courses actually fostering risk-averse attitudes (Beck, 1994). Porter and McKibben (1988) also felt that too much emphasis was placed on functionalism and not enough on the integration of business functions across an organisation. In addition to the criticisms directed towards the content of MBA programmes it was considered that business graduates lacked certain behavioural skills, such as an ability to either communicate properly or work within a team. Also, the leadership skills of graduates were considered poor, with, in particular, the capabilities of thinking strategically and developing a long-term vision underdeveloped. In particular graduates focused on short-term rather than long-term horizons when establishing priorities (Beck, 1994). Cheit (1985) in particular criticised business schools for not focusing on developing the potential for managerial lifelong learning, while Porter and McKibben (1988) felt that social responsibility should be an important aspect of any course which is specifically designed to prepare graduates for careers in business.

Concern about the adequacy of management education was not confined to US business schools. As Beck (1994) notes, Handy et al.’s (1988) review of business and business education was stimulated in part by a concern that the decline in the UK’s economic performance may be related to the way in which managers and business professionals were educated. Constable and McCormick (1987), focusing specifically on the UK context, suggested that the provision of management education could be changed to meet the needs of post-experience business students more adequately. While the actual detail of these individuals’ criticisms varies a number of general trends emerge – namely, that the courses
developed in the professional educational model were too narrowly specialised, too quantitative and too theoretical, encouraging analytical detachment and rationality. Grey (1996, p. 8) observes that while the criticisms made by the aforementioned commentators vary in the nature and scope of their criticism “it is fair to say that they all come from ‘within’. In other words, they all reflect the internal crisis of confidence of ‘orthodox’ management education with respect to the future, if not the present”. He continues that current debates within the field are so significant because “for the first time since wide-scale management education emerged, orthodoxy has lost its self-confidence, and is searching, perhaps desperately, for a way to re-invent itself” (Grey 1996, p. 10). The implication of this is that management education has not kept up with developments in the modern world and consequently managers are no longer able to manage adequately.

The proposed alternative approaches within management education are more committed to bridging the gap between “the formal knowledge derived through theory and the informal knowledge experienced in practice” (Raelin and Schmererhorn Jr, 1994, pp. 196-97). Raelin (1993) notes that separating theory and practice is not a modern US invention. Instead “it is the central thrust of the German Wissencraft tradition of old science wherein the professor-scientist perceives his activities to be quite different from those of the manager-doer” (Raelin, 1993, p. 85). In association with these new approaches there has also been a shift in emphasis on the pedagogical method considered appropriate. In the professional model a didactic approach to teaching and learning is still apparent, in that “the teacher and the text are the repository of what needs to be known about a discipline” (Beck, 1994, p. 238). Although applied in a management development context within companies Pedlar’s (1988) comment (quoted in Willmott, 1994, p. 122) can equally be applied to management education within universities where “management education is largely done to managers rather than done by them, socialising them into existing norms, practices and values and treating them as ‘patients’ rather than ‘agents’”. Indeed, as Chia (1993) suggests, changing the pedagogic process itself demands a suspension in the belief that the often passive and alienated approaches to teaching and learning are the most effective. A great challenge therefore faces management academics to develop alternative curricula and modes of delivery, which not only stimulate but facilitate a process of active and continuous learning (Salaman and Butler, 1990). The pedagogical methods inherent within the concept of action learning as developed by Revans (1982) are akin to Friere’s (1972, p. 53) description of critical pedagogy, “through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but who is himself [sic] taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach”. Employing a practice such as action learning obviously alters the traditional teacher-student role to one where the teacher fulfils not only a facilitating role
but also a learning one. In fact the balance of power has shifted from one of “leader-follower” to one which is much more equal in nature.

Action learning

Action learning is a theory of management learning in which a manager learns by reflecting on the actions being taken in solving a real organisational problem with managers of similar position also experiencing challenging situations (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993; Eden and Huxman, 1996). The model of action learning was proposed by a Cambridge physicist, Revans (1971), who distinguished between two types of learning, P and Q. P represents programmed knowledge and includes facts, theories or problems with known solutions and is the predominant learning mode in the traditional paradigm. On the other hand Q is more aligned with the ideology and assumptions underlying the alternative approach in which the ability to ask penetrating questions about problems, for which there are no known solutions, is a necessity. The concept of action learning by implication is in opposition to the status quo, not least because it challenges the passive approach to learning characterised in the traditional approaches. Indeed, the concept has been described as being more than just a pedagogical approach, but “at its most profound it is a form of personal therapy, a means of social and economic transformation, and even a way of life” (Lessem, 1982, p. 12). Revans (1971) believed that students (in this case managers) learnt most effectively with and from other managers while attempting to find solutions to actual, real-life problems. In the process of doing this managers can discuss not only the practical implications of their solutions but also the applications or misapplications of theories and concepts to proposed actions and solutions.

Unsurprisingly there have been those who have been critical of this approach and, because it is claimed to be antithetical to theory, it has been rejected “as anti-intellectual by the modernist supporters of the professional education approach” (Raelin, 1994, p. 302). Their fears may be allayed by recognition that both P and Q types of learning are encouraged in action learning – it is not just simply a case of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Raelin (1994, p. 305) believes that in the model of “action learning, theory is not separated, either temporally or epistemologically from practice”. Indeed the model of action learning provides a good example of the paradigm of synthesis articulated by Forray and Mir (1994). They explain that it is also an important critique of the paradigm of balance “insofar as it attempts to falsify the dichotomies between subject-object, stability-change and theory-practice, and attempts to replace them with a synthesis which helps us appreciate the relationship between knowledge and experience” (Forray and Mir, 1994, p. 211).

Action learning emphasises learning by doing and, as Raelin (1994) indicates with reference to adult education programmes, the doing is often preceded by a theoretical modular unit so that the whole exercise in fact requires both P and Q learning. Action learning, which encourages both P and Q learning, contradicts the view that management can be learnt in an isolated lecture excluding
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experience. This is because principles only become meaningful to the extent that they are deliberately introduced into practice (Raelin, 1994). Indeed, McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993) first articulated this concept as the alternative approach to traditional management education and development with reference to Kuhn's (1970) concept of scientific revolution.

Although McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993) propose action learning as the new paradigm in management education, it would be better termed a new approach. In this instance the differences identified between the two approaches do not reflect a paradigmatic shift but rather a change in context. Despite the fact that McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993) propose action learning as an alternative perspective they also identify a number of caveats. While they found that the model appeared to work in principle they discovered a number of anomalies. First, self-development assumes that a learner is able to accurately define his/her own learning needs. Frequently though, guidance is needed in defining this, and therefore McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993, p. 25) suggest that an action learning framework needs to provide structure so that students are able “to reflect in action, illuminate practice and criticise both”. Second, they claim that there is no a priori reason why a manager could not use the model to develop his/her manipulative techniques. However, they state that proponents of self-development techniques would argue that these tendencies are likely to be decreased rather than increased. Third, action learning encourages “a desire to move on the higher plains” (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993, p. 25). Students who are thus challenged to take a broader view of the world may seek further enlightenment and ignore practical action. Pedlar (1988 p. 11) states that in fact “some beings in their wisdom often choose to refrain from action in favour of contemplation”. Fourth, McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993) acknowledge the fear that cognitive knowledge may be dismissed completely, thus impoverishing the action learning experience. As Sutton (1990, p. 9) states, “action learning’s emphasis on Q type learning has obscured the need for continual growth in P material, both as knowledge in its own right and also the base from which future Q learning can take place”. Having identified these anomalies they recommend that a contingency approach which “lacks the philosophical underpinning of the other two and is much more pragmatic” (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993, p. 26) is adopted as a potential way forward. This approach is based on the premise that the most appropriate type of management education depends on the type of manager required. Thus, a more traditional approach will be suitable to a manager who seeks knowledge based on theory, while an action learning perspective will be more appropriate for a manager requiring a focus on action.

Based on this characterisation of action learning McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993) have identified a number of ways in which it represents a radical change in view compared with traditional management education. These characteristics of the action learning paradigm (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993) dovetail neatly with the shift of emphasis identified in management and entrepreneurial education and development (Porter and McKibben, 1988;
Executive leadership programme

This programme was designed in response to the numerous technological, social, economic and information revolutions apparent at present. In particular, it was realised that knowledge as opposed to mere information is the key to opening the door to renewed competitiveness. The immediate pragmatic stimulus to the development of this course and the context in which it is grounded arises from a series of academic research and official policy documents which identified the persistent poor performance of the Northern Ireland economy, despite considerable expenditure on an industrial development programme (DED, 1990; T & EA, 1991). Increasingly, it was also recognised that a key constraint to achieving any significant strategic progress, and hence improve on competitiveness, was the poor level and quality of training at all levels of industry in Northern Ireland. This position concurs with the comments expressed by Handy et al. (1987) who related the decline in the economic performance of the UK to the way in which business professionals were educated. As the Department of Economic Development for Northern Ireland (DED, 1990) noted, more professional management is essential if industry is to become more competitive. However it was also observed that the potential for excellence within Northern Ireland was present. For instance, DED (1990) stated that some international companies had publicly stated that their local operations and their workforce had the potential to perform as well as those anywhere, so long as they were given the right leadership, support and training. More specifically the Training and Employment Agency (T & EA, 1991) identified a general lack of sophistication in terms of the type of management training and development undertaken by businesses in Northern Ireland. The agency (1991) believed that a need existed for management education provision which enabled participants to not only build personal international networks but to also develop an understanding of, and an opportunity to acquire, the skills and qualities necessary to compete effectively at an international level. A nother stimulus to the design of this course was a recognition that a re-examination of the theory and practice of management education approaches was necessary. This had been stimulated by criticism of the static, content-oriented approach which was considered inappropriate to the changing environment of the 1990s. In particular, it was observed that a shift from content- to process-based approaches was needed, emphasizing the holistic action shifts required for effective management (Harrison and Leitch, 1994).

Thus against this background the programme was developed so as to meet the three interrelated needs discussed below. First, it was designed so that the international competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy might be improved. Second, as the basis for achieving this the programme focused on
increasing the efficiency and proficiency of key companies within the regional economy. Third, the course aimed to develop flexible and adaptable leadership in senior executives within these companies so as to provide a basis for, and stimulus to effective organisational transformation and development. In addition the focus of this programme has been on developing the leadership capabilities of managers so as to enable them to cope with what Vaill (1989) has termed the “Grand paradox of management”, for to be a manager in the modern world is to take responsibility for controlling what is less and less controllable. The overall objective of this course was, and still is, to assist senior executives in both large and entrepreneurial small companies to develop the knowledge, skills and awareness which will enable them to transform their companies by providing team-based leadership through the creation and communication of vision and values. The emphasis on leadership, establishing and articulating both a vision and values, developing strategic awareness and building a team are among those issues which were identified as absent from the professional model of management education. In addition to addressing the criticisms advanced by Cheit (1985) and Porter and McKibben (1988) the approach developed in this programme has recognised the need to define an enlarged learning arena in management education. As discussed above, traditional approaches have considered that two separate learning arenas within the field have existed, namely:

1. the university; and
2. the organisation.

Alternative perspectives, in which a more integrative strategy towards management education is emphasised, focus on the acquisition of action skills in the field. This necessitates a high level of reciprocal integration and requires a fusion of the two learning arenas. Action learning (Revans, 1971) provides one of the mechanisms by which participants on this particular executive education programme may transfer between the two learning areas which have been identified. As the context for this type of learning is a participant’s organisation, integration is encouraged not only between theory and practice but also between academic institutions and industry. The approach adopted within the design of this programme parallels the proposed alternative to the professional model of action learning advanced by, for example, Raelin (1994) and McLaughlin and Thorpe (1993).

Participants
Over the first six years of the programme 64 senior executives and business owners have participated in this personal and organisational development process. Reflecting the male/female ratio in the wider senior executive population, and the wider difficulty in encouraging female executives and business owners to participate in executive development programmes dominated by their male counterparts, only five (8 per cent) participants have been female, although this has increased significantly in recent years (Table I).
In terms of role and sector, there have been some significant shifts in the nature of the programme since its inception (Tables III and IV). Overall, 59 per cent of participants have been at managing director/CEO level and 41 per cent have held senior executive-level positions (Table I). However, there has been a major shift away from primarily owner managers in the programme: in the first three years three-quarters of participants were MD/CEOs; in the following three years this had fallen to only 43 per cent.

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Table I. Gender analysis of participants

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD/CEO</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior executive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table II. Managerial level of participants

<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-manufacturing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
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Table III. Industrial sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>Cannot say (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare business to export</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess and develop personal leadership</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and pursue leadership opportunities</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strategic abilities</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify opportunity for competitive development</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key factors for world-class leadership/performance</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV. Stated course objectives
In sectoral terms there has been a shift away from participants from organizations in the manufacturing sector, down from 79 per cent to 63 per cent, and a rise in participation from the private services sector (up from 18 per cent to 23 per cent) and the public sector (up from 3 per cent to 14 per cent) (Table III). This sectoral shift in part underlies the shift away from MD/CEO level participants as the programme participation has become more “managerial” in nature. It also reflects a relaxation in an artificial constraint on recruitment to the programme in the early years imposed by the core development funding provided by the Training and Employment Agency, which has a statutory obligation to support the development of the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors. Given that the programme was designed originally to meet the needs of both the growing entrepreneurial business and the senior executive in larger organisations faced with the challenge of responding creatively to increasing change, the growing interest of non-owners in the programme is not unexpected. What is of interest is the growing interest in the programme in the public sector, particularly in education and health-care management, which reflects the increasing introduction of “private sector” management practices in recent years.

One unexpected development reflected in these figures is the impact of programme recruitment being primarily through word-of-mouth recommendation (more than 50 per cent of participants found out about the programme this way, compared to only 21 per cent who responded to direct university-originated materials and contacts); for the large company executives on the programme the opportunity to interact with and learn from entrepreneurial business owners was consistently identified as a major benefit, and this formed the basis of the recommendation of the programme to others. However, as the proportion of non-business owners has grown, there is a possibility that the programme is perceived to meet the specific needs of the entrepreneur less well: success in meeting the original aims of an integrated and diverse participant group may well have had the unintended effect of reducing the programme's perceived relevance to this key group.

To date, 22 participants have completed the requirements for the degree of MSc in executive leadership, of which six were awarded the degree with distinction, and no participant who has registered for the degree (which is not compulsory) has failed. Overall, only around 15 per cent of those participating in the programme have not opted to register for the Masters programme, despite the MSc being an important factor in deciding to do the programme for only 5 per cent of them.

Outcomes and benefits
A sessment of the outcomes and benefits of the programme has been undertaken in a number of stages as part of a rolling programme of formative evaluation. In this paper we report briefly on three phases of this evaluation, which is ongoing: first, both participants and, where appropriate, their companies were asked to indicate the benefits and outcomes attributable to the
programme, and 34 responses were obtained (with a further 15 company responses); second, a slightly smaller set of responses ($n = 25$) were obtained to a more detailed probing of the impact of the programme on leadership development, operational business development and strategic business development; third, in order to set these results in context, a small number of detailed behavioural event interviews with selected participants were held ($n = 3$).

**Stage 1, evaluation: participants and companies**

Participants in the first five-year cohorts of the programme were asked to indicate their perceptions of the extent to which the programme met course, personal and business objectives. The vast majority of participants considered that the programme had met its stated objectives (Table IV), with “internal”-oriented objectives such as leadership development and strategic ability being rather more highly ranked than “external”-oriented objectives such as competitive development and world-class leadership development. This is reflected in the achievement of personal objectives in the area of improved leadership development, self-confidence and improved professional skills and knowledge, a direct consequence of the emphasis of this part of the programme on the assessment and development of leadership skills and behaviours.

In terms of business objectives, the majority of participants reported benefits in terms of the development of strategic planning and increased export market development (see below) and in implementing changes within the organisation (Table V), although almost a quarter of respondents were unable to indicate benefits because it was still too early to identify the impact of the programme.

Overall, participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the content of the programme (Table VI): in this, the calibre of the other participants and, interestingly, the overseas visits (which involved both international

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table V.</th>
<th>Stated business objectives</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Too early to say</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved operational efficiency</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved motivation in workforce</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to/implement world-class leadership practice</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of new systems/procedures</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VI.</th>
<th>Course content and structure</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>Quite relevant</th>
<th>Not very relevant</th>
<th>Not at all relevant</th>
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<td>Coursework</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calibre of participants</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas visits</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
Entrepreneurship education and development

management seminars and industrial visits) score particularly highly, emphasising the need in executive education to give full attention to the opportunities for peer learning and development to occur in a high quality and highly motivated peer group.

These reactions were broadly confirmed in the company responses (by their nature, these responses relate to senior executive participants on the programme and not to owner-managers/MDs, and the line manager responses have yet to be complemented with the views of those managed by the participants). In all cases where the participating executives had staff reporting to them, it was reported that their skills as a manager had improved, there were positive changes in performance and/or behaviour and an underlying broadening of managerial capability reflected in longer-term thinking, improved communication skills, improved decision making, a more methodical approach to management and a wider marketing focus. For 80 per cent of the companies surveyed, the programme was felt to have enhanced the competitive advantage of the company (a stronger response than from the individual participants themselves) in terms of efficiency, organisation, responsiveness to change and improved communication among staff. For both participants and companies, a key but intangible and unquantifiable benefit of the programme has been the development of contacts and peer networks which have continued as an informal learning (and in some cases business development) mechanism beyond the life and confines of the programme itself.

Stage II, evaluation: participants
A more detailed assessment of the benefits and outcomes of the programme for both the individual executives and their companies has been undertaken at three levels, namely:

(1) leadership development;
(2) operational business development; and
(3) strategic development.

These correspond with the three levels of need and objectives identified. A total of 32 personal and company development dimensions have been measured for the 25 senior executives who completed the programme in 1992 and 1993. Each participant was asked to assess the impact of their participation in the programme on each dimension using a five-point scale (1 = major effect, 2 = considerable effect, 3 = some effect, 4 = minor effect, 5 = no effect). Participant comments are included under each heading (leadership development, operational business development and strategic development) to indicate the precise nature of some of these effects.

Leadership development
Programme impact has been greatest on leadership development. All ten leadership dimensions were reported as experiencing “some effect” at least by participants, and for six dimensions the average scores were under 2.5,
indicating a considerable programme impact. Overall, the programme has been responsible for participants establishing a clear vision, identifying core shared values for the company, building more effective working teams, building commitment to the vision and values by the management team, and developing the personal leadership skills of influencing, networking, facilitating, empowering, learning and deciding. In other words, the programme has achieved its primary goal of enabling senior executives to create a future for their company (vision) by providing a purpose (values) and establishing a process (effective working teams) to generate an outcome (commitment) through personal capability (leadership skills).

I joined IDP to assist me in determination of the strategy necessary to take my company forward to a point where I would step back from all the day-to-day issues and concentrate on the strategic issues of future development. This was essential to allow my management team to develop and especially to allow development of my two sons to give them the opportunity to take over running the company. These ambitions are now well on the road towards achievement.

A clearer vision of the future, improved confidence in achieving vision/goals and a clearer definition of company culture.

My total outlook on everything has changed or is changing.

I now understand the difference between leading and managing. Before IDP I wasn’t 70 per cent managing and 30 per cent leading, now it is 80 per cent leading and 20 per cent managing.

I now have a clear idea of my objectives and how best to help my people set and achieve their own objectives. I now understand better the need for “soft” skills when leading people and the importance of a vision, values and personal commitment.

... A superb course, most of which would benefit “higher flyers” at least in our company. I wish I (and my management) had had this course 15-20 years ago.

I have developed a clearer focus on the future direction and development of the company. I am putting greater emphasis on multi-functional teams.

Operational development

The development of executive leadership provides the basis for operational business development – in only three of ten dimensions identified does the impact measurement fall below “3.0 – some impact”. The primary operational development impact of the programme occurs through efficiency gains – improved internal and external communications provide the basis for better planning, administration and organisation. Together with reduced scrap and wastage rates, and reduced throughput and cycle time, these support overall efficiency improvements as the basis for improved competitiveness (see below). Improved product quality is also reported as a result of these operational improvements:

In a high tech manufacturing plant, cycle time has been reduced from 42 to 14 days, resulting in the elimination of 12 days work in progress and representing an annual saving of £125,000.

The course has initiated a complete general review of distribution policy with regard to frequency, computer hardware and software replacement and personnel requirements.
The planning and operational review has produced a new dimension, the customer. By a questionnaire and customer forum we have asked how it should be done instead of continuing our normal policy which we have been operating for 20 years ... Customer and supplier involvement has and will result in us being well ahead of the competition.

Profits have increased by 232 per cent since completing the course.

A division returning a period loss of £30k has been turned round to return profits of £50k.

Strategic development

Leadership development at the most senior levels of the participating companies, and organisational and technical efficiency improvements, are reflected in strategic developments in the companies, and hence in their contribution to the development of Northern Ireland plc. For participants the programme provides the basis, to date, for increased competitiveness through improved business strategy formulation and diversification, resulting in increased turnover and market development opportunities.

Participation in IDP has focused my attention more on strategy issues ... this has helped in the development of staff.

The course helped provide improved focus on expansion opportunities and on complementary business opportunities (which are) not possible/applicable to quantify.

A contingency analysis is underway with regard to training needs at all levels within the group to take effect 1994-5-6.

All the IDP modules have a slightly different slant but are on an absolutely consistent theme. The whole theme throughout has been personal leadership thus preparing Northern Ireland business for the year 2000 and ensuring these businesses become high performers.

Within five years the business will grow from £4m p.a. total sales to >£10m, from 100 to over 200 employees, expand from one to at least two production sites and investment will rise from £400k p.a. to £1m p.a.

Business performance

In order to overcome some of the limitations of the self-report perception data discussed so far, respondents were asked to provide tangible evidence of changes in business performance attributable to the programme. Over the three years post-programme assessment there has been a significant improvement in key aspects of business performance as a direct result of programme participation, based on responses from these 25 senior executives in 21 different companies (see Table VII).

Total employment in participating companies increased by an average of 15 per cent in the two-year period/pre-programme year/first year post-programme, total turnover increased by an average of 25 per cent and exports as a percentage of turnover rose by an average of eight percentage points.

These results provide the basis for concluding that the programme is achieving: final linkage established at the outset, that between company development and the development of the Northern Ireland economy in the context of the fundamental need to become more internationally competitive. It
is, therefore, even in the short term, beginning to have an impact on the fundamental need – regional economic development – which was the original stimulus for the development of the programme.

Stage III, evaluation: case study

It is not always possible or appropriate to capture all aspects of the impact of a wide-ranging programme such as this on the personal and organisational development of the participants in “normal” quantitative and qualitative research contexts, not least because the programme is primarily designed to stimulate and support long-term rather than short-term changes in attitude and behaviour. To compensate for this, we have begun to undertake a series of more detailed case interviews to provide additional insight into the programme and its impact. One of these cases is summarised below.

Participant A is, in many ways, a classic example of the stereotypical self-made entrepreneur: he has had 50 years experience in business, and for 30 years has been operating his own businesses rather than working for others, having left school with nothing other than the basic qualifications. Based on his experience in the construction industry, participant A established a small joinery works initially, later expanding this to a full service construction business, which together employ 64 people today. Diversification into the manufacture of PVC window systems followed in 1980 and, although competition in this sector has increased greatly, this business continues to employ 35 people. The third main company in the group, in which participant A now acts as chairman (a change in role developed during the period of participation in the programme), was established in 1989 to manufacture toughened safety glass. Currently the group employs 200 (100 in toughened glass manufacture) and has a turnover of £13m.

The development of the toughened glass facility became the main focus of the application of the learning developed through the programme for participant A. As he tells it:

... as a result of my travels looking for a double glazing line in Milan, I met a man who persuaded me that tough (or safety) glass was a much better bet. I invested some £2.5 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increase significantly</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>No change (%)</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sales</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export sales</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: a more than 10 per cent p.a. for employment and turnover; more than 10 percentage points for export sales; b between 5 per cent and 10 per cent for employment turnover, between 5 percentage points and 10 percentage points for export sales; c between 0 per cent and –5 per cent p.a.; d in excess of –5 per cent p.a.; e these responses indicate the outcome of major company division restructurings to achieve efficiency and productivity gains and realise significantly increased turnover and export growth at lower employment levels.
[against a then turnover of c. £6m] and the result was the forming in 1989 of company X which today employs over 100 people… [and]… exports to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Since its formation company X has exported between 2.5 and 3 million panes of glass to GB and always delivers within five days on a two day per week scheduled run. The company has adopted the Confucian maxim “When a young bird learns to fly, some old birds get knocked off their perch”.

This represented a major shift in emphasis for the group, involving radical changes in the level of technological sophistication of the business and the development for the first time of a market outside the region. To date the development and success of the company has been based on a deep commitment to the development of quality in relation to the product, an overriding commitment to meeting and exceeding clients’ expectations and winning commitment from the employees to these values. By late 1994 the company was investing in additional glass-toughening facilities to double production capacity and support the further development and penetration of the UK market, and it was at this time that participant A joined the programme:

Throughout my working life and, particularly when I worked for someone else, I kept abreast of skills by doing all the short courses I could get my hands on. But I always regretted that I hadn’t been to university. During the 1980s, I undertook short courses at the University of Ulster and in the 1990s I undertook a course leading to an MSc in Leadership Studies [sic]. That not only gave me confidence, but it taught me to develop a vision and to delegate within that vision – an important lesson to learn at the stage that the group was and is, and at my age entrepreneurs want to do everything themselves and there is a time to step back from that.

In particular, participant A’s role progressed from the hands-on direct management role of the entrepreneur to one of leadership through the empowerment of others, through the appointment of an “outsider” as managing director of the business, through a range of initiatives to recognise the potential and achievements of the workforce (based on observation from successful organisations visited on the overseas study tour). As a result of the programme, participant A has devoted more time to “walking the talk”, demonstrating the consistency between management style and management expectations, and has seen improvements in his listening skills, in how to communicate his ideas, in his ability to manage and work with people, in thinking strategically and in allowing others to develop their talents. Since participating in the programme, participant A has embarked on a further expansion of the glass business, investing £9 million in facilities to produce curved tough glass, primarily for the European market. This will see employment in the company increase from 100 to c. 170 employees within two years.

Perhaps most significantly, however, and symbolic of the impact of the programme on encouraging participant A to “think out of the box” as he expressed it, is the fact that this expansion programme is based on the injection of outside venture capital into the business for the first time – given the traditional equity aversion of the typical entrepreneur, this injection of outside equity after 30 years of purely family ownership of the business is quite radical and indicates the potential of the programme to stimulate and support major changes in personal leadership and business development.
Conclusions

The approach adopted in the development of this programme, taking a cue from Limerick and Moore (1991) and Porter and McKibben (1988), recognises the need to define an enlarged learning arena in management education and development. Traditional approaches have conceived of two separate encapsulated learning arenas: the university and the organisation. The university has provided cognitive, intellectual frameworks and the organisation has taught, often informally, skills in applying theory to practice. Too often those individuals participating in management education and development programmes have been seen as moving from one arena to another in sequential fashion. Yet as Yavitz (1982) has pointed out, to cover a continuum of learning "requires a better articulation and integration of universities, management schools and corporate education, as well as an orchestration of professors, line managers and professional trainers". Such an interactive strategy towards management education and development focusing on the acquisition of action skills in the field necessitates a high level of reciprocal integration and requires a fusion of the two arenas.

Action learning provides one of the mechanisms by which the participants of this particular executive education programme may transfer between the two learning arenas identified, most especially if the "action learning as a toolbox of techniques" perspective is taken. This is not necessarily to imply that the programme does not address the issues of action learning as therapy or as philosophy. However, these perspectives raise issues which go beyond the narrowly defined purposes of the present paper. In this approach, the assumption is made that this type of learning operates only within certain preconditions: a manager has a problem which needs to be solved and this problem is important to the organisation. To enable him/her to solve this problem the individual joins an action learning set of managers in a similar situation, which is facilitated by a set advisor who acts as a tutor.

In both overall design, and in the context of several individual modules within the programme in particular, the approach being adopted to the detailed evaluation of the impact of the programme and of specific modules and process interventions is to seek experiential answers to five questions:

1. Who learns?
2. What do they learn?
3. How do they learn?
4. Where do they learn?
5. When do they learn?

In seeking answers to these questions, the nature of the learning alliance between faculty and participants is continually called into question. Furthermore, the answers to these questions themselves call into question the nature of and basis for the learning alliance which underlies the design, development and delivery of the programme itself. This is important as, despite
the great expansion in the volume of research on entrepreneurial education, there is still scope for “research on formal, structured education programmes (which) should include niches for growth-oriented entrepreneurs and technology entrepreneurs, (are) areas which seem to have been neglected ... and greater emphasis on the development and evaluation of specific pedagogical methods and techniques, suitable for use for practicing entrepreneurs should be encouraged” (Young, 1997, pp. 233-4). This paper, and the programme it describes, specifically occupies this niche and, in reviewing contemporary trends in management education, reinforces previous attempts to broaden the intellectual base for thinking about SME and entrepreneurial development (Harrison and Leitch, 1994; Gibb, 1997).

The experience of participants in the entrepreneurial executive development programme described in this paper has demonstrated the applicability and efficacy of an action learning-based approach. As interest in the whole area of management, organisational and entrepreneurial learning continues to grow, the range of research issues to be addressed in assessing issues of programme design, content, audience and delivery also expands. In a very real sense, therefore, our collective current state of knowledge represents no more than the establishment of an awareness of the boundaries of our ignorance. As Block and Stumpf (1992, p. 40) conclude in their review of the current state of entrepreneurship education:

... rigorous research is clearly needed to understand the target audiences for entrepreneurship education, their unique educational objectives and learning styles, and the types of content to be covered for each audience, and which specific pedagogical methods will most effectively meet their educational goals. Such research must look at both the proximal criteria of student interest and immediate feedback as well as the more distal criteria of actual behaviour over ten or more years.

This is an immense agenda – our perspective is, however, to suggest that the key to progress is, as Filion (1991) and Harrison and Leitch (1994) have argued, to recognise that entrepreneurial learning is not necessarily to be construed as unique but is capable of construal within a broader framework which allows for a comprehensive reconceptualisation of the field of management education as a whole.

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Further reading