A Framework for Effective Management Learning

By

Elizabeth Ann Thorne

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University.

March 2002

DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis is the result of an original investigation. The material has not been used in a submission for any other qualification. Full acknowledgement has been given to all sources used.

Signed..

ABSTRACT

Management learning integrates the theory of management education and development with professional practice. The complex and fragmented nature of the literature, and the wide range of professional practice, mean that research in this area is particularly challenging. This thesis appraises good practice to develop a framework for the proactive implementation of effective management learning.

The demand for higher education that leads management learning has impacted significantly on the nature of management master's provision over the last two decades. Generic, open programmes such as the MBA, as well as customised master's provision designed specifically for organisations' management development initiatives, have been critical in meeting this demand.

The thesis investigates the impact of three customised master's programmes that facilitate management learning. It assesses their overall contribution to management learning from the perspectives of three stakeholder groups: managers undertaking the programme, universities where the programmes are conducted and sponsor organisations. The sample includes public and private organisations. The case study method is used as the principal data collection technique, drawing from management development and educational practices, and is based on the principles of action research.

The thesis identifies factors which have a direct impact on success in management learning. These include mutual recognition and acceptance of the role and contribution of each stakeholder group, the need for these roles to be clearly articulated in the form of learning agreements, and the utilisation of innovative programme design and delivery methods.

While the thesis focuses principally on customised management learning programmes, evidence is presented to suggest that the framework can be applied to other generic management programmes where similar benefits are sought.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been one of the most challenging things I have ever tackled, but just over a year ago I had given up on completing this thesis, after two years of mixed health and a change in job.

The trigger to complete it is firstly down to Gill Wright whose belief in me never wavered (and boundless patience) and secondly to Frank Sanderson, Jennifer Latto and John Reynolds who gave me the support, time and space to actually complete it. Other staff at work have been kind and supportive and this includes Paul Iles, Ken Holden, Dave Gardner, Saundra Middleton, Yvonne Moogan, Aileen Corley, Elaine Eades, John Simmons, Alex Douglas, Bob McClelland and the rest of the HR group.

From the home front I have to thank Geoff, Mum and Dawn for helping and encouraging me and especially Emma, Neil and Mark who thought their Mum had been living on a different planet over the last year!

The final few weeks have been the most arduous. Harriet Gudge kept the day job going and latterly Nicky Hovell, Amanda St. John and Harriet helped with last minute word processing-without them my fingers would have been shorter and the deadline later.

I dedicate the thesis to my **Dad** who I know would be proud of me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION..ii

ABSTRACT..iii

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS..iv

LIST OF TABLES..xi

LIST OF FIGURES..xiii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background to Management Learning	1
	1.1.1 Management, Manager Development and Learning	1
	1.1.2 Dearing Report and Management Education	2
	1.1.3 Business School Perspective	2
	1.1.4 Programme Rationale and Programme Development at Liverpool Business School	3
	1.1.5 Partnerships and Collaboration	5
1.2	Research Problem	5
1.3	Research Questions	6
1.4	Research Aims	6
1.5	Research Objectives	7
1.6	Research Contribution	7
1.7	Research Methodology	8
1.8	Structure of the Thesis	12
1.9	Conclusions	13

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING

2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Management Research relating to the Aims of the Research	15
2.3	Manager Learning	17
2.4	Development of Business and Management Learning and Education	19
2.5	Management Learning	20
	2.5.1 Domains of Management Learning	22
2.6	Higher Education, Manager Learning and Education	22
	2.6.1 Corporate Universities	24

	2.6.2	Higher Education and Industry	25
	2.6.3	Higher Education and Business Schools	26
2.7	Management Education		27
2.8	Management Development		30
	2.8.1	Management Development and Competence Approaches	32
2.9	Management Education and Development Nexus		34
2.10	Partnerships		36
	2.10.1	Learning Agreements	38
2.11	Types of Management Award-bearing Programmes		40
2.12	Generic Programmes		40
	2.12.1	Customised Programmes	40
	2.12.2	Tailored Programmes	41
	2.12.3	Customised, Tailored and Client-Based and Corporate Programmes	41
	2.12.4	Accredited Programmes	42
2.13	Growth in Management Learning Programmes		42
2.14	Challenges of Award-bearing Management Learning Programmes		43
2.15	Good Practice in Management Learning Programmes		47
	2.15.1	Setting up a Programme	47
	2.15.2	Academic Standards	48
	2.15.3	Qualification	49
	2.15.4	Content and Context	49
	2.15.5	Assessment Processes	49
	2.15.6	Academic and Learning Support	49
	2.15.7	Induction	50
	2.15.8	Delivery Methods	50
2.16	Best Value Initiative In Local Government		51
2.17	Critical Review of Literature using an Inductive Approach		52
	2.17.1	Consultation Stage	55
	2.17.2	Pilot Programme	56
2.18	Conclusions		57

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1	Introduction		59
3.2	Rationale and background to the Research Methodology		59
3.3	Management Research		61
3.4	Research Philosophy		63
	3.4.1	Positivism	64
	3.4.2	Phenomenology	66
	3.4.3	Positivism and Phenomenology	66
3.5	Research Approach		68
	3.5.1	Deductive Approach	69
	3.5.2	Inductive Approach	70
	3.5.3	Major Differences between Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Research	70
	3.5.4	Validity, Reliability and Triangulation	72
3.6	Research Strategy		72
	3.6.1	Chosen Research Strategies	73

	3.6.1.1 Grounded Theory	74
	3.6.1.2 Research Strategies Rejected	77
3.7	Coding Procedures	78
3.8	Case Study	81
3.9	Action Research	82
3.10	Action Learning	84
3.11	Longitudinal Research	86
	3.11.1 Exploratory Descriptive and Explanatory Studies	87
	3.11.2 Interview Processes	88
	3.11.3 Interviews and Data Quality	90
	3.11.4 Methodology Conclusion	91
3.12	Research Methods	91
	3.12.1 Consultation Phase	92
	3.12.2 Programme Evaluation Phase	93
	3.12.3 Reflections on Learning	95
	3.12.4 Focus Group Evaluations	96
	3.12.5 Interview Itinerary	96
	3.12.6 Interview Structure and Content	98
	3.12.7 Coding Information	98
3.13	Conclusions	99

CHAPTER FOUR: LIVERPOOL BUSINESS SCHOOL AND CASE STUDY INFORMATION

4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	Background to Initiative	100
4.3	Liverpool Business School (LBS)	101
4.4	Case Study Overview	103

CHAPTER FIVE: KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (KMBC)

5.1	Introduction	104
5.2	Background	104
	5.2.1 KMBC Climate and Culture from 1974 to 1994	104
	5.2.2 KMBC Current Climate and Culture 2001-2002	106
5.3	Consultations and Development	107
	5.3.1 Consultation Phase	107
	5.3.2 Design Process	110
	5.3.2.1 Driving Principles of Programme	110
	5.3.2.2 Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage	111
5.4	The Programme	113
	5.4.1 The Qualification	113
	5.4.2 The Programme Structure	116
	5.4.3 Admissions and Entry Requirements	116
	5.4.4 Enrolment	117
	5.4.5 Assessment	118
	5.4.6 Evaluation Strategy	119
5.5	Evaluation Results and Analysis	121
	5.5.1 KMBC Senior Management Views	124

5.6	Pilot Programme Evaluation Results	126
5.6.1	Programme Structure	127
5.6.1.1	Participant Focused Issues	127
5.6.1.2	Organisational Focused Issues	129
5.6.1.3	University Focused Issues	130
5.6.1.4	Structure Summary	131
5.6.2	Programme Benefits	131
5.6.2.1	Participant Focused Issues	131
5.6.2.2	Organisation Focused Issues	136
5.6.2.3	University Focused Issues	139
5.6.3	Programme Areas for Development	141
5.6.3.1	Participant Focused Issues	141
5.6.3.2	Organisation Focused Issues	141
5.6.3.3	University Focused Issues	144
5.6.4	Stakeholder Involvement	145
5.6.4.1	Participant Focused Issues	146
5.6.4.2	Organisation Focused Issues	147
5.6.4.3	University Focused Issues	149
5.7	Conclusions	150

CHAPTER SIX: ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL (ACC)

6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Background	155
6.2.1	Local Authority Sector	156
6.2.2	Anglesey County Council (ACC)	158
6.3	Consultation and Development of Initiative	159
6.3.1	Consultation Phase	160
6.3.2	Design Process	161
6.3.2.1	Driving Principles of Programme	162
6.3.2.2	Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage	163
6.4	Programme	165
6.4.1	The Qualification	165
6.4.2	Programme Structure	167
6.4.3	Admissions and Entry Requirements	170
6.4.4	Enrolment	170
6.4.5	Assessment	171
6.5	Evaluation Strategy	172
6.5.1	Reflections on Learning	172
6.5.2	ACC Senior Management Views	173
6.6	ACC Programme Evaluation Results	173
6.6.1	Programme Benefits	174
6.6.1.1	Participant Focused Issues	174
6.6.1.2	Organisation Focused Issues	177
6.6.1.3	University Focused Issues	179
6.6.2	Programme Areas for Development	180
6.6.2.1	Participant Focused Issues	180
6.6.2.2	Organisation Focused Issues	183
6.6.2.3	University Focused Issues	185
6.6.3	Stakeholder Involvement	185

6.7 Chapter Conclusions 186

CHAPTER SEVEN: LITTLEWOODS LEISURE (LL)
7.1 Introduction 188
7.2 Background 188
7.3 Consultation and Development of Initiative 191
7.3.1 Consultation Phase 191
7.3.2 Design Process 194
7.3.2.1 Driving Principles of the Programme 194
7.3.2.2 Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage 195
7.4 Programme 199
7.4.1 Qualification 199
7.4.2 Admissions and Entry Requirements 203
7.4.3 Enrolment 203
7.4.4 Assessment 203
7.4.5 Evaluation Strategy 203
7.5 Evaluation Results and Analysis 204
7.5.1 Reflections on Learning 204
7.5.2 Certificate, Diploma and Dissertation Stages Feedback 204
7.6 LL Programme Evaluation Results 205
7.6.1 Programme Benefits 205
7.6.1.1 Participant Focused Issues 205
7.6.1.2 Organisation Focused Issues 207
7.6.1.3 University Focused Issues 209
7.6.2 Programme Areas for Development 210
7.6.2.1 Participant Focused Issues 211
7.6.2.2 Organisation Focused Issues 212
7.6.2.3 University Focused Issues 213
7.6.3 Stakeholder Involvement 215
7.7 Conclusions 216

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH
8.1 Overview of Research 218
8.2 Implications for Research Questions and Aims of the Research 218
8.2.1 Research Question One – Discussion and Conclusions 218
8.2.2 Research Question Two – Discussion and Conclusions 219
8.2.3 Research Question Three – Discussion and Conclusions 220
8.2.4 Research Question Four – Discussion and Conclusions 221
8.2.5 Aims of Research 221
8.3 Management Learning Conceptual Framework 221
8.4 Impact of the Research Methodology on the Research 223
8.5 Discussion and Impact arising from the three Case Studies 224
8.5.1 Consultation Stage 224
8.5.2 Action Research 227
8.5.3 Learning Agreements 228
8.5.4 Stakeholders and Management Learning 229

8.6	Success and Development factors in the design and delivery of Award-bearing Programmes		230
	8.6.1	Success Factors for Individual managers	230
	8.6.1	Organisation Focused Success Factors	231
	8.6.3	University Focused Success Factors	233
8.7	Negative Impact of Programme		234
	8.7.1	Individual Focused Areas for Development	234
	8.7.2	Organisation Focused Areas for Development	235
	8.7.3	University Focused Areas for Development	236
8.8	Recommendations from Research		237
	8.8.1	Action Research	237
	8.8.2	Stakeholders	238
	8.8.3	Learning Agreements	238
	8.8.4	Programme Design	239
	8.8.5	Establishing a framework for management learning	239
8.9	Conclusions		243

CHAPTER NINE: REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING

9.1	Introduction	244
9.2	Rationale, Reflections on Learning and Critical Evaluation	244
9.3	Reflecting on the Experiences	247
9.4	Pre Programme and Motivational Factors	249
9.5	Consultation Stage	250
9.6	Programme Success Factors and Development Areas	251
9.7	Cross-Departmental Learning/Group work	251
9.8	Stakeholders	253
9.9	Research Methods	253
9.10	Actions to take Forward	254

REFERENCES 256

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Conference Paper *Responding to Best Value through Management Development*, September 1998

Appendix 2 Conference Paper *Strategic Partnerships and Management Learning*, July 2002

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Summary of 3 Case Studies	10
Table 2.1	Differentiating Factors between Management Education and Development Programmes	36
Table 2.2	Categories of Postgraduate Management Programmes	40
Table 2.3	Key data Sources driving the Literature Review	53
Table 3.1	Academic Versus Applied Research	63
Table 3.2	Key Features of Positivist and Phenomenological Paradigms	67
Table 3.3	Deductive Approach	69
Table 3.4	Inductive Approach	70
Table 3.5	Differences between Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Research	71
Table 3.6	Open, Axial and Selective Coding	78
Table 3.7	KMBC Evaluation Questionnaire	94
Table 3.8	KMBC Master's Evaluation Questionnaire	95
Table 3.9	Reflections on Learning Data	96
Table 3.10	Three Cases Interview Information	97
Table 3.11	Interview Questions	98
Table 4.1	Student Numbers, LBS (1993 to 2000)	101
Table 5.1	KMBC Profile 1984 - 2002	107
Table 5.2	Perceived Benefits to KMBC and LBS	110
Table 5.3	Aims of KMBC Programme	114
Table 5.4	KMBC Programme Structure	116
Table 5.5	Participants' Motivation for taking Programme	128
Table 5.6	Benefits to Participants, KMBC and LBS	151
Table 5.7	Pilot Programme (KMBC) Results Overall Plan	154
Table 6.1	Anglesey County Council Structure on 1st April 1996	158
Table 6.2	Training Needs Analysis conducted by ACC, 1997	164
Table 6.3	Aims of the ACC Programme	166
Table 6.4	Programme Structure	168
Table 6.5	The Leading Edge Programme ACC 2000-2001	169
Table 6.6	Learning Commitment and Entitlements Document	182
Table 6.7	Pilot Programme (ACC) Results Overall Plan	187
Table 7.1	Learning Contract	192
Table 7.2	Learning Record feedback for Residential Module	198
Table 7.3	Aims of Littlewoods Leisure Programme	200
Table 7.4	Programme Structure Stage One	201
Table 7.5	Programme Structure Stage Two	201
Table 7.6	Programme Structure Stage Three	202
Table 7.7	Programme (LL) Results Overall Plan	217
Table 8.1	Consultation Stage Overview	225
Table 8.2	Programme Success Factors – Individual Focused Issues	230
Table 8.3	Programme Success Factors – Organisation Focused Issues	232

Table 8.4	Programme Success Factors – University Focused Issues	233
Table 8.5	Programme Development Areas – Individual Focused Issues	234
Table 8.6	Programme Development Areas – Organisation Focused Issues	236
Table 8.7	Programme Development Areas – University Focused Issues	236
Table 8.8	Key stakeholders for management learning programmes	238
Table 9.1	Combined Results from 3 Case Studies	248

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Positivist and Phenomenological Continuum	68
Figure 4.1	Commercial Income for Period 1995 – 2001	102
Figure 5.1	KMBC Marking Criteria	118
Figure 8.1	Emerging Conceptual Framework for Management Learning	240
Figure 8.2	Management Development and Education See-Saw	241
Figure 8.3	The Context of Management Learning	242

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Management Learning

Management learning is described by Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) as an area of both professional practice and theoretical enquiry, and has as a special concern, the linking of these two domains in a way that advances both. The synergistic relationship between theory and practice means that professional practice advances theory, while theoretical insight enhances competence.

Management learning draws on a number of areas. These include key developments in management education and management development, and reports and initiatives that have influenced management learning.

1.1.1 Management, Manager Development and Learning

Over the last two decades, management development has been the subject of national debate, which included the publication of two major reports on the same day in 1987 (Constable and McCormick 1987; Handy 1987). These reports focused on the lack of management training for managers, its impact on national competitiveness, and the need for more effective management development. The reports viewed the role of managers as crucial to the success of British industry, and that management development should equip managers to face the challenges of the future. These challenges included the need for managers to innovate and be flexible (Peters 1987, Wickens 1987), to lead change, and to encourage the participation of all employees. Managers needed to change focus from operational demands to a more strategic leadership role (Peters 1987, Wickens 1987, Salaman and Butler 1990).

In order to change, and to equip them with the required skills, managers must 'learn, learn and learn' (Salaman and Butler 1990). Managers' learning can be affected by a number of factors, including the environment, the extent of their knowledge and personal traits. Managers are additionally affected by the extent of their opportunity to practise the new learning. Management learning draws these issues together and links the domains of professional practice (opportunity to practice in their role as managers) with theoretical enquiry (knowledge and information), and the emphasis lies very clearly on learning. By drawing on the wider and longer established areas of management development and management education, management learning is the most contemporary.

1.1.2 Dearing Report and Management Education

In 1997, 'A Vision for 20 Years: The Learning Society' (DEE 1997) commonly known as the Dearing Report led to major changes in management education and the relationships with employers. This report emphasised the total neglect of management education and development in the UK. It stated that to be a successful nation in a competitive world, more investment in management education must take place. Additionally, higher education must be increasingly responsive to the needs of students and of clients (such as employers), and higher education must work in partnership with public and private sector employers.

This report had major repercussions in the University sector. It addressed problems such as reduced funding alongside increasing student numbers. Dearing urged higher education leaders to work in a far more collaborative style, and to recognise the increased resources that collaboration with the business sector could bring. He emphasised the importance of collaboration (see Section 1.1.5) between leaders of industry and higher education in developing managers and leaders, and demanded far more collaboration between practitioners and theorists. This is central to the principles of management learning, and therefore a primary focus of this research study.

1.1.3 Business School Perspective

In response to Dearing (1997), a number of University Business schools recognised the need to collaborate with industry, and provide research and teaching specifically for a purpose-built environment in management education. Business schools have grown in number and are now regarded as major revenue earners within the University sector.

Business schools are however undergoing change, with movements towards creating a learning environment with more flexibility, in terms of learning options and delivery of teaching, which includes on-line delivery of subjects (Selen 2001). Selen's view is that whilst Business schools are embracing some change, many are not addressing the learning needs of the rapidly changing organisational environment. The reasons for this include (Selen 2001:106):

- rigid organisational structure of University settings
- changing and decreasing funding schemes
- outdated methodology
- lack of collaboration within and outside the Business school

Selen states that whilst this paints a grim picture, the dynamic business and organisation arena presents the higher education sector with countless opportunities for curriculum development, diverse learning methodologies, and growth. It also presents higher education with scope to collaborate more closely with organisations and business practitioners.

According to Selen, business educators often advocate integration in their own specific subject specialism. However, this can be to the detriment of the overall programme aims, as well as the evolving business models and strategies. This modular approach is favoured in many institutions within higher education, as demonstrated by the growth of University modular frameworks and credit rating systems for modules. The assessment framework for evaluating learning outcomes in relation to the needs of business can also be adversely affected by this lack of integration (Brown and Knight 1994; and Yorke 1998). This highlights the need for management education to change by embracing the business community and incorporating the best elements of training and development in an effective learning strategy within higher education.

1.1.4 Programme Rationale and Programme Development at Liverpool Business School

The Dearing Report challenged higher education to improve and broaden its focus, and the research presented in this thesis is based on an early response, whereby a range of collaborative programmes were established in the public and private sectors following requests for management development programmes that would contribute to their change management agenda. These programmes were developed in Liverpool Business School (LBS), which is part of John Moores University. The programmes were groundbreaking and seen as:

- highly influential (attracting major organisations both nationally and locally)
- dynamic and challenging
- satisfying the needs within universities to keep staff updated with organisation trends
- a means of networking
- encouraging diverse learning and teaching methods such as distance learning/e-learning
- major revenue earners.

In 1992/3, the first collaborative master's programme was set up with the Rover Group, and this competence-led programme provided the School with its first major contract to deliver postgraduate education to an external organisation. Shortly after that, LBS was approached to tender for other postgraduate management programmes, the first of which was for Knowsley council with an entrepreneurial leader who was responsible for raising the profile of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council which was in the lowest category in terms of national league tables for socio-economic mix, schools, economic growth, etc.. The growth of these programmes continued throughout the 1990's within LBS and throughout the University sector in general (Brown 1999, Pareja-Torres 2000).

Two of the key staff responsible for the growth in the new collaborative programme provision at this time had similar backgrounds. Both had gained their Master of Arts (MA) in Management Learning (MAML) at Lancaster University and had worked at senior levels in industry (both private and public sector), and both significantly had management development and training backgrounds. The principles that underpin the MAML programme include action research and reflective practice.

These members of staff designed programmes based on management learning principles and used a number of the practices of the MAML programme as a model at the design stage. This included the use of:

- action research principles

- programme structure
- diverse and challenging teaching methods.

1.1.5 Partnerships and Collaboration

Sadler-Smith (2000), cites De Geus (1998) and others who have suggested that learning is the key to maintaining and sustaining an organisation within a competitive environment where new products can be quickly and easily imitated. Gibb (1996) and Fryer (1997) state that learning leads to competitiveness and promotes commitment to employee development and life-long learning. They state that learning is developed through:

- a methodology informed largely by action research
- participation through a stakeholder approach and collaborative action
- increased attention to personal and organisational learning rather than training
- an emphasis on work-based learning

These issues are all implied in the Liverpool Business School's mission statement. The duty to network with the local business community, to inspire, innovate and provide an effective learning infrastructure. This participative approach and the Schools emphasis on work-based learning has led to the environment supporting a learning climate.

1.2 Research Problem

The contemporary literature on the emerging area of management learning is synthesised from a diverse literature base, grounded in both management education and development. The literature is complex and fragmented, and because of these different contributions to the body of knowledge, there is a lack of cohesiveness in the application of management learning to management practice. The research problem and challenge is to integrate these ideas, to develop a framework that can be used to design and develop management learning provision within the University sector, taking into account three stakeholder groups: managers undertaking University programmes in management learning, organisations sponsoring programmes, and universities providing the programmes.

1.3 Research Questions

This research problem gives rise to the following research questions. This thesis is an action research-based collaboration, which is work-based and leads to both personal and organisational learning and change. The University, employer and manager want to maximise the learning which is implicit in the aims of other postgraduate programmes in LBS, whether they are open or for a specific client group. This action research-based activity is set in three organisations, two from the public and one from the private sector.

The research questions arising from the conceptual review and the methodology are:

1. In what ways could management learning programmes contribute to organisational change management agenda?
2. Could action research principles and training and development techniques be used more effectively in management education to produce a better experience?
3. In what ways could collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the sponsoring organisation, affect the management learning experience?
4. How could management learning practices in LBS be improved?

1.4 Research Aims

In the light of the research problems and questions, the aims of the research are:

1. To contribute to the body of management learning knowledge by an analysis of how the concepts of management learning work in practice.
2. To validate this emerging subject area and to reinforce its importance.
3. To bridge the gap between the wide range of ideas for effective management learning and the lack of cohesion and synthesis in the literature.
4. To offer, based on master's level provision, a framework for good practice in management learning.

1.5 Research Objectives

In order to answer the research questions and to meet the aims of the research, the researcher has defined the following specific objectives:

1. To critically evaluate contemporary management learning literature.
2. To review best practice in management learning programme design and delivery.
3. To determine the impact of three master's programmes from the perspectives of the manager, University, and sponsoring organisation.
4. To develop a framework for effective management learning, based on the results of the three programme evaluations, and any gaps established in the literature on management learning.

1.6 Research Contribution

This thesis is an action research-based collaboration, which is work-based and leads to both personal and organisational learning and change. The University, employer and manager wants to maximise the learning which is implicit in the aims of other postgraduate programmes in LBS whether they are open or for a specific client group.

The publications from this study include the following:

1. A conference paper presented to the annual conference of the Centre for Enterprise and Management, Bolton Institute of Higher Education, September 1998 entitled *Best Value: the Case in a Welsh Unitary Authority* (Appendix 1).
2. An abstract has been submitted and accepted in the 3rd International Conference on Connecting Learning and Critique, at Cambridge University, July 2002. The abstract is entitled - *Strategic partnerships and management learning* (Appendix 2).
3. An abstract has been submitted to the Corporate Institute of Personnel and Development, Professional Standards Conference; refereed stream, July 2002. The abstract is entitled - *Strategic Alliances: operationalising management learning* (Appendix 3).

This research concentrates on factors that would have an impact on specialist University programmes designed for organisations, and suggests that approaches gaining popularity in industry can also be applied in other traditional open programmes.

1.7 Research Methodology

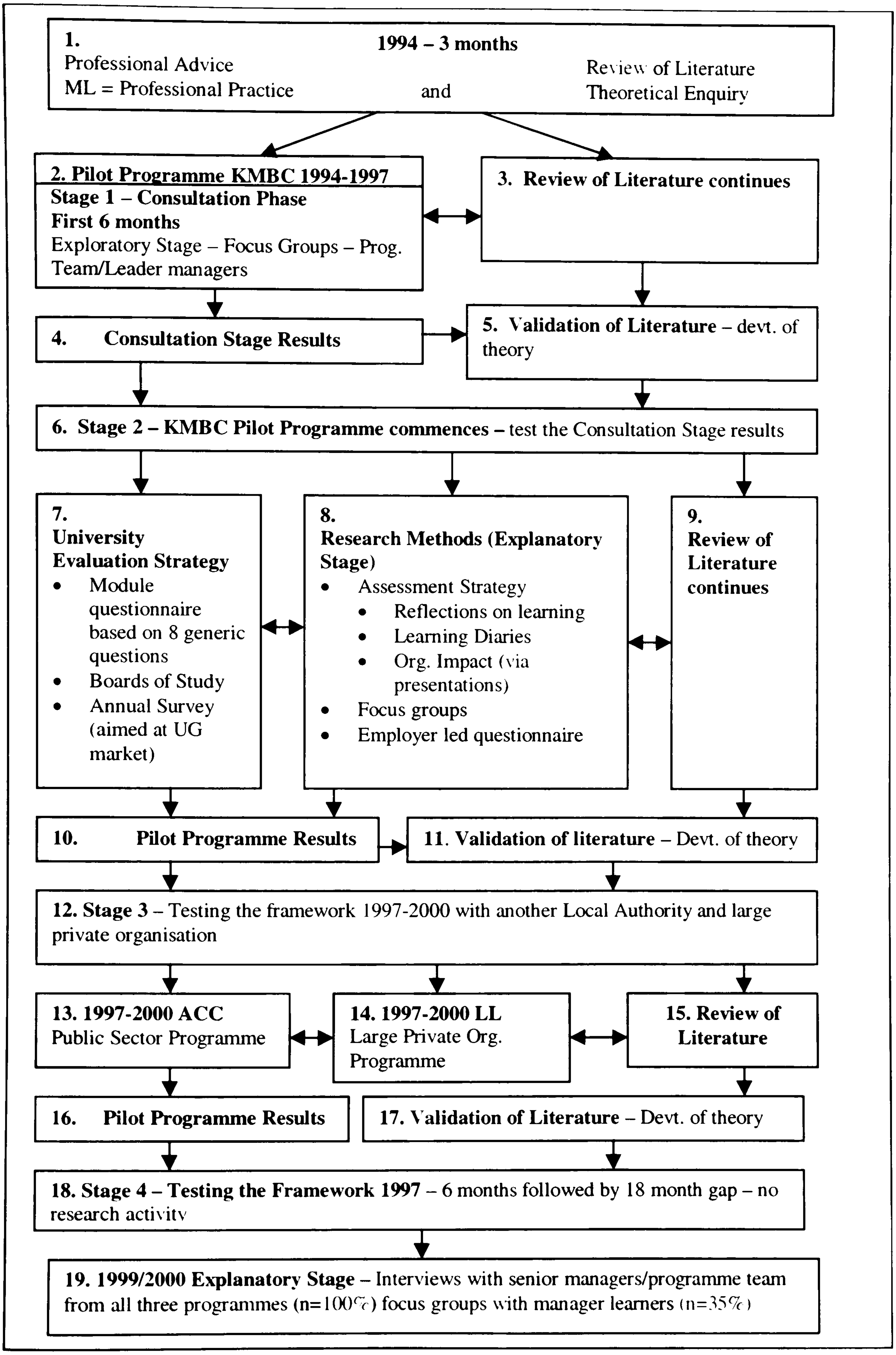
This action research-based activity is set in three organisations, two from the public and one from the private sector. The emerging research strategy uses a 'grounded' approach. This leads to a case study methodological framework for the thesis, which allows use of a range of sources of information and has a multi-method approach. In defining and outlining the methodology for the research described in the dissertation, it is important to note that the development of collaborative programmes in 1994 were a step into the unknown (Section 1.1.4). Issues which have already been discussed in this introductory chapter, and impact on the methodology include:

- the research was groundbreaking within LBS (Section 1.1.4)
- the research was innovative within the HE Business school sector, it predated the Dearing Report by three years, which stressed that HE should interact far more with industry. By implication, other Universities were not collaborating effectively in 1997 and there is evidence in 2001 (Selen 2001) that a number of University Business schools are still not acting in a collaborative style and embracing change
- the management learning literature is diverse and did not provide the researchers with a clear understanding of how to progress the research. This further endorsed the original view of the researcher that the management learning literature is difficult to access and use
- the most relevant literature available at the start of this research (1994) was drawn from a limited number of management education journal articles.

It was therefore clear at this early stage that although the management learning literature provided a degree of background information, it was not sufficient for the purposes of the research to allow rigorous theories to be tested on the literature. The learning was therefore taking an inductive stance where theory is derived from the emerging data. As the collaboration developed the different views of the stakeholders were taken into account in the development of a management learning programme.

In addition to the inductive nature of the research, which was based on a collaborative programme taking place in a major public sector organisation, the most appropriate methodological framework was a case study approach. The research aims and questions described at the beginning of this research, led to a case study methodological framework. This allows for a range of sources of information and a multi-method approach. The research methods include focus groups, interviews, reflections upon learning, and learning diaries in addition to the normal University evaluation mechanisms. The following table describes how the research methodology impacted upon the research.

Table 1.1 Summary of 3 Case Studies



Each of the three case studies has similar aims, which are to develop management potential and promote organisational change. The emphasis on change led to an action research approach, drawing on theoretical insights from both management research and management learning. The strategy is based on a multi-method approach, which includes the evaluation method, interview and focus group information, as well as reflections on learning, which is part of the assessment strategy for the programmes.

From the review of the literature and from the early discussions with the stakeholders it was agreed that a consultation stage would allow the stakeholders the opportunity to design the most appropriate management learning programme using exploratory research methods (Table 1.1, Box 1 and 2). During this stage the literature was referred to and the results of the consultation stage validated the current management learning literature. This pattern was then followed at each of the subsequent stages. The pilot programme commenced, a range of evaluation strategies and research methods were established which were informed by the literature. Once the results were established the development of theory led to an emerging framework for management learning (Table 1.1, Boxes 6-11). This framework was then further tested with another local authority and a large private organisation (Table 1.1, Boxes 12-17) and the results compared against literature, which then informed theory.

In normal circumstances the research would then have gone into the final stage but due to unforeseen circumstances the research was suspended for a period of 18 months. This intervening period did allow the researcher time to reflect upon the research design, methodology and outcomes. Once the research recommenced it was necessary to review the future of the research project. The data that had emerged from the 3 case studies was substantial and significant, but the literature review was extensive, wide, lacked cohesion and the draft literature review was not applied.

The original research approach was inductive and the decision was taken to use a selective approach, to allow the data emerging from each stage of the research (key issues) to determine the structure of the literature review. This approach ensured that the key areas emerging from the data became the main headings used in the literature review which then formed the basis of the framework for management learning described in Chapter 8.

1.8 Structure of thesis

Chapter one is divided into four unequal parts which are: the background to management learning, the context of the research, the chapters in the thesis, and the contribution to knowledge. The first part includes the rationale for using management learning as the main subject area and is concluded by the aims of the thesis. The next part describes the context in which this research has been set. The third part includes information on each of the chapters in the thesis and the final part describes the learning that has taken place and the contribution to knowledge arising from the research.

Chapter two is broadly split into two main areas. The first deals with the literature on management learning and its associated areas and is more theoretical and conceptually focused, while the second describes the literature on programme development, which is more practically focused, with emphasis on good practice in the design and implementation of a range of management programmes.

The first part considers information on the conceptual underpinnings of management learning. This focuses on the prime area of management learning, and is followed by a review of the two other sources of literature, that underpin management learning, which are management education and development. Partnerships are then considered with practical information on the development of learning agreements. The second part of this chapter is a critical review of the literature on programme design and development, which includes discussion on the different types of management learning programmes and the challenges that face universities when designing and running these complex programmes.

Chapter three starts by reviewing the overarching area of management research. Thereafter, the chapter covers three main areas. The first is the research philosophy, stance and approach taken in this research. The next describes the research strategy and critically evaluates a range of options considered and rejected. Chapter three continues by describing the research methods used, and concludes with information on coding of results and the interview schedules.

Chapter four provides information on Liverpool Business School where this research has been based and provides background information on the three case studies.

Chapters five to seven describe the three organisations upon which the case studies are based. Chapter five is the most detailed for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. This was the first of the organisations to request a management learning programme. This section includes a longer consultation process and a pilot stage to test the emerging programme design, which was not relevant to the other two organisations. Chapter six discusses Anglesey County Council where the programme design and delivery was tested with a second local authority, and chapter seven reviews the work undertaken with Littlewoods Leisure, whereby the emerging framework was tested within a large private sector organisation. The structure of Chapters five to seven is similar, and each provides background information about the organisation followed by the consultation phase and design process. The details on each programme, cover the qualification, structure, admissions and entry requirements, enrolment, and assessment characteristics. This is followed by the evaluation strategy employed on each programme, with the results of each programme discussed from the perspective of the participant, the organisation and the University. The results include both the success factors and areas where further development is needed.

Chapter eight commences with an overview of the combined results extracted from the three case studies. The implications arising from the conceptual framework, the consultation and the programme stages are provided, as well as the negative impact of the programme. The latter part of this chapter discusses the emerging conceptual framework for management learning.

Each chapter provides an introduction or overview and conclusions statement.

1.9 Conclusions

This chapter provides the background information relating to this thesis, which concentrates on management learning and its wider context. The research problem is described, and is followed by the aims, objectives, and methods for the research described in the thesis. Information has been provided on the contribution to knowledge and the contributions arising from the research. Finally, an overview of each chapter is provided.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING

2.1 Introduction

This chapter falls into two main areas:

- Sections 2.2 to 2.10 review the contemporary literature on management learning and its associated areas and have a more theoretical and conceptual focus.
- Sections 2.11 to 2.14 describe the literature on programme development and are more practically focused. Here the emphasis is on good practice, both in the design and the implementation of a range of management programmes.

The chapter starts with an introduction to management research in relation to the research aims stated in Section 1.1. Information is first of all presented on manager learning, and the focus then shifts to the prime area of management learning. This is followed by a review of the two other sources of literature which underpin management learning: management education and development. Partnerships are then considered with information on the development of learning agreements.

The latter part of the chapter focuses on a critical review of the literature on programme design and development and includes discussions of the different types of management learning programmes and the challenges that face universities when designing and running these complex programmes. This is followed with evidence of good practice in the area which can then be used to take the research described in the thesis forward. The chapter concludes with a section which critically reflects upon the literature using the inductive stance taken for the research described in this thesis.

2.2 Management Research relating to the Aims of the Research

Management is an extremely broad area of research (Thietart et al. 2001) which encompasses a range of theoretical and conceptual models as well as practical insights into the field. Management researchers tend either to study the literature and extract concepts from it or to explore reality through fieldwork as a means of assembling either a group of concepts or a body of data (Angot and Milano cited in Thietart et al. 2001).

The accumulation of concepts leads to speculation in terms of the types of data required to study concepts in action. The accumulation of data leads the researcher to attempt to reveal the concepts underlying the data. These are referred to by Thietart et al. (2001) as measurement and abstraction. Measurement is described as the translation of concepts, and abstraction is the translation of data into concepts. Thietart et al. (2001) states that researchers can employ multi-measurement and/or abstraction processes when confronted with the varying demands of management research. Therefore, as the empirical data develops, links are made to the theoretical realm.

Broadly, the first stage of the research described in the thesis, comprises of a "trawl" (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991) of the theories and concepts relating to the area of management learning, and this is followed by the more practical programme design and development literature. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) and Angot and Milano (2001) confirm the value of reviewing the conceptual base for research, but the latter text suggests the need to revisit this as the empirical data develops. As described in Section 1.1.4, LBS had the opportunity to develop management programmes for three organisations. The initial approach was from a large Local Authority, who wanted to develop their managers. Therefore Section 2.3 commences with a review to manager learning. The research questions (Section 1.3) are broad-based and it is therefore important that the researcher is able to review the conceptual base as the data developed. This endorses the Angot and Milano (2001) view. Another source of information is a review of abstracts from other theses. Internal documents relating to each of the three organisations who requested management programmes is also used (they are considered as case studies in this research) and includes Liverpool Business School documentation.

The concept of management learning is synthesised from a diverse literature base, grounded in management education and development. It is an emerging area, and the research described in the thesis, suggests an approach to the effective utilisation of management learning in the practice of management. The conceptual review continues with an analysis of manager learning, which is then followed by reviewing management learning literature.

2.3 Manager Learning

The Concise Oxford Dictionary definition (1972) for the term manager is "a person conducting a business", and for learning is "the possession of knowledge". In terms of the research described in the thesis, the manager is someone who leads a business department within one of three organisations considered in the research upon which the case studies were based. The learning element is crucial, the managers are in organisations that are subject to constant change and the possession of knowledge is paramount to their success as a manager.

Managers have been the subject of intense debate over the last two decades. Salaman and Butler (1990) state that British managers are seriously under-trained and uneducated. In 1990, only 15% of British managers had a degree or equivalent, and only about 12,000 of the 90,000 people who started managerial careers each year received any form of education or training in management.

Tom Peters (1987) states the need for managers to be responsive, innovative, able to lead change and to encourage the participation of all employees (Section 2.17.1). The new forms of learning for managers stress the need for managerial flexibility and innovation (Peters 1987, Wickens 1987, Salaman and Butler 1990). They emphasise the need for managers to be able to switch from operational roles to become far more strategic and, where required, to change their management style or team role. Boak et al. (1997) states that areas of management work should also include activities promoted by the Government, such as the Investors in People (IiP) award, and the quality standards BS5750/ISO 9000. Additionally, the work done alongside senior managers by Boak et al. (1997), suggests that managers need to learn about, and address the issues of new product/service development; expansion; downsizing and redundancies; negotiation and bargaining with trade unions; and the handling of disciplinary and grievance issues.

If managers are to be able to face these demands, they must be encouraged to "learn, learn, learn" (Salaman and Butler 1990). It is recognised that there will be difficulty in accomplishing this. Managers may resist learning or learn in different ways, but trainers, consultants or Business school lecturers, must recognise their roles in providing the right learning experience for managers (Salaman and Butler 1990). The area of manager learning is continually changing. Although the views expressed, over a decade ago by Salaman and Butler (1990) and Peters (1987) are still relevant, the gap has changed. Certainly managers are now more skilled and more have been trained as job roles continually change, but the demand for learning is even greater. The area of manager learning concentrates on the role of the manager and the acquisition of knowledge. In addition to gaining a competitive edge through people, organisations will require a skilled management work force able to work in a fast changing environment. The management of change is therefore seen as a key managerial requirement. It is therefore essential to extend the conceptual review to the wider field of management learning.

The results indicated by Boak et al. (1997) show that many senior managers are engaged in bringing about radical changes, including changes to company mission, culture and significant reorganisations, and that they gain most valuable learning and development from activities within their own team, from managing new projects, and networking with customers. Employees with a professional qualification may see promotion in terms of a management post for which they have no formal qualifications. Developing management qualifications may therefore lead to "improved chances of employment, improved promotion prospects, evidence of ability, improved knowledge and a general view of management" (Fripp and Wilson 1996). Some employers are also aware of their responsibility to make their employees more marketable, having removed their job security (Fripp and Wilson 1996).

This was certainly the case in all three organisations described in the thesis. All had been through some form of restructuring and viewed this collaboration as a way of consolidating the development strategy. Littlewoods Leisure, for example, wanted to retain its managers as it prepared for a potential take-over, and additionally wanted its managers to concentrate on the future rather than the past. The take-over did take place.

However management education may be considered by some employees as a contentious area, as some employers believe that equipping their staff with higher level qualifications may be counterproductive (Boak et al. 1997). In particular, within the public sector, it was found that senior managers did express the reservation that this higher level qualification could be seen as "a passport out of the Authority". A number of organisations have penalty clauses when agreeing for staff to undertake such training. Employees leaving within a certain period have to repay costs and this is the case at Anglesey County Council.

However, the new generation of enlightened, qualified managers should be trained to accept constructive criticism, setting up more channels/candidates for further course attendance, benefiting both the course-giving organisation and the commercial company (Macfarlane and Lomas 1995). The skills of being critical are one of the key differentiating factors between the subject areas of management education and development. Further critical reflection on this section has been included in Section 2.17.1.

2.4 Development of Business and Management Learning and Education

Management is described by Maund (2001), as a "distinct subsystem which is responsible for directing and co-ordinating all other subsystems in an organisation". Another definition is "making the most effective use of available resources, whether in the form of machines, money or people" (Statt 1991). Both of these definitions stress the interaction of the systems and resources employed within the organisation, with an emphasis on the organisation. The influence of these business systems on learning and education must also be considered to determine the impact on management learning. The research aims (Section 1.4) consider the wider field of 'management' as opposed to 'the manager' described in the previous section. As the research questions defined in Section 1.3 state, the research seeks to recognise the ways in which management learning contributes to organisational change and management processes. This review of management learning will therefore continue with a historical appraisal of the subject area.

There has been major expansion in the 1960's in the business, management and education sector, which led to growth within the Business school sector. At the same time, there was growth in the public and private sectors of training and development (Stewart and McGoldrick 1996). In the 1970's, Burgoyne and Stuart (1978) created a national framework for management learning, which incorporated a number of different learning approaches. These included the long established subject areas of management education and development, which when combined, describe the area of management learning. This research concentrates on the development of managers and draws on literature from all three areas.

During the 1980's, Handy (1987) and Constable and McCormick (1987) published reports which identified that management training and development in the UK was poorly developed, particularly when compared to the USA, France and Germany (Sargeant and Matheson 1996). In 1986 over half of all UK companies appeared to make no formal provision for training their managers (Mangham and Silver 1986). Since then, the provision of management development has been through an enormous transformation. Thomson et al. (1997) conducted a survey which identified that only 4 per cent of the larger companies declared undertaking no training.

Whilst management learning and development provision has improved over the last four decades, there is still a lack of training and development for managers, at a time when the role of managers described in Section 2.3, is constantly changing (Burnes 1996, Kotter 1982, Peters 1987, Salaman and Butler 1990). Additionally, there is greater competition for jobs with employers demanding more qualifications (Brown 1999). The research described here, seeks to address this issue by developing Master's provisions in three different organisation case studies.

2.5 Management Learning

Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) describe management learning as an area of both professional practice and theoretical enquiry. They see professional practice adding to management learning and theoretical insights adding to practitioners activities. This is similar to the concept of manager learning (Section 2.4), in that both areas focus on the manager and their role as a practising professional. Although the definition of manager learning describes the need to increase knowledge, Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) emphasise the relationship between practice and theory, and stress the importance of theoretical insight. The research described in the thesis is conducted in a Business school where theoretical enquiry, allied to professional practice, is implied in the School mission statement. Therefore the wider area of management learning is more appropriate for this research than that solely of manager learning. In this respect, Burgoyne and Reynold's work was the first to describe and scope out the subject area of management learning. This has been highly influential in the research described in the thesis and has been critically reflected on in Section 2.17.2.

This unique interdependence between both is found in the aims of this research (Section 1.4), where management learning is seen as an area of professional practice. The senior and learner-managers at Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, wanted an understanding of leadership, management knowledge, and skills. The demonstration of this learning in a Business school is normally through the assessment process. This seeks to identify management learning and provide theoretical insights into the individual manager's capability as well as encouraging managers to improve and adopt effective change management strategies in the organisation (Brown 1999). The research seeks to determine whether examples of good practice in management learning arise in the case studies and conclusions (Chapters 5 –8).

According to Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997), the existing subject areas of management development and management education have become increasingly blurred, and it is argued that management learning was created in response to two main influences. These were:

- doubts and criticisms of management education and development which created a demand for research
- shortage of management educators, trainers and teachers created the need for teaching and good quality design and curriculum

Source: Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997:8)

Over the past ten years, the split between the theorist and the practitioner has increased. National institutions endorsed the split which included the British Academy of Management which represented views from the academic and theoretical community, and AMED which represented the corporation, organisation and consultancy community (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997).

In other cases University staff become involved with the clients' activities where their expertise is used to further knowledge within the organisations. This develops real life experience of work and research underpins this level of management education and is therefore a two-way process.

2.5.1 Domains of Management Learning

Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) state that management learning has, as a special concern, the linking of the two domains of professional practice and theoretical inquiry in a way that advances both. Domains are further described within the core text on management learning (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997) as the localities in which management learning activity is carried out. They describe the two main localities as the educational institutions, including Business schools, and work organisations, which include the public and private sector. The research described in the thesis seeks to address the establishment and development of links between professional practice and theoretical enquiry, leading to advances in both domains.

The first domain is within the organisation, where improvements in the development of the managers' learning is through helping the managers to manage change effectively. The improvement in their learning will increase knowledge within the organisation, which will then have an impact on change strategies within it. The second domain is through the intervention of the managers learning and organisation change. This has led to a body of knowledge, which the University has utilised. The development of knowledge through the case studies described in chapters 5 – 7, has provided knowledge and information, which together have added to theory. Both domains have substantially gained from the experience, and this is described in the conclusions to the thesis (Chapter 8).

2.6 Higher Education, Manager Learning and Education

It is important to recognise the contribution to the first domain, the educational sector, of management learning (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997). The context of the research described in Section 1.1.4 is a Business school in the higher education sector. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) initiated a review of postgraduate education in 1995, in response to concern about the quality and nature of postgraduate provision. A committee was set up, and the Harris report was completed in 1996. Among its recommendations was the establishment of a national qualification framework. The subsequent Dearing report in 1997, considered both undergraduate and postgraduate provision and recommended the immediate endorsement of the framework.

The Dearing Report 1997 (Section 1.1.2) also emphasises the importance of the role and contribution of higher education to a knowledge-based economy, and promotes the notion of lifelong learning. It states that in a dynamic, competitive business context, the nature of managerial work is changing, creating a requirement for new skills and knowledge, and for the higher education sector to provide a value-added element when educating managers.

These reports are significant, and have been developed by key national figures and members of the educational establishment. They emphasise the importance of changing the way in which higher education operates. To bring about change on the scales suggested in these reports is likely to be problematic, Dearing is suggesting changes that go beyond higher education and point to collaboration with industry. These changes will not be easy and it will take time and resources to nurture such relationships. Resources are rarely mentioned in the Dearing and Harris reports. Lee (1998) suggests that proportional funding for UK higher education has dropped over the last few years, and that many people now believe the quality of higher education is seriously threatened. Franks (1996) has considered whether education could be delivered for less money, and states that many employers and organisations have put pressure to make education more effective, so that it can equip students for the work or careers they will be taking up in the future. This pressure has been experienced within LBS and one of the ways in which the University is meeting the demand is through growth in collaborative programmes and providing support for organisations and managers, some of whom regard academia as an "ivory tower".

There have been a number of attempts to bring about such radical change. This includes bringing industry and higher education together, in ways that will generate revenue and resources. The Fryer report (1997) and the establishment of the University for Industry (UFI) have both contributed to the current changing face of higher education in terms of:

- widening participation in learning (accessibility of learning opportunities, regarding time, place and pace),
- inspiring national demand for learning, and
- modernising the supply of learning.

UFI is charged with taking forward the Government's vision of a 'University for Industry', working as a public – private partnership in the UK. Their aim is to put individuals in a better position to get jobs, improve career prospects and boost business competitiveness (www.ufiltd.co.uk). Whilst help and support, including financial, can be provided through Learning Skills Councils (the Government body responsible for UFI), this demand will impact on the higher education sector. It must be met without it affecting standards and quality, and with little additional resources and financial support to develop the range of programmes and necessary support, such as open-access programmes.

2.6.1 Corporate Universities

Corporate Universities have been established by a number of large organisations where education faculties are being created, e.g. British Aerospace and Unipart. The Government has therefore impacted on the higher education and organisation debate. Organisations have also put pressure on further and higher education sectors, with the growth of Corporate Universities. These were established in the UK in the 1980's and onwards, and has had some success. There has however, been cause for resentment at the 'double standards' (Wild 1998), whereby traditional universities have strict guidelines maintained by QAA. These stringent requirements are not being made in the area of Corporate Universities. This may be seen by some, including Wild (Principal of Henley Management College), to create a two-tier system. That is, one representing traditional academia with an interest in employability, and the other representing a single employer with an interest only in its own employees. This description is however open to debate since the latter will want to acquire degree-awarding status. Wild (1998) explores the need by clients to have more control of the curriculum and delivery, which is the case with Unipart and British Aerospace. In such cases, there is often a partnership with one or more Business schools, e.g. Cable and Wireless is linked with Henley Business School where they can gain degrees (Brown 1999).

These Corporate Universities are likely to be internationally sourced with what they need. That is for example, teaching and related resources, and accreditation for qualifications. This may be seen as erosion of the role of traditional universities, but it could also be in the interest of the University sector to reconsider its present practices. Traditional Universities could consider awarding their qualifications for programmes delivered largely by other institutions. In addition, 'hosting' arrangements can be made whereby the corporate University is part of the faculty of an existing University. The main outcome from Wild's article is the need for Universities to become flexible, and for individuals and organisations to drive programme menus. The context of the research, described in the thesis, is set in a Business school which has bridged the gap between meeting organisation needs, and maintaining academic standards, whilst also awarding degrees (Liverpool John Moores University Business and Management Subject Review Report, October 2000).

2.6.2 Higher Education and Industry

The previous section describes one way of linking Universities and organisations. Pressure for higher education to change is also coming from the business sector. Organisations have had to apply their core technologies, assets and competencies to new markets, and Business schools will have to meet this challenge (Sparrow 1994). Business schools therefore need to get closer to industry, and structure their programmes to match the needs of the employers, if they are to be able to survive in the long term (Sargeant and Matheson 1996).

Lees (1992) sees the qualities for the 'new' managers as the skills to successfully embody the team player, be accepted by colleagues, and be able to work flexibly above the accepted boundaries. Lee (1995) also states the need to train managers to manage, if necessary, by providing them with a quick fix of tools like people skills, to empower others to act quickly and well. These 'tools' and techniques may be drawn from the management development training sector, described in Section 2.8.

2.6.3 Higher Education and Business Schools

As well as equipping students for work, Universities have been looking at more non-traditional ways of developing with these issues. Prince and Stewart (2000) have highlighted the rapidly growing market for corporate management education, and the emerging role Business schools are playing in this market:

> *The 1990s have seen the dawn of a new phase in business school development with the focus now on access, developing innovative ways of delivering learning and knowledge to managers in different settings and contexts.*

Source: Prince and Stewart (2000:214)

The demands described so far on the Business school sector includes: widening participation, modernising learning (Fryer (1997), improving postgraduate provision (Harris 1997), providing a value-added element for the development of management (Dearing 1997), getting closer to industry and then collaborating with them (Dearing 1997, Sargeant and Matheson 1996), and encouraging wider use of training and development methods. There is therefore common accord in these statements, that Business schools need to meet the challenges of the management community. However, as described in Section 2.7.2, this is at a time of constant erosion of funding (Frank 1996, Lee 1995), and one of the ways in which both the issue of meeting the demands for services, and increasing revenue within the Higher Education sector, is to work with industry to develop full cost programmes which is the case in the research described in the thesis.

Prince and Stewart (2000) states that the range of Business schools (105 at the time of their research), each have different histories and expertise and the responses are therefore diverse. They state that the Business school response to new business should be based on:

1. Market structure
2. Management seniority - Senior management education consists primarily of non-accredited programmes delivered by high profile academics drawn from prestigious Business schools and private consultancies.
3. Geographic location
4. Perceived credibility. There is an argument that there is not one market for management education but several distinct markets. There is some evidence that a

number of traditional universities would like to move into the senior executive education market, which is within the fairly elite management schools and colleges such as Cranfield, London Business School, and Henley.

The agenda for Business schools is to know the market they are in, to focus, and to build a critical mass of clients. In the above description the context and credibility of the Business school is important. In terms of the research described in the thesis, these issues are endorsed by staff at Liverpool Business School based on their experiences. An additional factor is that of reputation. Liverpool Business School has built a reputation to deliver management programmes, which have been recognised as innovative and quality programmes (Business and Management Subject Review Report 2000). These are designed for a range of senior and middle managers, and over a ten year period there has been growth and development of the programmes, largely due to the reputation gained by the school (Chapter 8), even though it is not particularly well placed geographically. However, the credibility factor relating to elite schools has already affected Liverpool Business School. A major contract was lost to Liverpool University's new management school, and this was thought to be due to its international reputation.

2.7 Management Education

Management education is described by Statt (1991), as any course of instruction in management and related fields. Success in such a course is usually rewarded with an academic qualification. French and Grey (1996), suggest that management education exists to provide managers with the knowledge and skills they need to operate effectively. They state that the area is complex and open to much critical debate. The context of the research described in the thesis, is management, and in order to meet the aims described in Section 1.4 it is necessary to analyse management education literature. More pertinent to the area of management learning since the definition is wide and the field is complex (French and Grey 1996), this review has been taken from the perspective of the research questions (Section 1.4) which focus on the collaboration with organisations and management practice in the field. The area of management learning as described in Section 2.4, is drawn from both management education and management development practices and it is therefore relevant to recognise the contribution of management education to the field of knowledge. The discussion on the differences between management education and development are contained in Section 2.9.

As discussed by Macfarlane and Lomas (1995:33), Barnett (1990:138) identifies 12 characteristics traditionally associated with higher education. Some are particularly pertinent to programmes which run specifically for an organisation, normally termed 'client-based' programmes such as "the pursuit of truth and objective knowledge, research, academic freedom, a neutral and open forum for debate, and the development of both the student's critical abilities and autonomy." Barnett describes one of the critically acclaimed core values of an academic, as the ability to research actively and to be able to comment freely on research findings. Barnett extends this factor to students, where he states that knowledge in higher education emerges through critical dialogue, referred to in the literature. At its best, management becomes fully integrated with the organisation's strategic performance and the individual managers' performance and career development (Storey et al. 1997).

Thomson et al. (1997) found that a key driver in management education was company strategy. This was also confirmed by Boak et al. (1997), who considered the extent that company strategy impacted on management participants, as part of a funded project for the Department of Education and Employment in 1996. Boak et al. (1997) developed and piloted relevant services that Business schools could provide to senior managers. They surveyed a range of managers from middle to senior, and found that with the gradual changes over the past ten years to less hierarchical structures, middle management staff are being asked to take on more responsibilities and be more accountable for their actions.

Thomson et al. (1997) and Boak et al. (1997), all recognise the importance of company strategy in the provision of management education. But Boak et al. (1997) describes what managers want from management education, whereas Prince et al. (2000) looks at this from a different perspective, from that of corporate training managers. The training managers stated what they wanted from management education which should include:

1. Strategic and focused on key staff who drive change initiatives.
2. Performance-driven, where organisations tie their existing management education and training into award-bearing programmes. Organisations should seek outside accreditation, which acts as an incentive for managers and is an external benchmark of quality.
3. Individual needs driven which has the longest tradition and is the market for open programmes.

The first statement is consistent with a number of views referred to in the literature, and the third statement is hard to contest since it refers to the biggest market for management education, where students attend open programmes within Universities to learn. The second statement is one that is more contentious. The research described in the thesis fits into this category, it is performance-driven and leads to a masters qualification. The view could, however, be taken that tying existing courses to award-bearing programmes may be both difficult for some managers to aspire to, and deemed unnecessary by others. For example, a manager may already have a degree and want managerial skills development only.

Nevertheless, there has been considerable debate about the efficacy of management education. In particular, academic and pedagogic validity has been questioned (Brown 1999), and yet recent evidence shows that growth is expected to continue (Fripp and Wilson 1996).

> *improved chances of employment, improved promotion prospects, evidence of ability, improved knowledge and a general view of management.*

Source: Fripp and Wilson (1996)

Fripp and Wilson (1996) suggest the reasons for that growth include:

1. The need for managers to gain a qualification to enhance their CV at a time when jobs are no longer secure and long term.
2. Employees may be professionally well qualified but lack relevant managerial qualifications.

3. Improved career development opportunities may lead to: "improved chances of employment, improved promotion prospects, evidence of ability, improved knowledge and a general view of management."
4. Some employers are also aware of their responsibility to make their employees more 'marketable' having removed their job security.
5.

Some employers believe higher level qualifications may be counterproductive and help employees move on to better jobs outside the organisation. Many organisations in the public sector have penalty clauses whereby employees leaving within a certain period have to repay costs, and this was the case with two of the three case studies described in the research in the thesis.

2.8 Management Development

As described in Section 1.1.1, management learning draws on the longer established areas of management development. To address one of the research aims (Section 1.4), which is to bridge the gap between the wide range of ideas and lack of cohesion in the management learning area, it is necessary to recognise the contribution made by the subject area of management development. Management development is defined in a myriad of ways (Woodall 1998:4). For example, she states that management development can be defined as:

> *An attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through a planned and deliberate learning process*

Source: Training Services Agency (1977)

> *A conscious and systematic process to control the development of managerial resources in the organisation for the achievement of goals and strategies*

Source: Molander (1986)

> *The management of managerial careers in an organisational context*

Source: Burgoyne (1988)

Woodall (1998) suggests that one way of making sense of these competing definitions is that generally the definitions fall into two categories, which focus on process and/or processes. She presents an overall approach combining both categories with a third element, which is that of presuppositions, which she describes as requirements for effectiveness. This holistic approach to management development was particularly attractive since the research aims described in Section 1.4, are to analyse management learning (which draws on management development) work in practice, whilst additionally trying to bridge the gap in this diverse literature. Lees (1992) agrees with Woodall (1998) and suggests that management development attracts multiple and often conflicting definitions. However, Lees also states that management development is an ambiguous concept.

Management development is described as a key component of the area of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Woodall 1998), and it is seen as the main area of HRM activity with the greatest potential for influencing the strategic capability of the management team (Mumford 1988; Storey 1989; Purcell and Ahlstrand 1994; Woodall (1998). This strategic capability, which is also discussed in management education literature (Section 2.8), is a key outcome for organisations considering developing their managerial capability. In the research, described in the thesis, the organisations have a stated need to develop managerial capability to manage change (Section 1.1.4).

Woodall (1998) suggests two contrasting purposes for why organisations choose management development: for long-term investment, or for rapid deployment of management skills.

As described in Section 2.4, key national reports in the mid 1980's (Constable and McCormack 1987, Handy 1987) were scathing about management development practices in the UK. This led to a multitude of different surveys into the effectiveness of management development working practices and procedures. A number were externally supervised by the Institute of Management (Thomson et al 1997) and other large-scale investigations took place throughout the 1990's (Bevan et al. 1995, Handy et al. 1996, Storey et al. 1997). These reports led to changes in the area of management education and development as discussed in Section 2.4.

Having determined that management development is about developing individuals within the organisation through a total process, it is then important to see what this would incorporate. One significant survey that has impact on this research study was conducted initially by the Thomson working party that commissioned a report in 1987. This collected data on managerial training methods, which were categorised under 4 main headings:

- in-company training
- planned job experience/rotation
- external short courses, and
- external qualifications

Source: BIM/CBI (1987:4)

Thomson (1994) stated that these methods had extended over a seven year period to 13, and in 1997, due to the growth in management training over this period, Thomson further split the 13 methods into two areas, formal and informal management development. It could be argued that the research described in the thesis is at the formal end of the continuum, which includes training, workshops, learner support activities and group presentations. These broad and wide ranging methods were applied in the research, as previously described in this section's reference to Woodall's contrasting purposes.

2.8.1 Management Development and Competence Approaches

Competency is defined by Maund (2001) as "the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed to carry out a task, and how such attributes are applied". Competence is seen as a major area of debate in the world of management development (Fisher 1996 cites Mansfield 1993 who states that competencies are outcomes, which contribute towards the meeting of functional objectives. Where an organisation has a set of well-defined and developed management or leadership competencies, these can be used as the basis for a management programme, which would normally require the manager to provide evidence of their competencies (often collected together in a portfolio).

Cannon (2000) states that the Departments of Trade, Industry, Education and Employment, are two UK Government departments concerned with the training infrastructure for the UK economy. He criticises the management and enterprise training organisations responsible for setting up management standards, and states that it would be a fair criticism of the standards to say they do not affect the new emerging economy. The Government want these standards reviewed, so competencies today have not yet become the major management vocational qualification (Cannon 2000).

Competence approaches have gained momentum in the last 20 years with the development of Management Charter Initiative (MCI), but the competence movement has dramatically slowed down over the last few years. Among critics of this Loan-Clarke (1997), listed a number of problems, including:

- it was not always possible to codify management in a way applicable to all managerial situations
- standards could not reflect dynamic nature of management work
- preferred work methods are emphasised rather than work outcomes
- assessment stressed rather than development
- knowledge base is weak

As described in the introductory chapter, the first collaborative programme designed and delivered by Liverpool Business School for Rover Plc. was competence-based. In addition LBS set up a Competence Centre and had a range of managerial, competence-based programmes and this experience was drawn on when the discussions with the first case study commenced. The experiences at Liverpool Business School supported the issues described by Loan-Clarke (1997) and additionally suggested that managers preferred an academic qualification, to a vocational qualification. The University was geared up to teach and assess academic programmes but it was far less successful with vocational qualifications. The Competence Centre was developed for the growth of vocational qualifications within Liverpool Business School, but it closed down after 3 years, as it could not attract sufficient clients at a commercially competitive price. Universities are subject to high overheads costs which small management training enterprises are not subject to. This can make the University unattractive in terms of its costing mechanisms. Additionally, the employer (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council) did not want vocational qualifications, due to problems with the delivery of a previous programme, by a further education college. The competence-based programme was therefore discounted in the case of the research referred to in this thesis.

2.9 Management Education and Development Nexus

Despite the many differences and distinctions between management education and management development, there is evidence that these areas are increasingly overlapping (Burgoyne et al. 1997, Woodall, 1998). Management Education has been defined in Section 2.7 and management development in Section 2.8. The main differences in the two definitions is that management education normally leads to some form of qualification (Statt 1991) and is primarily conducted in further and higher education.

Liverpool Business School found when setting up new partnerships with organisations, which lead to management learning programmes, that the qualification is seen as a major motivating factor, not only to the manager wishing to take the programme, but additionally to the organisation. Management development tends to be training orientated, primarily work-based and delivered in organisations and in the past has been largely conducted by independent, management consultants or in-house training staff.

As described above, despite the overlap of management education and management development, neither of the approaches needs the other one to exist. For instance, a development programme for new managers could consist of set targets, jobs and timeframes, challenging tasks, objective feedback, etc., which could improve management performance leading to management development. In this case, management education has not intervened at all. Likewise, a participant who attends an open degree or management postgraduate award, does not automatically mean that management development has taken place. On some programmes, there is no need for the graduate to be a practising manager, and in these cases it is very difficult to consider skills development. Some open programmes will include work experience, but this gets gradually more difficult in terms of taking managerial roles for short-term development needs.

Fox (1997) states that Business and Management schools are gearing up to provide post-experience courses as well as postgraduate programmes and therefore they do compete in the management development as well as the management education market. Mumford (1998) suggests that management education and development are not coterminous in any way, and that management education is only a small part of the development experience.

Macfarlane and Lomas (1995) describe the differentiating factors between management education and development as the:

1. Learning environment where they outline the need for informal learning support for student-managers, through interaction with other students. In terms of informal academic facilities, student managers may feel more constrained than normal students to discuss career development with their tutors.
2. Teaching style where often such programmes are taught in management development, by in-house trainers. In customised management education programmes, senior managers may be highly influential in the delivery of the programme which is due to company-based programmes. The design and delivery may tend towards prescriptions and solutions, while University staff encourage discussion and debate.
3. Politicisation of knowledge where a tailored MBA may be seen as less attractive than a general one and where change may be required but within the parameters of the organisation. Lees (1992) notes that the education of managers acts as an extension of the organisation's political order; he states that there is no shortage of these culture change programmes linked to management education, making this a politically intrusive theme within the learning programme.
4. Research tensions where the autonomy of the learner can be severely challenged by the need to negotiate findings, which may be sensitive to the organisation or individual, within it. In some such cases, this implied criticism of senior managers can severely impede job prospects. In addition, the emphasis on results by some employers may demand clear actionable points in cases where this may not be appropriate (Macfarlane and Lomas 1995).

Table 2.1 Differentiating Factors between Management Education and Development Programmes

Factors	Management Education	Management Development
Qualification	Normally academic, e.g. Master of Arts in Management – may also offer vocational qualifications	Academic qualifications not normally provided- some vocational qualifications provided
Location of provision	Further and Higher Education sector	In-house training facilities or out sourced to management consultants/ trainers
Leads to improvements in	Knowledge and education	Development of skills and knowledge
Learning environment	Open programmes in education sector Customised programmes, mix of education sector and in house locations	training centres or in-house
Teaching and research style	Encourages open discussions and debates	More prescriptive, action and solution-orientated

Table 2.1 represents the main issues described in this section on the main differences between management education and development programmes. However the gap is reducing with the growth of for example, franchise arrangements, and where Universities accredit colleges, management training providers and/or organisations to run a variety of programmes, which are then normally assessed within the University. The research described in the thesis will therefore draw on this learning and will use this knowledge for discussion with the organisations to deliver the most appropriate management learning programme.

2.10 Partnerships

The supplier of management education and development is normally drawn from the further/higher education or the private, in-house training and consultancy market. The customer or student is normally the manager, this traditional customer-supplier model in management development and management education is being replaced by a "learning partnership" (Keithley and Redman 1997) which involves a mixture of learning, consultancy and research. Although there are initial difficulties, such as pre-course arrangements, specification of the programmes, discussion with the client about knowledge and skills needed and contents, the best way to deliver/receive management education is through "complementary contributions" (Keithley and

Redman 1997:154) between providers and users. The research questions in Section 1.3 set out to determine in what ways could collaborating with other stakeholders contribute to management learning.

Ormerod (1996) suggests that when setting up a partnership within business, the importance of securing the active interest of a top manager should not be underestimated, and this was the situation regarding the three case studies described in the thesis. Ormerod suggests the strategic importance to the organisation to form 'professional partnerships' between universities and organisations as opposed to 'service agreements.' The differences in the two terms appears to be that the professional partnership is one that is based on a number of partners of equal status, and service agreements are normally more contractual and set up where there is a client-supplier relationship, which is similar to the experiences described in the previous paragraph.

Boot and Evans (1990) were one of the first to report on partnerships between education and organisations. This work was highly significant in terms of the research described in the thesis (Section 2.17.1). The collaboration was between British Airways and Lancaster University in which they describe as the collaborative continuum. At one end of the continuum, an organisation takes a product from the University, which is the designed, run and assessed by the University, and the organisation will send its staff on to the programme. In the Lancaster University collaboration, the programme is paid for by the organisation, but the University has complete control over all aspects of the programme, for example staff attending an MBA Programme.

At one end of the continuum, an organisation takes a product from the University; which is then designed, run and assessed by the University, and the organisation send their staff on to the programme. At the other end of the continuum, the programme is designed, run and assessed by the organisation, and the University awards the qualification. In the latter case, the organisation has complete control over the learning inputs, but the University oversees the assessment process.

The focus of the research described in the thesis, is more towards the end of the continuum described first, which is that where the organisation purchases a product from the University (LBS), although it is hoped that over a period of time, movement along this continuum could be achieved and the organisations may become sufficiently qualified, and able to provide more of the input.

Lancaster University was primarily looking for a distinctive position in the business education market place for this collaboration (Boots and Evans 1990). The effectiveness of the collaboration is described as producing "effective practice and effective practitioners" (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997:2).

There is tension between the normal University cycles and those required by the organisation. It is argued by Boot and Evans (1990) that accountability within Universities is diffuse and is not linked to any clear chain of command. Lancaster University thus preferred to take a low risk, lengthy approach to decision making, while the organisation found this rather 'ponderous and slow'. The company preferred quick decision making, and favoured a quicker 'best-fit' approach. The University found this a cavalier and short-sighted approach by the organisation. This has also been experienced within Liverpool Business School at both the early stages of the research project discussed in the thesis, and when running other collaborative programmes. There has normally been pressure placed on LBS to run a management learning programme with strict time constraints. LBS staff have preferred to consider the issues at length to ensure that the correct resources, structure and content are in place. Comments have also been forthcoming from LBS staff that the organisations want quick solutions to problems as opposed to debate, and from organisation staff that LBS take too much time in its decision making. These issues have also been found in the research described in the thesis, and are referred to in the conclusions (Chapter 8).

2.10.1 Learning Agreements

A learning agreement in Liverpool Business School is described as the key reference and working document agreed by a student, or employee, the employer and the University. Learning agreements will differ and depend upon the detail required by the parties concerned. Information can be included on the expectations of each party, the targets set and the roles and responsibilities of each party (www.livjm.ac.uk/umf/vol2/ch6.htm).

One of the ways in which this partnership can be made explicit is by creating learning agreements to ensure that all stakeholders review the extent of their relationships with each other. The terms, learning and training agreement are used interchangeably in the literature and in the case of the research discussed in the thesis, the term used by the author of the literature will be used. Keithley and Redman (1997) state that formal training agreements between the employer and the employee are not used effectively in higher education. Training agreements are established conditions under which an employer is prepared to fund an employee. There is often a financial penalty on the voluntary termination of a trainee's employment in a defined period (usually 1-3 years).

The standard training agreement of local government employers commits the employee to obtaining the qualification at the earliest opportunity, and to refunding all or some of the funding received if an employer fails to make satisfactory progress, withdraws or leaves. This has been the experience of staff within Liverpool Business School when dealing with organisations.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) literature centres on the legality of partnerships and collaboration (Davis 1996), deterring the "poaching" of trained staff (Cann 1993), and where this fails, recovery of the training costs by the employer. A neglected aspect is those who are given the incentive to complete training when entering it under a formal training agreement e.g. when a manager commences a 3 year Master's programme, the organisation may not be able to sponsor the next stage of the programme, or may delay until there is sufficient demand to the next stage. Learning agreements were set up in the research described in the thesis, and examples are contained in Table 6.6 in Section 6.6.2.1 and Table 7.1. in Section 7.3.1.

2.11 Types of Management Award-bearing Programmes

This research study will evaluate programmes that have been set up specifically for organisations to develop their managers and lead to a postgraduate management qualification. There is a variety of different types and descriptions of these programmes in the University sector and this has led to difficulties in accessing information for the research described in the thesis. This has been critically reflected upon in Section 2.17. Brown (1999) suggests that these types of programmes include varying levels of tailoring or customisation, and goes on to suggest three examples.

Table 2.2 Categories of Postgraduate Management Programmes

Generic	Customised	Tailored
• Standard curriculum • Material already exists • Little or no contextualisation	• Standard qualification design • Some contextualisation in delivery	• Curriculum structures design unique to organisation

Source: based on Brown (1999:351)

2.12 Generic Programmes

Brown suggests that generic programmes use a standard curriculum, this is often referred to as "off-the shelf" where a programme can be taken and used with a variety of students with little or no changes made in terms of the student group needs. The teaching material provided already exists and examples of such programmes would include an open programme leading to a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme.

2.12.1 Customised Programmes

As described in the Table 2.2, customised programmes normally have a standard qualification design drawing on existing programmes but there is some contextualisation in the delivery of the programme. Examples of these programmes described by Pareja-Torres (2000) include versions for specific client groups of the MBA, Diploma in Management and Certificate in Management. The organisations who request such programmes are wide ranging and are drawn from both the public and private sector (mainly medium to large sized organisations).

2.12.2 Tailored Programmes

In the third category tailored programmes are normally modified to meet learning outcomes identified by the customer. Brown (1999) states the need to adapt more flexible patterns of working with these programmes.

2.12.3 Customised, Tailored, Client-Based and Corporate Programmes

There are significant overlaps in the areas of customised and tailored programmes which Brown (1999) also refers to as a continuum. The demands for management programmes to be flexible, mean that it is difficult to clearly differentiate these programmes under one heading alone. Programmes may be split into many different modules of learning some may be drawn from existing University provision, others may be tailored specifically for an organisation. In the research objectives (Section 1.5), three masters programmes were to be set up by the University for managers who were sponsored by their organisation. These programmes could be classed as either tailored or customised programmes, dependant upon the negotiations with the three stakeholders. The key to the success of programmes designed specifically for client groups is the degree that each programme meets their individual needs. The challenge for the University is to meet the need in a flexible manner whilst maintaining academic rigour. The key to the success of client-based programmes is the degree to which each programme meets the individual needs of the client. This requires the University sector to be able to meet the needs demanded, by using a flexible human resource strategy whilst preserving academic rigour in order to be able to accredit such programmes.

Another term widely used to cover the range of customised and tailored provision is client-based, which is a misleading title, in that it may give the impression that the programme is delivered off-site at the client's base. This is not always the case, as a number of such programmes are delivered at universities or at a mixture of locations. Another term used widely, is 'corporate' programmes. This is the preferred choice of Prince and Stewart (2000), who use this term when discussing the research conducted on corporate programmes that lead to qualifications. This thesis also refers to the term 'award-bearing' in preference to 'qualifications', but either term would suffice for the research used in the thesis.

2.12.4 Accredited Programmes

A number of programmes may be based on in-house courses or training programmes, and in these cases there may be no changes necessary for them to meet University standards. The organisation may then be accredited by the University to run the programme and gain award-bearing status.

It is recognised, however, that a number of in-house programmes will need some modification, and the level at which the programmes described in the thesis are pitched at, will require delivery by University staff. In-house trainers can and are used on these programmes, but they have to satisfy University requirements beforehand, which normally involves being suitably qualified, both contextually and academically. Additionally, in-house trainers can become involved with the assessment of such programmes, providing they meet University standards.

2.13 Growth in Management Learning Programmes

In the 1980's, the development of UK award-bearing management education surveys by Ascher (1984) and Bateson (1989) found few universities involved in this market. Three years later, a report by Baston (1989) identifies changes in the market for management education and development with 15 reported accredited programmes in the UK. This area has been the subject of other research, which explores the extent and diversity of such programmes, which is described by Brown (1990:355):

- ten management development courses specially designed for organisations led to a postgraduate award.
- five programmes led to an MBA,
- four gave specific credits towards an MBA or other postgraduate award, and
- one programme led to a Master's degree in Education Management

The Harbridge Survey by Kennedy and Mason (1993) identifies another increase, by then there were 53 reported consortium and MBA programmes delivered by 23 different universities. In the same year, Brown (1993) states that 36% of large UK organisations had some form of management qualification associated with their management development programmes.

In 1997, the Association of Business Schools suggests that approximately two-thirds of new programme provision in some universities were customised development programmes. Fox (1997) reports that Business and Management schools are gearing up to provide post-experience courses as well as postgraduate programmes, and therefore they do compete in the management development as well as the management education market. Brown (1999) states that most large organisations have in-house management development programmes for middle, junior and supervisory management - 46% of the large companies surveyed did some form of management qualification associated with their in-house programme. Where organisations ran in-house programmes, which were not award-bearing, 59% considered incorporating one.

A report by Pareja-Torres (2000) determines the extent that the University sector have developed its customised award-bearing programme portfolio. This reveals that 30 UK universities are running such programmes. The outcome of the research conducted by Pareja-Torres (2000) shows a significant increase in the number of programmes with 52 award-bearing management programmes reported by UK universities. This range of surveys has been used to inform the research described in the thesis and has provided background contextual information. Further critical information is described in Section 2.17.

There has therefore been a steady increase over the first two decades in these programmes. However, there has also been much debate about this type of programme, which is now described in the next section.

2.14 Challenges of Award-bearing Management Learning Programmes

There has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of management education and development programmes (Macfarlane and Lomas 1995). Brown (1999) suggests that in the quest to extend programmes to client groups and make them more flexible, academic and pedagogic validity has been questioned. It is in this area that there are power relationships between participants of different levels on the same programme. This is noted by Macfarlane and Lomas (1995) who state incidents where students are cautious of possibly breaching organisational loyalty, i.e. sharing information which may be considered confidential.

> *When higher education fails to focus fully on the emancipation of the learner's critical faculties, this will stifle the development of both individual student managers and the client organisations they serve.*

Source: Macfarlane and Lomas (1995:35)

They also argue that although specialist client-based management programmes are a growth area, conflict exist between values and organisational goals. Values such as academic freedom, students' critical abilities and autonomy may be jeopardised by the relationship with the sponsoring organisation whose goals may restrict the openness and honesty of the student as well as capping potential career development. These are very important factors in order to secure the quality of the course (Brown 1999:360) The ability to research actively in client-based courses and to be able to comment freely on research findings is a value which the management education sector will want to retain..

Vignali and Jones (1995) state that there is little or no evidence to show that Universities are pro-active in gaining this type of work. The experiences in Liverpool Business School (LBS) partly support this argument. Staff and management at the school have set up an extensive network of local employers and have developed a Business Advisory Council, which consists of key, local business managers. Through this network, links are made to the business sector which have resulted in new business. It is however still the case that in the majority of cases where major programmes have been established, they have been due to organisations making the first approach, either through personal contact, or through bids placed in the national/local press.

As defined in the Carlsberg Tetley example (Section 2.15) which overall, is cited as evidence of good practice, there were tensions that exist between full time work and part time study and between work pressure and the academic programme. This led to differences in terms of meeting the University's quality assurance process, such as keeping to deadlines and misunderstandings. The collaboration between the two parties has required consistent hard work to uncover potential areas of weakness. Boot and Evans (1990) described similar experiences in their partnership between Lancaster University and British Airways (Section 2.10). One of the ways that these tensions could be lessened is by being more explicit about the relationships and considering the use of learning agreements described in Section 2.10.1.

Brown (1999) suggests that the most common disadvantages of postgraduate client-based programmes include the delivery methods and consultation time in preparation for the programmes, which could be considerable in terms of additional resources. Another resource issue relates to the lack of efficient administration and communication between the Business school and the client, weaknesses mentioned by the respondents (Brown 1999). This has also been experienced within LBS and was due to lack of resources and/or the responsiveness of the University to meet the challenges and needs of these complex partnership programmes. There is a heavy resource issue for Universities undertaking this type of work, which is often taken on at short notice but requires high levels of contextual knowledge. The start-up costs for a one-off programme are likely to be prohibitive, so that these types of programmes are best suited to a large organisation where larger numbers of students attending the programmes make it more cost effective. This has also been the case as experienced by the researcher within Liverpool Business School, where all collaborations have been with medium to large sized organisations.

The disadvantages of client-based programmes (Macfarlane and Lomas 1995) also include a lack of interaction with other students from different backgrounds and with other points of view (which normally enrich learning). There may also be less possibility of career development outside the company due to the fact that the knowledge/skills acquired in the programme may be too specific to the sponsor organisation to be applied in a different one. There is however a counter argument to this statement, where some employers regard the open programmes such as the MBA, as too general for their requirements, which has been experienced at Liverpool Business School, and so there is therefore arguments for both schools of thought.

The work of Barnett and Lees (1999) quotes the Association of MBA (AMBA) survey, which states that 98% of MBA students undertake programmes with career change in mind. There is therefore considerable tension between the aspirations of the students and the organisations goals which may be to develop the manager within the organisation but not outside it.

Kable (1998) suggests that attending the courses for the "wrong reasons" involves:

- employees being sent on the programmes (with no brief or any training needs assessment), and
- people who attend the course to get a qualification.

Kable's view in relation to the second statement is dubious, since the qualification is seen as a motivating factor for a number of managers who attend award-bearing programmes, and for whom the programme has been a success. The issue may be whether the University operates a sufficiently rigorous entry and admissions criteria policy, and/or provides the right level of support to students who enter the University, who have not undertaken academic study. There are examples within LBS, where managers have no prior qualifications, but hold very senior positions. These managers have required more support initially but have gone on to achieve good academic results.

To sum up this section, a number of themes for development have been discussed which include:

- academic and pedagogic validity
- potential loss by students of a mix of experiences
- qualifications may not be valued by employers
- communications strategy
- explicit quality mechanisms
- the needs for these programmes to be effectively resourced and supported (especially in the administration area)
- potential lack of honesty of results or commercial sensitivity
- students expectations may not always be met.

2.15 Good Practice in Management Learning Programmes

The research objectives described in Section 1.5 of the thesis, sets out to determine the output of three Master's programmes and to establish a framework for management learning based on the results. It is important therefore to determine current good practice from the literature which outlines similar developments in the design of management learning programmes. Section 2.17.2 critically reflects upon the success factors of the programme. Vignali and Jones (1995) describes a postgraduate management programme, designed to meet the needs of Carlsberg Tetley, which was set up by Manchester Business School.

The main outcomes from the Carlsberg Tetley Partnership includes the Executive Board who strongly support the award-bearing, management development programmes and believe that these programmes provide managers with wide ranging perspectives, conceptual understanding, strategic vision and a range of practical skills.

Keithley and Redman (1997) report the experiences of a partnership programme between the University of Teesside and Cummins Engine Company Ltd. In 1991, Cummins began discussions with Teesside Business School (TBS) to explore the extent to which supervisors completing a programme developed by Cummins could gain accreditation for their studies against a University certificate programme.

The pertinent University model for comparison with the Cummins programme was then linked to the management development programme. This was a part-time, integrated, taught programme allowing participants to progress from a Certificate in Management (CIM) through a Diploma in Management (DMS to a Master in Business Administration (MBA). Examples of good practice from a range of programmes including Carlsberg Tetley and Cummins are discussed under a number of headings as follows.

2.15.1 Setting up a Programme

The issues that will be considered when an organisation and the University consider a joint programme include discussing the following issues:

- establishing the learning needs of the company and potential participants

- quality of teaching and research needs to be assured by constant feedback from participants and regular progress meetings with clients
- commitment by all the parties involved to guarantee the success of the programme this may need to be made explicit in some form of contract

  Source: Keithley and Redman (1997)

Prince and Stewart (2000) state the need for systematic and comprehensive education and management processes.

Management at Cummins had concerns about the course validation panel, which was considered bureaucratic and not necessary due to the lack of knowledge of what a validation paper looks like and what would happen if it failed (Keithley and Redman 1997).

Brown (1999) states that the design of the programme should take account of demands on manager's time. Development of a set of knowledge bases and general management competencies delivered in a modular structure was favoured to enable staff to accumulate credit and facilitate those who did not wish to register for full Diploma. Delivery was through block release at the University. Vignali and Jones (1995) state that mentors were successful in the Carlsberg Tetley example. The company also provides a small number of guest lecturers to deliver specialist input.

2.15.2 Academic Standards

Brown (1999) suggests that client-based trainers should be familiarised with the requirements and standards of the relevant academic level, teaching/learning strategies and assessment methods. Vignali and Jones (1995) state that academics confirm the benefit of getting involved with action research which has led to commercial vitality, the generation of teaching resources through case studies, and research and publications. University academics had to be assured that the Cummins programme at least matched the quality of the University CIM programme from which a series of quality control mechanisms were introduced (Keithley and Redman 1997).

2.15.3 Qualification

The research conducted by Pareja-Torres (2000) suggests that the growth in these programmes may be due to the offer of a recognised qualification. She suggests that this may increase employee motivation, which might then be reflected in a beneficial way in his/her job's performance. Vignali and Jones (1995) state that Carlsberg Tetley believe the University award gives a competitive edge over rivals in recruiting and retaining managers which is the experience at LBS.

2.15.4 Content and Context

The context and content of such programmes must be relevant to the needs of the client, if the content of the programme is too specific for the organisation needs, it may lessen the possibilities of career development outside their organisation (Brown 1999). In addition, the quality of the programmes may be threatened by the use of client-based trainers not familiarised with the requirements of the relevant academic level. Carlsberg Tetley's management programme was action-based and included such information such as communications, personality, determination, confidence, appearance, and initiative (Vignali and Jones 1995).

2.15.5 Assessment Processes

The generation and implementation of real solutions to real problems should form part of the assessment in an award-bearing programme. The assessment included work-based assignments, projects and presentations. There were no formal examinations. A final assessment board was established comprising company and University staff, the tutors concerned with delivery, and an external examiner (Keithley and Redman 1997). This joint involvement has proved successful at LBS and the majority of masters provision based on action research principles, are examined through course and group work as opposed to formal examinations.

2.15.6 Academic and Learning Support

Academic support facilities should be arranged, e.g. telephone help-line tutor, in-company library resources, and suitable study materials for each participant. These all impact on resources since the programmes require flexible delivery times and dates, and this leaves the University with difficulty in staffing and resourcing them.

The experience of the lecturer was also an issue with the Cummins case, where the programme was designed to meet the specific needs of the company to outside academics with no diesel engine business knowledge (Keithley and Redman 1997). This lack of contextual knowledge is likely to be a common problem in the University sector but by working with the partner organisation this lack of knowledge can be overcome.

2.15.7 Induction

An induction day was set up before start of the Carlsberg Tetley programme. The programme was residential and the team felt the balance between activity, reflection and recreation to be vital (Vignali and Jones 1995). This residential element is thought helpful as a way of teambuilding and networking.

2.15.8 Delivery Methods

Delivery methods used on the Cummins programme include the use of outside consultants and University staff, in day-long modules on strategic management and managing self-development.

A variety of modes of delivery, drawn from both the management education and development sectors, were used which included:

- formal lectures and tutorials
- seminars and workshops
- small group activities
- 'skills days'
- weekly feedback sessions
- field visits
- self-development tutorials
- library support sessions
- visiting speakers

Source: Vignali and Jones (1995; Vol.27, 6)

Overall therefore, there are a range of views described in the literature that need to be addressed when considering such programmes. Further critical reflection is contained in Section 2.17.2.

2.16 Best Value initiative in Local Government

The election of a Labour Government (1 May 1997) heralded the beginning of the end of Compulsory Competitive tendering (CCT). A new policy initiative – 'Best Value' was developed to replace CCT (DETR, 1999b). The Government defined Best Value as a duty to deliver services to clear standards – covering both cost and quality, by the most economic, efficient and effective means available (Audit Commission 1999). Under Best Value, local authorities are required to publish annual Best Value performance plans and report on past and current performance by identifying forward plans, priorities and targets for improvement. In addition, all service functions must be reviewed over a five-year cycle (DETR 1998).

One of the key drivers in Local Government over the past 5 years has been Best Value. It is therefore important that staff working within the Local Authority are aware of this, but significantly Anglesey County Council requested that their programme be focused on Best Value and therefore information on this is now provided.

Best Value challenges local authorities to consider fundamental questions about the underlying objectives and priorities of their work and about their performance in relation to other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. At the heart of Best Value is the need for local authorities to make judgements on how to improve their services. In addition, Best Value requires local government to consult with local residents and the users of services about their views and priorities for services.

2.17 Critical Review of Literature using an Inductive Approach

The inductive stance taken by the researcher described in Section 1.7 (Table 1.1) makes explicit the links between the data and literature. This Table identifies the links from the emerging data to the literature and at each stage of the research, the literature was used to inform the consultation and programme development group. The results of each stage were then compared against traditional and contemporary literature and this informed the emerging framework for management learning. In this way, the results dictated the most appropriate areas of literature and new theory developed. The Table below extends the information provided in Table 1.1 and describes how the literature was used at each stage. This is followed by a critical review of the key literature areas that impacted upon the research and contributed to the body of knowledge.

Table 2.3 Key Data Sources driving the Literature Review

Stages of Data and Outcomes	Key Subject Areas from Literature	
1994 – pre-Prog. stage – early discussions Review of literature	**Key reports** Constable &McCormick (1987) Fryer Report (1977) Handy, C et al. (1987) Revans, R. (1971) **Management Development** Barrington/Reid(1994) Lees, S. (1992) Mangham/Silver (1986) Margerison, C. (1991) **Action Learning** Lewin, K. (1946) Revans, R. (1971)	**Management** Storey, J. (1989) Wickens, P. (1987) **Management Education** Barnett, R. (1990) Harris, J. et al (1992) Salaman/Butler (1990)
Stage 1 – Consultation Stage 1994 – 6 months Need further information on the design of management programmes and collaborations in HE	**Management Development** Mansfield, B. (1993) **Management Education** Ascher, K. (1984) Baston, R.H (1989) Bateson, F. (1989) Peters, T. (1987)	**Partnerships – Mgt. Learning** Boot/Evans (1990) DeGeus, A. (1998) Storey, J. (1992) Sparrow, P.R. (1994) **Corporate Universities**
Stage 2 – Pilot Programme 1994-1997 Learning Agreements Partnerships Latest developments in Programme design Managing Change HE Strategic management	**Management Learning** Burgoyne/Reynolds (1997) Mumford, A. (1998) **Partnerships** Keithley/Redman (1997) Ormerod, R. J. (1996) **Customised Progs** Baruch/Leeming (1996) Boak, G et al. (1997) Bourner/Flowers(1997) Fripp/Wilson (1996) Macfarlane/Lomas(1995) Monks(1995) Vignali/Jones (1995) Loan-Clarke, J. (1997) Ramsden (1998) **Management Education** French/Grey, C. (1996) Wild (1998)	**Benchmarking** Bramham, J. (1997) Codling, S. (1998) **Managing Change** Burnes, B. (1996) Storey, J et al. (1997) Waddell, D. (1998) **HRD/Strategic** Stewart/McGoldrick (1996) Walton(1999) **Action Research** Mesdag, M.V (1998) **HE Quality** Sargeant/Matheson (1996) Yorke, M(1998)
Stage 3 – Testing the framework with ACC and LL Best Value Outdoor Mgt. Tech. Public sector Mgt.	**Learning organization** Carr, A. (1997) Frank (1996) Gibb (1996) **Public Service Mgt.** Wilkinson/Pedlar (1996) **Best Value Reports**	

The first column of the above table describes the timed stages of the research and the outcomes relating to the literature. The second column provides information on what information was required from the literature and the key texts that impacted on the research at that specific time.

The body of literature most helpful at the pre-programme and early consultation stage of the research includes key reports (Constable and McCormack 1987; Handy 1987) that have had national impact in the area of management learning, development and education. These reports are still regarded as key milestones in the development of management education and development in 2002. They painted a bleak picture of the UK management development and education market when compared to more buoyant USA and European markets and presented a vision for the future, which was most relevant to the research described in the thesis. The reports lacked contextual and cultural information, which would affect the outcomes of change, and furthermore there was little discussion on how to achieve the vision. This was also the case with other key reports such as Dearing (1997), Harris (1996) and Fryer 1977, all of whom have had major impact on the HE education arena. These emphasise the inadequacies of the UK education system and provide strategic insight, but lack operational detail. Such information reinforced the need for collaboration with industry and other stakeholders, but did not provide the detail of how to achieve the strategic goals.

The researcher accessed a range of management texts that provided background information (Lees 1992; Peters 1987; Wickens 1987; Storey 1989), but again they lacked the specific management learning detail and infrastructure required for this research. The literature that had the most impact on this research at this time came from management education literature, which focused on the changing roles of Business schools and corporate/collaborative programmes. The researcher needed to establish the extent that her research questions would lead to a contribution to knowledge. In proving this, it was important to consider the context of the research and what other research had been done in the University Business School sector. A review of past theses and the management literature as described above suggested there was a gap in terms of learning. The literature most likely to verify the uniqueness of the research was that of management education, in particular the researcher looked to information on the growth in the sector and who had influenced the area of collaborative management learning programmes.

As described in Section 2.12, a range of researchers used survey methods to determine the developments of similar research in management education. This literature search identified that prior to 1984 there was no University involvement in such programmes (Section 2.12) and, although there had been a substantial growth by 1994, collaborative management learning programmes were areas of new research. As the research developed over time, there were subsequent reports of continued growth in the sector which was verified in 2000, by a LBS masters student (Pareja-Torres, 2000) supervised by the author this thesis (Section 2.11). This information provided a contextual background for the research. Information provided in such surveys cannot be regarded as academically rigorous, since the sources for these surveys are derived from a range of stakeholders within Universities and there are limitations in accessing that information. Universities are not always willing to share information on commercially sensitive areas and additionally there are a wide range of types of programmes described in Section 2.11, ranging from variants of an existing programme such as MBA to a totally tailor made programme as described in this research. One possible way of improving the situation would be for universities to adopt common descriptors for the different types of programmes (Section 2.11). Other researchers and education agencies such as Quality Assurance Agency have suggested this, but practice within universities fluctuates and the information described in the surveys suggest growth trends which are unlikely to be accurate due to the wide variety of working practices in the area.

2.17.1 Consultation Stage

As the consultation stage progressed, information was required on alternative management learning and development strategies, and management education journal articles on programme development were a rich source of information. This bridged the gap in the literature by providing the operational knowledge required for the research described in the thesis. Key texts in this area were limited in 1994, and often comprised chapters within general Human Resource Management or Management texts. There was however a number of management skills books emerging which were aimed at improving managerial skills and challenging leadership practices (Section 2.3). As an example, Peters (1987) suggested new models of management that had also become widely used in the management training market as a trigger to start change processes through more consultative and transformational management and leadership styles. Whilst Peters' views are challenging, his later texts overturn previous concepts, possibly due to a lack of rigour in the earlier texts and this has led to a loss of credibility in some areas. The academic fraternity often sees this style of popular management literature as lightweight, faddish and academically unsound. In the context of the research described in the thesis, this type of information is used at induction as a way of introducing managers to the world of management literature from a practitioner's viewpoint. It also contributes to the outcomes of the research which describe the need for the management learning community to utilise the most appropriate learning methods (Section 8.8.4). In the case of the research described in the thesis, management development knowledge on working practices has contributed to an effective management learning framework.

Another outcome of the consultation stage was the need for knowledge in terms of other management learning partnerships, which was limited in 1994. This is discussed in Section 2.10 and the work that had most influence on the research at that time was Boot and Evans (1990). This provided a range of examples of both good practice and issues that had affected their work. Since this was one of the earliest examples of its kind, it is difficult to measure it against other literature but was used very effectively as a benchmark for the pilot programme.

2.17.2 Pilot Programme

The outcomes of this stage of the research described in the thesis includes the need for:

- more substantial information on management learning
- the introduction of learning agreements
- managing change
- background information on the domains relating to the stakeholders i.e. higher education and public sector organisations and programme design.

A great deal of the literature in this area was informative but not highly influential. The most significant influence on the research problem was identified at the pilot stage. This was the first text on management learning that described the emerging subject area of management learning (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997). This text has been widely referred to throughout the thesis and has been used as a benchmark for this research. As described in Section 2.5, Burgoyne and Reynolds (1977), provide a description of management learning which the researcher fully supports and has influenced the research problem described in Section 1.2. However, there are a number of critical areas, where the research described in this thesis challenge Burgoyne and Reynolds assumptions. This relates to their view that the area should not be mapped. The outcome of the research suggests that it should be and that this would lead to better access and use made of the area. It is suggested by the research that this would lead to validation of the subject area as a major academic body of knowledge (Section 8.3).

Programme design literature has been fundamental to the research and in the mid to late 1990's a range of literature emerged on the development of customised programmes described in Sections 2.11 to 2.15 inclusive. The literature is divided about the efficacy of corporate management development and education programmes. Section 2.14 describes a range of views on the efficacy of such programmes. The major concerns suggest that in the quest to drive forward flexible organisation-based programmes, academic and pedagogic validity are questioned. Similar concerns have been raised about the growth in Corporate Universities, where in addition there have been accusations of double standards (Section 2.6.1). Overall there is far more agreement in the literature that the academic community (Section 2.15) should embrace them, but most researchers suggest moving ahead, with the knowledge that such programmes can be problematic. This area of research has contributed to an operational framework for management learning; the diverse views have enabled the consultation group to develop a framework that has been tested with two organisations (in both the public and private domains). The outcomes of the research validate this body of knowledge but recognise the challenges and benefits of such programmes.

2.18 Conclusions

This chapter provides conceptual information on which to take this research forward. The first half of the chapter provides information on the subject areas of management learning, education and development. The research has impacted on both the University and the organisation and therefore the context was relevant and inextricably linked to the main subject areas so additionally the cases of higher education and partnerships (with the organisation and manager) are explored.

The second half of the chapter comprises a review of the literature and programme design in management education and learning. This provides detailed information on the programme design and delivery but also gives information on the wider area of management learning. This section will be the basis of information for the consultation stage of the pilot case study with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The headings will be taken forward for discussion. The key issues arising from this review of the literature includes:

1. Work-based qualifications leading to organisational change (Section 2.4) are in demand and there is continued growth in higher education. The impact of these programmes should raise their profile and may lead to additional resources.
2. Management learning must focus on the role of the manager which should be aligned to the organisational strategy (Section 2.5), focus on learning and work in partnership with others.
3. The most suitable management learning programme for the research purposes would not be competence based but would lead to a Master's award.
4. Past learning experiences were reviewed in developing and running effective management learning programmes and it was agreed to use a diverse set of methods and management development techniques.
5. Evidence of best practice and issues to avoid were discussed, which will impact on the case studies.
6. Being explicit about the stakeholders relationship and the responsibilities was important and the development of a learning agreement be considered.

Information taken from the literature and research suggests the most appropriate design and implementation of other collaborative management Master's programmes. This information will be used to inform the researcher and the design team at the consultation phase of the first case study for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. The final section of this chapter provides a critical reflection of the literature using the inductive stance described in Section 1.7.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by describing the rationale and background to the research methodology, commencing with an overview of management research, and a review of the two philosophical stances and the different research approaches. This is followed by a justification for the most appropriate research methodology described in the thesis, which is based on a phenomenological stance and a grounded, inductive approach.

Information is provided on different research strategies and describes the reasons why certain strategies were considered and rejected, and what were the most appropriate strategies for the research described in the thesis. The final research strategy is a longitudinal case study implemented through action research, to enable a grounded approach at exploratory, descriptive and explanatory levels. A critical review of the most appropriate research methods has been included which were: interviews, programme evaluation, reflections on learning and focus group evaluation.

3.2 Rationale and background to the Research Methodology

The research described in the thesis started out as an area of enquiry and a quest for knowledge about the area of management learning. This was in line with the perception of research defined by Hussey and Hussey (1997:1):

> *Research is a process of enquiry and investigation, which is systematic and methodical and leads to knowledge*

As described in Section 1.1.4, networks were being established by Liverpool Business School through the development of collaborative management learning programmes, designed and delivered for two public sector Local Authorities which were Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) and Anglesey County Council (ACC) and one large private sector organisation, Littlewoods Leisure (LL). The research questions described in Section 1.3 refer to the ways in which management learning programmes contribute to organisation change management agenda. This has been explored conceptually in the previous chapter, but the researcher now needs to test these conceptual ideas and to add any further new learning that may emerge from the research methodology process.

The opportunity for LBS to work with three organisations (KMBC, ACC and LL) in a collaboration, led to the development of three Master's level management programmes, which were developed on action research principles. These programmes were designed using a wide range of learning methods, drawn from both management education and development practices. This research investigates how the programmes have impacted on the three main stakeholders (the manager, the organisation and the University), and why they were successful.

The research questions (Section 1.3) focused on the 'how' and 'why' which Yin (1994) suggests is more likely to lead to case study histories and experiments as the appropriate research method.

The research is seen as innovative and groundbreaking within Liverpool Business School, it grew 'organically' and took a grounded approach (Section 3.6.1.1). This longitudinal case study was implemented through action research to enable a grounded approach at exploratory, descriptive and explanatory levels. This approach led to an inductive and qualitative methodological stance, based on interviews and evaluation documentation arising from the three management learning programmes.

The work was undertaken initially by reviewing the area of management research followed by a discussion on the underpinning research philosophy and stances. It develops through analysing the most appropriate methodology and a critical review of the methods chosen. A brief set of concluding remarks is provided at the end of the chapter.

The learning arising from these programmes has since been recognised as an example of good programme design (LBS Business and Management Subject Review 2000). The questions for future research will be to determine the extent that this good practice can be used on mainstream, open programmes, such as the MBA (Conclusions Chapter).

3.3 Management Research

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991:1) put forward the following view of research on management:

> *Research can be seen as a way of accelerating the process of understanding, and hence it should lead not only to a better understanding of management, but also a better understanding for managers about how best to go about their work.*

This common approach acknowledges the need for managers to understand and to be able to consider different constructs and determine the most appropriate and effective ways to work. This is an implied aim of the research described in the thesis, where the organisation wanted to improve its management and leadership capacity, but according to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) managers may see research as an area which has little or no relevance in their daily work.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) suggest that there are three aspects that combine to make managers a focus for research:

1. How managers draw upon knowledge developed by other disciplines.
2. Managers tend to be powerful and busy people, they initially only allow research access if they can see a personal or commercial benefit or advantage.
3. Research needs to have practical consequences. It needs to identify the potential for some form of action or to take account of the practical consequences of the findings. Business and management research is usually undertaken to provide some tangible information, although sometimes just satisfying the curiosity of the participants can suffice.

Whilst completing research with managers it is essential to demonstrate what the manager will get from the research, and that this is provided in a way which the manager can understand. Thietart (2001:1) presents the following view:

> *Management Research is a complex and broad area of research; management is less concerned with establishing procedures than it is to motivating groups to work towards a specified collective action.*

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) expands on Thietart (2001) by stressing the need for working in teams and taking collective action. This collective action is allied to one of the research questions (Section 1.3.3), which is to develop collaborative stances with organisations.

The focus on research is at odds with assessment strategies on a number of University programmes where business students are known to undertake research, yet their respective organisations have little or no knowledge about what the research is for and what the outcomes will be. It is therefore important when undertaking this type of research that organisations and their managers have involvement at all stages of the research project and are party to developments, evaluation strategies and actions.

The researcher recognises the complexity of management research (Hussey and Hussey (1997) and as described by Jankowicz (1991), uses a multi-method approach because of the different perspectives and extent of the research described in the thesis. These included:

- interviews,
- questionnaires,
- text, and
- documentary evidence.

The organisation aims from the collaboration with Liverpool Business School were relatively simple, and espoused the principles discussed by both Thietart (2001) and Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), which are that organisations and managers want to improve managerial capacity and skills. It is also noted by the development team described in Section 5.3.1, that managers would have to be convinced of the value of research and that this would lead to an improvement in their skills and knowledge as well as having an impact on organisational change. One of the main ways in which these managers could be convinced that this collaboration would be in their interests, was the degree to which the programme would meet their operational needs and the extent that the research was applied. The managers also stated: that they wanted knowledge about the subject areas of management and leadership, needed an arena where they could consider their own motivations as managers and information on how to motivate others to bring about the changes in their organisations. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) describes the different stances between academic and applied research as described below:

Table 3.1 Academic Versus Applied Research

ACADEMIC RESEARCH	APPLIED RESEARCH
Purpose • Expand knowledge of processes of business and management. • Results in universal principles relating to the process and its relationship to outcome. • Findings of significance and value to society in general.	**Purpose** • Improve understanding of particular business or management problem. • Results in solution to problem. • New findings limited to problem. • Funding of practical relevance and value to managers in organisation.
Context • Undertaken by people based in Universities. • Choice of topic and objectives determined by researcher. • Flexible timescales.	**Context** • Undertaken by people based in a variety of settings including Universities and organisations. • Objectives negotiated with Originator. • Tight timescales.

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (1991)

The research described in the thesis spans both academic and applied research. This collaborative project seeks to expand organisations' knowledge and understanding, and if the assessment is correctly carried out it will lead to specific solutions and new findings of practical relevance to managers and the organisation. At the same time, the findings described in the conclusions (chapter 8) of the thesis, are of significance to a wider academic audience in that they expand the area of knowledge and will contribute to management learning. The research objectives discussed in the thesis (Section 1.5), seek to determine the impact of three Master's programmes on the manager, University and sponsoring organisation.

3.4 Research Philosophy

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) define two main philosophies - positivism and phenomenology which will now be critically evaluated.

3.4.1 Positivism

> *The key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition.*

Source: Easterby-Smith (1991:22)

According to Easterby-Smith (1991), positivism assumes similarities in terms of the laws that govern the social and natural world. If the emphasis is on measurement and objective methods, this suggests the use of quantitative methods, whereby factual data can be interpreted in a meaningful way and this is normally by a statistical method.

The research described in the thesis includes a wide range of methods to confirm and validate the emerging data (Jankowicz 1991). The evaluation strategy for LBS and the organisations (KMBC, ACC and LL) includes the use of questionnaires to determine the impact of learning on the student. So within the overall research strategy for this dissertation, there were methods developed that could be measured that were both systematic and academically rigorous. As described by Easterby Smith et al. (1991) it is possible for action research to be conducted in a positivist way, and the methods described above could be construed as positivist in nature. The research design in the thesis sets out to interpret the impact of a programme on managers. When researching human actions from the stance of the individual, it is recognised that the individual has (or at least latently) the ability to be self-directing. Since people as opposed to objects are the subject of this research, they are under the influence of external factors (Easterby-Smith et al.1991). This area of research is described as co-operative enquiry (Reason 1998). In this way it is viewed by action researchers that the traditional positivist method could be rejected. The involvement of the researcher through co-operative enquiry is the case in the research described in the thesis. The researcher is involved in, and is part of the research process, and is therefore a partner in the research.

The research is not focused on measurement, and although the researcher has aspired to be objective and systematic, the research described in the thesis will involve the analysis of people's feelings and reflections on their learning; additionally the learner-managers have varying roles and these different stances mean that the data are likely to be affected by peoples perspectives and views.

> *The researcher in this tradition....making detached interpretations about those data that have been collected in an apparently value-free manner.*

Source: Saunders et al. (2000:85)

The research described in the thesis is not value free. The stakeholders have positions to defend, each of the organisations described in this research will need to define success factors and improvements. These are likely to include issues such as efficiency, improved resources and cost effectiveness whilst the individual will often view the success factors from a personal, career development stance. The work undertaken as part of the three case studies referred in chapters 5-7, requires participants to reflect on their learning, and this will involve relating feelings, emotions and values in the data.

Positivism places great emphasis on a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication (Gill and Johnson 1991), and in this respect, this research does place emphasis on a structured methodology, but the outcomes of the research emerge in three different organisations (KMBC, ACC and LL), over a period of years, therefore the timing of the data differs greatly and the context is different. Additionally, the first programme for KMBC was the most significant, the researcher observed the outcomes and developed the evaluation strategy as the programme developed. There was far more evaluation required and more data collected from the KMBC programme, which acted as a pilot programme.

Once this was completed, the second programme for ACC was built on the hypothesis derived from the KMBC programme, and the third, LL programme was built on the learning from the first two programmes.

From a methodological stance, therefore, it would be impossible to replicate the methods. As stated by Hussey and Hussey (1997) (Table 3.2), it is impossible to separate people from their context without looking at their perceptions, and in this case, as the managers are sponsored by their organisations, the impact of their learning is greatly affected by the context, i.e. their employer. To sum up, whilst the research described in the thesis is systematic and rigorous and has positivist tendencies, the research leans far more towards a phenomenological approach.

3.4.2 Phenomenology

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) state that phenomenology is determined when reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. The social scientist recognises the different constructions and interpretations people place on experiences, rather than the gathering of facts and measurement. Additionally, as described by Saunders et al. (2000), researchers critical of positivistic approaches are more likely to be nearer to those of a phenomenologist, and in particular, this philosophy leans more towards the world of business and management research. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991:24) the researcher should "try to understand and explain why people have different experiences rather than search for external causes and fundamental laws to explain their behaviours".

The research question described in Section 1.3.1 seeks to determine how management learning programmes contribute to organisation change management agenda. And therefore it is necessary to determine the impact of the programmes on the key stakeholders described as the manager, University and organisation (Section 1.3.3). How and why managers learn are central to the argument, and for this and the reasons described earlier, this work is more phenomenologically-based. Additionally, in the adoption of the phenomological approach, the data collection is more likely to be qualitative. Such data facilitate the "how" and "why" of events which occur and the social processes involved, which again is the focus of this research.

3.4.3 Positivism and Phenomenology

It is however a simplistic view to view these two philosophies in isolation or assert that one approach is better than the other. Saunders et al. (2000) state that research rarely fits neatly into either camp, and in particular, business and management research is likely to span both. It is important to look at the features of both which have been described in the previous two sections, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Key Features of Positivist and Phenomenological Paradigms

	Positivist paradigm	*Phenomenological paradigm*
Basic beliefs:	the world is external and objective	the world is socially constructive and subjective
	observer is independent	observer is part of what observed
	science is value-free	science is driven by human interests
Researcher should:	focus on facts	focus on meanings
	look for causality and fundamental laws	try to understand what is happening
	reduce phenomena to simplest elements	look at totality of each situation
	formulate hypothesis and then test them	develop ideas through induction from data
Preferred methods include:	operationalising concepts so that they can be measured	using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena
	taking large samples	small samples investigated in depth or over time

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (1991:27)

As discussed earlier, management is complex, but there are some areas in this study where knowledge has been obtained e.g. the evaluation questionnaires, but even then the interpretation can often be analysed in a number of ways, and this research does not lend itself as much to the positivistic approach.

Hussey and Hussey (1997) state that it may be more helpful to consider the research approach as a continuum (Figure 3.1). This interpretation encourages recognition that research can in parts be rooted in both areas, whereas the Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) interpretation encourages an either/or approach.

Figure 3.1 Positivist and Phenomenological Continuum

Positivist → *Approach to social science* → Phenomenologist

Reality as a concrete structure	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a projection of human imagination

Source: Hussey et al. (1997:51) adapted from Morgan and Smircich (1980:492)

Whilst this is how the individual perceives the impact of learning, Hussey and Hussey(1997) regard reality as a projection of human imagination. This research aims at construing effective management learning, but this will not be easy to quantify, and one of the main sources will be the managers' interpretation of their own learning. This perception needs to be captured, and the best method considered by the researcher and the design team for each of the organisations described in the research, was for managers to be allowed to reflect upon their own learning. In the continuum described above, the research fits under the last two categories. First, reality as a social construction, in that the research evaluates the world of organisational change and the impact managers have upon it. Additionally, reality as a projection of human imagination, describes the reflections on learning which participants were encouraged to make from the beginning of the programme. These have been evaluated and produced as data. The research described in the thesis aims to determine the effect of a management programme, from the perspective of the individual.

It may be difficult to determine the impact of the research outcomes described in the thesis, on each of the three organisations. It is not always easy to measure the input of the organisation. The input could be determined by analysing managers' reflection on their learning to demonstrate what has happened and the personal learning achieved from it.

3.5 Research Approach

The two main approaches to research are inductive, where data are collected and a theory developed from data analysis, and deductive, where a theory and hypothesis are developed and a research strategy is designed to test the hypothesis. (Saunders et al. 2000).

3.5.1 Deductive Approach

The deductive approach as described by Robson (1993) will now be cited and explained in the text following Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Deductive Approach

<u>The Deductive Approach</u>

- Involves development of a theory that is subjected to a vigorous test, hence dominant research approach of natural sciences where great element of control is required to validate results and where quantitative methods of data collection are utilised.
- Strives to explain casual relationships between variables and requires stringent controls to allow testing of hypotheses.
- Requires researcher independent of what is being observed.
- Needs concepts to be operationalised or strictly defined.
- Requires selection of samples of sufficient numerical size in order to be able to generalise conclusions.

Source: Robson (1993:19) cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:87)

In terms of the first statement of the research described in the thesis, there was no hypothesis since this was a new area of learning. The development of the theory could not be rigorously tested because the results from managers are personal and in some cases, may not become apparent for some time. Additionally, this research was designed to validate an effective management learning framework, but the method used to gain the information was predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative.

Although causal relationships are apparent between the variables within the project, the research methods developed over the period of three case studies, each building on the practice of the previous one. The researcher is part of the process and is not independent of what is observed, and the concepts for this research cannot be strictly defined. The numbers involved are quite small and would not normally lend themselves to generalise conclusions. Therefore the deductive approach has been rejected.

3.5.2 Inductive Approach

The inductive approach will now be as described by Saunders et al. (2000) and will be applied in the text following Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Inductive Approach

Inductive Approach
• More concerned with gaining understanding of meanings that humans attach to certain events, which informs collection of qualitative data leading to formulation of a theory.
• Adopts more flexible approach to research methodology, allowing possibility of variety of explanations to emerge that may help to explain why particular happening occurs.
• More concerned with context in which happenings are occurring.
• Researcher is part of research process.
• Less concern with need to generalise.

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000: 91)

With regard to the first aspect of the inductive approach, the research described in the thesis, is concerned with gaining an understanding of what participants found successful in their management learning experience, and the data was collected in qualitative format such as through interviews and reflections on learning. The researcher has adopted a flexible stance to the methodology which is multi-method, and there are a number of emerging explanations arising from the data.

The research is concerned with the process as well as the outcomes of the three case studies. There is a need to generalise, whilst the numbers on the programme are quite small. The impact of three case studies makes the overall population greater, but with repetition of a number of key success factors. These have then been validated externally (for example through Subject Review).

3.5.3 Major Differences between Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Research

Saunders et al. (2000) recognise that whilst these two approaches are very different (Table 3.5), they are not complete opposites. Mixed methods can be used (Jankowicz

1991), and there is an overlap in the two areas. This research therefore draws on both approaches.

Table 3.5 Differences between Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Research

Deduction emphasises	Induction emphasises
* scientific principles	* gaining understanding of meanings humans attach to events
* moving from theory to data	* close understanding of research context
* need to explain casual relationships between variables	* collection of qualitative data
* application of controls to ensure validity of data	* more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses
* operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	* less concern with need to generalise
* highly structured approach	
* researcher independent of what is being researched	
* necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalise conclusions	

Source: Saunders et al. (2000: 91)

The research leans far more towards an inductive stance in that the research requires an understanding of the manager's requirements from the programme. These data are of a qualitative nature and lead to the formation of a framework for management learning.

There is a flexible approach to research methodology, allowing a variety of explanations to occur. The managers and the staff in the organisation have a variety of views on the collaboration, and they have the freedom to discuss issues that they feel important, which may not necessarily follow a set pattern of questioning. The context for each of the three cases is unique (two from a public local authority and one from a large private organisation). Additionally, this research is a longitudinal study, spanning seven years. The programmes started at different times, and each programme built on the successes of the previous one. There was therefore an on-going analysis and developing hypotheses, which were then tested from the different perspectives within each of the case studies, and through a variety of different research methods.

The context as described above leads this research to take an inductive approach. Furthermore, as the researcher is a key part of the process, this means that the research has a very strong inductive approach.

3.5.4 Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

The terms validity and reliability were originally developed for use in the quantitative, social science field (Kirk and Miller 1986). However with the movements towards mixed methods and the acknowledgement that research can be drawn from both positivist and phenomenologist areas, validity and reliability is now used more regularly in the phenomenological areas.

Validity from the phenomenological viewpoint focuses on the researcher and whether they have gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of informants (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991). In terms of the research described in the thesis, the main methodological approach was systematic and rigorous. The use of multiple but independent measures is known as triangulation. This research draws on data which has been triangulated. The data has been collected over a range of time frames and from different sources thereby validating information from a number of sources.

3.6 Research Strategy

The research philosophy and stance have therefore been identified as phenomenological and inductive. The next stage of the research is to organise the research activity (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991).

The choices at this stage must allow for a degree of involvement by the researcher as discussed above. In science, the traditional assumption is that complete independence shall be maintained (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991), but this research is in the social science area, where it is acknowledged that it is far harder to sustain independence.

This work also follows in the tradition of action research which assumes that social phenomena are always changing and the researcher is part of the change process. In the research described in the thesis, this is very much the case. The organisations concerned in the research all recognise the importance of management learning, and as part of the aims and objectives for each of the programmes there is an emphasis on bringing about organisational change.

For these two reasons (involvement of the researcher and organisation change) Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) believe these to be the key characteristics of action research. From this stage, it is then necessary to consider the best way of conducting the research. This will determine the research strategy, design and data collection methods.

A number of different research strategies that are phenomenologically based are considered in the research described within the thesis. These include grounded theory, case study, action research, action learning, longitudinal studies, exploratory, descriptive and explanatory strategies all of which were considered as part of the overall research strategy. From the wide range of available strategies (Saunders et al. 2000), two further categories are considered and reasons why they are rejected are provided.

3.6.1 Chosen Research Strategies

This thesis aims to examine the impact management learning programmes have on managers in local government. It seeks, therefore, to establish the aims and expectations of the managers and their sponsoring organisation when embarking on these types of programmes, then to compare those expectations with the outcomes, through, and at the end of the programme. As stated previously, managers were asked to keep reflective diaries on the learning process as part of the assessment. In the process of doing this, a critical evaluation of these programmes will take place concluding with 'best practice', in the design and management of such programmes, which will either confirm that the current University provision is acceptable, or that it needs to be changed to become more effective.

The research questions are described in Section 1.3, along with the aims and objectives of the research. From the review of literature relating to management learning, described in Chapter 2 and the research methodology already described in this chapter, it was determined that the most apt research strategy was therefore a longitudinal case study implemented through action research, to enable a grounded approach at exploratory, descriptive and explanatory levels. Each of these factors will be discussed in more detail.

3.6.1.1 Grounded Theory

Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that a grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. It is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. They state that the researcher does not begin with a theory, and then prove it, but one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) first formulated this approach in 1967 when they saw the key task of the researcher is to develop theory through the comparative method, which means looking at the same event or process in different situations. It was thus necessary to consider each of the three case studies from different perspectives – the University, the manager and the organisation, all of which had different requirements of the process and the outcomes of the programme. In this way, the research was very clearly an example of the comparative research method.

The area of grounded theory has been developed over the last three decades culminating in the Strauss and Corbin (1990) text which describes grounded theory, procedures and techniques.

This approach is used in the research described in the thesis. Participants were required to keep diaries to assess their learning throughout the time on the programme. These reflective diaries were kept by the participants and formed part of the assessment. The participants were then awarded credit for completing them. They were encouraged by the tutors to complete their reflections on learning section in their own personal style, and were encouraged to be as open and honest as they felt comfortable with.

Jones (1987) suggests grounded theory works because "rather than forcing data", research should be used to generate grounded theory which "fits" and works because it is "derived from theories and categories". The perceived strengths of grounded theory in relation to the research described in the thesis is that it:

1. Enables the researcher to start by gathering data, in this case relating to the development of three Master's management programmes, and to move this towards substantive theory.
2. Gives the researcher a model with which to analyse the gathered evidence and then, systematically and scientifically, construct a hypothesis with which to re-examine the data or conduct further research. In this case the data emerging from the KMBC case study was re-examined for use with the second case study (ACC) which was then re-examined for use with the third case study (LL).
3. Ensures that the theory generated, as a direct result of the research, is relevant to the needs of the University.
4. Provides a framework for the theory generated to be continually expanded and modified, in line with new developments, so the next stage after the thesis has been completed is to use the model on open, mainstream Master's programmes.

Since this work is inductively derived, a grounded approach has been used as opposed to strict adherence to grounded theory. As stated in the Strauss and Corbin (1990) definition, this work did not begin with a theory, the researcher began with an area of study, in this case management theory, and allowed the framework to develop through this longitudinal research. In grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1990) stress that there is heavy reliance on "data collection, analysis and theory", and the "reciprocal relationship with each other". In the research described in the thesis there is a systematic and rigorous approach taken to data collection, analysis, and theory building, but the heavy reliance and emphasis in grounded theory on coding was not appropriate.

Saunders et al. (2000) describes a number of disadvantages associated with the method:

1. Because of the flexible nature of unstructured or semi-structured interviews, the process can produce overwhelming volumes of data for analysis.
2. The analysis process can also generate large amounts of concepts, categories, properties and dimensions, which in turn consume many hours of additional research investigation.
3. These factors increase the chances of pursuing a line of thought or hypotheses which do not reach any satisfactory conclusion
4. The end product of this type of study may be that further areas of research are identified without any firm recommendation for change or improvement being produced.

One of the difficulties in using grounded theory is the emphasis placed on taping and transcribing interviews and the sheer volume of data to analyse. The case study approach however follows a less detailed breakdown of the data. This research has produced a great deal of data from a very wide range of sources and they have been coded in a systematic fashion. The data analysis has therefore been produced to an academically rigorous standard, and causal relationships have been explored empirically throughout the research methodology stages.

Grounded theory is a vehicle that will methodically and scientifically help collect and analyse data and develop and provisionally verify conceptual management education models and theory, in relation to award-bearing programmes.

To evaluate the first programme, the researcher evaluated the reflective learning diaries written by managers on the programme as a way of providing key areas for further evaluation. These key areas were then tested using a pilot group from another programme. Since the first programme commenced in 1994, the author has been able to track participants from the start of the programme to the finish and beyond, measuring the impact through a longitudinal study which provided more information on which to evaluate future programmes. The original work then provided the background for another study in a Welsh authority which focused on the Best Value agenda (Section 2.16). This was then tested on another case in the private sector with a large organisation.

3.6.1.2 Research Strategies Rejected

1. Experimentation

Experimentation was originally considered because of the emphasis placed on surveys and questionnaires as part of LBS quality mechanisms for programmes, but was rejected due to its deductive stance and the lack of theoretical hypothesis in the research question. Experimentation normally takes place under controlled and planned situations through experiments. It was difficult to determine if this research was a planned change at the beginning of the research, and even more difficult to measure the changes initially.

Since the programmes were unique at that time, there was nothing to compare the emerging changes against. All of the characteristics of the experimental form of research are normally associated with surveys, etc.. Surveys were considered and used to evaluate the effectiveness of each day of the learning programme. They provided a 'snap-shot' of the events at that time. They represented a small part of the process, providing-reaction based evaluation of the programme with the major emphasis on the collection of rich deep information, including reflections and insights into learning.

2. Ethnography

Ethnography which is rooted in the inductive approach (Saunders et al. 2000) suggests the need for researchers to immerse themselves in the setting and become part of the group. At one stage early in the research, the researcher was working full time on these three programmes, she was an integral part of the Programme Team having designed and run these programmes and was immersed in the setting.

This was however for a period of two years and since then, this research has been only one part of her role which is wide and varied, so for the majority of the research time she has not been immersed in the subject and for this reason ethnography will not be considered further.

3.7 Coding Procedures

Coding, or analysis, is central to grounded theory. As stated previously, this research does not slavishly follow grounded theory but takes a grounded approach. Nevertheless, the research has been conducted to an academically rigorous standard and coding procedures have been used. This section will therefore discuss the coding theory with applications for research.

> *Coding represents the operations by which data is (sic.) broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data.*

Source: Strauss and Corbin (1990:57).

There are three types of coding used in grounded theory, shown in Table 3.6 which will then be applied to the research described in the thesis.

Table 3.6 Open, Axial and Selective Coding

<u>Open Coding</u> The data would be collected and be split into conceptual units of data and provided with a label. So understanding the responses would be easier to manage.
<u>Axial Coding</u> This is the process for searching out "relationships between the categories of data that have emerged from open coding" Once these relationships have been found the next stage is to explore and explain the results.
<u>Selective Coding</u> This is the process to identify the principal categories from the open coding and show the relationships to these core categories and other categories with an intention of developing a grounded theory for the research.
Source: Saunders et al (1997:355)

1. Open coding

This requires interviews and observations to be broken down and analysed into concepts, categories, sub-categories properties and dimensions. Observations have not been used in this research but interviews have. Each interview was taped and transcribed. The transcription was then analysed to identify a range of issues. As the coding proceeded, the initials of each interviewee were recorded along with the cohort number and the Topic area relating to the issue being discussed, so that the researcher could identify not only the author of a statement but also the subject focus that they were discussing.

2. Axial Coding

The analytical framework and explanation was now clear. It is now necessary to link the variables to a category through a relationship between causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences. The purpose of axial coding is to:

- investigate phenomenon
- analyse themes
- develop concepts
- propose provisional theory

It is during this process that patterns or themes in the data are noted. For example, several participants and senior managers discussed group work, which was presented to senior managers in each organisation. There were wide variations in the statements from the transcriptions, ranging from the fact that this was a highly developmental part of the programme to requests for it to be cut out of the programme altogether. There were different views expressed by participants as opposed to the managers who sponsored the programme. These senior managers tended to comment on organisational issues arising from the group work, whilst (unsurprisingly) participants commented on individual learning.

> *the researcher may well feel that for much of me the analysis of qualitative data is chaotic and extremely messy.*

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (1991:112)

At this stage of the analysis, there was a feeling of lack of control by the researcher who was faced with large amounts of data. The research data was collected in the early to late 1990's and use of NUD*IST was considered but decided against, because a proportion of the data had already been coded using a manual system which, whilst cumbersome, worked well.

The next stage required evaluating data, proposing statements of relationship, and then attempting to verify what has been deduced, by comparing the data emerging from different sources.

3. Selective Coding

Once the collection and analysis of the data was complete, the next stage involved re-integrating the categories to form a type of grounded theory by means of selective coding. Paul Atkinson, cited in Strauss and Corbin (1990), describe this as a complex issue:

> *This aspect - making it all come together is one of the most difficult things of all... it is hard to inject the right mix of (a) faith that it can and will be achieved, (b) recognition that it has to be worked at, and isn't based on romantic inspiration, (c) that it isn't like the solution to a puzzle or math problem, but has to be created, (d) that you can't always pack everything into one version, and that any one project could yield several different ways of bringing it all together.*

Source: Strauss and Corbin (1990:117)

The steps follow a scientific and defined, though not necessarily sequential, process as follows:

- Identifying core category
- Relating categories and core category
- Grouping categories
- Grounding theory
- Completing

The information gathered under the different headings emerged from various sources and led to an enormous amount of work, including some repetition. The sub-headings and the detail enabled the formulation of theory to emerge, which when bought together were the basis of a framework for management learning.

Grounded theory has been compared to the case study method which has been identified as applicable in this research. Differences between the two approaches include the role of theory development. In case studies, theory development is always an essential part of the design phase, whereas grounded theory typically avoids specifying a theoretical position at the beginning of the research (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The case study should "by no means be considered with the formality of grand theory", nor are you being asked to be a "masterful theoretician", but suggesting theoretical propositions that will act as a blueprint for the study (Yin 1994:26). This open approach, with less emphasis on the coding elements but more emphasis on the need to develop theory, provides more justification for adopting the case study method whilst using a grounded approach to develop and make sense of the emerging data.

3.8 Case Study

A case study is an extensive examination of a single instance of a phenomenon of interest (Hussey and Hussey 1997). They emphasise the importance of the context which is pertinent to this research, which spans the public and private sector.

> *The case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews and observations*

Source: Yin (1994:8)

The research questions focus on how management learning programmes could contribute to the organisations' change management processes, and in doing so, improve management learning practice in higher education and communication between the two (Section 1.3.1). The emphasis in the research questions is on how and why events are happening e.g. how an improvement has come about.

> *In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ' how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.*

Source: Yin (1994: 1)

Saunders et al. (2000) state that a case study will help a researcher gain a rich understanding of the context of the research the process involves. This is required in the research undertaken, which will be carried out in a local authority. The original request was for a management learning programme that would bring about change. It is therefore essential to consider the context so that the learning could be effective within the organisation and of direct relevance to the managers of the programme.

Yin specifically identifies case studies for research purposes in:

> *public administration, research and public agencies, organisational and management studies, and dissertations and theses in social science*

Source: Yin (1994:1)

Since the first case study was within the public sector and required organisation and management development leading to a masters qualification, this fitted closely with Yin's description.

An additional reason why the case study was a chosen research method was due to the fact that the programme was ground-breaking within LBS. The requirements from the case study organisations were not clear at the beginning of the process. There was an overall aim and a couple of research questions. There were also organisational and University considerations and demands, which would require an evaluation of the programme, but the methods and the sources of the investigation would need to be developed. It was therefore essential in the research methodology that a multi-method approach be used.

But Strauss and Corbin (1990), as well as Yin (1994), point to the use of different qualitative methods interviews, direct observation, participant observation, - and positively state, that a good case study "will use as many sources as possible" (Yin 1994:80) which gives the researcher the confidence to adopt the multi-method approach.

3.9 Action Research

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991:8) points out:

> *Because of the collaborative features of action research, participants (the researcher and the researched) are likely to learn a lot from the process itself.*

Research question 1.3.3 states the need to develop ways in which collaboration could be increased between the partners in the research (the University, learner-manager and the organisation). This would require gathering data on the outcomes of the research and the process itself, which is a stated aim of action research (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991).

Another research question (Section 1.3.2) required information on whether action research principles could be used more effectively in management education. This looks at the over- arching area of action research which draws on information from the subject areas of management education as well as research methodology.

Action research has been described as the mechanisms that are suited to evaluating social policy, innovations and reforms within an organisation (Gill and Johnston 1991). This research suggests that action research can make a difference to organisations through its planned approach by adding to existing knowledge. Since the aim of this study is to bring about changes in the organisation, action research principles underpin the study.

Action research is first referred to by Lewin (1946), and has been interpreted by a number of management researchers subsequently. Saunders et al. (2000) suggest that there are three common themes in the literature which states that action research:

- focuses on and emphasises the purpose of research, in this case the management of change within the organisation
- relates to the involvement of practitioners in the research – there needs to be close collaboration between practitioners and researchers. In this research academics, senior managers from the organisation and the participants have worked together.
- the implications go beyond the current research; that is, they are forward thinking.

In the context of this research, the changes in the organisations have wide implications and the design of the management learning framework will have repercussions outside the University.

It is normal for the researcher to be part of the organisation in which the changes take place (Zuber-Skerritt 1996). In this study, the researcher is one of three partners in the research (LBS, organisations and participants).

> *action research differs from other forms of applied research because of the explicit focus on action in particular promoting changes in organisations*

Source: Marsick and Watkins (1997), cited in Saunders (2000:95)

The focus on action is key to the success of the programme. The organisation looks for the manager to act as a catalyst bringing about change in the organisation, whilst the participants will normally work to improve their leadership skills and knowledge. The emphasis is on an active rather than passive research stance and draws on both the positivist and phenomenological approaches, although this research is very much more situated in the phenomenological arena.

The area of action research is very versatile and useful because it addresses some of the practical issues faced when problem solving in an organisational context. Stewart and McGoldrick (1996: 294) comments on the role of action research:

> *It is essentially a change tool designed to diagnose a problem, take action, evaluate the action and then withdraw.*

Thus the process of action research is as relevant to this research method as to the content of the research itself. At the core of the theory is the 'set' of managers who share their experiences in order to "explore their own biased, subjective conclusions and turn their idle, useless reflections into action" (Day 1999).

3.10 Action Learning

Action learning is a method of learning pioneered by Revans (1983) whereby tailor-made programmes of several months' duration were created "for the development of managers....based on real life problems" (Barrington and Reid 1994:354).

The theory originated with Revans (1971), but despite his work appearing in numerous publications, "he never provided a single, comprehensive statement of action learning" (Mumford 1998). Mumford however remedied this situation by producing the following:

- learning for managers means learning to become more effective
- this involves actually taking action, not just recommending it
- this happens best in working on a defined project which includes analysis, implementation and recommendation
- managers learn best with and from each other

- regular meetings facilitate this
- others can provide help to the manager, but not by teaching, rather by exposure to the issues and learning to solve them

Action learning arose as a response to the lack of confidence in traditional methods of management education (Revans 1982). Although Revans himself has never defined action learning, it is based on the premise that "there can be no learning without action and no action without learning" (Aspinwall 1996:20).

The method consists in regular meetings of managers to discuss their individual projects in order to learn from one another (Mumford 1998:37). There is a process of mutual learning (Harrison 1997) with help from a person or group of persons whose role is not to teach but to help managers to learn from exposure to problems and to one another (Mumford 1998).

The components of the process for action learning are:

- Learning (L)
- Questioning insight (Q)
- Programmed knowledge (P)
- The learning equation: L=P+Q (Aspinwall, 1996:20).

Different authors have given different variations of the components of the learning equation. Koo (1999:91) believes that the effective learning should depend on the appropriate mix of the programmed knowledge (p) and questioning insight (q).

In the academic context, the method has been developed on a number of University programmes, and it is acknowledged as being a very different technique to the majority of University programmes where the emphasis is on teaching or learning. The emphasis of action learning is on delivering teaching. Learning is often left to the individual (Keys 1994).

For the research described in the thesis, action learning is not one of the research strategies but is included because of the use of action learning as a teaching method on the final stage of the Master's programmes. This approach has been taken on a number of postgraduate Master's programmes at LBS and since the research was to lead to a Master's qualification, it was likely that this teaching method would be used.

O'Hara, Webber and Reeve (1996:17) defined the purpose and role of action learning in management education by the expectations of the various stakeholders of management education:

> *The manager who enrols for a course expects both a qualification and learning which will be useful beyond the life of the course. The sponsoring organisation expects increased managerial capability of a type which can be applied directly to organisational issues, a good return on its investment. The Business School has the expectation of achieving its purpose. Typically, this encompasses creating new and better ways of developing managers, contributing to business success, awarding qualifications and guarding standards of education.*

For managers who are looking for career development this research base is particularly helpful, the role of action learning in LBS has been beneficial, creating networks of managers who often meet many years after the end of each course or programme.

Margerison (1991) found that managers learn a considerable amount about themselves, their jobs, team leaders, and how to improve things and make changes with this method, Margerison's views are very similar to the experiences of LBS. Increasingly, companies are supporting this radical work-based approach to development which is the case in the research described in the thesis where each of the organisations expected to use action learning methods, especially at the final dissertation stage.

3.11 Longitudinal Research

The research described in the thesis has been conducted with three organisations over a long period of time, and Saunders et al (2000:96) point out that:

> *The main strengths of longitudinal research is the capacity that it has to study change and development.*

Easterby-Smith et al. suggest that the research should focus on change processes within the broader political, social and economic context of the organisation. Longitudinal research begs the question "Has there been any change over a period of time?" (Saunders et al. 2000), which whilst not stated as an explicit research question was implied in a number of the research questions. This should be done using "time series data" over a period of time. Thietart et al. (1999) states that the quality of longitudinal research depends largely on the data collection process and that it is important that the research strategy is well thought out. The design stage is crucial (Thietart et al. 1999) and therefore the consultation stage of the pilot case study for KMBC was lengthy with emphasis on the quality of the research strategy. This work has developed over a period of seven years, and therefore is a longitudinal study.

3.11.1 Exploratory, Descriptive and Explanatory Studies

Exploratory studies seek to stabilise "what is happening; to ask questions and to assess a phenomenon in a new light" (Robson 1993:42).

In this research, the organisation and the University started out with the premise "in what way can we work together - how can we improve management learning?" (Robson 1993:42). From this, it was essential to determine what was happening through a series of questions at the consultation phases. This refined the original ideas and concluded with a management programme which is piloted with a local authority.

Saunders (2000:97) suggests there are three ways of conducting exploratory research:

- searching the literature
- talking to experts
- conducting focus group interviews

All three were done at the consultation phase of the pilot programme. The literature is described in the previous chapter, the latter two methods are described in the case studies.

1. Descriptive studies

Saunders portrays this as an extension of exploratory studies which is how this has been used in this research study. From the exploratory stage of the research a picture emerged of what was required, it was determined that a management learning programme that would bring about change in the organisation and development for managers was required. Once the clear picture emerged of what was required, it was relatively easy to describe the case, but care had to be taken to ensure that the information was not overly descriptive, as Saunders states it is important for description in the management arena to be evaluative and analytical. It is recognised that description does have a very clear place in management development

2. Explanatory studies

Finally, once information had emerged from these programmes, it was classified as examples of programme success factors. It was then essential to link these together and to see the impact caused by a number of factors. As an example, it was felt important to develop a learning agreement as the programmes developed. This was drawn from a number of different areas, such as student comments and organisation requirements and tutor experience. There was a need for this information to be explicit.

3.11.2 Interview Processes

One definition of an interview given by Saunders et al (1997:210), citing (Kahn et al 1957) is:

> *An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people.*

The use of interviews can help to gain valid and reliable data which is relevant to research questions and objectives. The importance of interviews is summarised by Burgess (1982:107) as:

> *The opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience.*

In order to gain this information, the researcher needs to be sensitive enough to recognise that the other person's point of view is understood, by exploring and clarifying without unnecessarily interrupting the flow.

The advantages of using interviews are that they create a more personal approach whereby the interviewer can ask probing questions leading to previously unconsidered views. The interview can be conducted in a structured manner, with control in terms of timing, place and environment. Additionally, the interviewer can observe non-verbal messages which are unavailable in less personal methods. Interviews if conducted by skilled interviewers can produce deep and rich information.

The limitations of using interviews include the lack of standardisation which can result in a concern about the reliability of findings. There can be interviewer and interviewee bias which can be intentional or unintentional, e.g. where the interviewee wants to influence the interviewer. The fixed time factor can be a major consideration for both the interviewer and the interviewee. There is also normally a greater investment in the time required for the interviewer to analyse and write up findings.

Interviews are normally categorised under three headings, as follows:

- structured interviews
- semi-structured interviews
- unstructured interviews

A description of these categories presented by Saunders (1997) will follow with application to the research described in the thesis:

1. Structured interviews will follow the same format for all interviewees and the answers will need to be recorded in the same format to avoid bias in the results. The emphasis is on keeping the questions uniform and constant which is not appropriate in the research described in the thesis. The three cases were from different organisations, the language and the information would have to be contextualised when considering the format of the questions.

2. In this research study, semi-structured interviews will be used. The researcher will develop questions and draw up a list of 'themes' that will need to be covered, and contextualised for each interview. The researcher will take comprehensive notes throughout the interview and will use a tape recorder. This allows for more flexibility. The theme can change direction and certain lines of thought explored, depending on the organisational and research context.

3. An unstructured interview is informal, where the interviewee is encouraged to talk freely about events, behaviour and beliefs in relation to the research topic, but there are no predetermined questions to work through. The researcher will need a clear idea about the aspects of research topic requiring exploration. This was not possible in the current research as described in the programme rationale (Section 1.1.4) and since the work will take a grounded approach (Section 3.5.1.1), this interview category has been discounted. This type of interaction is known as non-directive, and has been labelled as an informant interview as it is the interviewee's perceptions that guide the conduct of the interview (Saunders et al. 1997).

Bias can occur on both sides, irrespective of the type of interview method chosen, from the interviewer and from the interviewee. In many respects, it is easier to eliminate the areas where bias may occur from the interviewer. In this research study this will include planning the themes to be addressed in advance, making sure that areas are not omitted inadvertently by having a question plan with prompts, and by representative sampling of groups (Ghauri et al. 1995).

3.11.3 Interviews and Data Quality

Interviews that are non-standardised are not designed to be replicated in other areas and this affects the perception of them as reliable (Healey and Rawlinson 1994 cited in Saunders et al. 1997). The justification against this is that the data collected is reliable at the time, in the specific circumstances that they relate to. This does mean though that the findings will apply only to the groups studied and will not be able to be generalised for the whole organisation which in the research study includes Local Authorities and a large organisation.

Validity is not often raised as an issue, because the researcher is usually able to gain full access to the experiences and knowledge of the interviewees. This is true in the research study, particularly as the interviewees are likely to be known by the interviewer, which means a level of trust and understanding already exists.

3.11.4 Methodology Conclusion

In defining and outlining the methodology one needs to consider that the programmes, to which research is applied, were a step into the unknown (Section 1.1.4). It was more apparent that a 'grounded' approach be used (Section 3.5.1.1) but it was not felt appropriate to use grounded theory. The research aims and the questions at the beginning of this research led to a case study methodological framework for the thesis. This allows for a range of sources of information and a multi-method approach.

Each of the three case studies have similar aims to develop management potential and promote organisational change. The emphasis on change leads to an action research approach, drawing on theory from the subject areas of both management research and management learning. In the research described in the thesis three case studies develop management programmes which lead to a Master's qualification. It is recognised that the research should be a longitudinal study reviewing the changes over an extended period of time. The emerging data can be explored, described and theory developed, as the research project progresses.

3.12 Research Methods

The original approach for this research came from the organisation (Section 1.1.4) when a general discussion was set up with senior managers at the University and with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. As discussed in Section 3.2, the broad aims of the project were outlined, this led to a request from the organisation for a management development programme which would lead to organisational change. It was important to get managers involved in the process (Section 3.2) and one of the early aims of the University team was to reduce any barriers or limit any pre-conceived ideas about the University being seen as an 'ivory tower' by the organisation (Section 2.6), to maximise the learning opportunities.

The organisation requested a postgraduate programme, and they wanted a recognised and prestigious award to attract middle and senior managers onto the programme. Since it was to be a Masters programme, academic credit would be gained through assessment. It was agreed that projects and assignments would be of an applied nature, but would be based on a sound academic foundation (Section 3.2).

The first programme was therefore to be classed as a pilot programme, with an evaluation strategy to determine best practice. The first stage of the development was the consultation phase which was expected to last for up to six months for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC). The KMBC programme will lead to an outline programme, this supposition of facts or hypothesis will then be tested on the second case. The consultation stage for this is expected to last for up to three months for Anglesey County Council, where the hypothesis will be again tested for use in Local Authority. The emerging data for ACC will lead to a refined hypothesis which will then be tested in a large private organisation at Littlewoods Leisure (LL) where the consultation phase will last for up to three months and the programme will again be contextualised.

3.12.1 Consultation Phase

1. Documentary Analysis

Internal documents, including reports on training development and management development, will be reviewed to determine the current status of management development in the organisation.

Other data sources used for gathering information on the background to the project will include documentation from the following sources:

- University Forum for Human Resource Development (HRD)

  This is a forum which represents over 30 UK universities whose representatives meet regularly with HRD practitioners to discuss the latest issues, models and trends in the area of HRD. Management Development has been an area where the group have been very active which has led to the production of a framework for masters provision, which has been utilised in the research described in the thesis.

- Journal/text documentation described in Chapter Two of the thesis.

2. Focus Group Meetings

Focus groups take the form of loosely structured "steered" conversations. They are used extensively in market research (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991) and have gained popularity in the business sector. During the consultation stage, focus group meetings will be set up to plan and prepare the programme. The planning team will comprise Directors and will be conducted by the Training Officer from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council plus the Director of Postgraduate Programmes and Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management and Development from Liverpool Business School. Draft programmes will be circulated for discussion and comment to a wider audience within both institutions. The planning teams for both Anglesey County Council and for Littlewoods Leisure will be similarly convened with senior representatives from both the organisations and the University. Further focus groups will be set up with managers who are likely to attend the programme where ideas will be tested out.

3.12.2 Programme Evaluation Phase

The evaluation strategies for the three cases included the following:

1. Documentary analysis of all documentation relating to the programme This will include Annual Reports, LBS University evaluation questionnaires, module questionnaires and Board of Study which represent views of students and staff.
2. Learning reflections from managers on the programme will be compiled by using a grounded approach (drawing issues from the reflections, identifying clusters, and using this to constitute the main key areas for further research). Section 3.11.3 describes the outcomes of this process.
3. Surveys and evaluation questionnaires will be used at the end of the modules and programme. Information will be presented from Knowsley Metropolitan Council which is the pilot programme and attracted more information. This will be followed by information from the surveys used with the other two case studies:

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Pilot) Surveys

- KMBC internal pilot stage questionnaire 1997/1998 (see Figure 3.9)

- LBS module questionnaires and summary documents to be completed at the end of each module.
- LBS end of programme discussion group (with comment on flip chart).
- LBS annual feedback survey to students
- Annual report and programme self-assessment documentation.

Table 3.7 KMBC Evaluation Questionnaire

Management Development Programme 1997/98
Responses of Certificate Group
1. What was it that interested you in this programme?
2. Whose decision was it that you joined this programme? (e.g. your decision alone, you and your manager's joint decision, your manager's decision alone).
3. What were your objectives for joining this programme? (e.g. what results did you hope to gain in terms of your performance as a manager at KMBC? What other benefits did you hope to gain?)
4. To what extent have these been met?
5. What aspects of the programme did you find most useful and why?
6. What aspects of the programme did you find least useful and why?
7. How relevant / useful did you find the assessment methods used on the programme?
8. How would you rate your contribution to this programme?
9. How would you rate the contribution of the following:
9a Tutor A (Managing People)
9b Tutor B (Changing Role of the Local Government Manager)
9c Tutor C (as above)
9d Tutor D (TQM)
9e Tutor E (Business Planning)
10. KMBC Speakers
10a Speaker 1 (Managing People)
10b Speaker 2 (Changing Role of the Local Government Manager)
10c Speaker 3 (TQM)
10d Speaker 4 (Business Planning)
11. If you left the programme before completing the first year, why was this?
12. How effective was the management / administration of the programme?
13. To what extent has this programme influenced your personal effectiveness over the last year?
14. What benefits do you think that KMBC gains by offering this programme?

Source: KMBC Internal documentation (1998)

The questionnaire was developed by an evaluation panel of four KMBC senior managers, agreed with the Liverpool Business School, and was piloted for use with 3 members of the programme before findings were circulated. These questions were open questions and the results were collated by the evaluation panel which comprise three Senior Managers and the Training Officer for KMBC.

The master's cohort questionnaire had to be modified, but the same process preceded its issue (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8 KMBC Master's Evaluation Questionnaire

Management Development Programme 1997/98

Responses of Masters group

1. Why did you decide to continue with the programme?
2. Whose decision was it that you continued? (e.g. Your decision alone, you and your manager's joint decision, your manager's decision alone.)
3. What were your objectives for this level of the programme? (e.g. What results did you hope to gain in terms of your performance as a manager at KMBC? What other benefits did you hope to gain?)
4. To what extent have these been met?
5. How relevant/useful did you find the supervision given on the programme?
6. How would you rate your contribution to this programme? (e.g. In terms of support to other students)
7. How effective was the management/administration of the programme?
8. To what extent has this programme influenced your personal effectiveness over the last three years?
9. What benefits do you think that KMBC gains by offering this programme (with particular emphasis on the Master's level)?

Source: KMBC Internal documentation (1998)

3.12.3 Reflections on Learning

This was an integral part of the assessment process, and it formed part of the overall marking scheme throughout the programme. All participants in the programme completed this, but the analysis of the reflections for this thesis took place over two years (1998 and 1999), when 50% of the total number of participant's reflections and learning were analysed.

The way that this was conducted was that each reflections section from the assignment of each project was photocopied. The copies were read and any significant issues were highlighted. The comments were recorded on post-it notes and then grouped in a similar way to the interview information, i.e. ones of similarity were grouped together and a title provided. This was then used for data analysis.

Each post-it comment was recorded with the initials of the participant and, where relevant, his/her stage (Certificate, Diploma or Master). Table 3.9 gives an example:

Table 3.9 Reflections on Learning Data

<u>**Pre Programme factors**</u>
• No management theory before programme DBC1
<u>Management factors</u>
<u>Personal</u>
• Importance of trust, fairness and consistency DBC1
• common sense and courtesy foundation good mgt KGC1
• managers need to be pragmatic and practical (make most of situations) ABC2
• ACC1
• flexible managers JMC2, JMC2
• decision making VMC1
<u>Team</u>
• need co-operation and skills DBC1
• team work gets jobs done JRC2
<u>General</u>
• manage change KGC1
• ISO9000 buzz word schemes are used by managers, hated by more junior, see it as more paper work less work DBC3
• Managers across authority should have responsibility for business planning (BP) DBC4
• Value of business planning JMC2
• Develop BP VMC1
• BP is not exact science AMC4
• ownership most important aspect of BP VMC1

(Extracted from data findings from current research)

3.12.4 Focus Group Evaluations

These were conducted at the end of each stage of the programme. They comprised the KMBC Programme Co-ordinator and the Liverpool Business School programme manager who ran a lunch-time, informal focus group with all members of the cohort. The information was taken in note form with follow up meetings held by the programme team for LBS and the Training Officer from KMBC.

3.12.5 Interview Itinerary

It was essential to get feedback from the senior managers at each of the three organisations, and this took place over the period 1999-2000. It was agreed that enough time had lapsed for most learning outcomes to be developed, and that the senior managers would still retain sufficient knowledge and information about the programme.

KMBC still had students on the programme in 2000, but the programme was now due for re-validation by the University and these issues are discussed in the conclusions to the research. Anglesey County Council and Littlewoods Leisure at this time both had participants attending the final stage of the programme (MA).

The interviews were set up with senior staff who had been involved in the consultation and design phase, e.g. the Training Officer at Anglesey County Council, and/or staff who at that time had a major influence on the programme, e.g. Managing Director. The number of staff involved in the running of the programmes was relatively small at the consultation phase. The minimum staff involved was 2, and the maximum was 4. It was agreed that feedback was required from senior staff who would have direct knowledge of the programmes in 2000.

Table 3.10 Three Cases Interview Information

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	**Anglesey County Council**	**Littlewoods Leisure**
April 2000	May 2000	June 2000
1) **Acting Chief Executive** (involved throughout) 2) **Director of Leisure Services** (involved throughout) 3) **Programme Co-ordinator** (appointed 1996 and had continuous knowledge of programme through that time) 4) **Director of Planning** (member of original consultation team)	1) **Managing Director** (appointed 6 months earlier and had some knowledge of the programme) 2) **Director Central Services** (involved throughout) 3) **Training Officer & Programme Co-ordinator** (member of consultation phase and ongoing responsibility for programme)	1) **Finance Director** (involved throughout) 2) **H.R. Director** (member of consultation phase and ongoing responsibility for programme)

Feedback for Littlewoods Leisure was most problematic because of a take-over in 2000 and the subsequent loss of staff who were involved in the programme in the early days. The programme has not been adapted for use in the new organisation.

The two staff who have provided feedback have however full knowledge of the programme.

3.12.6 Interview Structure and Content

The interview question areas were as shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Interview Questions

	Question Areas
1	**What would you consider success in terms of this programme?** **Consider the organisation** **The individual** **Any other?**
2	**What would make a difference in this organisation that could be achieved through a programme such as this?**
3	**What do you think have been the main strengths of the programme?**
4	**What are the success criteria for the group work? Individual work?**
5	**What do you think are the main weaknesses?**
6	**Who has an impact on the participants taking this programme? In what ways do they affect them?**

LBS Programme Documentation (2000)

The interviews were arranged by the researcher, and the timing allowed for each interview was up to 2 hours. The interviews were all taped and copies of the transcripts are available.

The only area where the taped interview was problematic was with the Managing Director for Anglesey County Council. He was very softly spoken and moved his chair away from the microphone so some of the conversation was lost. However, the researcher had also taken notes and, additionally, the Managing Director was not fully aware of the nuances of the programme at that time since he had only recently taken up his post.

3.12.7 Coding Information

The interview transcriptions were typed and the researcher highlighted the key information that had an impact on the research. This ranged from 40% to 60% of the total word-processed document. The highlighted areas were then summarised and a note of who stated what comment put onto post-it notes. The researcher then grouped the post-it notes with comments of a similar nature. These groups of information were then given a title and the titles were introduced into the text and subsequently analysed.

3.13 Conclusions

To sum up the methodology, the programmes were a step into the unknown. It was more apparent that a 'grounded' approach be used, but it was not felt appropriate to use grounded theory. The research aims and the questions at the beginning of this research led to a case study methodological framework for the thesis. This allowed for a range of sources of information and a multi-method approach.

Each of the three case studies had similar aims to develop management potential and promote organisational change. The emphasis on change led to an action research approach, drawing on theory from the subject areas of both management research and management learning. The case studies developed management programmes which led to a master's qualification. It was essential to track participants over this three-year period, and over the time that the pilot programme existed another two programmes were set up. It was then recognised that the research would be a longitudinal study reviewing the changes over a seven-year period. The emerging data were explored, described and theory emerged, and the research project progressed.

The second half of this chapter provided information on the research methods used a multi-method approach conducted at different stages of the programme.

This raft of detailed information provided very detailed data for analysis and development of best practice theory which is described in the case study information in Chapters five to seven and the Conclusions Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: LIVERPOOL BUSINESS SCHOOL AND CASE STUDY INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will cover the background to the research described in the thesis, this will include information on Liverpool Business School, and common background information on the three organisational case studies described previously in the thesis.

The results of the study will be described over the next five chapters. The first will provide background information regarding LBS which is common to all three case studies. The following three chapters will present information on the case studies for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC), Anglesey County Council (ACC) and Littlewoods Leisure (LL). The concluding results chapter will provide an overview of the information and critical success factors arising from all three case studies.

4.2 Background to Initiative

This section provides background information on the major UK Local Authority (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council) and the international Business School (Liverpool Business School) that set up this collaborative programme.

In February 1994, a representative approached LBS from the Chief Executive's Department of KMBC to help them design a management development programme. This collaborative initiative has had a major impact upon all three partners - Liverpool Business School (LBS), KMBC and the learner-managers who subsequently completed the MA in Management course. The reputation arising from this programme subsequently led to a number of requests from organisations to provide similar types of programmes. In terms of the research described in the thesis, in 1996 Anglesey County Council approached LBS to deliver a similar programme which is described in Chapter 6 and in 1997 Littlewoods Leisure requested another (Chapter 7). The requests were both made as a result of the growing reputation of the programmes and through personal networking links to the researcher (author) of this thesis. This chapter describes the background and context relating to the LBS which developed the programme

4.3 Liverpool Business School (LBS)

LBS is one of the largest Business Schools in the UK, and is part of John Moores University (JMU). The School was awarded an excellent rating (22 points from a potential of 24) by the Quality Assurance Agency as part of the Subject Review for postgraduate programmes held in November 2000. The collaborative programmes, most of which are modelled on the framework on which this research is based, received special commendation, and this has been recognised as a significant factor in gaining the excellent rating.

As demonstrated in Table 4.1, student numbers for both full and part- time study have been steadily decreasing over the years, with an increase in overseas students. One of the ways in which the University has rectified this shortfall is to attract commercial full-cost programmes.

Table 4.1 Student Numbers, LBS (1993 to 2000)

Year	Home-FT	Home-PT	Overseas
1993/94	1387	1494	104
1994/95	1328	1484	141
1995/96	1281	1345	91
1996/97	1280	1465	78
1997/98	1308	1415	125
1998/99	1316	1191	134
1999/00	1299	1191	144

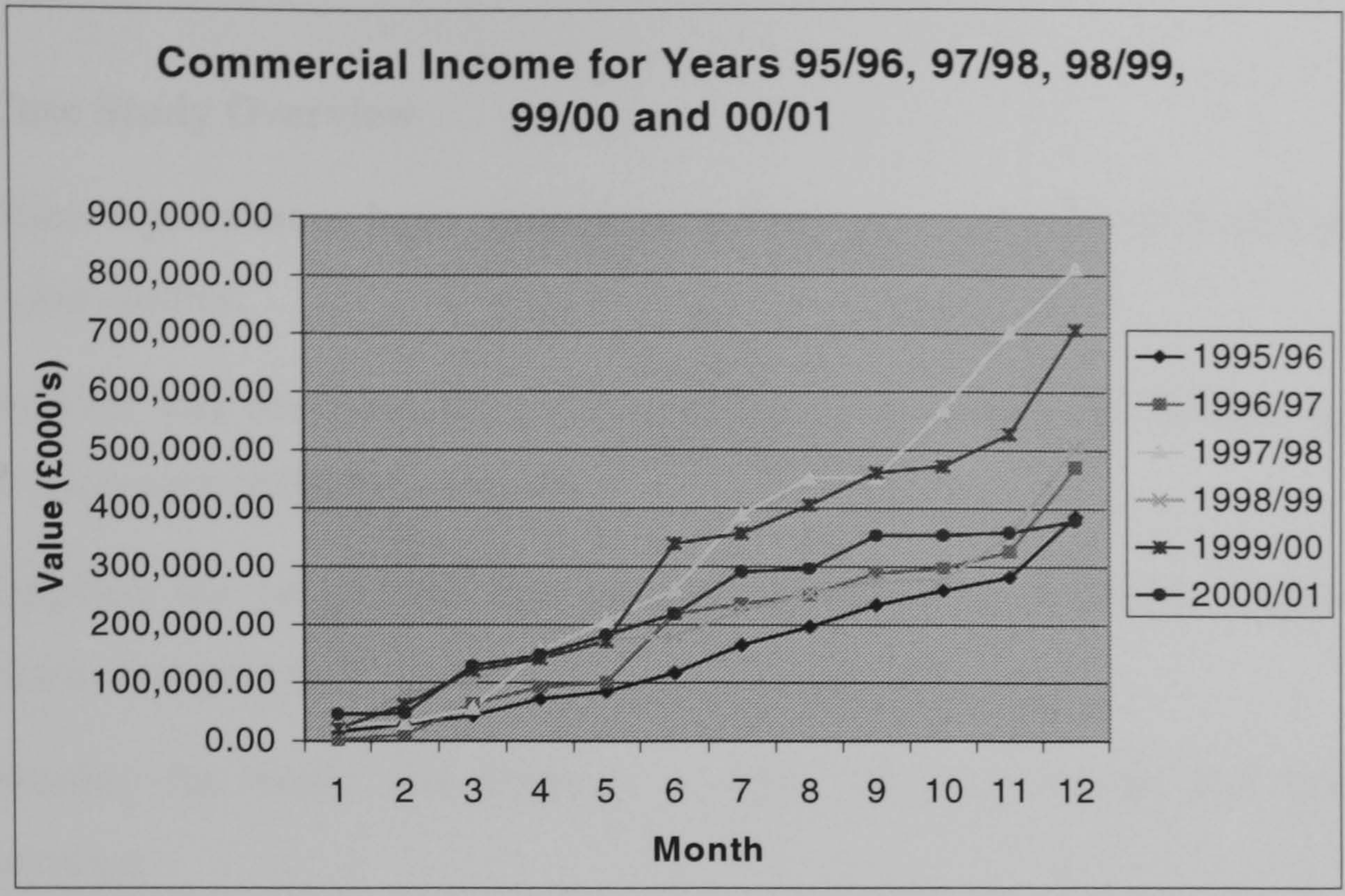


Figure 4.1 Commercial Income for Period 1995 – 2001.

As can be seen from the above table, student numbers have decreased over the last few years however commercial activity has increased over the same period as demonstrated below.

In 1994, when this in-company programme was evolving, JMU had recently changed status from a Polytechnic to a new University. The majority of programmes were traditional, open programmes such as BA/BSc in Business Studies (part and full-time, with sandwich options) and at the postgraduate level, the MBA that was then in its third year. A number of newly validated MA programmes had been developed to top-up undergraduate or professional programmes for experienced professional and business practitioners. Examples of these include the MSc in Human Resource Development, MA in Strategic Human Resource Management (which were both developed by the researcher responsible for this thesis) and the MA in Marketing.

Only one other collaborative programme had been validated by LBS prior to the KMBC development. This was for the Rover organisation and led to an MA in Role Model Leadership. This structure involved Rover staff in delivering the competence-based Certificate and Diploma stages, with LBS staff moderating the assessments and supervising the final MA dissertation stage.

4.4 Case Study Overview

The three organisations have since become the focus of this research and each of the three case studies:

- analyses and describes the process of the consultation and design stage in the development of the programme,
- describes the programme specification including the structure, admissions and assessment processes,
- presents the results and findings in terms of collaboration and management learning,
- determines the key themes emerging from the stakeholder evaluation of the programme,
- identifies the impact of stakeholders upon the programme development
- identifies the motivating factors attracting learner-managers to postgraduate, collaborative programmes,
- identifies specific programme attributes that attract learner-managers,
- identifies organisational requirements of the learner-managers completing the programme,
- proposes the success factors arising from the research.

4.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has provided background information relating to the initiative and describes the main factors arising from the three case studies and the structure of the subsequent three chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE: KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (KMBC)

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter describes the background of the first case study for KMBC. This includes information on the:

- climate and culture, both past and present day
- consultation phase which is comprehensive since this is the first programme developed without prior experience of the area
- design process including the driving principles of the programme, the key outcomes for the consultation and design stage
- programme including the qualification, aims, structure, admissions and entry requirements, enrolment, assessment and evaluation strategy
- evaluation results and analysis which includes views from senior managers and key stakeholders
- pilot programme results which are divided into four areas; structure, benefits, areas for development and stakeholder involvement. Each of the four areas are further divided into three categories which provide feedback of the programmes from the perspectives of the participant, organisation and manager. The Chapter finishes with a conclusion statement.

5.2 Background

Before describing the consultation phase, it is important to appreciate the background leading up to this request and to understand the cultural aspects of the Authority, both past and present.

5.2.1 KMBC Climate and Culture from 1974 to 1994

KMBC was created in 1974, following a Local Government reorganisation, which brought together the urban districts of Huyton with Roby, Kirkby and Prescot. All three former districts were very different in terms of culture, social standing and economic viability. Whilst changes over time had brought about some improvements, KMBC in the late 1980's had major problems including, attracting new business to the area, social deprivation and lack of the leadership and management potential to bring about the rapid cultural changes required from Local Authorities at that time. KMBC was not unique in this area; a number of other Local Authorities were still struggling to manage the changes brought about by Local Government reorganisation. Local Authorities are complex organisations with elected members responsible for policy creation and employed officers charged with planning and controlling functions.

In the period 1979-1989, KMBC (along with other Local Authorities) enjoyed a relatively stable management structure. The Boundary Commission reported in 1989 that the population size of Knowsley (154,000) was likely to decline (the forecast by the year 2001 was 134,000). One of the recommendations by the Boundary Commission was to abolish KMBC.

The Boundary Commission Report coincided with the appointment in 1989 of a new Chief Executive who, together with the senior management team, viewed the prevailing culture as essentially negative. They felt the Council had a poor reputation for its services, and appeared to be inward looking and bureaucratic. The new Chief Executive was perceived by staff to be approachable, young, dynamic and energetic. His main priorities described at an early meeting with him were:

- Setting a strategic agenda for the organisation with elected members playing a key role
- Ensuring transparency of information and actions tell them (the public) what the problems are, what you are going to do about it, and then do it
- Investing in staff and recognition of worth
- Getting staff to think innovatively, one thing we do (Chief Officers) is to benchmark. To compare ourselves against others, not just other Local Authorities but blue chip companies too.

Following his appointment, major changes led to a complete reorganisation. The Authority had been through a major restructuring exercise and appeared to be entering a consolidation phase when they contacted LBS in 1994. The Chief Executive and other Chief Officers expressed the view at public meetings that they were keen to re-energise and motivate the workforce. They expressed a desire to show commitment to training, following the upheaval, and in line with the Chief Executive's statement that he intended to invest in staff.

The request for LBS to help them with their middle and senior management development needs was one of several initiatives taken forward by the Chief Executive's department, and because of the seniority of the managers involved, it was perceived within the organisation as a major initiative attracting top management support.

5.2.2 KMBC Current Climate and Culture 2001-2002

KMBC is now one of Merseyside's five Metropolitan Districts and is an area of major inward investment and regeneration. The Boundary Commission forecast in 1989, of a drop in the population, proved inaccurate (see Table 5.1). In 2001, Knowsley has a stable population of 154,000 people, and is the fastest growing community on Merseyside.

The stability and success are attributed to the strategy regarding inward investment and economic regeneration, as well as the impact of strong, transformational leadership. The transport infrastructure is excellent with the M62 motorway to the south of the District, and both Liverpool and Manchester Airports within a 15-mile radius.

On the negative side, Knowsley is still recognised as an area of social deprivation, and is one of the top five authorities in the Index of Social Deprivation. In terms of health, areas of Knowsley are well above the national average rates for cancer, coronary heart disease and mental ill-health. Knowsley is also low in terms of the national league tables for schools. Table 5.1 summarises the developments from 1984 to 2002.

Table 5.1 KMBC Profile 1984-2002

Profile	1984	1994	2002
Population	154,000	154,000	154,000
Index of Social Deprivation	Top 5	Top 5	*6th
Political Leadership	Labour	Labour	Labour
Number of Council staff	Figures Not Available	Approx. 8,500 excluding teachers	Approx. 5,081 excluding teachers

(* DETR-Multiple Deprivation Ranking)

5.3 Consultations and Development

This section describes the rationale and background to the project, including the consultation phase, the design process, and the driving principles underpinning the programme.

5.3.1 Consultation Phase

In 1994, no management development was carried out within KMBC, and the request for discussion arose from the Chief Officer Group who felt this was a weakness. The lack of management development had also been identified in a consultation document provided as part of the Investors in People (IiP) diagnostic stage, which attracted funds for delivering training activities from the local Training Enterprise Council (TEC). The Training Co-ordinator from KMBC contacted LBS to discuss their requirements for management training and development. The Postgraduate and Professional Programmes Director of Liverpool Business School and the Programme Leader for MA programmes in HRM met with the Training Officer from the Chief Executive's Department.

The consultation phase lasted six months, and during this time the programme was developed and accredited by JMU as an MA in Management. It was the second collaborative programme set up by the Business school and was a full-cost programme.

The planning team comprised of two Directors plus the Training Co-ordinator from KMBC who met with the Postgraduate Programmes Director and the author, for several meetings to determine the most appropriate programme for the organisation.

The first stage of the consultation phase was the partnership negotiations stage - where LBS worked with the organisation to develop common ground. At this stage both parties were out to show their ability and knowledge, they both started in a more defensive mode, where the organisation was unsure of how honest to be about their needs. LBS were overly responsive to the organisations needs in a bid to win the business, but as the discussions progressed, both parties started to become more open with one another. The literature on partnership development discussed in Section 2.10 was pertinent and the experiences of Boot and Evans (1990) were considered where both parties described their own requirements for a similar type of partnership. From the beginning KMBC expressed that their main task was to develop a management development programme that was at Masters level. Whilst they recognised that the qualification would require adhering to University regulations, they wanted to negotiate their own involvement in the relationship. Initially there was more concentration on resources, which included the Chief Officer Group comprising 8 Directors of Service plus the Chief Executive who would be mentors and advisers to the programme.

The second stage was where the organisation articulated their requirements from the partnership which led to the organisations requirements for managers who attended the programme. The organisation had certain new management practices (Section 2.4) that required managers to be able to manage more effectively. The general manager skills are discussed in Section 2.3 and include the need for the managers to think strategically, to be innovative and able to lead change as discussed in Section 2.3. Boak et al. (1997) discusses the importance of moving manager thinking from operational issues to strategic and the importance of benchmarking against other organisations and departments. The managers would need to learn how to influence staff and negotiate, as well as to think critically (Barnett 1960). It was also important for the managers to consider the systematic and process changes such as knowledge of HR processes, quality mechanisms and other manager skills described in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. Additionally the team were aware of the good practices involved in running programmes, as described in Section 2.15 and potential problem areas discussed in Section 2.14 (challenges in setting up award bearing management programmes).

The organisation requirements arising from these meetings were to design a programme that would:

- encourage cross-departmental teamwork
- cover a wide range of management and leadership issues
- lead to improved leadership and management skills
- motivate staff on the programme
- lead to innovative thinking by linking with other organisations and undertaking benchmarking activities
- encourage participants to bring about changes in the organisation.

KMBC provided top management involvement in the process, and the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Group (COG) offered their help and support in the development and running of the programme. These senior managers recognised that whilst the organisation was prepared to provide resources for the learner-managers, they did expect commitment from those supported to undertake the programme. This would include participants having to invest personal time in the preparation of programme assignments. The planning team believed that since the programme would lead to a qualification which would enhance the learner-manager's personal profiles, they would be more willing to engage with the programme and put in this extra time.

The other partner in this collaborative programme, LBS, described in Chapter four wished to develop its staff by taking on projects with local employers in order to keep their teaching up to date, provide an opportunity for case study research, and encourage staff to get involved in work that would bring funds into the School. Participants in LBS expressed the view that this form of collaboration would be beneficial to all parties.

The perceived benefits to the two organisations discussed during the consultation phase are summarised in the Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Perceived Benefits to KMBC and LBS

KMBC	LBS
Management/Leadership/Organisation • lead to improved leadership and management skills and expertise • manage changes in the organisation more effectively • encourage more open channels of communication **Improved teamwork** • break down barriers both hierarchically and departmentally • encourage cross-departmental teamwork **Personal/skills improvements** • motivate staff • encourage innovative thinking • provide staff with a qualification • empower staff • encourage learner managers to take on major projects	**Staff Issues** • develop staff • provide more variety and interest for tutors **Improvement in teaching** • ensure teaching materials are up to date and relevant • development of case study material • increase opportunities for benchmarking **Improvements in research outputs** • generate more material for research • improve networking opportunities • provide financial benefits • attract funds to University and School

5.3.2 Design Process

LBS was given autonomy in the design of the programme. The initial ideas were, in part, based on the experience of working with a partner to develop other management development programmes. This experience, along with the team's knowledge of the University regulations and the issues discussed at the consultation stage, led to the proposal of a draft programme.

5.3.2.1 Driving Principles of Programme

The planning team identified a number of key driving principles for the programme, which were:

1. Cross-departmental networking- it was agreed that learner-managers would be drawn from all departments and that they would be expected to work cross-departmentally on group projects
2. Senior management involvement was an essential element of the programme - the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Group wanted to be involved with the programme and to have input into the major topics for the group work
3. Recommendations arising from the projects completed by participants on the programme to be considered for implementation within the organisation
4. Dissemination of good practice was essential - it was agreed that staff within the organisation with expertise in a particular area could be invited to share their knowledge with participants on the programme
5. Participants were expected to commit themselves to the programme and in return would be supported by the organisation to undertake it.
6. Final dissertation stage would be working on projects to manage change.

5.3.2.2 Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage

As a result of the meetings, notes were taken by the researcher for the thesis, and grouped under the following headings.

1. Personal/Skills, Issues and Entitlements

The programme was to be of award-bearing status (to MA standard) which all parties recognised would be beneficial (2.15.3). Experience in the management of training and development provided the researcher with insight into training practices within the Local Authority sector, where it was (and still is) normal practice to train staff to do their current jobs. The Certificate and Diploma stages of the programme (which covered areas of content specifically aimed at improving managerial skill) would be considered an acceptable use of the training budget. The dissertation stage, however, was seen as an additional qualification, possibly for career/ personal development, as opposed to training for a specific job role. In the case of KMBC, the Authority welcomed the whole programme and allowed staff to attend.

The learner-managers were allowed to attend the modules during normal working hours. It was however agreed with staff at the open meetings that they were expected to do the majority of the assessment in their own time. At a later stage, time was allowed for meetings (regarding the assessment) to take place in working hours.

2. Teaching & Resource issues

The taught modules would be provided on-site using KMBC training facilities. Tutors with public sector and/or curriculum expertise led the taught modules on the programme and were to be responsible for the marking of assessments. Staff from KMBC who had specific knowledge/experience in the module content area were invited to contribute to the taught module to ground the learning. The sessions normally lasted up to an hour and the contributors were usually staff at senior management level. These were later referred to as 'champions'.

3. Programme Management

A Programme Co-ordinator was identified at KMBC to work closely with the Programme Leader from LBS. These two people managed the programme and were supported by other staff from each organisation.

4. Management Skills

Benchmarking is described in Section 5.6.2.2.7. Benchmarking/Comparative Analysis was perceived by the Chief Officers as an essential management activity, which would encourage participants to widen their perspectives. In addition, they recognised the importance of thinking innovatively and to considering and adopting different working practices which was endorsed at the consultation stage and is confirmed in management literature (Peters 1987, Wickens 1987, Salaman and Butler 1990).

5. Assessment

Individual assessment was to be agreed with the tutor, programme co-ordinator, and where relevant the 'champion', in an effort to ensure the work was of benefit to the organisation and the student. Learner-managers were encouraged on some of the modules to design their own piece of assessment and a proposal form was provided which was then submitted to the LBS module tutor to ensure it met University standards for the level of programme. Information was drawn on from the literature on programme development described in Section 2.15.5.

The group assessment topics were agreed by COG in conjunction with the LBS Programme Leader. More topics than presentation topics were given, providing each group with some choice. The topics for the dissertation were agreed by learner-managers at KMBC, building on and integrating knowledge from the Certificate and Diploma. These topics were to be significant issues leading to major changes presented to Chief Officers.

5.4 The Programme

Following the consultation phase, the programme was then formed. This section includes information on the qualification, which conformed to the University regulations, and the requirements of both the manager and the organisation. This Section continues by providing the emerging programme structure, the admissions and entry requirements, enrolment, assessment, and evaluation strategy.

5.4.1 The Qualification

The programme led to a professional development programme for managers employed by KMBC. The aims of the programme as stated in the Definitive Document for the programme at the three levels is shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Aims of KMBC Programme

MA IN MANAGEMENT FOR KMBC
PROGRAMME AIMS
Certificate in Management
• To provide an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge and competence for the role of a line manager, by completing four core modules at the beginning of the programme.
Diploma in Management
• To extend and develop the knowledge and skills gained at the Certificate stage.
• To integrate the development of this new learning into the line management aspects of the participants' job role, and
• To help participants learn to plan their continuous self-development.
Master's in Management
• To develop the capacity to use research techniques to help explain, and if appropriate, resolve a practical issue.
• To enable participants to prepare a major project by applying concepts, techniques and models to a practical issue or problem relating to KMBC.

Source: Programme validation document, KMBC (1994)

Managers were enrolled onto the programme at the Certificate stage and would normally expect to progress through the three stages (Certificate, Diploma and MA). If however a manager was unable to complete the full programme they could withdraw and receive the last full stage as a fallback award (e.g. Certificate or Diploma).

The programme was designed to encourage cross-departmental networking, so it was originally agreed that all managers must start at the Certificate stage, and Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L) was not provided (see Section 5.4.4). Individual credit for modules could not be accrued.

1. Certificate and Diploma stage

The Certificate stage focused more on the concepts and models of management and leadership theory and was operationally focused. It was designed to provide the manager with a wide range of management knowledge and skills, and also to help the manager understand the academic requirements. The Diploma stage built on the learning from the Certificate stage and progressively helped the manager to act and think more critically and strategically.

The Certificate stage comprised 4 taught modules, plus an independent module, which required the completion of a learning diary. The Certificate and Diploma stages were structured in the same way, as shown in Table 5.4. The assessments for the taught modules included individual and group work. All projects identified for assessment were to be agreed by both KMBC and LBS, to ensure that the work met academic requirements and promoted organisational growth.

The group work required learner-managers to work in small groups with a maximum of 4 in each group. They were required to produce a joint report for the Chief Officers prior to a formal presentation where Chief Officers would have the opportunity to question the group on their topic (Section Assessment 5.4.5.).

2. MA Dissertation Stage

The final dissertation stage provided the learner-manager with the opportunity to manage a major project of his or her own choice in negotiation with line manager and dissertation supervisor. The aim of this stage was to integrate and apply the learning from the Certificate and Diploma. The learner-managers had to reflect on their learning as part of the assessed work.

The groups of learner-managers met in small action learning groups (action-learning is described in Section 3.10) with an action learning supervisor from LBS. The group's purpose was to support the learner-managers through the dissertation process.

It was agreed that the learner-managers present their topics to Chief Officers at the proposal stage, which allowed the Chief Officers to have input into the topics.

A Programme Team was set up to manage the programme, comprising the LBS programme leader, KMBC co-ordinator, the tutors, and two programme representatives from the programme.

5.4.2 The Programme Structure

The overall structure of the programme is shown in Table 5.4 (The term 'M Credits' relates to master's level credits at LBS).

Table 5.4 KMBC Programme Structure

Certificate in Management (9 M Credits)

4 taught modules

- Managing People (2)
- Changing Role of Local Government Manager (2)
- Total Quality Management (2)
- Business Planning (2)

Plus Learning Diary (part of independent study module) (1)

Diploma in Management (9 M Credits)

4 taught modules

- Financial Management (2)
- Organisational Behaviour (2)
- Improving Service Operations (2)
- Strategic Management (3)

MA in Management (12 M Credits)

Issues and Techniques in Research Design (3)
Dissertation (9)

* numbers after the title denotes credit rating.

Source: KMBC Validation document (1994)

This above table reflected the LBS, 30 M credit rating system in operation in 1994. This was changed in 1995 to a 180 credit rating system, which is more generally used in the University sector. To translate the old to the new system, each old credit should be multiplied by 6 to get the new credit rating.

5.4.3 Admissions and Entry Requirements

The programme team and Chief Officers had expressed the view that they expected the participants on the programme at the later stages to be able to coach others and act as mentors. This coaching/mentoring role was seen as requiring higher level skills, which the organisation recognised as essential for senior managers. The programme was restricted to KMBC managers who managed other people or were likely to manage others in the near future. The grades were normally middle Senior Officer (SO) grade and above. Participants could attend the programme and not take the assessed route. Additionally, they could attend individual modules without completing the whole programme. The agreement between LBS and KMBC was that the participants taking the full-time assessed route had priority on the programme, which was limited to a maximum of 20 participants per module.

This provided the participants with an element of choice. Some were concerned that the programme would be too time-consuming, others were unsure of their ability to tackle this level of academic work, and some participants did take up the option of continuing on the programme without taking the assessments.

5.4.4 Enrolment

Participants enrolled on the programme with a wide variety of professional and academic qualifications and experience. Some of them

- were professionally well qualified,
- did not meet normal University entry criteria,
- held postgraduate qualifications
- held qualifications not at the appropriate level.

This was discussed at length at the validation event when the University panel had to assure itself that participants could cope with such a programme and that the entry requirements were being used fairly, consistently, and in line with other postgraduate programmes, e.g. MBA. It was therefore agreed that where a participant did not hold an acceptable professional or academic qualification, he/she must have demonstrated experience as a manager of a service and/or group of people for a minimum of 3 years.

AP(E)L on the programme was not allowed at the start of the programme, since this was a programme designed to encourage team building and networking, and all cohorts in the earlier stages of the programmes were at the Certificate stage.

5.4.5 Assessment

Two modules from each of the Certificate and Diploma stages of the programme were individually assessed, the other two modules were assessed through group presentations.

The individual work was either set by tutors as a project, which would develop the learning on the module and/or would have benefit to the organisation, or set by participants using a proposal form which was then agreed by the module leader. As described in Section 5.3.1, benchmarking activity was seen as an important management activity, and this was an explicit outcome of the assessment.

The marking criteria for the Certificate and Diploma stages of the programme were assessed using a standard format as shown in Table 5.5.

Figure 5.1 KMBC Marking Criteria

ASSESSMENT

MARKING CRITERIA

Certificate and Diploma in Management	
• Analysis of the problem or issue	20%
• Use of concepts, theories and benchmarks	20%
• Development of a solution or conclusion	20%
• Implementation plan/action plan	40%
MA stage	
• Analysis of problem or issue	35%
• Conceptual thinking about problem or issue	35%
• Development of conclusion or solution	20%
• Ability to communicate	10%

Source: KMBC Validation document (1994)

It was agreed that participants should start the programme by keeping a learning diary and that this would act as an aide-memoir in the completion of the reflections on learning, which constituted the final piece of work at the Certificate and Diploma stages. Learning styles and some learning theory had been covered as part of the induction process in the first module (Managing People).

The group work was presented to the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Group (COG). To the author's knowledge, this was unique at that time, and it is still unusual for the top team of a large organisation (8,500 staff in 1994) to commit as much time to assessing and mentoring students. The presentations lasted for 20 minutes on average, with 10 minutes for questioning by the COG. The programme leader from LBS was always at these presentations, and was responsible for agreeing with the COG an overall mark and feedback to give to the participants. The pass mark for the programme was 40%, which was the normal University pass mark.

In every other way, the programme was within the normal UMF regulations with regard to assessments.

5.4.6 Evaluation Strategy

A number of factors influenced the evaluation strategy. At the outset of the programme, evaluation was conducted as part of the normal University procedures. Additional methods were developed over the lifetime of the programme as determined by the Research Methodology described in Section 3.12.2. The programme team recognised that evaluation was essential and that the University evaluation mechanisms, which include module questionnaires, Boards of Study, and annual reporting, was a long-term strategy where issues could be remedied the following year (or the next time the module ran). The team felt improvements were needed to provide on-going feedback, so that improvements could be made quickly and rectify any particular issues with the current cohort of participants. Therefore key dates within the programme were identified as:

- after the first module of the Certificate stage (cohort 1),
- the end of the first Certificate stage. Although evaluation took place at the end of the Diploma stage (which is similar in structure to the Certificate stage), it did not lead to any significant changes and has therefore not been included in this study,

- the end of the MA programme.

The next factor was the choice of evaluation method, and it was agreed that a range of methods would provide the most comprehensive information. The methods included questionnaires (these were in-depth, open questionnaires) at the end of the first module, after the completion of the dissertation, and a generic tick box questionnaire, completed at the end of each module of the programme. Other methods included the formal University evaluation questionnaires and meetings which produced documentation (discussed at Boards of Study, team meetings, and through the Annual Report), and interview analysis conducted at the end of the programme with key KMBC staff involved in running it.

Another factor was to ensure that information was received from all three parties involved with the programme. Views were therefore sought from KMBC staff who were responsible for running the programme, from participants on the programme, and from LBS staff who were party to the normal University meetings, etc. (e.g. Boards of Study).

The design of the evaluation questionnaires used extensively on LBS Postgraduate programmes had limited involvement of either students or employers. In this case, it was felt essential that the three partners in this programme (KMBC, LBS, and the participants) had some freedom to conduct their own evaluation of the programme. Therefore:

- the employer designed a questionnaire for module one which is provided in Tables 3.7, 3.8 in Section 3.12.1; the employer also had informal feedback from participants through normal communication channels, as well as some more formal lunchtime meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme;
- LBS had input into the evaluation;
- the participants, were involved as part of the formal University evaluation processes, and also through learning diaries where they were asked to analyse and reflect on their learning throughout the programme.

This comprehensive set of evaluation methods produced a vast amount of data, which was then split up under separate headings for recording purposes. These findings were then discussed by the programme team and led to appropriate changes for the next two case studies, which tested this emerging framework for a collaborate postgraduate programme.

5.5 Evaluation Results and Analysis

The evaluation methods led to the production of a vast amount of information and included learning diaries, reflections on learning, certificate and diploma feedback, dissertation stage and programme documentation.

1. Reflections on Learning

As part of each module in the Certificate and Diploma stages, participants were asked to complete a reflection on the learning arising from each module (using the learning diaries just described). The importance of reflecting on learning is discussed with the learner-manager and is further discussed in Section 3.12.3. There were 8 modules (section 5.4.2), which were assessed through either group or individual projects. To complete the required credits, another piece of assessed work was required, which was the completion of a learning diary (see below).

Each student's reflective summary from the end of each of the 8 modular assignments was photocopied and given a unique code as follows:

- Initials of the learner
- Programme level - e.g. Certificate
- Module number

E.g. DBC1= Named participant DB- Certificate stage - Module 1

Each diary was scrutinised and issues were then put onto post-it notes and arranged into groups of similar issues. Each group was then given an overall title. An example of this is contained in Table 3.9 in Section 3.12.3.

2. Learning Diaries

Participants were provided with a learning diary template and advised to complete the diary regularly throughout the programme. This encouraged the participants to comment on the module, on the learning arising from it, and how they could take this learning forward.

A significant number of issues arose from the learning diaries, which were broken down into a number of themed headings, as follows:

- Pre-Programme issues
- Management factors
- Group work
- Benchmarking
- Presentation to Chief Officers
- Interpersonal skills

The issues arising from the programme documentation and from the learning diary were combined and are presented in Section 5.5 (Results).

3. Certificate and Diploma Feedback

At the end of each stage of the Certificate and Diploma, the participant was asked to reflect on the programme as a whole using the learning diary, and additionally to comment on the personal learning taking place as a result of the programme.

Participants were encouraged to complete this in their own way, and were allowed to write in a personal (as opposed to a more formal business) style, which most participants found helpful. They were asked to be as honest and open as they felt comfortable with, and apart from approximate word lengths they were not given any further instructions. The programme team thought that by allowing the participants the freedom to reflect on their learning, without too much steering and structure from LBS, that this would encourage a wide range of learning outcomes from the evaluation of these two stages. Additionally, it gave the participants choice and freedom to comment on whatever they felt was important in terms of their own learning.

Some students did tend to repeat the issues discussed at the end of each module, but others commented on new learning issues. Where additional information was provided, the process was repeated again, i.e. to copy the learning diaries (using computer-scanning equipment) and then to add these to the list generated from the learning diaries described above. The code used for this process was the initial of the student and LD (Learning Diary) e.g. DBLD= Named participant DB - Learning Diary.

The main headings emerging from the research to date are Pre-Programme issues, Management factors (Personal, Team,), Personal (Interpersonal, System, Confidence, Leadership, Team membership), Group work (plus the presentation to Chief Officers), and Organisational issues.

4. Dissertation Stage

At the final dissertation stage, the participants were asked as part of the dissertation to comment on the learning arising from the programme. Since the participants had experience of completing reflections on learning throughout the programme, they presented quite a wide range of ideas and issues. The programme team recognised that one aspect emerging at the dissertation stage was that there was no specific mark awarded for reflections on learning. At the Certificate and Diploma stages this had been a separately marked assignment. At this stage, reflections on learning were marked under the category of communication on the mark sheet.

Although there was commonality between the views expressed within the dissertations, and the Certificate and Diploma learning diaries, the information generated at the dissertation stage was more in-depth, with one new learning area which was benchmarking.

5. Programme Documentation

A number of mechanisms were employed to produce information about the programme; only the reports that led to significant changes have been used in this study. It was necessary to identify a unique code for referencing purposes and these have been provided in brackets. The information is as follows:

- Annual report information October 1995 (KS1 and 2)
- Boards of Study for programme 1996
- Student representative produced written notes (coded as KE1-Knowsley Evaluation item 1)
- Module assessment Board Minutes September 1996 (KS3)
- Leisure Services programme annual report October 1996 (KS4)
- Board of Study notes 1998 (coded as KL1-Knowsley Learning issues 1)
- Knowsley MBC meeting minutes September 1998(KS5)
- Board of Study minutes December 1998

All of the above information was put on post-it notes and moved into groups under the following headings:

- Pre-Programme
- Management issues
- Programme structure
- Assessment
- Group work

5.5.1 KMBC Senior Management Views

The information arising from the evaluation of the programme and through the normal University mechanisms provides feedback from the perspectives of the participants on the programme and from representatives of the University (including a small amount from the employer). The information generated looks at the output of the module and programme but not the outcomes. Feedback is an integral part of the operational aspects of the programme. This does not however, allow for evidence of learning taking place after the programme has ended.

In order to address both of these issues, semi-structured interviews with the employers took place as part of this research project in 1999. This was a year after the completion of the programme, allowing time for reflection, and addressed the issues identified in the Research Methodology Chapter under interview itinerary (Section 3.12.5); Interview structure and content (Section 3.12.6) and how this was coded (Section 3.12.7).

The key people to test the success of the programme included the original planning team, the Chief Executive and members of the Chief Officer Group. Changes however had occurred in the interim; the Chief Executive had left the Authority to take up a post as Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council, so the Acting Chief Executive was interviewed. He had deputised for the Chief Executive at the presentations, and had in his own right (as Director of Finance) first-hand knowledge of the programme. The original Training Co-ordinator had left the Authority, so the present Training Co-ordinator was interviewed. She had knowledge of the programme, having worked in this role for the last 2 years. Additionally, the Director of Leisure was interviewed. This represented a sample size of over 30% of the original Senior Officer team.

The list of Officers interviewed is as follows:

- Acting Chief Executive
- Director of Leisure
- Director of Planning
- Programme Co-ordinator

The interview schedule is contained in Table 3.12.6 in Section 3.12.6. The themes from previous content analysis of the research have been used as the basis for the initial organisation of the data and are now presented as key themes.

5.6 Pilot Programme Evaluation Results

This section presents the results and findings arising from the evaluation of the pilot programme. It also contains information from the analysis of interviews with the KMBC Senior Management Team. The question areas stated in Table 3.11, Section 3.12.6 have been identified (in italics) and linked to the results described under the following four sections:

- Programme Structure
- Programme Benefits - *In answer to Questions 1 – 4 what are the:*
  - *success factors?*
  - *differences the programme has made?*
  - *main strengths of the programme?*
  - *success of group and individual assessment?*
- Areas for development - *In answer to Question 5*
  - *what are the main weaknesses of the programme?*
- Stakeholder impact - *In answer to Question 6*
  - *what impact have people had on the participants on the programme?*

Each section considers issues that are focused on:

- Participants
- Organisation
- University

5.6.1 Programme Structure

This section discusses the results and findings arising from the evaluation of the programme from the perspectives of the participant, the University and the organisation.

5.6.1.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants was collected and coded under the following headings.

1. Prior Knowledge

   Both the participants and the senior managers stressed the need for increased knowledge of management theory, which led to the suggestion that participants should be provided with pre-programme reading. After discussion with the programme team, it was subsequently agreed that an open meeting with participants prior to the programme would help deal with a number of problems, including the above, where they could be given prior reading.

2. Pre-programme Concerns

   Some participants were concerned about the academic requirements of the programme and others were concerned that their performance at the presentation stage in front of Chief Officers may have an impact on their future (DF1, LH2).

3. Participants' Motivations for taking Programme

   The strongest motivating factor for both the senior managers and the participants was the qualification itself. This was followed by wanting to be a more effective manager, increasing their communication skills, enhancing their personal profile, and lastly, that the programme was funded by the employer. Table 5.6 show the actual results in percentages.

Table 5.5 Participants' Motivation for taking Programme

Motivating factors for taking programme from participant's perspective.	% of participants views
1. Improved knowledge of management theory	**100**
2. Improved management skills	**86**
3. Gaining postgraduate qualification	**72**
4. Be a better and more effective manager	**58**
5. Improve networking skills	**43**
6. Better promotion prospects	**29**
7. Funded by employer	**28**

As described above, the highest motivators were related to improving managerial knowledge and skill. Examples from two participants express the sort of views discussed by a number of other participants, as follows:

I wanted to be a more effective manager and the programme has transformed my approach - I also felt the course would be instrumental in helping me achieve my career aims.

(Certificate participant)

I wanted to gain further management experience and expertise and further insight into the higher management processes.

(Diploma participant)

Participants acknowledged that the qualification was very important for career prospects:

I wanted to gain a master's qualification.

(Certificate participant)

I thought it would help my future career at KMBC and career prospects generally.

(Diploma participant)

There was less evidence that participants saw the qualification as a way of gaining promotion. This may have been due to the massive restructuring which had taken place in the organisation, so staff felt promotion was difficult to achieve in the present climate. In the feedback, there was no evidence to suggest that staff saw this qualification as a "passport out of the authority" (Section 2.3). This is a view often expressed by senior managers of organisations who feel that additional higher level qualifications may lead to loss of staff.

Managers and staff responsible for the programme agreed that it should be career enhancing. The fact that so many staff completed the programme to MA standard showed commitment and that the programme met the participants needs. (DF5,LH6). The lowest motivator was related to the financial benefits, whereby the employer funded the programme.

5.6.1.2 Organisational Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation relating to the organisation was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Managerial Requirements from Programme

   The interviews with senior managers showed that they wanted managers who could manage change, and they need real understanding of how managers can operate in the environment; they expected improvements in the way managers think, including the ability to act critically.

2. Setting Performance Indicators

   KMBC and LBS did not set up performance measures for this programme, the Training Co-ordinator stated that they acted with a "*sort of faith*", and believed that the programme would achieve positive outcomes (LH1). She said that individual Directors had their own views of what was required, and had frequently discussed their views informally with her, but this was not collectively sought or formalised.

5.6.1.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation relating to the University was collected and coded under the following headings. This was as a result of the discussion in Sections 3.6.1.1 on a grounded approach and 3.12.7 on coding information.

1. Qualification

   The importance of the qualification was endorsed by all 3 senior staff who were interviewed, and who commented on this being an excellent opportunity for participants, some of whom had no previous management qualifications (JB2).

2. Progression Issues

   Participants who had progressed to the Diploma stage of the programme stated that their incentive was to continue the process, since they had enjoyed and learnt a lot in the first year (DP1).

   Final year participants who had completed the dissertation, stated that the long-term nature of the programme (3 years in total, with stages at the end of Certificate and Diploma) had been a motivating factor. Once they had started at the Certificate stage they felt compelled to go on and complete the whole programme. Examples of comments include:

   I owed it to myself and to KMBC to see the programme through.

   A lot of time and effort went into the first 2 years - it seemed a waste not to continue.

   (MA participants MP1)

The final year students found the programme interesting and stimulating and were motivated to complete. The comment most frequently heard in the later action learning sets was "the end is in sight".

5.6.1.4 Structure Summary

From the two perspectives discussed above (that of the Directors/Senior managers involved with setting up the programme and that of the participants in the programme), the following represent the key themes to be taken forward to the final section summary:

1. Participant

- motivating factors for participants who take the programme (stated in Table 5.6)
- increased knowledge of management theory

2. Organisational

- what KMBC senior managers want from participants on the programme
- improve managerial skills (decision making, able to act and think critically)
- encourage managers to network better
- ability to manage change
- more awareness of organisation strategy
- need for organisation to evaluate more effectively through setting performance indicators.

3. University Issues

- the qualification (for career prospects) - this includes the opportunity to progress from stage to stage.
- Progression through stages provides incentive to continue.

5.6.2 Programme Benefits

The information from the evaluation of the programme provided a range of information on the benefits of the programme. These have been presented from the perspectives of the participant, the organisation and the University.

5.6.2.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants was collected and coded under the following headings.

1. Personal objectives met

Participants at each stage of the programme were asked to comment on the extent that the programme had met their own personal objectives for attending. 75% of the participants stated that they had been met and that they had also been able to improve their skills.

2. Group Work and Presentations

The group assessment was presented to the Chief Officer Group, each group comprised of no more than four participants, a group report was provided and presentation lasted approximately 20 minutes (Section 5.4.1.1). The group work has had a major impact upon the participants and the organisation, and the majority of the feedback has been positive. Issues relating to the participants are discussed in this section, issues relating to the organisation are contained in Section 5.6.2.2.5, with the negative comments found in Section 5.6.3.2.

The aspects of the programme they felt most useful were the group followed by the presentations to COG and the lectures.

The participants viewed the group work with an enormous sense of achievement. It was stated by one participant that the relationships made at this stage could be with her for the rest of her life.

> *I think that this* (group work*) was probably the part of the programme that had most impact on the individuals, certainly that is my impression until they got to the dissertation stage anyway.*
>
> *The enormous sense of achievement people got from it individually, and again it wouldn't have mattered that much what they actually did. It was more the mechanics of it, working as a team over whom they had no power - just getting on and doing it and being there on the day and delivering and still being alive at the end of it. The enormous sense of pride and excitement that stays with people forever.*
>
> (KMBC Training Co-ordinator)

These comments were made by the Co-ordinator who organised the presentations and was with the groups through both the planning stage and on the day leading up to and after the presentations. She was in an excellent position to comment on this, having been in a support role for the participants, as opposed to having a direct impact on the event and the marking/feedback issues.

Regarding cross-departmental communications, the Certificate students commented that the organisational benefits from the programme included greater cross-department interaction (56%). Diploma participants confirmed the importance of networking.

3. Improved Management Skills

Participants stated that the organisation now had more professional managers (42%), and that the organisation had a better management skills and knowledge base. The participants felt more motivated as managers as a result of the programme.

It was suggested that managers' skills had improved both within the Authority and when dealing with external organisations. They felt that they were better business managers.

> *I was taught to challenge theorists' views and not just take them at face value.*
> *I ended up with an understanding of the political and economic environment.*
>
> (Certificate participant LDJM1)

> *I am more aware of major managerial changes and how they have affected me and the Council.*
> *I understand now what the moves to flexibility and changes in working practices have been about.*
>
> (Diploma participant LDJM2)

These comments endorse the success of the programme in relation to the planning team's original desire to get managers to think more critically, to widen their perspectives, and to consider strategies to manage change.

43% of the Certificate participants felt they had improved their management skills after attending this programme. They stated they felt more able to think strategically. The same percentage felt they had gained more experience and insight into the organisation. The next highest category (28%) stated the programme had given them a framework for academic learning, had given them more confidence, and had improved their time management skills. Finally, comments included better networking and increased knowledge of management theory.

The results at Diploma and Master's stages were also were very similar to those of the Certificate group. Additional comments included confirmation that what the manager had been doing was good practice (DP3).

Master's stage participants stressed the insights into higher management and leadership skills, and hoped to use the models of change management. More emphasis was placed on the acquisition of the qualification for career development purposes. (MP3)

4. Career Enhancing

The results at Diploma and Master's stages were also were very similar to those of the Certificate group. Additional issues included,

- raised personal profile,
- covered new topics relevant to future jobs.

Two participants were seconded to the Chief Executives Department as a result of their performance on the programme. At least four staff left the Authority for better jobs, and cited the programme and the qualification as a significant contributory factor.

5. Personal/Interpersonal Skills/Confidence

A variety of responses describe the personal and the interpersonal benefits of the programme. The following extracts from the taped and coded conversations represent the views from the perspective of a Chief Officer, the Training Co-ordinator and one of the participants on the Diploma programme.

> *I had a conversation yesterday with someone off the programme who is now regarded as a person with potential, somebody who is still developing and that's something to be said in relation to the success factors arising from the course.*
>
> (Chief Officer DF)

> *It has helped people grow and mature, and gives them confidence...to take responsibility....it has made them think.*
>
> (Training Co-ordinator)

> *I never would have believed that I could have argued with my Director and lived to tell the tale! I got away with it because I had the confidence that I had researched my topic and was right in my facts.*
>
> (Participant Diploma)

Responses from the evaluation stages of the programme (questionnaires to the Certificate, Diploma and Master's groups) suggested that this programme had provided participants with more confidence. They stated that this was brought about through better knowledge of management theory and practice, which had endorsed that what the participants had learnt through trial and error had actually led in some cases to good practice, and through involvement with senior managers they felt their contribution was being recognised. A number of comments from participants stated the importance of being critical and not accepting theory at face value.

The programme provided students with more confidence by allowing open and honest debate with a range of other staff, including very senior staff. One member of the group had received a commendation from her Department management group on the quality of her work as a result of learning on the programme (DB1).

5.6.2.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation, was collected and coded under the following headings.

1. Application Process

The application process was applied very differently across the Authority. In some Departments, this was as a result of appraisal (Leisure, Planning, Housing); in others, it was the responsibility of the Departmental Training Officer to nominate staff. The acting Chief Executive felt there was a "fairly open invitation to people to join" (DF1).

At the evaluation of each stage of the programme (Certificate, Diploma and final year MA), participants were asked whose decision it was to undertake the programme, 80% of the participants said it was a joint decision, i.e. themselves, supported by their line manager. In all cases, the individual manager was party to the decision; however in one case the participant had felt pressured to go on it by their colleagues. (MDP2, DP2, MP2).

2. Improved Human Resource Planning

Participants stated that they thought that the qualification helped attract managers to KMBC, and would improve the image of the organisation. Through the programme the Authority had identified high fliers and had increased its management capacity within the organisation.

In two cases, participants had received secondments to take forward some of the issues arising from their research, and therefore felt their work had been recognised (MP4).

3. Retention of Staff

Participants commented that once they commenced on the programme they felt motivated to continue. Since the programme was 3 years in length, participants stated that they were more likely to stay in KMBC.

4. Investors in People Award

The programme had successfully attracted IiP funds and the Authority gained IiP status. This programme was perceived to have been a factor in gaining the award.

5. Group Projects

Group work has had a major impact upon the participants and the organisation, and the majority of the feedback has been positive. Issues relating more to the organisation are discussed in this section, issues relating to the participants are contained in Section 5.6.2.1.1, with the negative comments found in Section 5.6.3.2.

The group topics were initially chosen by KMBS. The Co-ordinator had asked the COG to develop them, but they did not respond, so she therefore spoke to the Chief Executive and together a set of potential projects were established. These were then sent to the COG, who amended and approved them, and subsequently they were offered to the participants. Normally, they were given a choice of eight topics for four or five groups. Groups were encouraged to choose different topics, but on occasion, if the participants and the Co-ordinator thought it practicable, two groups worked on the same topic. At the launch of each new programme, the topics were sent to the COG for reappraisal (LH13, DF13).

The group composition was determined by the Training Co-ordinator at KMBC. She had only one main purpose: to ensure that the groups had as wide a mix of staff as possible drawn from diverse Departments. Where this was not feasible, she ensured that staff from the same background or section were not in the same group. The groups were capped at four people, but more often participants were in groups of three to ensure that there was an opportunity for all to present work.

In some cases, e.g. Business Planning, this had been adopted for implementation in the Planning Department. The networking factor was key and recognised by all parties. Some changes were made as a result of the presentations.

The participants recognised the contribution of their fellow group members, and through the use of the group work where team membership was encouraged, this was stated as a way of increasing their contacts with other departments and recognising the experiences of other staff and departments.

Participants stated that at a local level 60% of the issues suggested in the recommendations of their projects had been taken forward within departments, and in this area participants had felt progress had been made.

In three cases, the work had led to personal projects based on the dissertations being successfully implemented, and subsequently led to promotion to e.g. Head of Service posts.

The Chief Officers were able to see the impact of the programme on the participants.

> *I think the way the groups worked was good, I do think that they were more clear, certain and more together and able to go back to work with more confidence.*
>
> *This sort of programme, where the events we were discussing at COG were immediate and we were asking them about best practice, I think that was a big plus point. Generally something that came through in these presentations was that we had been helping them beforehand.*
>
> (Chief Officer DF)

Comments from all three years endorsed the significance of group work as a key factor in improving interdepartmental relationships (networking), leading to increased confidence. The students were more likely to discuss matters with senior managers as a result of the group work.

6. Champions

The Certificate and Diploma participants confirmed the importance of the KMBC staff who presented examples of good practice at the taught modules and who were later referred to as 'champions'. These staff often acted as mentors, and their contribution in grounding the theory was stated by participants as very beneficial.

7. Benchmarking/Comparative Analysis

At the consultation stage, benchmarking and comparative analysis were suggested as an integral part of the programme. Chief Officers were aware of the advantages of this activity, and all Chief Officers had said that they had all undertaken benchmarking activities in the past. They themselves recognised its importance, but felt that more junior managers within KMBC did not value the importance of benchmarking (Sections 5.2.1 and 5.3).

The tutors on the first programme stated that participants expressed surprise at being asked to benchmark against other organisations. They appeared to be more willing to consider other Local Authorities, but the idea of broadening this to the rest of the public sector and to private industry was a new concept to most participants. The tutors expressed the view that participants appeared more willing to benchmark against other public bodies rather than the private sector. They therefore encouraged them to be more diverse in both benchmarking and comparative analysis activities.

At the end of the programme, participants commented in their learning diaries and in their reflections on learning that this was in fact a very worthwhile learning experience. They tended to benchmark against world class organisations through textbooks and journal articles. Participants stated that they got more out of benchmarking and comparative analysis, by conducting the activities directly with an organisation. They gained access to organisations through personal contacts, through other students at the University, and in some cases through letters to Personnel departments. It was noted that these organisations were not necessarily world class; however, the participants still found this comparative analysis worthwhile. Participants stated that in some cases it provided a number of innovative ideas and enlightened the participants at KMBC, which was one of the original aims of the programme. In other ways, the information they received acted more as a warning of what NOT to do. Participants saw benchmarking as a life skill, and it was interesting to note that this subject was discussed favourably by participants throughout the programme.

5.6.2.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University, were collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Tutors

The participants commented on the industrial experience of tutors and found this helped them to understand the issues being discussed by giving them practical examples from the tutor's own experiences.

2. Key Modules

The Research Design module was felt to be particularly beneficial (DP5), and the dissertation stage was perceived by some participants to be the best part of the programme. They stated this work had allowed them to demonstrate a range of knowledge in an applied way.

3. Management Factors Curriculum Issues

The participants stated in the learning diaries that outcomes from the programme included:

- the ability of participants to react to change
- recognition that key managerial features included pragmatism, flexibility and fairness
- the ability to take decisions and the importance of quality systems management was also emphasised.

The participants also stated in the diaries the value of all the modules, but specifically Total Quality Management (TQM) and Business Planning. Whilst the value of both was endorsed, some changes were made following the fact that the quality system in place at KMBC (ISO 9000) was used by participants but not liked by junior managers who found the system bureaucratic. This led to a wider review of quality systems and practices in the quality module and this comment was fed back to staff at KMBC who took this issue further with the Quality Enhancement Group KMBC.

The remaining comments all concentrated on the Business Planning module which was seen as challenging. Comments ranged from its importance to needing ownership of it, and most regarded it as not an exact science. This had impact upon the design features for the next module. In one Department, the Business Planning process was used as a model for future Business Plans in the Planning Department.

5.6.3 Programme Areas for Development

The information from the evaluation of the programme provided a range of information on the programme areas for development. This included information on the perceived negative issues relating to the programme. These have been presented from the perspectives of the participant, the organisation and the University.

5.6.3.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants viewpoint was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Group Work

Three participants on the Certificate programme commented that the group work was the least useful. They stated it to be time-consuming, demanding, of limited value, and there should have been only one piece of group assessment at the Certificate and Diploma stages.

This was in contradiction to the feedback that emerged elsewhere, which confirmed that the group work was a very positive learning experience. On investigation, the comments were from three people in the same group who had particular problems with one member of the group who would not contribute, and this person left the programme shortly afterwards. There were no further complaints from the remaining group members who appeared to find subsequent group work beneficial. This led to the KMBC Co-ordinator getting more involved in the group processes.

5.6.3.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation, was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Job Enhancement

60% of the participants confirmed that there was an expectation that the programme would lead to job enhancement, which they felt it did not.

2. Prior Information

The KMBC Training Co-ordinator stated that several participants had told her that they needed more information and time at the beginning of the programme, e.g.

> *At the end of the programme it all came together and I realised how it all fitted together.*
>
> (Certificate Participant)

Whilst recognising this issue, she also felt there was a difficult balance between providing helpful information and overloading people.

3. More/better use of Participants within the Organisation

The KMBC Training Co-ordinator commented:

> *We could have done more to use the people that were going on the programme,.....but I imagine that is the lament of every management developer in every organisation under the sun.*

When asked to expand on this statement, she referred to the fact that KMBC did not have any planned strategy for career development. She stated that managers on the programme had got involved through secondments, mentoring schemes, job swaps, cross-departmental focus groups headed by past participants, but these were limited and ad hoc. Her view was that far more could and should have been done with the trained managers.

4. Implementing Recommendations from Dissertations

Participants stated that the majority of the recommendations in their dissertations had not been taken forward. They had not expected 100% implementation, but they had at least expected communication about their dissertations from the Chief Officers following the group presentations.

5. Human Resource Planning

Certificate and Diploma participants stated that :

- KMBC were not capitalising on this group of participants, and
- KMBC should do more to keep them

There was also some cynicism from the group who thought KMBC should gain from this group of effective managers, but they asked the question "Would they?". Other comments included the fact that the programme provided *"Kudos for the Authority"*, and that it *"acts as a motivator that breeds commitment"*.

6. Group Work

The participants stated that not many of the reports presented were taken forward by the COG. They tended to look at them as interesting presentations, rather than as opportunities to implement change. Senior staff did state that for these to be successfully implemented, better business cases would have to be made, and that individuals within the groups should have been taking these forward within their departments.

Some of the Chief Officers were more involved and knowledgeable about the process than others. Some were disappointed with the outcomes of presentations when participants had poorly presented work. Participants stated they had to be careful about the content of their work, which could be interpreted by some CO's as being critical of them (LH and DF14, 16,17).

7. Benchmarking/Comparative Analysis

There were some comments within the manager's reflections about the difficulties in conducting this activity. The main problem was accessing the right people within the organisation. In some cases using the extended network within KMBC and LBS helped track the right person down. Another problem was that participants often left this activity until they started the data capture stage. They stated that these relationships tended to take a long time to establish and they regretted not making contact earlier in the process.

5.6.3.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University, was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Tutor Preparation

According to the KMBC Training Co-ordinator, tutors had not always been prepared:

> *Tutors should have a better idea of the context, what they were delivering and how this linked to work on previous modules.....so greater linking between modules was important.*

This comment was made when the Co-ordinator was interviewed some time after the programme had concluded. When probed the main issue related to the lack of integration between the modules and the tutors tended to be knowledgeable about their own subject area but were not knowledgeable or particularly interested when questioned about the content and context of other modules or parts of the programme.

2. Impact on Participants' Job Role

The KMBC Co-ordinator thought that too much emphasis was placed on quality issues by the Chief office Group, and not enough on the impact on people (LH3). The outcome of this was the inability of senior managers to identify the improvements in participants on the programme (DF3). It was however agreed that implicitly participants had improved their intellectual capacity, although in some cases their behaviour was not thought to have improved. (JB4). The inference here is that the participants were learning and developing their intellectual management skills, but in some cases this had not led to a perceived improvement in their job role.

3. Action Research

One of the research questions (Section 1.3) is that the programme acts as a catalyst for change. Ways in which this can be affected include the need for participants to recognise change management practices and be able to lead changes in the future. The programme was designed using action research principles to design the programme (Section 1.3). By completing real live projects of benefit to the organisation this was felt a way of encouraging participants to lead change. This was happening but from the comments above the participants thought that some of the more major changes (such as those presented by the groups to COG) were not acted upon and this was limiting the change processes and the value of action research.

4. Assessment

Participants on the programme were asked to comment on the assessment methods used in the programme. At the Certificate stage, comments were made that not enough feedback was provided on assignments, and delays had occurred in handing back work. This was a localised problem. The assessment appeared generally useful and comments on development included needing more help with academic requirements. Use of the mark sheets was commented on by participants as helpful, fair and consistent.

Individual assessment received little feedback other than the comments already discussed, where understanding the academic requirements was difficult in the early stages of the programme.

5.6.4 Stakeholder Involvement

The senior staff responsible for the programme were asked at interview to comment on which stakeholders were associated with the programme and their impact on it. These issues will be discussed under the same three main headings as previously: participant, organisation and University focused.

5.6.4.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants' viewpoint was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Participants

When asked how participants rated their contribution to the learning process, the Certificate stage participants commented that they had worked reasonably hard on the programme. They also recognised the importance of getting out what you put in (MDP8). Participants stated that they could help others by providing insights into their departments and job roles.

Group work was again commented on; this was where some participants felt their biggest contribution had been made.

2. Participants' Family

The family was seen as a key stakeholder - it needed to be supportive and allow the participant to complete some of the work at home, which often had quite an impact upon family and social life. (LH9). A significant number of final year dissertation participants acknowledged the contribution of the family in terms of supporting them through the process.

3. Other Group Members

Other group members (i.e. those participants on the programme who were in the groups presenting work to Chief Officers) were seen as having impact upon the participants. The feedback included how much they influenced one another; this could be both negative and positive. Comments passed on from group members to the Co-ordinator included:

> *We've got responsibility without power. You have to be big enough to do group work...we don't have any power over the individuals to make them contribute.*
>
> (Diploma participant-KMBC)

Some groups breeze through the group work....others find it really hairy.

(KMBC Co-ordinator)

The KMBC Co-ordinator had the most problems with the programme with regard to group work and relationships between members. Mostly this was to do with group members who would not contribute, and her role was to work with the groups to try to ensure an equitable conclusion to the group work.

5.6.4.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation, was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Mentors and Champions

Senior staff from KMBC attended taught modules and described their own experiences relating to the specific module. They were given approximately one hour, which included a presentation and a question and answer session. The staff were normally senior managers with special expertise in the area. They additionally acted as mentors for the participants in between the modules. They were latterly referred to as 'champions' and were very highly rated, some were seen to be inspirational. There were 28 comments, from a possible 29 participants, which were positive (ranging from inspirational to fair) with only one negative comment which was that the speaker "went on far too long".

2. Co-ordinator at KMBC

The feedback from the analysis of interviews with the Directors and staff at KMBC stated the importance of the role of the Co-ordinator at KMBC who managed the process and the programme. KMBC staff acted as a 'buffer' between the participants and the University. This relationship was mostly positive, but it was recognised that at times KMBC staff were unsure of University requirements, and communication problems had occurred as a result. The Co-ordinator stated that her role had made the programme "cosy" for participants (LH7 and 8).

When asked to comment on the effectiveness of the KMBC administration and management of the programme, the Certificate participants expressed mixed feelings. Most issues were to do with waiting too long for marks, caused by delays in getting the work back to the students. This was investigated and appeared to be more a localised problem with one module over the Christmas period when administrators kept the work until after the Christmas holiday.

Once the KMBC Co-ordinator/LBS Programme Manager had set up a system, this problem reduced. The majority of comments suggested the administrators and particularly management staff were supportive and helpful in communicating issues to participants (MDP12).

3. Line Managers

The line manager was a key person, who could at times be a key motivator but could also be a de-motivator. There had been mixed responses by line managers, from those who were very supportive and wanted to see copies of all work and outcomes of the programme, to line managers who simply noticed that the participant was missing for the day (LH10). This had an impact upon participants - witnessed explicitly, by the support (or lack of it) for allowing participants time off and support when conducting the research, and implicitly, through a complete lack of interest in the work being undertaken.

4. Senior Managers at KMBC

"Chief Officers had a major impact - without them there would be no programme" said the KMBC Co-ordinator.

All Chief Officers had contact with programme members through the presentations, the dissertations, and in mentoring (LH12). They had sponsored the programme and given their own time and resources. There was quite a variation in the degree of help given, with three Chief Officers extending a virtual open door policy to participants. The main negative issues have already been discussed, which were regarding the work presented to them in groups and the lack of communication and implementation of the recommendations.

5.6.4.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University, was collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Tutors

Comments from senior managers at KMBC emphasised the importance of tutors; a lot depended on the quality of these, most of whom were rated as very good (as evidenced in the module evaluation questionnaires). A small number of tutors appeared unprepared, and participants soon complained if the standard was not sufficiently high. The tutors all received feedback on the evaluation, along with any comments, and the programme team jointly discussed ways of overcoming any specific problems.

Feedback from Certificate participants about tutors was mixed. This was the first stage of the programme, and they found some tutors very approachable and interesting whilst others ranged from fair to disorganised.

This was the first programme LBS had conducted for an outside organisation, where the majority of the teaching was conducted by LBS. The programme team recognised that the standard of some of the tutors' work was not acceptable. The fact that the organisation had expected a quality product meant that their standards were high and they demanded good quality teaching. This affected the tutors in a variety of ways. Where tutors were prepared to change, this impacted upon their standards across a range of other teaching areas, improving core business (undergraduate teaching on open programmes). Where tutors were not prepared to change after being given the opportunity to shadow other staff, they were not invited to work on subsequent programmes. This only happened in the case of one member of staff throughout the lifetime of the programme. LBS was therefore gaining improvements in teaching quality through this interaction with KMBC.

Diploma and Master's participants were more positive about the quality of the tutors, with the majority of comments ranging from excellent to good. This also suggests that the tutors had improved the quality of work over the course of the first year and that the participants were also more used to academic work and standards.

The dissertation supervisor received excellent feedback from all but one manager who felt the supervisor useful but not personal enough. This student appeared unhappy with other aspects of the programme, including the fact that there was little support from both KMBC and LBS.

2. Programme Administration at LBS

When asked to comment on the effectiveness of the administration and management of the programme, the Certificate participants expressed mixed feelings. Administration appeared to be problematic. This led to communication problems between the two organisations and was improved by setting up formalised systems but there was a consistent issue with administrative support at LBS, which at times was limited, constantly changing and led to a number of delays.

3. Programme Management at LBS

The feedback from the interviews with the Directors and staff at KMBC stated the importance of the role of the staff from LBS who managed the programme. The view expressed at KMBC was that the management of the programme was excellent but she was not backed up by an effective administrative support system. LBS appeared more willing to provide high level academic staff but gave little or no thought to providing administrative support. In one year the KMBC Co-ordinator dealt with five different LBS administrators.

5.7 Conclusions

This is a complex chapter to summarise, but it will be presented in terms of

- the benefits to the three parties
- the extent to which the original expectations have been met
- the success factors to be taken forward to the next programme
- what motivated participants to attend the programme
- who the key stakeholders were

These conclusions will be taken forward in two ways, the first will be implications for the next case study for Anglesey County Council where these results will be discussed as the framework for the next programme. Secondly the results will be discussed along with the results from the other two case studies in the final chapter of the dissertation (Chapter 8) entitled the Discussion and Implications of Research.

1. Benefits to the three parties

The original perceived benefits to the two parties involved in the original planning team have been met. The benefits to the participants have now been made explicit. The table below describes the benefits to the Participants, KMBC and LBS who are the three main stakeholders. The results have been presented in priority order, which has been determined by the number of responses attributed to each category.

Table 5.6 Benefits to Participants, KMBC and LBS

Priority order	Participants	KMBC	LBS
1.	Gained MA qualification	Better managers and leaders	Improved quality of teaching materials
2.	Increased personal profile and career prospects	Better evaluation techniques	Updated tutors
3.	Increased knowledge of management theory	Managers willing and able to manage change	Source of case study material and led to research outputs
4.	Improved management and leadership skills	Tied staff into the authority for 3 years during time of change	Success at Subject Review
5.	Ability to think critically/take decisions	Improved cross-departmental communications	Financial inputs over a regular and planned period
6.	Ability to manage change	IiP success	Experience of running a collaborative programme
7.	Increased confidence	Improvements in project management capability	Developed staff
8.	Improved presentation techniques	Source of potential managers	
9.	Increased knowledge of other organisations/benchmarking and networking	Improved teamwork	

2. Success factors for next programme

Overall, this programme has been a resounding success. The framework is to be taken forward and used with two further programmes, one another Local Authority, the other a large private sector organisation - Littlewoods Leisure.

- The success factors to be taken forward from this research include:
- the importance of the consultation phase which establishes the driving principles for the programme
- a planning team should be set up with representatives from both organisations.
- the importance of a pilot programme (where possible)
- at the pre-programme stage, hold open meetings where knowledge and activities are undertaken to help resolve participants' potential problems and allay fears of undertaking an academic programme
- at the programme stage, the major success factors have included
    - involvement of top senior managers,
    - presentations which were very successful, but topics need careful supervision, and
    - monitoring within the organisation to disseminate information on the recommendations
- the 'champions' ground the learning and provide excellent examples of best practice
- the group work is an excellent way of team building
- the programme was successfully based on action research principles, the success was diluted by some of the changes not being implemented within the organisation
- action learning groups worked well for dissertation groups
- the learning diaries were a very effective way of getting participants to reflect on their learning
- the organisation needs to set up performance indicators for the programme.
- the stakeholders should be identified, and information and contact made with them relating to the programme.
- the motivating factors for staff attending the programmes should be established as early as possible.

3. Factors motivating participation in the programme

The motivating factors for managers clearly show that improved knowledge of management theory was the most significant reason for participating in this programme. As can be seen from Table 5.6 in Section 5.6.1.1 this represented 100% of the participants' views. The next two significant results showed that managers wanted to improve their skills (86%) and to gain a postgraduate qualification (72%). 58% of the group surveyed, wanted to become a better, and more effective manager, whilst 43% wished to improve their networking skills. 29% of the participants stated that they would like better promotion prospects, with 28% stating that the funds provided by the employer was a major motivating factor.

4. Key stakeholders

For the purposes of this dissertation, the key stakeholders are described as the manager, the University and the organisation. Further groups who have impacted on the key stakeholders include tutors, mentors and champions, KMBC training co-ordinator, programme leader, programme administrators, participants' family, line managers, other group members, KMBC senior managers and participants.

5. Key Themes emerging from the programme evaluation

The themes that emerged from evaluating the programme with participants and the programme management team were:

- pre-programme issues,
- programme structure,
- management factors (including curriculum, personal and team),
- personal issues (including interpersonal, confidence, systems, team membership),
- assessment,
- structure of MA dissertation - no explicit marking criteria for reflections on learning
- group issues, including presentations to the Chief Officers' Group,
- organisational issues, and
- benchmarking

TABLE 5.7 PILOT PROGRAMME (KMBC) RESULTS OVERALL PLAN

CONSULTATION STAGE	PROGRAMME PLUS POINTS	PROGRAMME AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	STAKEHOLDERS INVESTMENT
1) PARTICIPANT • Prior knowledge • Pre-programme information • Participant motivation	**1) PARTICIPANT** • Personal objectives met • Group work & presentations • Improved managerial skills • Career enhancing • Personal/Interpersonal & increased confidence	**1) PARTICIPANT** • Group work	**1) PARTICIPANT** • Participant • Participant's family • Other group mentors
2) ORGANISATION • Managerial requirements of programme • Setting performance indicators	**2) ORGANISATION** • Application process • HR planning • Retention of staff • Gained IiP • Group projects • Champions • Benchmarking	**2) ORGANISATION** • Job enhancement • Prior information • Implementing recommendations • More/better use of participants • HR planning • Group work • Benchmarking/Comparative analysis	**2) ORGANISATION** • Champion • Co-ordinators • Line Managers • Senior managers (KMBC)
3) UNIVERSITY • Qualifications • Progression	**3) UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Key modules • Management factors - curriculum	**3) UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Impact on participants job role • Action research • Assessment Issues	**3) UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Programme management (LBS)

CHAPTER SIX: ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL (ACC)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the background information relating to the acquisition of the ACC contract and the main differences between the KMBC and ACC programme requirements. This is followed by information on

- Best Value within the Local Authority sector which is the focus of the programme as well as details regarding ACC.
- Consultation and development of initiatives
- Design process including the driving principles of the programme and the key outcomes for the Consultation and Design stage which is presented under a number of key headings
- Qualification section is further divided into the Aims and objectives, programme structure, admissions, entry, enrolment and assessment issues
- Evaluation strategy and results are presented under three main categories, programme benefits, areas for development and stakeholder impact

The same overall structure for the presentation of results is used where each section is described from the perspective of the participant, organisation and University.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the strengths of the programme designed for KMBC and to discuss the developments to that model. This chapter follows a similar structure to that of the previous KMBC case study.

6.2 Background

In 1996, Anglesey County Council (ACC) had undertaken a training needs analysis conducted by the Training Department and had been the subject of an Auditors' report, both of which stated the urgent need for management training. LBS was asked to tender for this work based upon the training needs analysis, and in 1997, LBS was awarded the contract against stiff competition from other universities, including Lancaster and Bangor.

Both Authorities (KMBC and ACC) stressed the need for a collaborative approach, working with the University to provide a programme which would bring about major changes in the organisation, whilst developing management capacity. The main differences between KMBC and ACC original needs were:

- ACC had a clear idea of the content required for the programme,
- ACC wished to focus the whole programme on the principles of the newly emerging national agenda for 'Best Value'
- LBS now had valuable experience of working with another local Authority.

The success by LBS in gaining this contract for work was attributed to the amount of detailed information provided by the team and the willingness to be flexible in the design and delivery of the programme (where as in the case of the other universities they had tried to offer existing programmes). Another success factor was the experience of having run the KMBC and the Rover programme. Although LBS was successful, there was one area which had been a potential problem, which was the requirement to conduct work wherever possible in the Welsh language. It was therefore a disadvantage to be a University without any Welsh speakers (which LBS was). The way in which the University allowed for this was that all group work could be conducted in Welsh, with the briefing sessions in English. Presentation to the Chief Officer Group could be done in Welsh, using translation equipment, etc.. Although some councillors had expressed dissatisfaction at not engaging a Welsh University, the officers of the Council were robust in their defence that the tendering process had been correctly carried out and the contract awarded to the best organisation which would deliver a programme which would most suit their needs.

6.2.1 Local Authority Sector

Local Authorities have been going through major change with a series of Central Government dictates and restrictions on funding. One of the major aims of Central Government throughout the Thatcher years was the movement towards privatisation and the quest for Authorities to take more responsibility. To be more cost effective and efficient was arguably made more explicit in the early 1990's with the onset of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT). This research does not require knowledge of CCT. It is however against the background of Local Authorities having to tender for work, and a plethora of mechanistic, financial constraints that the movement towards 'Best Value' is described in Section 2.16.

In 1997, CCT was being phased out and the new concept of Best Value was adopted nationally. Significantly, the new Labour Government did not initially dictate or define what Best Value was. In the early stages of the Best Value initiative, Authorities were asked to draw up their own definition of Best Value. Some Authorities were slow to react. KMBC, which was seen as a change-orientated and forward-looking authority, did not initially embrace the principles of Best Value. This was later rectified, and it is now fully supportive of the initiative.

In Wales at this time (1997), a report was prepared by a group comprising representatives of the Welsh Office, the Audit Commission, District Audit Service, Wales TUC, and CBI Wales. This group was named the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government and they were tasked with advising on and then managing the development, testing and implementation of Best Value policy in Wales.

The outcome of this report was a set of principles and practices for implementing Best Value in Wales. The key recommendations which have specific impact for this research were:

- Given the circumstances of Wales, the development of Best Value and the programme for testing the framework should not be linked at the individual authority level to decisions on CCT.
- A clear and workable definition of Best Value should be developed within each Local Authority
- The main objective of processes designed to achieve Best Value is to enable elected members and local authority employees to continuously review and improve an authority's performance, both in terms of service quality and cost, and then be held to local account for this.
- Authorities should be encouraged to see performance planning and a commitment to Best Value as an integral part of an authority-wide approach to continuous improvement.

These recommendations were fully backed by ACC which became one of the first Local Authorities in the country to embrace Best Value. It set up a Best Value forum comprising senior officers and councillors who were the principle decision making group on Best Value for the Authority. Whilst the principles of Best Value had been established by the Welsh Consultative Council on Local Government, there was total flexibility in terms of how each Authority could adopt Best Value strategy and policy.

ACC used a number of significant working groups to consider Best Value and determine Best Value policy. One of the key working groups was to be the Management Development Programme described in this research.

It was agreed that these managers would contribute to Best Value strategy and policy and that they were to focus essentially on Best Value and report back results to the Best Value Committee.

6.2.2 Anglesey County Council (ACC)

Before describing the consultation phase, it is important to appreciate the background leading up to this request and to understand the cultural aspects of the Authority, both past and present.

Anglesey County Council came into being on 1st April 1996 with the re-organisation of local authorities in Wales. This merged a small borough council at Anglesey with a larger county council at Gwynedd. This needed major change to draw together two very different cultures. The main differences and issues are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Anglesey County Council Structure on 1st April 1996

Factors	**Anglesey Borough Council**	**Gwynedd County Council**
Number of staff	500	1000
Structure	Borough Council	County Council
Location	Island with tourism, rural and agricultural history	Mainland, mostly industrial
Political	Political leadership of the council comprised two main parties which were Plaid Cymru and the Independent Party.	

Source: Management Development Report, ACC (1996)

In terms of the political agenda, within each party there were several different groupings. The groups formed alliances both within each party and cross-party. This alliance has not changed significantly over the last 10 years.

In the newly formed ACC, modernising local government was embraced and was seen as a major issue for Wales, with backing from the Welsh Office. The old Borough Council at Anglesey had always given a high profile to training and was one of the few Councils to have a full-time Training Officer. This emphasis on training was maintained after the merger, and was seen as a way to affect the changes required fulfilling the new authority's needs.

In the past, funds for training had been allocated mainly for basic qualifications to enable staff to do their jobs. As individuals moved up the career ladder, they obtained higher graded posts, which held a managerial aspect. Hence, well qualified professional staff became managers by default, without the necessary skill of experience.

Although management development was recognised as a priority, due to the massive internal changes, no action was taken until 1997, when the Training Officer conducted a training needs analysis amongst managers. This identified a wide range of managerial and leadership requirements, including:

- effective resource management through innovation
- financial management
- business planning and performance indicators
- commercial skills and marketing

It is against this backdrop of restructuring and movements towards the National Agenda for Best Value, that this management learning initiative took place.

6.3 Consultation and Development of Initiative

This section describes the rationale and background to the project, including the consultation phase, the design process, and the driving principles underpinning the programme.

The first two meetings of the consultation phase were set up as developmental meetings to establish programme viability. Links had been established prior to this when the Training Officer from ACC had taken a Master's programme at JMU in 1995, and the KMBC Programme Leader for the research described in the thesis who was subsequently the ACC Programme Leader. The link was established, the informal meetings were set up, but since CCT was still in force, it was necessary for the Authority to go through a tendering procedure for any substantial financial investments.

Four universities were asked to tender for the Anglesey work. These comprised two new universities (JMU - LBS was one of these), a Welsh University (the Welsh language was seen as a key requirement), and an 'old' University of high national standing with an international reputation in management. Further information on this has been provided in Section 6.2.

It was against this stiff opposition that Liverpool Business School won the tender for this work. Once the tender had been won, the consultation phase started in earnest.

6.3.1 Consultation Phase

The Training Officer from ACC contacted LBS to discuss its requirements for management training and development. The Postgraduate and Professional Programmes Director of LBS and the Programme Leader for MA programmes in HRM met with the Training Officer from the Central Services Department and the consultation phase lasted three months. During this time the programme was developed and accredited by JMU as a MA in Change Management. It was the third taught collaborative masters programme set up by LBS, and was a full-cost programme.

The planning team comprised the Assistant Director and the Training Officer from ACC who met with the Programme Leader for the KMBC programme for several meetings to determine the most appropriate programme for the organisation. The organisation requirements arising from these meetings were to design a programme that would:

- build on the knowledge gained from the KMBC programme
- focus on the new national initiative for Best Value
- encourage cross departmental teamwork
- cover a wide range of change management and leadership issues
- lead to improved leadership and change management skills
- motivate the managers attending the programme
- lead to innovative thinking
- encourage participants to bring about changes in the organisation.

ACC provided senior management and councillor involvement in the process, and the Director and Assistant Director for Central Services both offered their help and support in the development and running of the programme to articulate the commitment required from learners. As a direct result of the KMBC experience it was also agreed that a learning contract be set up at the outset which articulated both the commitment and the entitlements that learners could expect from the organisation. The Council had a cash incentive whereby all staff who gained a first qualification with the Council were entitled to an additional increment (approximately £1,000).

Other issues discussed at the consultation stage included the importance of marketing the projects done by the learners and who the target audience would be for the presentations. This was expected to be the newly formed Best Practice panel, which was a group of ACC managers and councillors.

6.3.2 Design Process

ACC had reviewed the structure of the KMBC programme; it agreed that the structure met its own requirements but the content was different.

6.3.2.1 Driving Principles of Programme

The planning team were committed to the same principles as those discussed in Section 5.3.2.1 for KMBC which were:

- cross-departmental networking
- senior management involvement, most likely to be at Director level rather than Chief Executive.
- ACC to decide topics for the group work
- recommendations arising from the projects completed by participants on the programme to be considered for implementation within the organisation
- dissemination of good practice
- participants expected to commit themselves to the programme and in return to be supported by the organisation to undertake the programme: this included a cash incentive
- the final dissertation stage would be working on projects to bring about and manage change.

Additionally, the issues discussed as success factors and improvements to the KMBC Programme were included. These were:

- importance of the consultation phase which establishes the driving principles for the programme.
- a planning team should be set up with representatives for both organisations
- set up a pilot programme (where possible)
- at the pre-programme stage, hold open meetings where knowledge and activities are undertaken to help resolve participants' potential problems and allay fears of undertaking an academic programme

At the programme stage, the major success factors included:

- involvement of top senior managers

- presentations which were very successful with KMBC, but topics need careful supervision and close monitoring within the organisation to disseminate information on the recommendations
- 'champions' to ground the learning and provide excellent examples of best practice
- group work is an excellent way of team building
- the programme was successfully based on action research principles, but the success was diluted by some of the changes not being implemented within the organisation
- action learning groups worked well for dissertation groups
- learning diaries were a very effective way of getting participants to reflect on their learning.
- organisational needs to set up performance indicators for the programme
- stakeholders should be identified and informed, and contact made with them relating to the programme
- motivating factors for staff attending the programmes should be established as early as possible.

6.3.2.2 Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage

The information from the consultation and design stage of the programme have been presented under the following headings:

1. Personal Skills, Issues and Entitlements

The programme was to be of award-bearing status (to MA standard). This was seen as a major attraction to the programme. The ACC Co-ordinator stressed that as this was a rural area and had been a small authority in the past, little training and education had taken place. They particularly wanted a qualification of stature.

Additionally learner-managers were allowed to attend the modules during normal working hours. Assessment was conducted mainly in their own time.

2. Teaching & Resource Issues

This was similar to KMBC in that taught modules would be provided on-site using ACC training facilities and that staff from ACC would act as 'champions'. The main difference was that ACC had already conducted a very full training needs analysis, and this was used to determine the curriculum for the programme. The training needs determined by ACC are shown in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2 Training Needs Analysis conducted by ACC, 1997

People Management	**Personnel Skills**
Manpower Planning	Leadership
Recruitment	Communication
Team Building & Developing People	Self Development to include Political
Performance Management	Sensitivity, Resilience
Appraisal	Delegation
Discipline	Time Management
Personnel Policies	Motivation
Health & Safety	Negotiation
Resource Management	Problem Solving
Innovation	Decision Making
Financial Management	Strategic Management
Business Planning and Performance	Managing Change and the Future
Indicators	Management Processes
Commercial Skills and Marketing	Advanced Personal Skills

Source: ACC Internal documentation Training Needs Analysis 1997

3. Programme Management

A Programme Co-ordinator was identified at ACC to work closely with the Programme Leader from LBS. These two people managed the programme and were supported by other staff from each organisation.

4. Management Skills

Benchmarking/Comparative Analysis was seen as essential.

5. Assessment

This was the same as for KMBC, except that group assessment topics were agreed by ACC Co-ordinator and Director of Central Services in conjunction with the LBS Programme Leader. The Best Practice Forum which included Councillors and Officers was to be the target audience.

6. Welsh Language Issues

It was agreed that group work and discussions could be discussed in Welsh, where presentations took place they again could be conducted in Welsh with a translator present.

6.4 Programme

The results of the consultation and design phase led to the development of the programme under the following headings.

6.4.1 The Qualification

The programme led to a professional development programme for managers employed by ACC. The aims of the programme as stated in the Definitive Document for the programme, at the three levels is shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Aims of the ACC Programme

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

Aims

The aims of the programme are to enable participants to manage change, that they contribute to the achievement of 'Best Value', as required by the Government, and, in so doing, facilitate their own personal, academic and professional development.

Stage 1- Certificate in Change Management.

On completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of leadership and change management concepts, techniques, models and skills
- analyse personal leadership and management style and traits and develop a personal plan for improvement
- analyse and apply the skills and knowledge required to manage teams and services within the context of Best Value.
- explain and evaluate the significance and rationale of the political and economic factors that influence managerial changes in the environment in which they work.

Stage 2 - Diploma in Change Management

On completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of existing and proposed options for resource allocation and utilisation.
- explain the relative significance of factors influencing employee behaviour, particularly in relation to acceptance of or resistance to change.
- apply appropriate operations, systems quality, and project management concepts and techniques.
- evaluate public sector strategic management processes within the context of the prevailing internal and external environment

Stage 3 - Master of Arts in Change Management

On successful completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

- develop a research strategy to resolve a change management problem or issue within Anglesey County Council.
- develop an independent and advanced piece of work which includes collecting data, analysing, and producing conclusions and recommendations that will lead to change management.
- reflect critically on self-development and the learning arising from the peer support groups and the process of producing the dissertation.

Source: ACC Definitive Document (1997)

The programme was designed to encourage cross-departmental networking, so it was encouraged that all managers should start at the Certificate stage and although AP(E)L was allowed in the case for example of a senior manager who may wish to join the programme who already holds another management qualification, no one to date has used the AP(E)L route.

6.4.2 Programme Structure

The information from the consultation and design stage of the programme have been presented under the following headings:

1. Certificate and Diploma stages

The Certificate stage comprised 5 taught modules, whilst the Diploma stage comprised 4 taught modules. The content was agreed using the training needs analysis conducted by the ACC Co-ordinator. The information contained in the training needs analysis was put into 'bundles' of learning and presented in modules. The programme is structured in three stages, as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Programme Structure

STAGE ONE		
CERTIFICATE IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT - 60 M LEVEL CREDITS		
Module ANGHRM001	Personal Leadership Skills	- 12 credits
Module ANGHRM002	Managing the Team	- 12 credits
Module BUSAGM003	Changing Role of Local Government Manager	- 12 credits
Module ANGAGM004	Managing the Service	- 12 credits
Module ANGAGM005	Resource Management	- 12 credits

STAGE TWO		
DIPLOMA IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT - 120 M LEVEL CREDITS		
Module ANGAGM006	Financial Management	- 12 credits
Module ANGHRM007	Organisational Behaviour	- 12 credits
Module ANGAGM008	Improving Service Operations	- 12 credits
Module ANGAGM009	Strategic Management	- 24 credits

STAGE THREE		
MASTER OF ARTS IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT - 180 M LEVEL CREDITS		
Module ANGHRM010	Action Learning Dissertation	- 60 credits

Source: Programme Definitive Document (1997)

An example of the certificate course details as given in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 The Leading Edge Programme ACC 2000-2001

Certificate in Management

Title	Training Days	Training/Learning Support	TUTORS	CHAMPION Please confirm date champions will attend	ASSIGNMENT DUE	DATES OF GROUP PRESENTATION
BUSANM001 Personal Leadership Skills	13th September 2000 14th September 2000 (these dates were cancelled-fuel crisis)	27 and 28th September 2000 (combined training and LS day)	A. Thorne Bob McClelland	Geraint Edwards	18th October 2000 (time extension given due to problems at beginning of prog to 25th October 00)	
BUSANMOO2 Managing the Team	18th Oct 2000 (AC) 19th Oct 2000 (EE)	2nd Nov 2000 (AC/EE in ARC at LBS) 12.00 Bd of Study room 144)	A. Corley E. Eades	Arthur Owen	6th December 2000	
BUSANM003 Changing role of Local Government Manager	6th Dec 2000 (TD) 7th Dec 2000 (TD)	9th January 2001 (TD)	T. Dawson	Ross Morgan	28th February 2001	W/C 19th February 2000
BUSANM004 Managing the Service	27th Feb 2001(TD) 28th Feb 2001(GF)	8th March 2001 (Room ???) (venue LBS 12.00 Bd of Study Room 144)	T. Dawson G. Foster	Martin Eaglestone	4th April 2001	
BUSANM005 Resource Management	4th April 2001(CP) 5th April 2001(CP)	24th April 2001 (CP)	Chris Pyke	Les Roberts	25th May 2001	W/C 14th May 2001

TIMES: 9.15 – 4.30pm

Draft 5th January 2001Boards of study will take place on November and March Learning Support days. MAB/PAB Date 1st June 2001

2. MA Dissertation stage

The final dissertation stage provided the learner-manager with the opportunity to manage a major project of his or her own choice in negotiation with line manager and dissertation supervisor.

6.4.3 Admissions and Entry Requirements

The programme team and Chief Officers had expressed the view that they expected the participants on the programme at the later stages to be able to coach others and act as mentors. This coaching/mentoring role was seen as requiring higher level skills, which the organisation recognised as essential for senior managers. The programme was restricted to ACC managers who managed other people or were likely to manage others in the near future. The grades were normally middle Senior Officer (SO) grade and above. Participants could attend the programme and not take the assessed route. Additionally, they could attend individual modules without completing the whole programme. The agreement between LBS and ACC was that the participants taking the full-time assessed route had priority on the programme, which was limited to a maximum of 20 participants per module. This provided the participants with an element of choice. Some were concerned that the programme would be too time-consuming, others were unsure of their ability to tackle this level of academic work, and some participants did take up the option of continuing on the programme without taking the assessments.

6.4.4 Enrolment

Participants enrolled on the programme with a wide variety of professional and academic qualifications and experience.

- The majority were professionally well qualified,
- Up to 40% of the participants on programme cohorts did not meet normal University academic entry criteria which stated they should have a University first degree or equivalent
- Up to 30% of each cohort held postgraduate qualifications

This was discussed at length at the validation event, when the University panel had to assure itself that participants could cope with such a programme, and that the entry requirements were being used fairly, consistently, and in line with other postgraduate programmes, e.g. MBA. It was therefore agreed that where a participant did not hold an acceptable professional or academic qualification, he/she must have demonstrated experience as a manager of a service and/or group of people for a minimum of 3 years. In such cases if the participant was unable to cope with the demand of the academic assessment, they would be advised to take the training route only, thereby improving their managerial skills without acquiring the qualification.

AP(E)L on the programme was allowed on the programme although most participants were encouraged to commence at the beginning of the programme as part of the team-building approach.

6.4.5 Assessment

Two modules from each of the Certificate and Diploma stages of the programme were individually assessed, the other two modules were assessed through group presentations.

The individual work was either set by tutors as a project, which would develop the learning on the module and/or would have benefit to the organisation, or set by participants using a proposal form which was then agreed by the module leader.

The main difference from KMBC was that the group work was presented to the Best Value forum which comprised Councillors and Officers with an academic from LBS. This forum was reviewed after the first two group presentations. The group work was not having an impact within the organisation, and additionally, the feedback from the panel was at times irrelevant and unhelpful in terms of group learning. This was possibly caused by a lack of understanding and clarity by the panel in terms of how Best Value impacted on ACC. Additionally, there had been some loss of knowledge in the translation from Welsh to English. The Best Value forum appeared interested in the concepts articulated by the groups, but were unable to express ways in which change could be taken forward.

At the same time, the authority had received some very negative national publicity and a number of senior staff left the organisation. The Authority went through another turbulent time in its history which led to the complete restructure of the Authority. A new Managing Director joined the organisation in 2000 and the group work has been presented to him along with a group of senior officers; this now appears the most appropriate forum.

6.5 Evaluation Strategy

With the knowledge and experience of the KMBC programme, the Evaluation strategy had been streamlined and included:

- normal University procedures.
- module questionnaires,
- Boards of Study and annual reporting.

The methods discussed above included questionnaires (these were in-depth, open questionnaires). Views were also sought from ACC staff who were responsible for running the programme, from participants on the programme and from LBS staff who were party to the normal University meetings, etc. (e.g. Boards of Study).

The evaluation methods led to the production of a vast amount of information and included reflections on learning and ACC senior management views.

6.5.1 Reflections on Learning

As part of each module on all three stages of the programme, participants were asked to complete a reflection on the learning arising from each module. This was part of each assessment. This was not an additional piece of work as it had been on the KMBC programme and the views have been incorporated into the evaluation results described in Section 6.6.

6.5.2 ACC Senior Management Views

As had happened on the KMBC programme the head of the Council officers now became the Chair of the presentation forum. The Managing Director for ACC who had replaced the previous Chief Executive of the Council led the presentations and his views were sought, along with those of other key people to test the success of the programme. This included the original planning team, the ACC Co-ordinator, and the Director of Central Services.

The list of Officers interviewed is as follows:

- Managing Director
- Director of Central Services
- Training Officer

The interview schedule is contained in Table 3.11, Section 3.12.6.

6.6 ACC Programme Evaluation Results

This section presents the results and findings arising from the evaluation of the programme, the reflections on learning, and the analysis of interviews with the KMBC Senior Management team described in three main sections:

- Programme benefits
- Programme Areas for development
- Stakeholder impact

Each section considers issues that are focused on:

- Participants
- Organisation
- University

6.6.1 Programme Benefits

The information from the evaluation of the programme provided a range of information on the benefits of the programme. These have been presented from the perspectives of the participant, the organisation and the University.

6.6.1.1 Participant Focused Issues

ACC senior managers and participants stated the following success factors:

1. Flexibility and change-orientation

ACC Senior Managers confirmed that this programme had encouraged managers to be more flexible, and this had widened people's horizons. This had led them to being more able to adapt to change, which was one of the Councils requirements from the programme.

2. Training for future

Past managers in ACC had concentrated on functional expertise and training for their current role rather than looking toward training for future roles. Many had not followed a formal management programme before, and this has been a big plus, coupled with a recognised achievement at the end of it

> *Many are not used to working at such a level, even at their functional level, but the programme has given them a different perspective.*
>
> (ACC manager)

3. Insight

Participants have stated that they had valuable experiences through attending the programme, and are

> *Now aware that other people apart from myself have difficulties and problems to cope with and when we worked together, we were reasonably open.*
>
> (MA participant)

Through the programme they have been taken out of their usual working environments :

We talked to different people from all sorts of other organisations and although they had their own difficulties and problems, we all found things in common.

(MA participant)

The sharing of information and the networking on the programme helped managers to feel confident in their skills and helped them try out new and different ways of leading and managing staff.

4. Best Value

In terms of Best Value, people have seen how it develops and associate it with the broader issue of management.

Best Value permeated the programme, it was not seen as an 'add on' to the programme, it formed part of the fabric of it.

Yes, although a relatively new concept, the values underpinning it have been around a long time.

Best Value is about good management values for specific issues.

(ACC manager)

The whole organisation is behind Best Value, and the groups were part of the decision- making processes relating to Best Value.

5. Learner Support

The time allowed when managers could attend the programme was seen as "a bonus". Participants generally felt the resources provided and support for the programme were generous. Additionally, they had access to a range of people within the authority as well as departmental managers, which worked particularly well. This included 'champions', line managers, and the programme co-ordinators.

One of the managers interviewed demonstrated the difference in his experience from that of other students on his cohort of the programme. He had done an MBA outside office hours six or seven years ago. There was a sense of isolation as he did not have a peer group.

> *On this programme, learners can share experiences and support each other. I have a sense of community and belonging on the programme which is missing on the MBA.*
>
> (ACC Diploma participant)

6. Managerial Factors

ACC senior managers stated that they believe the manager of the future should include the following characteristics:

- a good organiser.
- someone who delivers the goods at the end of the day.
- good time manager, able to meet deadlines.
- have clear objectives.

> *Managers have an objective that is different to the individual if you like. We all prefer to do the things we like first, and maybe never get round to the things at the end of the list that we don't enjoy. Managers have different objectives – of the team and the department, not just their own. Additionally, they should be able to concentrate on the Modernisation agenda.*
>
> (ACC manager)

This statement reinforces the focus on Best Value of the programme. The national agenda in 2001 is now moving towards a wider modernisation agenda. This follows national concern about the cost of implementing Best Value. Managers of the future must therefore be aware of the changing national arena. This however is a topic for further research and does not form part of the present study.

The senior managers at ACC stated their view of the possibilities in the future:

> *...introducing super managers where we would have say five directors. Whereas in the past, the Director of Education, for example was an ex teacher, the move now is towards less functional expertise and more management skills.*

There are now so many potential managers – it may take a couple of years to assess whether the organisation has got out of it what it wanted.

ACC has now moved towards a cabinet style of leadership, and has introduced multi-function directors responsible for groups of departments. This emphasises the focus and aim of the programme. It is necessary to ensure that the managers of tomorrow are equipped with leadership skills which embrace change and are flexible enough to adapt to this new culture.

6.6.1.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation and programme benefits, are collected and coded under the following headings.

1. Best Value

The organisation requested that any management development initiative should be focused on the emerging national area of Best Value. The following quotes describe the organisations views:

> *Although we wanted a local government-specific qualification, we didn't want it to become too insular. We wanted to ask participants to benchmark against other companies such as Tesco and towards other places that they wouldn't normally have got in touch with. The idea of benchmarking is what Best Value is all about. It is about getting the most effective and efficient services from the providers; and the best place to start looking for this is in the private sector.*
>
> *We were keen to get this theme. Best Value is really good practice at the end of the day. Themes that are flavour of the month tend to become old hat and can lose credibility. The principles of Best Value are here to stay.*
>
> (ACC manager)

The process of benchmarking has been of particular value to the organisation who originally stated their staff to be insular and inward-looking. The participants stated that the benchmarking activities helped them to understand about the organisation, to network, and provided them with very practical advice on operational matters.

2. Champions

Positive comments were given about the 'champions', stating that their inputs were interesting and valued for their honesty. The champions were termed this from the beginning of the programme and were asked to present information for up to one hour on each module and to act as a mentor to participants in between modules.

> *The Social Services Representative was interesting discussing for Client Contract Model. This is really seen as giving a more entrepreneurial private sector type approach. The champion had an impact but probably without realising.*
>
> (MA participant)

3. Culture

As described in the background information to the case study (Section 6.2), the organisation had been through major reorganisation following a number of changes in the authority. The following quote taken from the ACC programme training co-ordinator expands on this further:

> *The authority went through a bad time not long after the course was established and this took its toll. This was due to bad publicity, the Chief Executive left and there was major reconstructing. Over the last two years there has been a shift from a blame culture to a more optimistic environment. Now there is more chance that people can experiment and graduates can develop their thinking and continue their learning and apply it.*

The participants on the programme were seen to have taken a more pragmatic approach and were more structured and prepared to consider theories and texts.

> *The work the learners bring back and apply is very relevant, they are not learning something en masse as it were. They have to be able to be selective in their managerial stance and recognise what is appropriate. It is okay to apply common sense once you have the knowledge.*
>
> (Training co-ordinator)

The complex modernisation agenda affects the way the staff work, and managers on the programme seem to be able to work until the change agenda through restructuring changes at a political level. It is a difficult situation at political level as staff do not know what will happen next. The change agenda after restructuring had a major effect at office level and proved very difficult for everyone.

> *Change can be messy and difficult to manage. In terms of coping you have to be flexible. These are the skills we need as managers – to move ahead in a structured way and manage messy situations.*
>
> (ACC manager)

6.6.1.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University programme benefits, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Tutors, staff and material

KMBC suggests tutors, key modules and management factors all had an impact on the participant. At ACC, the tutors were given constant guidance by the co-ordinator and senior officers.

2. Reputation

Participants had a good attitude to LBS before the programme started:

> *JMU is an established and admired institution. It is a joint but independent venture which has been very successful.*
>
> (MA participant)

and feedback from the participants has encouraged others to take part.

> *You have had the biggest impact on opening our minds and the additional perspectives were good.*
>
> *Learning diaries are proving a good source for discussing problems. At the end of the day they must be honest to do themselves justice. I use one most of the time now and staff in my section are using them. Two are considering coming on the programme.*

6.6.2 Programme Areas for Development

It was noted in the interviews that:

> *The changes in the period to which the course has been running does make it difficult to assess what has come out of it. Also, it is going to be more long-term till we can see many results.*
>
> (ACC manager)

This pragmatic view is shared with the LBS team who were aware of a number of changes that have had major impact on the authority and on the programme. These include national publicity (negative), changes in top management and most recently, the foot and mouth outbreak.

6.6.2.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants' perspective concerning programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Honesty and openness

The issue of honesty and openness has been an issue raised by participants on the programme who have asked for details of the readership of their group and individual projects.

> *You have to be circumspect and politics do matter. In a small organisation where people talk and messages can be given to the wrong people, I think you have to careful what you say.*
>
> (ACC manager)

Individual projects come straight to the University, but the group projects are made available to the senior officers presentation panel. A number of participants stated that they were "circumspect" in their approach – they tended to state the issue, but sometimes were more willing to leave out the detail about a potential contentious issue.

> *Because of the mixture of grades and levels working together, some may find it difficult to tell the Assistant Director, for example, what he/she thinks. Or tell the Managing Director that they disagree.*

We have elected members who are similar to a Board of shareholders. And of course participants will not be as honest as they would like to be concerning certain things.

(ACC manager)

2. Commitment and Entitlements

The ACC Senior Managers felt there was problem with the levels of participant commitment:

Participants do not seem to realise the difficulties of putting on a programme like this and have only mentioned the lack of access to Liverpool resources. If participants want to use JMU resources they can. I regard this as their responsibility and their commitment to the programme. The situation was made clear at the beginning.

The expectation from some participants is that everything is provided for them and they just turn up on the day in Llangefni, but it is seen by senior managers as far more than that. To take the issues forward, the commitments and entitlements were discussed and presented in a general contract at the beginning of the programme. This was not detailed since the participants also complete a Departmental Training Request form which states that the Department will be liable for the cost of a programme should a participant not complete the programme. It is felt that this had an effect, but only for a limited time (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.6 Learning Commitment and Entitlements Document

This programme requires a high degree of commitment from all participants. It is a three-way partnership with commitments from all parties.

The University will provide you with:

- Personal tutor
- Learning framework
- Learning resources
- Advice and guidance.

Your Employer will provide you with:

- Time to attend learning group meetings
- Feedback on your research proposal
- Active support, e.g. mentor
- Opportunities to practise and encouragement to manage change
- Provide realistic resources

You will need to ensure:

- You meet University deadlines and requirements
- The job will not suffer
- Personal responsibility and ownership of the issue and process of learning
- You are prepared to give a realistic amount of personal time to complete the work.

The financial incentive did impact on the participants at the certificate stage who tended to complete this first stage. It was however noticed that there was a sharp drop-off in numbers after the certificate stage. However, those participants that did continue to the final stage were very committed to the programme and there was little drop-out rate at the diploma stage.

The ACC Senior Managers also stated their frustration that the participants have become more demanding over their time on the programme. They expressed the desire to encourage them to be managers who manage themselves and that the organisation should be putting more responsibility on them.

> *Group three in particular are very whiney but their status is at a lower level in terms of grade and experience. Perhaps we have spoon-fed participants too much as they expect everything to be in Anglesey.*

3. Group Presentations

The presentations to the various management groups have been erratic:

Some found the group work, working with certain individuals, quite difficult. But in the work place they would not have the opportunity to select the people they would like to work with.

(ACC manager)

Senior staff thought it would help to have a broader definition of changes in the external environment when presenting the group work. There was some doubt over the quality of some group work that maybe it is an ACC problem in terms of work they have set. In future, they need more specific tasks and more involvement from the managers, but there is a heavy commitment to the course itself.

6.6.2.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation and programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Group presentations

The following comment was received after the first two cohorts had completed the Anglesey programme:

There is a break down and barriers between departments need to be overcome and mix people together so all departments work with each other. This cross department mix could be used well outside the forum.

(ACC manager)

Attendance by the Best Value Forum, was proving a major problem in the early days of the programme:

Attendance is virtually non-existent – yourself, me, the Director of the Department, and no one else. Presentations should have been taken further and led to other joint working and productive learning. I got the feeling that after presentations it just gathered dust, which is a pity.

This prompted the format of the presentation forum to be changed from a very small group of councillors and officers to an all senior officer group.

2. Location

Over the lifetime of the programme, the venue has been discussed, with a number of learning support days being set up at LBS. It has been noted, however, that attendance at LBS has always been less than normal.

> *The location is a problem at times. The participants state the need to use resources but when we set up a meeting at Liverpool it is like asking them to go to the moon!*
>
> *One thing I thought was having the learning support here at Liverpool to get them into the habit of using our facilities.*
>
> (Training co-ordinator)

University staff, ACC co-ordinators and a number of participants recognise the benefit of having some meetings in Liverpool. There is however a group of participants who will not travel.

3. ACC Leadership

The changes in the Authority as described in Section 6.2 led to a more open and challenging environment for staff:

> *But we have a new, stable future with a new Managing Director. We have gone through three Chief Executives and an acting Chief Executive in such a short time.*
>
> *The new Managing Director has the same intentions that we had originally but he wants this going through the organisation in terms of the work that they do – something that is tangible and of benefit to the organisation.*
>
> *Need to increase Line Manager involvement.*
>
> *If one were to start the programme now, I think I would look at the Government's Modernisation agenda and draw from that, the changes that we need to put in place. In terms of structure but also culture and skills people need to cope with change.*

There has been an ongoing issue regarding the impact of the line manager on the participant, additionally the changing focus from Best Value towards Modernisation in 2002 is likely to impact on the programme

6.6.2.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University and programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Assessment

ACC discussed the subject of individual assessment receiving little feedback:

> *We need to establish proper evaluations to check these informal contributions. It needs to be measured correctly.*
>
> (Training co-ordinator)

Understanding the academic requirements was difficult in the early stages of the programme. The difficulties of group assessment has already been commented upon.

6.6.3 Stakeholder Involvement

The interviews included a question on who the stakeholders were. The information mirrored KMBC, as follows:

- Tutors
- Champions
- Training Co-ordinator
- Programme leader
- Participants family
- Line Manager

- Other group members
- Senior managers at ACC
- Participants

An additional stakeholder at ACC was: -

- Councillors

6.7 Chapter Conclusions

This will be presented in terms of:

1. The success factors arising from the programme. Each of these areas will be provided under the three headings: participant, the organisation and the University.
2. The areas for development of the programme
3. .Stakeholder involvement

Table 6.7 PROGRAMME (ACC) RESULTS OVERALL PLAN

PROGRAMME PLUS POINTS	PROGRAMME AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT
1. **PARTICIPANT** • Flexibility and change-orientated • Training for the future • Insight • Best Value • Learner support • Improved managerial skills	1. **PARTICIPANT** • Honesty and Openness • Commitment and Entitlements • Group presentation	1. **PARTICIPANT** • Participant • Participant's family • Other group mentors
2. **ORGANISATION** • Best Value • Champions • Culture	2. **ORGANISATION** • Group presentations • Location • ACC leadership	2. **ORGANISATION** • Champion • Co-ordinators • Line Managers • Senior managers (ACC) • Councillors
3. **UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Staff • Material • Reputation	3. **UNIVERSITY** • Assessment	3. **UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Programme management (LBS)

CHAPTER SEVEN: LITTLEWOODS LEISURE (LL)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the background information relating to the acquisition of the LL contract and the improvements taken from the KMBC and ACC programmes. This is followed by information on:

- Consultation and development of initiatives
- Design process including the driving principles of the programme and the key outcomes for the Consultation and Design stage which is presented under a number of key headings
- Qualification section is further divided into the Aims and objectives, programme structure, admissions, entry, enrolment and assessment issues
- Evaluation strategy and results are presented under three main categories, programme benefits, areas for development and stakeholder impact

The same overall structure for the presentation of results is used where each section is described from the perspective of the participant, organisation and University.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the strengths of the programme designed for KMBC and ACC and to discuss the developments to that model. This chapter follows a similar structure to that of the previous ACC case study.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the strengths of the programmes designed for KMBC and ACC and to discuss the developments on that model.

7.2 Background

In 1997, the Human Resources Director from Littlewoods Leisure (LL) approached LBS to help them design a management development programme. At that time, the LBS Professor for Human Resource Development post was sponsored by the Littlewoods organisation. As part of that role, the Professor was involved with organisation development for LL, including the management development strategy. Whilst discussions on this had limited impact, other links to the Littlewoods group were very significant, and included the fact that the University is named after its former Chairman and patriarch of the Littlewoods' empire - Sir John Moores. John Moores Junior was a frequent visitor to the school in the 1990's and was a member of a number of committees. The links were therefore strong with Littlewoods and they were also aware of the recent LBS successes with Rover and KMBC. The HR Director from the Pools Division approached LBS with a request for a management development programme.

The request was similar to that made by KMBC and ACC for a management development programme which would lead to a postgraduate qualification. This however was a large organisation and the design team were very aware that this programme would require a different emphasis and possibly a new structure from that of KMBC and ACC. There were however a number of similarities. From the outset, they stressed the need for a collaborative approach working with the University to provide a programme which would bring about major changes in the organisation whilst developing leadership capacity. The main issues included:

- LL was more similar to KMBC than ACC, i.e. they had no clear idea of the content required for the programme
- They had lost nearly a third of the workforce following major restructuring and were about to face more changes. The most significant change was in 2000 when LL split from the Littlewoods group. They are now owned by another company but retain the name Littlewoods Leisure.
- LBS had a growing reputation for designing collaborative programmes
- Finance for the operation was not an issue (as was the case with public sector partners).

The main activities for Littlewoods Leisure is the Littlewoods Pools and Lottery. The introduction of the National Lottery and growth in the leisure industry has led to massive changes in this organisation, including major restructures and changes in staffing levels.

Morale needed to be built, following the restructuring, along with the skills necessary to equip the new workforce to face the new challenges. The HR Director saw this as an excellent time to develop managers and to restore pride and enthusiasm in the staff in this newly restructured division. The Head Office for Littlewoods Leisure is at Walton Hall Avenue, Liverpool. This vast set of buildings was once a bustling production line for pools' operatives and the walls are covered with pictures of the busy sprawling open plan offices of the past. The employer in the post-war era was seen as a benefactor who gave work to the masses with fair rewards and good working environment. The building today is under-occupied, with much of the manual work now automated or made redundant.

With the growth of the National Lottery, LL diversified and set up its own lottery division, and further recent changes have incorporated the new Bet Direct operation. The Lottery staff were situated in the London premises in Acton (closed in 2000). This split site arrangement, with distinct differences in geographical location, core business and management style, led to the request for a team building, leadership development programme.

The acquisition of a qualification was seen as a key requirement of the programme, providing the staff with a qualification that can be used for career development and additionally tying the staff into a three year programme was seen as a way of retaining staff over a change period.

The programme has been specifically designed with and for Littlewoods Leisure. Whilst the content is unique to this organisation, it was agreed with Littlewoods staff, that the framework and structure of the programme be based on the other Management Development programme operated at KMBC and ACC.

A pilot programme has taken place at Littlewoods Leisure to test this framework, which has been successful, and no changes were requested.

Other features include:

- mentor for each module, who will be identified by the participant and will normally be a senior manager from Littlewoods, this is in addition to the champions who attend the modules.

- assessment workshops where programme members meet JMU staff to discuss assignments and content

- presentation to senior managers on relevant issues

- residential team-building events at both the Certificate and Diploma stages

7.3 Consultation and Development of Initiative

This section describes the rationale and background to the project, including the consultation phase, the design process, and the driving principles underpinning the programme.

7.3.1 Consultation Phase

The HR Director from LL contacted LBS to discuss its requirements for management training and development. As stated in the introductory section, there already existed a link with LBS, and additionally, the reputation of the collaborative programmes was such that LBS was receiving a number of enquiries for new programmes.

The Postgraduate and Professional Programmes Director of LBS and the Programme Leader for MA programmes in HRM met with the LL HR Director. The consultation phase lasted three months, and during this time the programme was developed and accredited by JMU as an MA in Leadership and Change, as a full-cost programme.

The planning team comprised the HR Director from LL who met with the Programme Leader for the KMBC and ACC programmes for several meetings to determine the most appropriate programme for the organisation. The organisation requirements arising from these meetings were to design a programme that would:

- build on the knowledge gained from other collaborative programmes
- encourage cross-divisional teamwork

- cover a wide range of leadership and change management issues
- lead to improved leadership and change management skills
- motivate the staff on the programme following the restructuring
- lead to innovative thinking
- encourage participants to bring about major changes in the organisation to regain competitive advantage.

LBS and LL provided senior management involvement in the process and support in the development and running of the programme.

Following the success of the introduction of the learning contract on the ACC programme, the team agreed to adopt this for use. It was however more fully articulated and included signatures of all three parties. An example of this document is now provided in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Learning Contract

The following paper is an agreement setting out the entitlements and responsibilities associated with the forthcoming MA in Leadership and Change programme run in conjunction with JMU Business School and Littlewoods Leisure and outlines specific statements of intent from all parties. The agreement is: Liverpool Business School will help the Student to achieve the learning outcomes by facilitating appropriate access to experiences, people and other sources of information. In return, the Student will undertake a dissertation that is both relevant to the business, Littlewoods Leisure, and is within the context of the MA programme in Leadership and Change. This contract ensures that the responsibilities of the Student, Liverpool Business School and Littlewoods Leisure are both transparent and explicit. **Liverpool Business School** Liverpool Business School will undertake the following: -Ensure that students have full support and guidance (where appropriate). -Students will have full access to LRC/Text facilities. -Guidance will be given to students in the areas of research and resources. -Help will be given to students in respect of choice and contacts with appropriate external companies for benchmarking exercises. -Appropriate access will be given to the tutors. -Together with self-appraisal, regular feedback will be given to students by the tutors and fellow participants -JMU will advise, where appropriate, on mentoring and line management involvement.

Littlewoods Leisure

Littlewoods Leisure will undertake the following:

-The Company will ensure that the students have access to all relevant professional bodies, e.g. CIPD.
-Littlewoods Leisure and LBS will investigate all IT facilities.
-Line Management understanding and support will be sought.
-An open door policy will be ensured.
-All relevant books will be provided on the understanding that they are well looked after and returned to Human Resources.
-Littlewoods Leisure will subscribe to appropriate journals.
-Access will be given to the relevant information and primary data.
-A "trust" factor will be acknowledged in respect of time for focus groups, interviews and data extraction during working hours.

Students

The students agree to undertake the following:

- Ensure that their line managers are fully briefed and understand the student's requirements.
- Ensure that other people within their lives are fully briefed (home/external and internal networks).
- Remain motivated, enhancing their strengths and making improvements in areas of weakness.
- Ensure that they behave in a courteous manner – which includes full attendance on the programme, punctuality, honouring of deadlines and co-operation
- Peer review each other's work as part of the action learning sets, in line with the principals of action learning
- Critically reflect on their learning and their own practice and apply the insight this brings into genuinely bringing about change.
- Monitor their own progress, ensuring that they work with others where appropriate, and that everyone is fully updated on a regular basis with a progress report.

Signed by Student ....
(Name)

Signed on behalf of JMU Liverpool Business School ....
(Name and position)

Signed on behalf of Littlewoods Leisure ....
(Name and position)

It was felt essential to make explicit the commitment required from learners and the entitlements that learners could expect from the organisation. The document was drawn up by the LL Training Manager but she negotiated this with the participant signed up for the first programme and with LBS staff.

Other issues discussed at the consultation stage included the importance of marketing the projects done by the learners and who the target audience would be for the presentations. This was expected to be the Managing Director and Senior Management Team within LL.

7.3.2 Design Process

LL had reviewed the structure of the other collaborative programmes, and it was agreed that the structure generally met its own requirements but the content and context was different.

7.3.2.1 Driving Principles of the Programme

The planning team were committed to the same principles as that discussed in Sections 5.3.2.1 and 6.3.2.1 which were:

- cross-departmental networking
- senior management involvement most likely to be Managing Director level and top team.
- LL to decide topics for group work
- recommendations arising from projects completed by participants on the programme to be considered for implementation within the organisation
- dissemination of good practice
- participants expected to commit themselves to the programme and in return would be supported by the organisation to undertake the programme.
- final dissertation stage would be working on projects to lead and manage change.

7.3.2.2 Key Outcomes from Consultation and Design Stage

The information from the consultation and design stage of the programme have been presented under the following headings. More of the issues discussed were similar to KMBC and ACC, additionally examples of good practice were discussed. The following comments therefore only represent issues that were new or additional to previous information.

1. Personal skills, issues and entitlements

The award-bearing status (to MA standard) was seen as a major attraction to the programme. There were two distinct categories of staff, the first was from the more experienced long-term managers, most of whom had few qualifications, and the second category were those staff who were newer, brought in for particular roles and who generally had an academic or professional qualification (but not necessarily in management). The HR Director stated that the organisation classed itself as a 'blue chip' organisation and wanted the best possible academic qualification for staff.

The learner managers were allowed to attend the modules during normal working hours and assessment was to be undertaken mainly in their own time which was similar to both KMBC and ACC programmes.

2. Teaching and Resource issues

This was similar to KMBC and ACC, the main difference from the other two programmes was in terms of location and team-building. Initially, the programme was to be run at a local hotel using conference facilities. This arrangement did not work well, and after two cohorts were completed using hotel accommodation, the Diploma and final year MA stage were both held at LBS. Additionally, the organisation wanted to get the group to work well together very quickly and to encourage team-building. It was agreed that a residential module involving some outdoor management techniques would be introduced in the programme. This was to be run with an external consultant in conjunction with the programme team. Greater emphasis was placed on financial inputs, and issues such as budgeting and financial management were requested in the programme.

3. Programme Management

A Programme Co-ordinator was identified at LL to work closely with the Programme Leader from LBS. These two people managed the programme and were supported by other staff from each organisation.

4. Benchmarking

Benchmarking/Comparative Analysis was seen as essential. This concept was used by senior managers at LL but was new to middle and junior managers.

5. Assessment

Same as KMBC and ACC, other than group assessment topics which were agreed by LL Co-ordinator and Management Team in conjunction with the LBS Programme Leader.

6. Learning Contract

A learning contract was developed for use on the programme. Discussion and a copy of the document is in Section 7.3.1 (Consultation Phase).

7. Mentors

A mentor system was set up which included the development of the role of the mentor and a half-day mentor workshop. Additionally the champions at both KMBC and ACC had received excellent feedback as presenters on the modules but had been erratic in their mentor support. This was seen as important, since it is more difficult to determine a group of senior managers willing to work with the group. The reasons for this was to see what stage the organisation was at. Senior managers had recently undergone re-structuring, most had taken on more responsibility and of those remaining some were so new in the post that they were unable to provide the level of knowledge required for a mentor's role.

Sufficient mentors however were identified, trained, and information provided to the student. This is further discussed as the programme progressed under Section 7.5.2.2 (1).

8. Residential Teambuilding Module

The aims of the residential teambuilding module is to build on prior learning and to develop individual skills in a team context and to allow participants to develop team working skills, through a process of experiential learning supported by theoretical concepts.

The objectives are for participants to:

- Evaluate their contribution during structured teambuilding exercises
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the team process
- Identify and analyse communication skills
- Evaluate the functions of teams in an organisation, particularly during a period of change
- Identify situations in the workplace where team processes could improve organisational effectiveness

The purpose of the residential is to apply and analyse a range of team leadership and membership learning methods and activities. The residential element was unique within LBS since the assessment was credit rated so this module formed an integral part of the academic Programme.

The feedback for this was very good and the following represents the evaluation questionnaire scores.

Table 7.2 Learning Record Feedback for Residential Module

Learning Record Feedback **Scale = 1-7 1- unchanged 7 - Greatly increased**		
1.	My understanding of teams development is:	**5.9**
2.	My understanding of the processes involved in reaching decisions is:	**5.0**
3.	My ability to reflect on a process in an analytical way is:	**5.4**
4.	The degree to which I developed in self-confidence is:	**4.3**
5.	Overall, how would you rate the three-day residential?	**6.4**

In relation to the **content** of the three-day residential the value statements included:

The time to reflect and discuss personal actions in a controlled environment.
Exercises such as the "houses" which we did poorly gave me much food for thought.
Feedback after each session in particular the last - which was personal feedback.
Understanding of how to get the best out of a team - plan, investigate individuals strengths.
Taking responsibility for ideas to the group (team).
Focusing on teamwork so that I can develop further.
Looking at the individual's strengths.
Learning and understanding the process involved in team building.
Learning to listen within a team for the good of that team.
I have felt the time spent after the course over a meal or drinks has greatly enhanced the course and the communication between members of the group.
Reflections on the lessons of each piece of work.
Opportunity to experience our team working style on a "pure" environment.
Feedback from colleagues and the fact I was given the opportunity to adjust my style in a positive way.
The process of reflecting on activities, particularly the length and time spent on it - very valuable.
The personal feedback from other group members. Identifying personal development opportunities.

> *It was first highlighted on the outward-bound teamwork module in the first year when it became obvious that I was trying to lead the group at every opportunity. I was constantly looking for the edge and this led to a lot of stress. These have been valuable lessons that have improved on my own behaviour in my career.*
>
> (MA Participant)

The key issue from the evaluation comments is the informal nature of the environment, which allowed the participants to relax and become more open with each other. The assessment which was in two parts, required the participants to reflect on the ways in which the learning from the module could be applied to their work situation. The second part of the assessment was an assignment based on leadership that would make a difference in LL. The participants then sent to reflect on the experiences gained on the residential module.

The residential was so popular that LL ran it as part of the induction for the second year (Diploma) of the programme.

7.4 Programme

The results of the consultation and design phase led to the development of the programme under the following headings.

7.4.1 Qualification

The programme led to a professional development programmes for managers employed by LL. The aims of the programme, as stated in the Definitive Document for the programme, are shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Aims of Littlewoods Leisure Programme

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

Aims The aim of the programme is to develop the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to perform the role of manager responsible for leading effective change strategies within Littlewoods Leisure.

Objectives: <u>Stage 1- Certificate in Leadership and Change</u>

On completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

a. Demonstrate knowledge of leadership and change management concepts, techniques, models and skills

b. Analyse personal skills and knowledge base, learning characteristics and personal motivation

c. Analyse and apply the skills and knowledge required to lead and manage teams and services within the retail and leisure industry.

d. Explain and evaluate the significance and rationale of the economic factors that influence leadership and managerial changes in the environment in which they work.

<u>Stage 2 - Diploma in Leadership and Change</u>

On completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

a. Evaluate the appropriateness of existing and proposed options for resource allocation and utilisation.

b. Explain the relative significance of factors influencing employee behaviour, particularly in relation to acceptance of or resistance to change.

c. Apply appropriate operations, systems quality, and project management concepts and techniques.

d. Evaluate the role of a leader in the management of change.

<u>Stage 3 - Master of Arts in Leadership and Change</u>

On successful completion of this stage, participants should be able to:

a. Develop a research strategy to resolve a strategic or operational issue or problem within Littlewoods Leisure.

b. Develop an independent and advanced piece of work which includes collecting data, analysing and producing conclusions and recommendations that will lead to leadership and effective change strategies within Littlewoods Leisure.

c. Reflect on personal learning and how this has contributed to developing an effective leadership style.

Source: LL Definitive Document (1997)

The programme was designed to encourage cross-departmental networking, so it was originally agreed that all managers must start at the Certificate stage and AP (E) L was not provided. This was similar to the other 2 programmes. Individual credit for modules could not be accrued.

1. Certificate and Diploma Stages

The Certificate stage comprised 5 taught modules, whilst the Diploma stage comprised 4 taught modules. The content was agreed at meetings held with the HR Director. The programme is structured in three stages, as shown the tables below:

Table 7.4 Programme Structure Stage One

MODULE	LEVEL M CREDIT VALUE	ATTENDANCE	LEARNING METHOD	ASSESSMENT METHOD
LITHRM001 Self Awareness	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and private study	Individual Project
LITHRM002 Team Building	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and private study	Individual Project
LITHRM003 Leadership	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and group work	Group Project and reflection on learning
LITAEM004 Quality Management	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and group work	Group Project and reflection on learning
LITHRM005 Personal Action Plan	12	3 days part-time study	Taught plus learning support and private study	Individual Project

Table 7.5 Programme Structure Stage Two

MODULE	LEVEL M CREDIT VALUE	ATTENDANCE	LEARNING METHOD	ASSESSMENT METHOD
LITAGM006 Financial Management	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and private study	Individual Project
LITHRM007 Organisational and Leadership Behaviour	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and group work	Group Project
LITHRM008 Managing Change	12	3 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and private study	Individual Project
LITHRM009 Strategic Management	24	6 days part-time study	Taught, plus learning support and group work	Group Project

2. Master of Arts stage

Stage 3 comprises the action learning dissertation module. The dissertation will be supervised in an action learning group of up to six participants and a supervisor/ facilitator, with access to advice from specialist subject tutors. The structure of Stage 3 is shown below. The dissertation stage provided the learner-manager with the opportunity to manage a major project of his or her own choice in negotiation with line manager and dissertation supervisor.

The first two meetings which take place over two days provide the underpinning knowledge of research methods to enable the participants to undertake the dissertation. Thereafter, participants normally meet on a monthly basis. The minimum time to complete the dissertation is nine months and the maximum is 24 months. It is one of the purposes of the meetings to determine the best learning requirements for the participants. This may affect the frequency of meetings (may increase) and individual tuition may be required, instead of group meetings (especially towards the completion of the dissertation). A summary of the parts comprising Stage 3 is shown below:

Table 7.6 Programme Structure Stage Three

MODULE	LEVEL M CREDIT VALUE	LEARNING METHOD	ASSESSMENT METHOD
LITHRM010	60	Taught, plus private study and action learning set	Individual dissertation

Source: Definitive Document 1997

Participants will be required to achieve 180 M Credits in order to gain the award of the MA in Leadership and Change. Awards will not normally be made at the end of each stage, the contained awards (Certificate or Diploma) being reserved for the participants who complete the assessment and learning outcomes from a complete stage but do not complete the next stage, either through failure or withdrawal from the programme.

7.4.2 Admissions and Entry Requirements

The programme was open to middle and senior managers, all came from LL except for one participant who represented the stores division. Participants could attend the programme and not take the assessed route. Additionally, they could attend individual modules without completing the whole programme. The agreement between LBS and LL was that the participants taking the full-time assessed route had priority on the programme, which was limited to a maximum of 20 participants per module. This provided the participants with an element of choice. Some were concerned that the programme would be too time-consuming, others were unsure of their ability to tackle this level of academic work, and some participants did take up the option of continuing on the programme without taking the assessments.

7.4.3 Enrolment

Similar enrolment issues to KMBC and ACC.

AP(E)L was not requested on the programme. The organisation wanted the team-building aspects of the programme to have priority, and it was felt that having participants join the programme at different stages was not conducive to this.

7.4.4 Assessment

Two modules from each of the Certificate and Diploma stages of the programme were individually assessed, the other two modules were assessed through group presentations. The individual work was either set by tutors as a project, which would develop the learning on the module and/or would have benefit to the organisation, or set by participants using a proposal form which was then agreed by the module leader.

7.4.5 Evaluation Strategy

The evaluation strategy included the following:

- normal University procedures
- module questionnaires
- Boards of Study and annual reporting

The methods discussed above included questionnaires (these were in-depth, open questionnaires). Views were also sought from LL staff who were responsible for running the programme, from participants on the programme, and from LBS staff who were party to the normal University meetings, etc. (e.g. Boards of Study).

7.5 Evaluation Results and Analysis

This section presents the results and findings arising from the evaluation of the programme, and from the analysis of interviews with the LL Senior Management team, in three main sections:-

- Programme benefits
- Programme Areas for development
- Stakeholder impact

Each section considers issues that are focused on:-

- Participants
- Organisation
- University

7.5.1 Reflections on Learning

As part of each module in all three stages of the programme, participants were asked to complete a reflection on the learning arising from each module. This was part of each assessment.

7.5.2 Certificate, Diploma and Dissertation Stages Feedback

At the end of each of the Certificate and Diploma stages the participant was asked to reflect on the programme as a whole using the learning diaries, and additionally to comment on the personal learning taking place as a result of the programme. Also, since there was a residential aspect. Of the programme which included outdoor management skills. This was evaluated by the trainer responsible for the module.

7.6 LL Programme Evaluation Results

This section presents the results and findings arising from the evaluation of the programme and from the analysis of interviews with the KMBC Senior Management team in three main sections:-

- Programme benefits
- Programme Areas for development
- Stakeholder impact

Each section considers issues that are focused on:-

- Participants
- Organisation
- University

7.6.1 Programme Benefits

The information from the evaluation of the programme provided a range of information on the benefits of the programme. These have been presented from the perspectives of the participant, the organisation and the University.

7.6.1.1 Participant Focused Issues

ACC senior managers and participants stated the following success factors:

1. Personal Development

In terms of the aim relating to personal development, part of the assessment process was to get participants to reflect on their learning and how the learning had contributed to personal development.

> *During the past three years of working towards my master's, I have found that I have changed drastically. I am more relaxed and more likely to hold back from jumping in to organise the situation without listening to others around.*

> *No-one can take the individual benefits away, although it's up to me to continue to nurture and develop skills and techniques learned during the programme.*

I have discovered through this programme, the feeling of satisfaction and achievement that comes with continuous learning.

Diploma Participant

2. ICT Issues

The participants were extremely well experienced with ICT and made excellent use of email and the IT infrastructure.

Greater emphasis on the use of IT this year - has encouraged participants to use email and this has led to improvements in communication and greater understanding of assessment requirements.

From 1998 to 1999, the development in using the dedicated web sites improved communication channels, and on one module (leadership) a specific web site was set up for the assessment. This was a subject of a successful paper for an international conference in 2000 by the module leader, as it was acclaimed an example of innovative learning assessment.

3. Career progression

Participants have stated to both LBS and LL that the qualification has helped them to attain professional recognition, and in some cases has led to career progression. In two cases, this has led to promotion outside the organisations, and a further two gained internal promotion. Since the restructure, the organisation is flatter with fewer chances of promotion but more chance of multi-functional project membership. In addition, participants have said that, in a time of potential change, the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and qualification has been a useful career development tool.

This qualification is helpful for career planning. It is unrealistic to expect promotion as a result of this qualification, however I have noticed a change in my management skills and this has led to my being able to bring about changes in my work place. I have used this on my C.V and think I stand a better chance of getting promotion in a new organisation.

(Diploma Student)

4. Increased management skills

One of the aims of this dissertation was to expand my knowledge of certain theories relating to business matters and make me a more competent manager.

(MA participant)

The participants stated they had an increased knowledge of team development, and they attributed this to the inclusion of the residential team-building introductory module. Their decision-making ability improved, as well as their general management and networking skills. This also led to an increase in personal confidence. The aim of the programme is to develop skills and knowledge needed to perform the role of a manager. The questionnaire score at the end of each module to ascertain whether the module aims and objectives had been met was consistently high, with an average mark of 6 from a possible 7 over the whole programme.

The University feedback survey shows that the majority of the participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the structure and content.

7.6.1.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the organisation and programme benefits, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Organisation Support

The LL co-ordinator met the groups regularly on both the learning support day and the normal modules. There was opportunity for participants to speak confidentially to the co-ordinator. When issues were raised these were in turn expressed to the LBS programme leader by the LL co-ordinator.

2. Communications

Regular team meetings were set up to discuss feedback issues and general communications, including programme delivery, evaluation and participant needs. Evaluation and progression information was kept in written format. There was an ongoing, formal meeting per semester, with specific project team members meeting throughout the programme period.

3. Marketing

This was done by LL which promoted the programme through the internal newsletter and training information which was made available to all divisions, and through recommendation from past participants.

4. Leadership and the residential module

LL stated that the priority for this programme was leadership.

> *The main change made was to emphasise leadership and change, whereas before the focus was on more general management aspects.*
>
> Diploma Student

The emphasis from the organisation was to provide managers with practical leadership skills. Whilst they recognised that the normal format of the programme included theoretical and conceptual leadership learning, the organisation discussed the concept of introducing outdoor management techniques as a way of team building. It was therefore agreed that a combination module be set up. This included a residential team-building event which fed in to the normal academic module for leadership. This combination was so successful that the organisation introduced an additional residential module at the beginning of the diploma stage.

> *I have been surprised that two participants on the programme got so much out of it, these were people who resisted change in the past. They are now raring to go! It is as though they have got a second lease of life and when you consider that one of them had major health problems part way through, I thought she would have difficulty on the residential yet she loved it, I think you can judge this a success.*
>
> (LL programme co-ordinator)

The organisation expected to see improvements in the standards of the participants. The senior managers at LL did note an improvement in all the managers who completed the programme. The improvements however did vary. In 85% of the managers' surveys there was a radical improvement, as demonstrated in the quote above. However, in the remaining 15%, the LL senior managers commented that they had expected a greater change.

5. Retention of staff

The LL co-ordinator stated that one of the success factors of the programme was the fact that the staff who had enrolled on the programme stayed with LL throughout the period when the merger took place. She felt these managers would have otherwise changed employment far earlier.

> *My time with Littlewoods Leisure, the sponsor of this dissertation, has not been the most enjoyable time in my life and at times has been unbearable. The course was always seen as the main reason to stay in my present role as the masters qualification was considered to be of value in my future career.*
>
> (MA participant)

Participants in the final MA stage of the programme commented that they would have left the organisation had it not been for the MA, since they felt the qualification would make them more marketable in the future.

7.6.1.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, relating to the University and programme benefits, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Action Learning Dissertation

This stage of the programme received exceptionally high feedback scores (6.5 out of 7). Ten participants started the final stage, they all passed, and it was stated by participants that the IT facilities and action learning format helped that 100% success rate. The action learning dissertation stage had been developed with IT infrastructure, feedback was provided through e-mail and within action learning sets. General group feedback was written up by the action learning tutor with a set of action points arising from each meeting. This was sent to all participants and to the tutor of the other set to ensure effective communications.

2. Tutors and Action Learning Sets

Tutors received consistently high feedback scores The feedback on the programme shows that the tutors gave excellent support and guidance to the participants.

The ratio of staff to participants on the action learning dissertation was excellent (5:1) The two tutors worked together as a cohesive team.

> *Action learning sets were most appropriate given the unique set of circumstances of this group of students.*
>
> (MA participant)

3. Curriculum design and Assessment Process

LL feedback was similar to the feedback from both KMBC and ACC. The group work was viewed by 65% of the LL participant as very positive and a major success factor.

> *Group presentations to top managers were an innovative feature of the programme.*
>
> (Certificate participant)

25% of the participants felt that the group work had given them a higher profile and this had led to a change in their role at work. 25% of the participants had found the group work acceptable, stating that they were neither positive nor negative towards it, whilst 10% of the participant stated that the group work was too challenging and had been confrontational.

4. Pre-programme information

Participants were invited to an open meeting prior to the commencement of the programme where a member from LBS was available to answer questions from potential participants.

7.6.2 Programme Areas for Development

The information from the evaluation of the programme provided a range of information on the programme areas for development. This included information on the perceived negative issues relating to the programme. These have been presented from the perspectives of the participant, the organisation and the University.

7.6.2.1 Participant Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants' perspective concerning programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Student guidance and support

The feedback survey showed that participants were either satisfied or neutral about the strategy for student guidance and support. This lower feedback mark may be associated with the issues to do with feedback, which is mentioned in the section on assessment.

2. Participant Representatives

It was difficult to establish participant representatives on the programme, and the LL co-ordinator stated *"there has not been any interest shown."*

The participant representative system seems to work relatively well on mainstream open programmes. The collaborative programmes are smaller and far more personal. Tutors, managers and participants all work more closely together and any issues are discussed as and when they occur. It is part of University regulations that a Board of Study is set up, and the participants stated that they would attend this but felt the forum unnecessary in their circumstances.

3. Organisation change

The organisation was going through massive change, and the LL Co-ordinator was anxious that whilst participants were improving they were still not willing to challenge and take on the more major change assignments.

> *We need to remind the group of the importance of driving changes at Littlewoods. I am concerned that the groups are still waiting for others to bring about change. We need to really emphasise their own responsibility for change.*
>
> (LL programme co-ordinator)

The reluctance to change was particularly evident when the projects for the dissertation were agreed. The participants had identified the topic, and they then presented the information to a group comprising of three Directors, the LL Co-ordinator and the programme leader from LBS. There was much discussion about the projects. However, the outcome of that meeting was that although the majority of projects were accepted with some modifications, in two cases the Directors felt that the participants were not stretching themselves. They wanted different topics to be concentrated on. After negotiation, the final two topics were agreed. It was evident to the panel that there was a significant difference in topics that the participants wished to pursue and what the organisation felt would bring about change.

Internal restructuring was still taking place within LL, and after the closure of the London Office some participants who wished to progress to the Diploma stage were unable to relocate to the North West. LBS was prepared to negotiate with the staff and devise appropriate methods of learning. However, a number of the staff were made redundant and were not prepared to take on the cost of the Diploma stage.

4. Academic ability

Participants held senior management roles - 35% had professional qualifications but were not graduates. Two participants from the non-graduate entry were not able to sustain the academic demands that were required to progress to the Diploma/Master stages. It was noted however by the programme leader that the other participants who did proceed gained mixed results. Two received very high marks, with a further participant receiving a reasonable pass. The final participant received a border-line pass, so this group gained similar results to the group who had prior qualifications.

7.6.2.2 Organisation Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, regarding the organisation and programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Restructuring

Internal restructuring was still taking place within LL, and this was having repercussions on staff and participants. The uncertainty, especially at the time of the merger with another organisation and after the closure of the London Office, led to staff missing meetings and 4 participants left the organisation and the programme.

2. Communications

Improved communication between JMU and Littlewoods was requested; this followed issues relating to assignments which were delayed in reaching LBS. Additionally, there were issues when participants could not gain access to the LL Co-ordinator who had a very senior role and responsibilities in the newly formed organisation. For one year a training officer was responsible for this, which had led to improvement in communications, but she left and was not replaced.

7.6.2.3 University Focused Issues

The results of the evaluation from the participants, concerning the University and programme areas for development, are collected and coded under the following headings:

1. Communications

The University was requested to set up regular team meetings to discuss PSAADS, programme delivery, evaluation and participant needs. This included evaluation and progression information to be kept in written format (1998/1999).

It was difficult to establish participant representatives on the programme, and there had not been any interest shown. This should have been followed up by the programme manager, but due to her long-term absence (through illness), it was overlooked.

2. Administration

Administration needs to be stabilised and improved. This was a constant issue on the programme. Examples of poor administration include lost documentation, having to train new administrators, and lack of knowledge of programme infrastructure. All staff involved with the programme agreed that the University had not provided effective administrative support for this programme. The demands of participants from external organisations are great, they expect the same level of service as found in their own organisations.

3. IT infra-structure

It was agreed in 1999 that dedicated use of web sites should be implemented on the programme. This started in the next academic year, but owing to the changes and the fact that the programme would not be continuing, this was not fully developed.

4. Assessment

Initially, there was some delay in returning work; however, the introduction of a receipt system and a front sheet on assessments reduced the problem. Confusion existed where participants were given marks on the learning support day and the mark sheets (which provided the feedback as well as the marks) were not sent on.

Participants requested that tutors provide them with more consistent word lengths. The assessment for a number of modules was based on individual assessment where a 5000 word limit was required. Participants asked for more consistency across the modules and more briefing about assignments and written guidelines.

On the first pilot programme, problems did occur in group assessment caused by difficulties in agreeing dates with senior managers in London. This was an isolated occurrence.

5. Mentors

It was difficult to set up an effective mentor system. Participants have stated that they had difficulty in using this resource. LBS ran a mentor workshop for potential mentors at LL prior to the commencement of the programme. This attracted a group of ten potential mentors. The quality of mentoring provision thereafter was patchy. Three of the mentors took the role very seriously and were particularly helpful to the students. This was stated in the participants' learning reflections, and the mentors provided an excellent source of learner support.

The issue with the remaining mentors was varied; four left the organisation in the restructuring and the remaining three were unable to provide the level of support required owing to work commitments.

6. Progression Issues

One of the common issues in collaborative programmes relates to progression issues. Organisations can only release managers on to a programme if they have sufficient managerial capacity to ensure the smooth running of the organisation. In the LL case, the diploma was delayed a year owing to insufficient numbers. They therefore had to run two cohorts of certificate stage participants to attract sufficient numbers to make the diploma viable.

> *The time between the first cohort and the diploma may have led to a lack of enthusiasm, I know of at least one case where the manager just wanted the certificate and was not prepared to wait.*
>
> (MA participant)

In the above instance participants were not prepared to wait for another year and left the programme after the Certificate stage.

7.6.3 Stakeholder Involvement

The stakeholders were similar to those at KMBC and Littlewoods, and included:

1. Organisation

- Co-ordinator
- Champions
- Mentors (mixed views on whether this was successful)
- Line Managers
- Senior Managers
- Participants
- The Group Work

2. University

- Programme Leader
- Tutors

3. Other

- Participants' Family

7.7 Conclusions

1. This will be presented in terms of:
2. The key factors from the consultation and design phase
3. The success factors arising from the programme under the three headings:
4. participant, the organisation and the University.
5. The development factors under the three headings.
6. Stakeholder involvement

TABLE 7.7 PROGRAMME (LL) RESULTS OVERALL PLAN

CONSULTATION STAGE	PROGRAMME PLUS POINTS	PROGRAMME AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	STAKEHOLDERS INVESTMENT
1. PARTICIPANT • Personal skills, issues and entitlements	**1. PARTICIPANT** • ICT issues • Career progression • Improved managerial skills • Personal development	**1. PARTICIPANT** • Student guidance and support • Participant representatives • Organisational change • Academic ability	**1. PARTICIPANT** • Participant • Participant's family • Other group mentors
2. ORGANISATION	**2. ORGANISATION** • Organisation support • Communication • Marketing • Leadership • Retention of staff • Benchmarking	**2. ORGANISATION** • Restructuring • Communication	**2. ORGANISATION** • Champions • Co-ordinators • Line Managers • Senior managers (LL) • Councillors
3. UNIVERSITY • Teaching and resource issues • Programme management • Benchmarking • Assessment • Learning contract • Innovative assessment (IT) • Group presentation	**3. UNIVERSITY** • Action learning Dissertation • Tutors • Curriculum design • Pre-programme information	**3. UNIVERSITY** • Communication • Administration • IT infrastructure • Absence • Mentors • Progression	**3. UNIVERSITY** • Tutors • Programme management (LBS)

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the relationships of the parties and how effective management of this process will provide a framework for effective management learning. It will:

- Discuss the implications of the research on the research questions
- Describe the findings relating to the overarching conceptual framework for management learning and the extent to which the review of the literature has developed the infrastructure for management learning
- Explain how the research methodology has provided the infrastructure on which to develop the details required in the development of a management learning framework
- Determine the key stages and impact of the consultation phase on the research study, which are presented under the three themes discussed earlier
- Discuss the results of the combined results extracted from the three case studies
- Develop the framework of effective management learning based on the concepts that underpin management learning and the results from the three case studies
- Recommend areas for further research.

8.2 Implications for Research Questions and Aims of the Research

The first part of this Section describes the extent that the research addresses the Research questions, the second part discusses how the aims have been met. Each question will be provided, followed by information on how it has been answered through this research:

8.2.1 Research Question One - Discussion and Conclusions

In what ways could management learning programmes contribute to the organisational change management agenda?

This is answered through a review of the literature in Chapter two (Section 2.3) which discusses the changing role of managers and of the wider field of management (Burnes, 1996; Prince and Stewart, 2000; Maund, 2001; Sections 2.4 and 2.5). This describes the needs for managers to think critically, strategically and innovatively (Salaman and Butler, 1990 and Boak et al., 1997) in order to meet the needs from within organisations for managers to be able to manage change effectively. The results of the three case studies show significant success factors arising from the research on one of the three main stakeholders, which is the organisation (Table 8.3). Additionally through the assessment of each of the programmes, major change projects have been undertaken within the organisations, which have contributed to change (Sections 5.6.2.1.2 and 5.6.2.2.5). The extent of that change has however been limited, and could have been more significant if the organisations had been more responsive to requests for meaningful projects for participants to work on and had acted more often on the recommendations of the participants (Section 5.6.3.2.4). The feedback from all three case studies supports this view, although to different degrees.

8.2.2 Research Question Two - Discussion and Conclusions

Could action research principles and training and development techniques be used more effectively in management education to produce a better experience?

Question two discusses two issues: the first relates to action research and the second to training and development needs. These will be answered independently. The impact of action research on management learning programmes is discussed in Sections 3.9. And 3.10, which describe the conceptual areas that underpin action research and action learning (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991). The literature confirms that the method is widely used on master's programmes in the University sector, but is often limited to final year projects (Margerison 1991). The results of the case studies described in the research suggests that action research is powerful and can be used at all levels of the programme. The results described in the thesis suggest that overall the assessment strategy is effective. This includes the involvement of senior managers from the organisations:

- in the decision making process when identifying the topics for the assessment

- at the presentation stage when learner-managers present their results
- on completion of the assessment when implementing the recommendations, and/or communicating what will be done with the recommendations

The use of both individual projects and, more significantly, group work as part of a management learning programme has thus brought about change. Action research is also referred to in Section 8.5.2.

In terms of using training and development methods more widely, the literature suggests a resistance by management educators to using management development techniques (Woodall 1998) which some would consider superficial and training orientated (Section 2.8). Management is a complex area but managers look for the best ways to manage, lead and to embody the team player (Lees 1992), and they need practical models and learning methods that they can relate to (Section 2.6.2). The literature suggests that using a diverse range of training and learning methods aid the learning process. An example of this is the use of outdoor management techniques as part of the induction to develop team building and team leadership qualities, which was a major success for LL (Section 7.3.2.2.8). Additionally, using wider techniques and presenting learning using the best information and communications infrastructure possible, which includes the use of information technology (IT) improves communication between the stakeholders and enriches the learning experience for the manager.

8.2.3 Research Question Three - Discussion and Conclusions

In what ways could collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the sponsoring organisation, affect the management learning experience?

This is discussed in Section 1.1.5, where a brief description of partnerships and collaboration is provided, and in Section 2.10 where more detail is provided on the practical implications within the University sector (Boot and Evans 1990, Keithley and Redman 1997). These suggest the need for Universities to develop this area not only for networking and educational purposes, but also as a means of sustaining growth and financial benefits (Kennedy and Mason 1993, Fox 1997 and Brown 1999). The literature overall supports the use of partnerships and collaboration between organisations and higher education. The results described in the cases (Chapters 5-7) confirm the views elicited in the literature and are demonstrated by the success of the collaborative programmes where the success factors and benefits for all three partners are fully documented and these outweigh the negative impact of the collaborations.

8.2.4 Research Question Four - Discussion and Conclusions

How could management learning practices in LBS be improved?

This is informed by the results of the cases, which has led to dissemination of good practice. This research can now be taken and applied on other programmes and will be the next stage in the research progresses and is discussed in Section 8.8.

8.2.5 Aims of Research

The aims of the research, described in Section 1.4 are met in the following ways:

1. through an analysis of how the concepts of management learning work in practice which is described in Chapter Two and Section 8.2 with the contribution to knowledge discussed in Section 8.3 and Section 8.8
2. the validation of this emerging subject area and reinforcement of its importance is discussed throughout this chapter (e.g. Section 2.17.2) but is most apparent in Section 8.8
3. the gap between the wide range of ideas for effective management learning and the lack of cohesion and synthesis in the literature is described in Section 8.3 and ways of bridging the gap is described in Section 8.3, 8.5 and 8.8.5
4. through a framework for good practice in management learning which is provided in Section 8.8.5.

8.3 Management Learning Conceptual Framework

Management learning as an emerging subject area draws on literature from both management education and management development (Burgoyne and Reynolds 1997 and Brown 1999). The research described in the thesis endorses the pragmatic view that the impact of management learning can be maximised by taking the most appropriate learning from both subject areas. Chapter two provides information on the diverse areas of management learning and the subject areas that underpin it. There is however little cohesion in the area and this is where the researcher considers there is a gap in the literature which the framework described in Section 8.8.5 seeks to address. In the political and business world the term 'joined-up' best describes the gap. There is a lack of joined-up thinking in terms of the strategy for management learning. Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) argue that when defining or mapping the field of management learning the most appropriate approach is a 'no map' approach which encourages an 'open door' approach and freedom to draw on a wide range of literature. The researcher maintains that if the area of management learning is to be utilised more widely especially by management practitioners, then the area should be more clearly defined. By having a framework for management learning managers will be able to operationalise the concepts more widely and effectively.

The research has impacted on both the University and the organisation and therefore the context is relevant and inexplicably linked to the research undertaken which confirms the literature relating to the domains of management learning described in Section 2.5.1. The review of literature also provides a wealth of information on the design and delivery of management learning programmes (Sections 2.11 to 2.15) which was the basis for the consultation stage of the first programme. The key issues arising from the review of the literature relating to programme design, links to the following research questions and include:

1. work-based qualifications leading to organisational change (Section 2.4) are in demand and there is continued growth in higher education (Peters 1987, Prince and Stewart 2000). The impact of these programmes should raise their profile and may lead to additional resources. This links to research question 1.
2. management learning must focus on the role of the manager, which should be aligned to organisational strategy, focus on learning and work in partnership with others (Boak et al. 1997 and Thomson et al. 1997 in Section 2.4). This links to research questions 2 and 3.

3. the most suitable management learning programme for the research purposes described in the thesis, determined at the consultation stage was not competence based but led to a master's award.
4. past learning experiences were reviewed in developing and running effective management learning programmes and it was agreed to use a diverse set of methods and management development techniques (Thomson et al. (1997). This links to research question 2.
5. evidence of good practice and issues to avoid are discussed, which did impact on the case studies. This is described at the end of each case study and is summarised in Sections 8.7 and 8.8. This links to research question 4.
6. being explicit about the stakeholder's relationship and the responsibilities is important and the development of a learning agreement will articulate this (Section 8.5.3). This links to research question 3.

8.4 Impact of the Research Methodology on the Research.

Chapter three defines and outlines the methodology most appropriate to the needs of this research study. A grounded case study approach was used (Section 3.5.1.1) which used a range of sources of information and a multi-method approach.

Each of the three case studies adopted a longitudinal action research approach, which led to three case studies, which allowed constant monitoring and reviewing the changes over an extended period of time. The most appropriate research methodology described in the thesis is based on a phenomenological stance and a grounded, inductive approach. The research strategy is a longitudinal case study implemented through action research, to enable a grounded approach at exploratory, descriptive and explanatory levels. A critical review of the most appropriate research methods has been included in Section 3.12

The research methodology was both systematic and rigorous and allowed for growth and change as the research developed, but it was also complex and fragmented. The data was gathered from a number of different sources which provided triangulation of data and therefore more consistency and accuracy over a lengthy period from 1994-2001. There was however a gap of approximately 18 months when the research was suspended due to unforeseen circumstances (ill health) of the researcher. This led to a delay in the presentation of the data findings and the development of the thesis. The sheer amount of data became unwieldy and difficult to analyse due to the lapse of time. There was also a danger that the innovative nature of the research would be diminished and the data would be out-dated if this research were not completed in a relatively short space of time, which has been done.

8.5 Discussion and Impact arising from the three Case Studies.

The main features emerging from the data from the combined results of the case studies stress the importance of the consultation stage, action research, the development of learning agreements and the impact of stakeholders. These will be discussed as follows:

8.5.1 Consultation Stage

The consultation stage is seen as an important and crucial stage in the development of management learning programmes. It is also important to spend time with the organisation to help break down any barriers or preconceptions about universities, and to gain the trust of the organisation. This stage consists of the stakeholders discussing the partnership agreement and making explicit what each party requires from it. The consultation stage for each of the programmes discussed in the thesis lasted between 3 and 6 months and the stakeholders were all senior managers and academics. The consultation stage has been described in detail at the beginning of each of the three case studies. Whilst the information that follows relates to the research described in the thesis, the results have been consistent over the three case studies which represent both the private and public sector. It is therefore proposed that these factors could be applied to other master's level management learning programmes. The key elements from the combined evaluation of the three case studies are shown below in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Consultation Stage Overview

CONSULTATION STAGE KEY ELEMENTS
• Prior knowledge • Pre-programme information • Participant motivation • Managerial requirements of programme • Setting performance indicators • Qualifications • Progression

1. Prior Knowledge and Pre-Programme information

It was important to determine the extent of prior knowledge the managers had before attending the programme. A survey was conducted and the results showed that 85% of the participants had little or no knowledge of management or leadership theory. It was then recognised that because management is an applied science that professional experience would help in their understanding of the conceptual models and theories and it was therefore agreed to set an entry limit of three years middle management experience as an entry requirement for the programme. The theoretical framework commenced at the pre-programme stage, where selected texts and information were sent to the participants to be read prior to the commencement of the programme.

2. Participant Motivation, requirements of the programme and qualification

Managers' motivations for taking the programme were similar to those discussed in the literature (Keithley and Redman 1997 and Pareja-Torres 2000). It was noted that motivation for taking management programmes differed. One recurring factor seen as a key motivator in terms of management learning is the acquisition of a postgraduate qualification. This is demonstrated in the LL example, which used the qualification for career development, and additionally to retain staff following a merger and this was achieved (Section 7.6.1.2.5). Evidence from the participants showed they had stayed in the organisation because of this qualification. Additionally, managers stated the importance of professional recognition. Since the field of management learning recognises the contribution of the professional practitioner, recognition of professional practice can be through membership of a professional body, most of whom request evidence of continuous development and these programmes contribute to that record.

The highest response rate for what motivated staff to attend the programme was the need for improved knowledge of managerial and leadership theory. Managers from all three organisations acknowledge their lack of perceived knowledge of management and leadership theory and knowledge. The managers often found that they gained more confidence from reading theory because this provided feedback on what they had done in practice.

The order for what motivated managers to attend the programme is described below in priority order as:

- Improving management theory
- Improved management skills
- Acquisition of a qualification
- To be a better manager
- Improved networking
- Improved chances of promotion
- Paid for by the employer.

The higher-ranking motivators have been described; sponsorship was ranked at the lower end. The fact that the management learning programme was supported in terms of time was seen as a motivating factor but that it was paid for by the employer was rated less highly.

3. Progression

This has been an issue at the consultation stages of the programmes. Due to the numbers involved on collaborative programmes, there is a likelihood that managers may have to wait until there are sufficient numbers before they can attend the next stage.

4. Performance Indicators

It was noted that performance indicators were not set by any of the three organisations. There had been stated aims and objectives at each of the consultation phases of the case studies but emerging data suggests that this was something that should have been established. This may be due to the fact that when the programmes were developing performance indicators were relatively new and have since gathered popularity.

8.5.2 Action Research

As part of the articulation of requirements from a management learning partnership, it is recommended that action research principles be adopted so that impact on organisations maximises the opportunities to bring about change (Gill and Johnston 1991 and Sunders 2000). The research described in the thesis suggests that action research principles are not being effectively used within business and management schools. A plethora of master's programmes claim to be based on action research, but according to Mumford (1995), this activity is often limited to final year dissertation students through the provision of action learning sets. These sets provide backup and support for managers, but the interaction and dialogue is between two key stakeholders, the University and the learner-manager, and there is normally no external validation of the effect of the research on the organisation. Both manager and academic have different agendas, and in the discussion that takes place in action learning sets, it is conjectured that organisational impact is diminished. The impact and involvement of senior managers within organisations has been discussed in the literature and is backed up by the results reported in this research study which are discussed in Section 8.2.2. Through this involvement the impact of change within organisations will increase. The two main issues emerging from this research include:

1. Action research should be integrated for use throughout a management learning programme. In this research study, groups worked on individual change projects as part of the assessment strategy, which were then presented to senior managers. They then considered these change projects for implementation. Although some participants thought this was a daunting task, the overall feedback was positive and increased the profile of the participants, as well as providing the programme with a higher profile, and the organisation gained from the changes. There was therefore a significant gain for each of the three stakeholders. This was on-going from the Certificate stage.

2. Action learning sets normally involve the manager and the academic; both have positions to defend or uphold. The academic will want a qualification that meets academic requirements and is rigorous. The manager may, having considered the academic requirements, decide to go for a low-risk strategy ensuring that academic needs are met, arguably at the expense of organisational change, which may be a higher-risk strategy. One potential way around this is to adopt a third party into the learning agreement. This third stakeholder will verify what organisational change is required in negotiation with the manager and the tutor and may also provide on-going coaching and/or mentor support.

8.5.3 Learning Agreements

As described in Section 2.7.1, it is essential to articulate the extent of the management learning relationship. This can be done informally, but when developing master's provision, which already requires explicit quality assurance mechanisms, it is recommended that a learning agreement be set up. The degree of formality will depend on the organisation and the relationships of the stakeholders. One of the essential elements in developing this framework is the extent that the relationships between the three should be made explicit, and one of the findings from this research therefore recommends the development of an explicit learning agreement between the stakeholders.

The concept of a learning agreement was formed in the partnership with KMBC and they were subsequently adopted in all three case studies described in Chapters 5-7, As described in Table 6.6, ACC developed a learning agreement based on stakeholder commitments and entitlements. This document was issued at open days and was part of a discussion, which was referred to again at the induction stage of the programme. The manager, organisation and the University were party to the document but it was not signed by the stakeholders. Littlewoods Leisure wanted it's learning agreement more formalised (Table 7.1). The document was far more detailed and each party signed and dated the agreement. It was felt that having articulated the positions of all three stakeholders and their responsibilities this would lead to a more effective management learning partnership. The process of negotiating and developing the learning agreement with the participants, organisation and University was an important part of the process which clarified and informed the parties and led to improved communications and value.

8.5.4 Stakeholders and Management Learning

Management learning affects a number of people and the stakeholders in any partnership must be aware of the implications. The list of stakeholders from this research include:

- Participants
- Participants family
- Group members
- Champion and/or mentor
- Organisation Co-ordinator
- Line manager
- Senior managers
- Councillors
- Programme Leader LBS
- Tutors

In any partnership, it is essential to identify the key stakeholders (Boot and Evans 1990, Ormerod 1996, Keithley and Redman 1997). In this instance, these were the organisational co-ordinator, the programme leader from LBS, and the learner-manager (participant).

Management development and learning is however different from staff development, since managers have the additional dimension of being responsible for staff, their development has direct impact on others, and therefore in any learning programme it is preferable to elicit support and feedback from others within the organisation. In the research study, this included line managers, champions who acted as mentors and presented personal examples of best practice, as well as senior managers and councillors who were a key part of the assessment process.

When developing the support infrastructure for learning activities, consideration must also take into account the participants' family, since the type of management learning programme suggested in this instance has far-reaching effects, and the time commitment is considerable.

8.6 Success and Development Factors in the Design and Delivery of Award-bearing Programmes

This section refers to the combined results from the research methods for the three case studies. This includes the evaluation of the programmes through a variety of methods including surveys, interview analysis and focus groups. The results will be presented from three perspectives, the individual, the organisation and the University. A number of these issues have already been referred to earlier in this chapter and where this is the case a reference will be made to the earlier information to save repetition. As stated earlier in this chapter, the case studies represent organisations from both the public and private sector and the conclusions drawn can be extended beyond this research and has implications in the design and delivery of other management learning programmes.

8.6.1 Success factors for individual managers

The information relating to the success factors for individual managers from the three case studies is shown in Table 8.2:

Table 8.2 Programme Success Factors – Individual Focused Issues

PROGRAMME SUCCESS FACTORS-Individual Focused Issues
• Personal objectives and development • Insight • Managerial Skills • Career development and progression • Interpersonal • Flexibility and change orientated • Training for the future • Learner Support • Group work and presentations

The combination of development techniques, emphasis on the curriculum and content, reflections on learning combined with a Master's qualification, provided a learning experience that went further than imparting knowledge. It also allowed the managers over time to reflect on the knowledge, to try out new ideas, thereby improving a range of management skills and affecting behaviour. The case study results demonstrate that the programme overall met the personal objectives for individual managers and helped develop their management skills, which includes improvements in attitudes and skills such as insight, interpersonal skills, being flexible and change management techniques. Reflecting on learning, was an integral part of the assessment process for all assessment, which attracted academic credit. Through the use of this method managers were able to identify the changes that had happened over the period of the programme and they were encouraged to set personal objectives for the next stage of the programme.

Managers also stated that they used this programme for career development purposes. The managers required learner support from a number of key stakeholders, including their line manager, organisation co-ordinator; senior managers and the University described in Section 8.5.4. The focus of the programmes was on getting managers to think more strategically and the results demonstrate that this has occurred.

The results arising from the impact of the group work (Section 5.4.5) on the learner-managers fell largely into two categories. Participants were either very supportive of it or the direct opposite (Section 5.6.2.2.5). The majority view was supportive and because the presentations were normally to a panel of Director level managers in their organisations, this provided the participants with a very high profile. 65% of the participants valued this experience, but 35% felt it too demanding and stressful. Other positive issues reported by managers from undertaking these group presentations were improved networking opportunities, more confidence and improved presentation techniques. Other factors that affected the participant's views included the marks they achieved, there was a correlation with lower marks attracting more criticism of the process and higher marks rating the process highly. Also where groups had difficulty with group members, this often attracted lower ratings in terms of overall satisfaction.

8.6.2 Organisation Focused Success Factors

The information relating to the success factors for individual managers from the three case studies is shown in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 Programme Success Factors – Organisation Focused Issues

PROGRAMME SUCCESS FACTORS-Organisation Focused Issues
• Best Value • ICT issues • HR planning • Retention of staff • Champions and mentors • Culture • IiP • Benchmarking • Reputation

One of the key success factors taken from the ACC Programme is the focus on Best Value. This common theme has given the programme a clear focus and enabled the managers to present work to staff responsible for this area. The fact that this was part of a national agenda has given the managers a further dimension to the normal organisational strategic focus adopted from most programmes. Themed management development programmes are gaining popularity and its effectiveness is borne out in this research study.

The management learning infrastructure that was required to support a major off-site programme included an effective ICT infrastructure. This worked well at the university end, but the organisation did have severe difficulties accessing it due to internal 'firewalls'. These difficulties were overcome by use of home computers and the training centre where open access is allowed. A number of public sector organisations have these restrictions and this is therefore likely to impact on other programmes.

Champions received excellent feedback ratings, especially when they acted as mentors to the participants. The mentor system worked well at both local authority venues but not so well at LL, where the organisation lost so many key staff the mentors became too thinly spread. The strength of the champion/mentors was described as being able to ground the knowledge imparted by tutors on the programme through personal experiences from another member of their own organisation. The mentors were all required to attend a half-day training session on mentor techniques.

The organisation was better able to plan by helping managers learn and plan for change; additionally, the results from the organisation representatives state that these learning programmes had brought about change which affected the culture within the organisation. The Investors in People Award helped fund the master's programmes in each of the organisations. There was a symbiotic relationship between the award and the master's programme. Each organisation needed evidence of effective management development and this programme had the stature to do this. Finally, the organisations stated that they wanted to link with a university because it was seen as a prestigious institution, in all three cases they had not worked with the higher education sector before. The organisations did however have extensive experience of working with training providers and further education colleges.

Retention of staff has already been discussed in this chapter. The main issue is that each organisation wanted a qualification and management development that would encourage staff to become better managers and remain in the organisation through periods of major restructuring. This was most evident at LL.

8.6.3 University Focused Success Factors

The information relating to the success factors for individual managers from the three case studies is shown in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Programme Success Factors – University Focused Issues

PROGRAMME SUCCESS FACTORS-University Focused Issues
• Consultation phase • Pre-programme information, application process • Tutors and staff • Curriculum • Action Learning dissertation • Key modules • Group work and presentations

The University gained major research opportunities through this collaborative venture. Staff and tutors had to ensure that their presentation style and materials were both current and relevant, and that the curriculum was well designed and fit for purpose.

The key success factors have been verified in a number of ways, by External Examiners, by other organisations whose representatives regularly request LBS to tender for work, other academics who have used this programme as a model within their own universities and perhaps most importantly through Subject Review. At the LBS Subject Review for Postgraduate Programmes, the programmes described in the thesis were commended for their innovative design, excellent learning and teaching methods and style, such as the residential team-building event, as well as the assessment strategy (more specifically relating to the group presentations to senior managers).

The action learning dissertation achieved 100% success rates and attracted excellent feedback. It is interesting to note that of the ten managers who completed the final MA stage of the programme only three had first degrees.

8.7 Negative Impact of Programme

There were a number of issues arising from the data that were negative and/or areas for further development; these have been categorised under the headings of the individual, the organisation and the University. These results have implications outside the case studies and could impact on a range of other similar programmes. Issues are as follows:

8.7.1 Individual Focused Areas for Development

The combined results of the individual-focused areas of development are shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5 Programme Development Areas – Individual Focused Issues

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AREAS-Individual focused
• Job enhancement and role • More and better use of participants • Honesty and openness • HR planning • Leadership • Progression

Whilst the model developed for this research is to establish an effective management learning framework, it is also important to be aware of possible pitfalls and problem areas to be avoided in this type of management learning activity.

This includes the fact that these programmes demonstrate through the results that they increase a manager's expectations within the organisation. The three organisations discussed in this research are typical of the market place and with leaner, flatter hierarchies there have been less chances of promotion. The organisations have compensated for this by developing a range of activities such as secondments; job shadowing and sideways moves but these have only been short-term solutions that have not normally led to permanent changes. Where managers were able to use their skills, they were highly motivated, and recognised that the management learning programme had played a major part in gaining recognition in the organisation. Where the skills had not been used, managers felt very deflated on having been through such a programme to find that there was then no opportunity to use their new found skills. As discussed earlier, this did lead to managers looking for new jobs outside the organisation, which had actually sponsored the programme.

Honesty and openness is not always realistic in such programmes, especially when the group is presenting work to senior managers who were responsible for some of the topic areas presented by the participants. A number of participants said they were not willing to be fully honest and frank at the presentations because of the chance of retribution by the senior manager. These comments were however rare, and the majority of the participants stated that the culture allowed them to be relatively open and honest in their presentations. It was noted that the negative impact of the presentations tended to be more of an issue with the private sector participants, and those staff within the public sector felt more able to be honest in their approach. Progression has already been discussed in Section 8.5.1.

8.7.2 Organisation Focused Areas for Development

The combined results of the organisation-focused areas of development are shown in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 Programme Development Areas – Organisation Focused Issues

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AREAS-Organisation Focused Issues
• Participant guidance and support • Communication • Mentors/ Re-structuring • Action research/ Implementing recommendations/ managing change • Benchmarking

Support for participants has been an area for development. This is in terms of administrative support from within the organisation, which caused a number of communication problems. This led to University staff having additional work in terms of supporting the participants. Another weaker area related to mentoring provision. As described earlier, mentors are seen as very beneficial to participants. In the case of LL this was limited by the re-structuring which caused a shortage of mentors, and in the Local Authorities, some of the champions did provide mentoring support but others did not. Comments were received from participants that the more senior staff were excellent as guest speakers but were not likely to be approached for mentor support. The outcome of the research suggests that there may be two roles, one for the speaker on the taught modules and one for the mentor who supports the participants in between the modules. It may be the same person but is more likely to be two.

The negative impact of action research relates to the outcomes of group work not being fully utilised, this is commented upon in the section on action research (Section 8.5.2). Benchmarking overall was rated highly but there was negative feedback about the difficulty of gaining access to some organisations.

8.7.3 University Focused Areas for Development

The combined results of the organisation-focused areas of development are shown in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7 Programme Development Areas – University Focused Issues

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AREAS-University Focused Issues
• Participant representatives • Tutors • Administration • IT infrastructure • Assessment

The student/participant representative systems, which are used extensively in the University sector on open programmes, were not seen as relevant on these collaborative programmes. When issues arose they required quick response times and by the time Boards of Study met these issues were not relevant. There was also far more dialogue between the participants, the programme leader and the organisation co-ordinator. It is clear from the results of the research that the normal University administrative support infrastructure is not sufficient when dealing with these specialised management learning programmes. The response rates to requests for communications need to be fast and systems set up to get back to participants when there are delays. Participants basically want an administrative support system that meets their expectations, which are normally modelled on their own organisation support systems.

Tutors need to be up to date and flexible in terms of their approaches to teaching. It was evident at the beginning of the KMBC programme that some tutors had not tailored their teaching to the programme requirements. The emphasis on having better presentation styles and more relevant curriculum and teaching information has had an impact within the school, since these tutors adopt the same methods on the mainstream open programmes. More feedback on assessment was requested from tutors.

The IT infrastructure can be difficult for reasons discussed earlier (Section 8.6.2) sector owing to security systems adopted within the public sector.

8.8 Recommendations from Research

There are a number of recommendations arising from the research described within the thesis. These include the following:

8.8.1 Action Research

Action research should not be restricted to the final dissertation stage of management master's programmes, it is recommended for use at all stages of such programmes. Where action learning sets are formed on management master's programmes, the involvement of a senior manager from the organisation should be considered to verify what organisational change is required in negotiation with the manager and the tutor and also to provide on-going coaching and/or mentor support. The involvement of senior managers from the organisations is recommended:

- at the decision making stage when identifying the topics for the assessment
- at the presentation stage (if applicable) when learner-managers present their results
- as a mentor and learner-support for the participant throughout the programme
- on completion of the assessment when implementing the recommendations, and/or communicating what will be done with the recommendations

8.8.2 Stakeholders

Management learning affects a number of people and the stakeholders in any partnership must be aware of the implications. The identification of stakeholders should take place at the consultation stage of a management learning programme and consideration should be given to the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders which should be formalised in a learning agreement. The list of stakeholders from this research include:

Table 8.8 Key stakeholders for management learning programmes

Key stakeholders for management learning programmes	
• Participants • Participants family • Group members • Champion and/or mentor • Organisation Co-ordinator	• Line manager • Senior managers • Councillors • Programme Leader LBS • Tutors

8.8.3 Learning Agreements

It is recommended that a learning agreement be set up for management learning programmes wherever possible. The degree of formality will depend on the organisation and the relationships of the stakeholders. One of the essential elements in developing this framework is the extent that the relationships between the three should be made explicit.

8.8.4 Programme Design

There have been a number of suggestions discussed throughout this thesis, which have impact on other management learning programmes. These include:

1. diverse set of training and learning methods and knowledge (Section 2.17.1) drawn from management education and development practices should be considered to maximise management learning
2. work-based qualifications leading to organisational change are in demand and will raise the University profile and may lead to additional resources
3. management learning must focus on the role of the manager, which should be aligned to the organisational strategy, focus on learning and work in partnership with others
4. the qualification is still a valuable motivator in the University sector
5. evidence of good practice from similar programmes should be researched as a basis for the consultation phase of management learning programmes
6. research on programme design suggests potential problem areas which should be considered in new programme design
7. being explicit about the stakeholders relationship and the roles and responsibilities is essential in management learning partnerships
8. that learning agreements are considered for effective communication of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in management learning.

8.8.5 Establishing a framework for management learning

The major issues arising from the conceptual review established a gap in the literature as described in Section 8.3. This is referred to as a lack of joined-up thinking in terms of the strategy for management learning. The researcher maintains that if the area of management learning is to be utilised more widely especially by management practitioners, then the area should be more accessible. The following Section suggests a framework for management learning arising from the research described in the thesis to bridge the gap that currently exists. This is not put forward as a definitive framework it is offered as a developing framework, which researchers can consider and apply to their own unique situations. Figure 8.1 describes the emerging framework drawn from the review of the conceptual basis for management learning.

Figure 8.1 Emerging Conceptual Framework for Management Learning

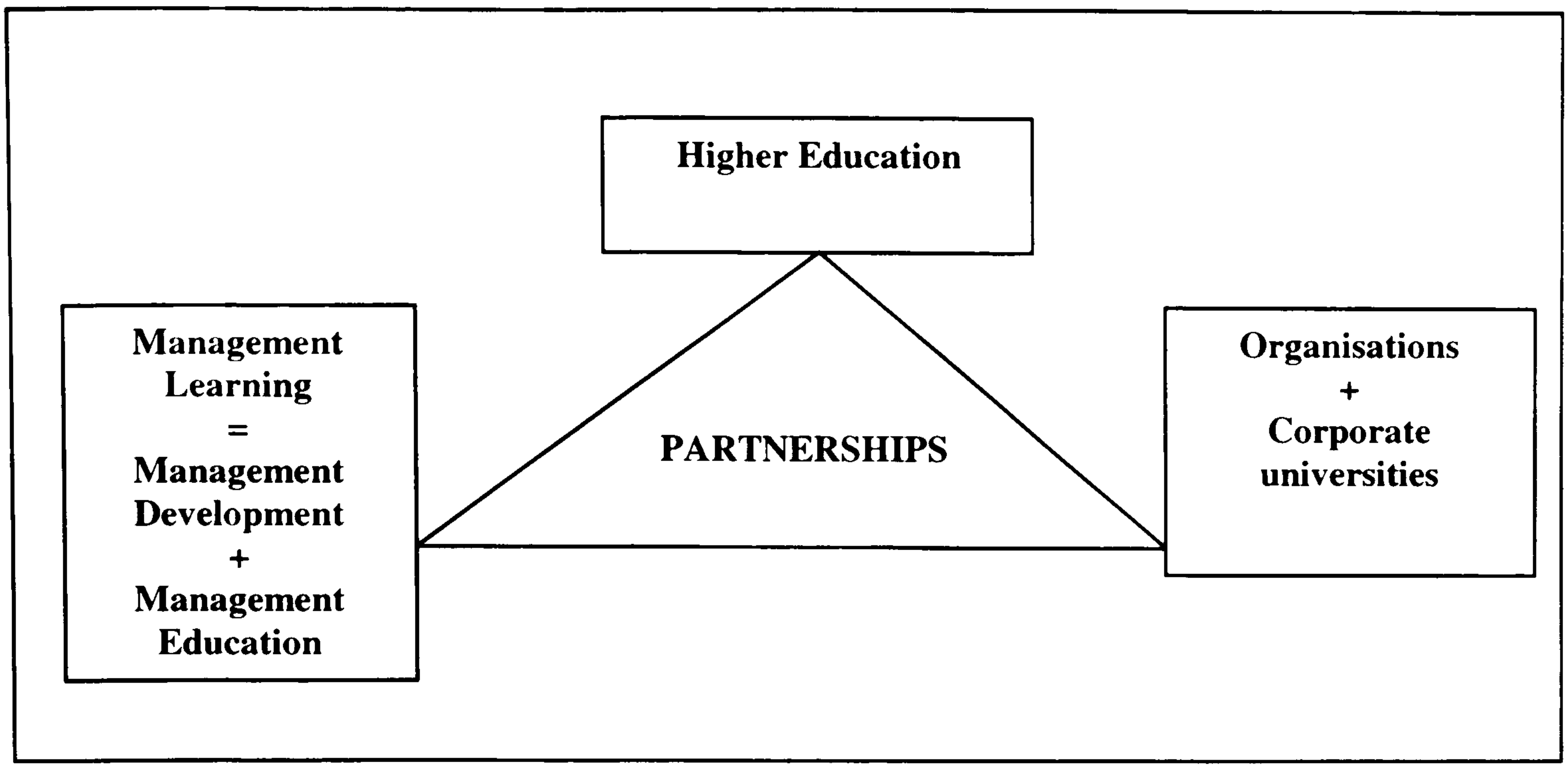
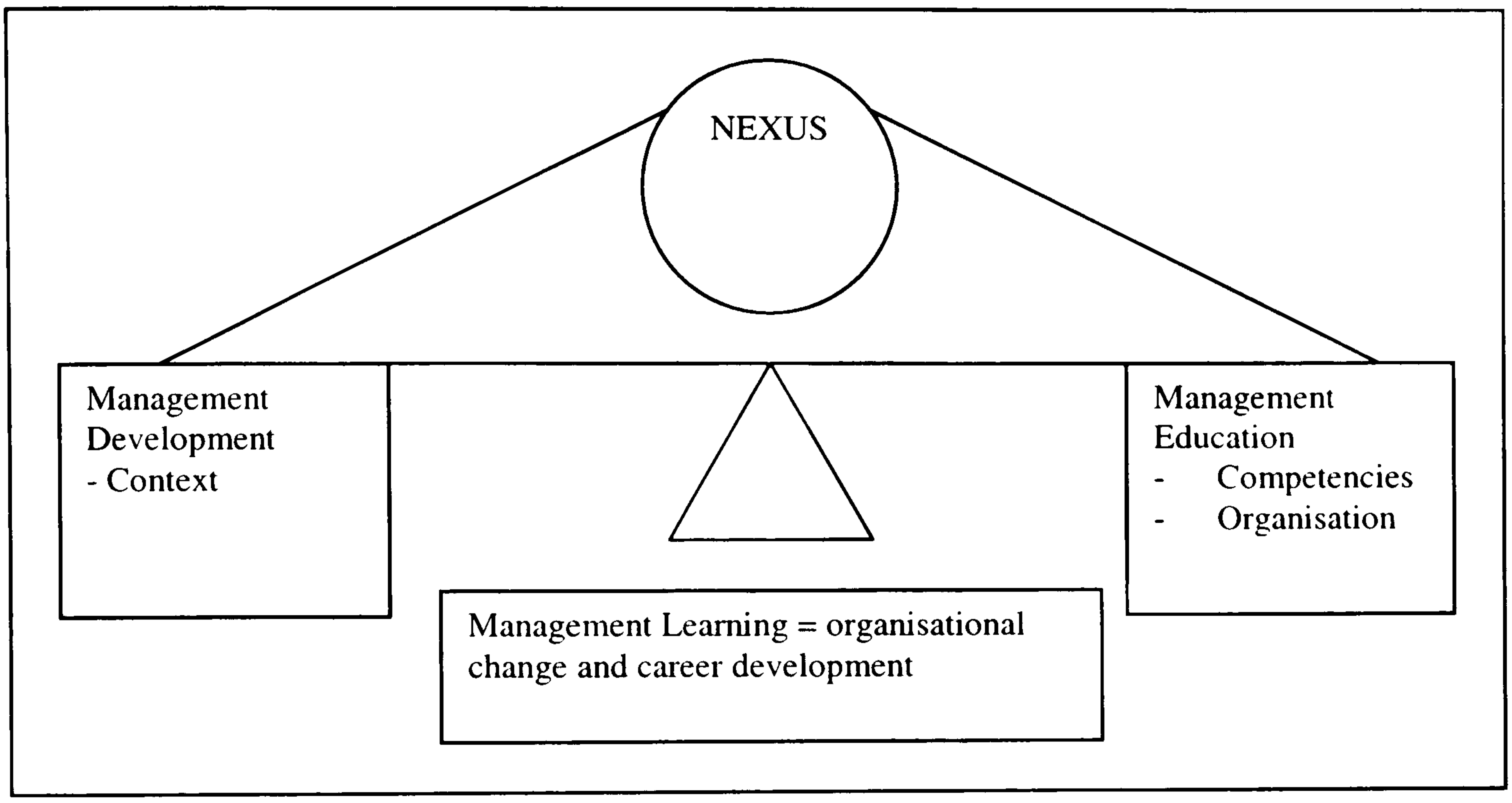


Figure 8.1 describes the three key stakeholders identified in this research study. Management learning is described as an amalgam of management education and development. The organisation includes corporate universities. The interaction of the organisation and management learning with the third party, higher education is shown as a partnership, which inextricably links the three areas.

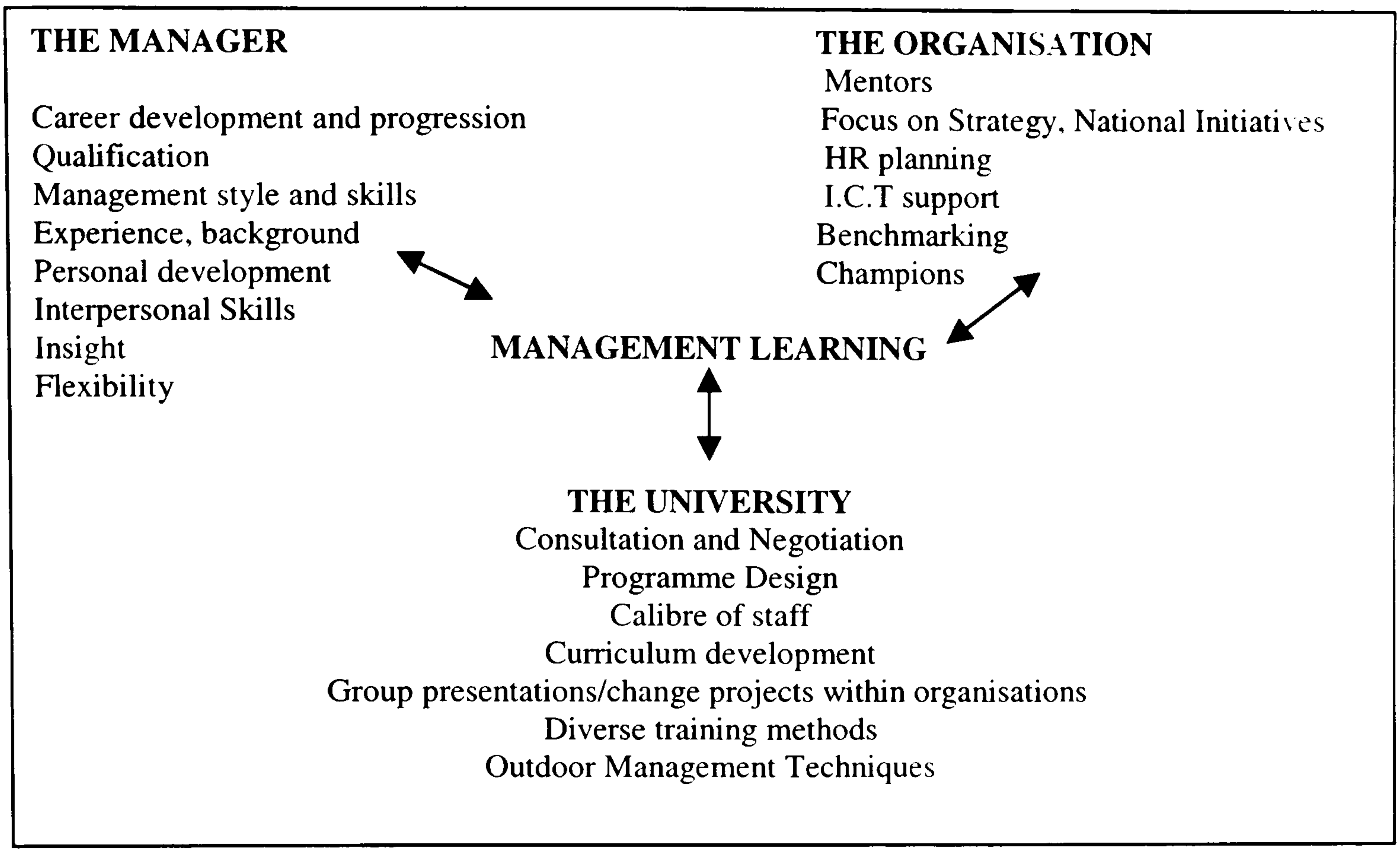
The nexus between management development and management education was discussed in Chapter Two. Figure 8.2 suggests another way of describing the emerging management learning framework which is focused more on the context of the areas that underpin management learning. This is described by the researcher as a see-saw approach. At one end of the spectrum is management development, which is situated in organisations, primarily work based, often competency-led and mainly delivered by private sector training providers. At the other end of the spectrum management education focuses on academic qualifications, is curriculum and assessment driven and is delivered predominately by the higher education sector. The management education and development nexus is described in Section 2.9 and is seen as largely overlapping areas which are difficult to differentiate in some areas and over a period of time are moving into each others markets. The linking of the two to extract the best possible management learning experience is what this framework sets out to achieve. Management learning is described as a mixture of both organisational change and career development. In order to maximise management learning, as described earlier it is essential to draw on both the practices in both fields. Therefore management learning is seen as pivotal, drawing on the most relevant activities from the management development and management education subject areas. This then needs to be articulated, and one suggested way of doing this is through a learning agreement.

Figure 8.2 Management Development and Education See-Saw



The final figure (Figure 8.3) describes the context of management learning and it is suggested that this framework is more appropriate for use with managers. This model draws on the three partners (manager, organisation and University) and then suggests the activities which have been drawn from the results of the three case studies, that impact on each of those stakeholders. This list is not exhaustive and dependent upon different management learning relationships and partnerships the list could be adapted for use in a wide range of other management learning partnerships and/or programmes. In this figure management learning is central and draws on ranges of activities and resources from the three stakeholders, which again maximises the learning opportunity.

Figure 8.3 The Context of Management Learning



The framework described in Figure 8.3 can be used by managers either for career or organisational development and by academics, especially those responsible for the design and delivery of management learning programmes.

The framework is based on learning taking an active stance and through learning bringing about change, which is based on the principles of action research. Business researchers often draw on action research which in common with other subject areas explores theories, models and concepts, but takes the area of research a step forward from the realms of theory to the realms of activity and change. By encouraging researchers to bring about change either within their own roles as managers or through organisation change, they are then asked to reflect upon the changes and add to the body of theory. In order for these changes to be most effective senior managers within organisations must be involved in the change processes, if a management learning programme has been set up they must be involved in all aspects of the change process (which is normally part of the assessment strategy) and support the manager to bring about the change. As stated before the extent of the relationships should be articulated in a form of learning agreement. Figure 8.3 provides topic areas where each of the three partners can reflect upon their learning requirements and adapt the framework for their own use.

8.9 Conclusions

This chapter has drawn together the different strands of the thesis. It provides information on how the research impacted upon the research questions and how the aims of the research described in the thesis have been met. The results of the case studies have been analysed and examples have emerged as good practice in the design and delivery of management learning programmes. The information has been provided from the perspectives of the three main stakeholders, the manager, organisation and University. From the review of the concepts that underpin management learning a gap in the literature has been identified. From the research data and in an effort to bridge the gap in the literature, three different figures are presented which comprise a framework for effective management learning.

It has been emphasised throughout this conclusions chapter that the framework is offered as a development framework, the challenge is to take this framework and use it with other open management master's programmes such as the MBA and test the emerging framework.

CHAPTER NINE: REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to review and analyse the learning taking place through researching this topic. I will reflect upon and critically evaluate the content and process, which will be discussed together, followed by the research methodology. In providing this information I will consider both my own personal learning as the researcher, programme designer and leader. The chapter will commence with a brief overview of reflective practice and the rationale for the chapter. The final section of the chapter will provide reflections on how the research can be taken forward.

9.2 Rationale, Reflections on Learning and Critical Evaluation

This additional chapter has been developed as an outcome of the PhD viva. In writing the thesis, I took a fairly traditional and conventional approach, leaning more towards a factual business report style and I had not reflected upon the learning taking place. I had considered including such a chapter, since reflecting upon learning and critical evaluation is part of the assessment strategy for the management learning programmes but had decided against it after taking advice from the literature, research, supervisors and colleagues. It would have been helpful to have one of my supervisors from a similar research background but this was not possible in the writing up period, so the action I can take from this experience is to learn from it and support others completing PhD's in the HR field. By reflecting on learning I realised that I had not displayed my own 'voice' sufficiently in the thesis. This was certainly not the case in terms of the research where I took a pivotal role in the development of the programmes. In practice however, all the stakeholders on the programme spent time reflecting upon the outcomes and time was spent considering the most appropriate actions required to address any specific learning issues.

As described above other key stakeholders did have a 'voice'. Pavlica et al. (1998) stresses the importance of individuals listening to the 'voices' of others. This was demonstrated in the research described in the thesis whereby the managers worked together on group and individual projects over a three-year period. Through the assessment strategy, for the programme, the projects included a section on reflections on learning and it was evidenced through this project that changes had occurred over time. The changes were often brought about by the dynamics of the group and the influences of their peer group, mentors, senior managers and other stakeholders.

I have been involved in the development of these programmes from the outset and have driven the research. I have influenced a number of key decisions based on the research data, which has been informed by the literature. This new chapter has given me the opportunity to bridge this gap through reflecting upon and critically evaluating the research.

Before reflecting on the outcomes of the research it is helpful to consider the effect of learning, which is commonly viewed from both the organisation and individual level. In terms of individual learning there are strong links to the discipline of psychology. Behaviourist psychologists suggest that individuals can be stimulated by their environment and by association with their environment (Myers 1995; Hilgard et al 1997). According to cognitive psychologists this view of learning is limited. They argue that behaviourist psychology does not encompass natural psychology, which is far more complex and does not consider the desire to learn and make sense of the environment.

There has been a growing body of knowledge to support the view that organisations can learn (Argyris 1990, Bratton and Gold 1994). In terms of the research described in this thesis, which has taken an inductive approach, the emerging views have been that learning has occurred at both the individual and organisation levels.

Most written reflections on learning used in management learning and development refer to the concepts developed by Kolb (1984) and Schon (1993) who are both cognitive psychologists, both of whom place reflections at the core of their research. Managers in the research described in the thesis have referred to both concepts, but the most widely used was the 'Kolb Cycle'. The original concepts developed by Kolb and Schon have been adapted and simplified and when going back to the original research there is clearly a far more elaborate process described, in terms of experiential learning theory. Another popular framework for reflections on learning is the use of learning styles, which are based on the learning cycle, which again is a derivative of Kolb's work. The emphasis with Kolb is on the relevance to work, specifically through reflection, looking at experience, observation, reflection and action. Pavlica et al. (1998) states that Kolb is simplistic, which is borne out by Reynolds (1988). The way in which we experience the world is developed through social contact, actions and experiences, which are normally shaped through contact with others. The Kolb Cycle has been used extensively on the programmes described in this research, for the reasons described by Reynolds (1998), since it is easily assimilated and has been used alongside other models and concepts of learning at the beginning of each programme with a wide range of managers, some of whom have no previous academic background.

The managers were encouraged to use any framework on which to develop their reflections on learning and 90% used Kolb, either as the main framework or used it as a part of a range of frameworks. When asked why the managers placed so much emphasis on Kolb, their replies included that although they recognised limitations, they also saw its strengths, which included:

- Kolb is widely known and used in the management development training sector
- It is easy to access and understood by managers and is part of a set of related learning materials and resources (e.g. learning cycle, learning styles)
- The language used is straightforward and easy to understand

At the consultation stage of the pilot programme, one of the key development areas was to encourage managers to think critically. The organisations involved in this research had each expressed the view that managers had traditionally not demonstrated strategic thinking and this was one of the issues they wanted the programme to address. As Reynolds (1998) suggests, managers as a social group exercise considerable influence, and collectively if not individually, they are in an extremely powerful position. Getting these managers to consider the impact of their decisions and problem solving abilities is fraught with problems especially when negative comments can be taken very badly. Since I took an inductive stance at the beginning of the research, the most widely used model for basing reflection on learning is Kolb, which has been consistently used and referred to by the managers on the programme and I have therefore based my reflections on the same source. In the remainder of this section I will discuss the experience, what I have observed, reflect upon it and determine whether any action can be taken from it.

Critical thinking was encouraged through the assessment strategies by asking managers to reflect on their own learning, critique it and consider what actions they need take to improve. In training and development activities undertaken by the organisation, managers were also given the opportunity to review how to communicate difficult decisions to staff in the most effective ways. The emphasis was placed on critical thinking in terms of the programme and therefore it is important that I take a critical stance in my reflections on learning and evaluations of activities.

9.3 Reflecting on the Experiences

Chapter One describes the background to the research, which states that one of the research questions (Section 1.3) was to contribute to the body of management learning knowledge by analysing how the concepts of management learning work in practice. Through evaluating three management learning programmes, the data emerging from this activity would form the basis of the literature review, which would lead to the development of the framework for management learning.

The research provided me with a range of challenges especially in the earlier stages. The first hurdle was in terms of gaining the confidence of the stakeholders, encouraging them to be relatively open and frank in what was also a commercial venture. A major factor of this research has been the need to collaborate and through dialogue with stakeholders, a management learning framework has emerged. The outcomes of each stage of the research led to a mass of data, which was informed by the literature and led to the development of theory (See Table 9.1). An inductive approach was taken, so that the emerging data became the prime focus of the literature review. In this way the topics emerging and the issues were derived from the managers and became their learning requirements and later contributed to the development of a framework for effective management learning.

Table 9.1 Combined Results from 3 Case Studies

Managerial Motivation Factors	Consultation	Programme Success Factors	Programme Development	Stakeholders
• Managerial and Leadership theory • Quals. • Professional recognition • Career development • Sponsorship	• Prior knowledge • Pre-Prog. information • Participant motivation • Managerial requirements of Prog. • Setting performance indicators • Quals. • Progression	• Personal obj. & devt. • Insight • Managerial Skills • Career devt &progression • Interpersonal • Flexibility & change orientated • Training for the future • Learner Support • Best Value • ICT issues • HR planning • Retention of staff • Champions and mentors • Culture • IiP • Benchmarking • Reputation • Consultation phase • Pre-Prog. info, application process • Tutors and staff • Curriculum • Action Learning dissertation • Key modules • Group work & presentations	• Job enhancement and role • More & better use of participants • Honesty & openness • HR planning • Leadership • Participant guidance & support • Implementing recommendatio ns/ managing change • Re-structuring • Comm. • Benchmarking • Mentors • Action research • Prior information • Group work • Tutors • Assessment • Participant representatives • Administration • IT infra. • Absence • Progression	• Particip. • Family • Group members • Champion • Org. Co-ordinator • Line manager • Senior managers • Councillor • Tutors

The structure of the thesis provides a set of tabled outcomes at the end of each of the three case studies in Tables 5.8, 6.7 and 7.7. These separate organisational factors have now been combined together and are presented in Table 9.1 above. This table is the basis of the overall structure for the next part of this chapter, which is then followed by a critical evaluation and reflection on the research methodology.

9.4 Pre Programme and Motivational Factors

The early requirements for each programme have largely been met. Managerial and leadership capacity has improved in all three organisations, as evidenced by the participants and witnessed by the senior managers within the organisations and through academic success. One of the first activities undertaken by the group of stakeholders was an analysis of what motivated managers in the organisation. By answering that we hoped to get an insight into how to market the programme and how to develop it to meet the needs of the managers. As can be seen from the combined managerial motivational factors described in Table 9.1 these results were fairly predictable and are presented in priority order. What is interesting is that the key motivational factor for attending such a programme was to gain knowledge of management and leadership theory. The original view of the consultation group suggested that managers would want a practical, skills-based programme since the majority of staff had not undertaken any previous management development. The managers stated that they had plenty of management experience, and what they now wanted was verification of their practices through analysis of the literature. Whilst this was recognised, in the pre-programme stages, in practice it was still quite difficult to impart management and leadership theories to the participants. This was a key factor in considering a far more diverse learning and teaching strategy, which included drawing on a range of learning methods from the training and development field. The remainder of the manager's motivational factors to attend a management learning programme were more predictable. They were based around career development needs with sponsorship from the employer being the lowest motivational factor. These actions stress the value of the discussions with the stakeholders and led to changes in thoughts and views which otherwise would not have occurred.

9.5 Consultation Stage

Setting this up at the beginning of each stage was a major contributor to the success of the programmes. The consultation stage for the Pilot Programme (KMBC) lasted for six months and the following two programmes; which tested the framework emerging from the pilot programme, took approximately three months from the start of the discussions to the first enrolled participant. My experiences based on the current research and from designing other programmes, suggest that three months is about average for such programmes, especially as they have to satisfy university requirements. This however, is an on-going source of tension. The organisations wanted quick responses, whilst the university was slower to act. This has been borne out in the literature relating to other collaborative programmes (Boot and Evans, 1990) and is more thoroughly discussed in Section 2.10. In the context of this research it is my view that the time span is about right since it allowed all the parties to fully articulate their requirements. At the end of the consultation stage a range of issues had been discussed and stakeholder responsibilities defined. This improved our understanding of what commitments and entitlements each party had signed up to, and my only regret is that we had not defined the learning agreement at the pilot stage. The latest development regarding learning agreements is with ACC who have used the programme as a catalyst to review their HR strategy. The ACC programme is now in its 5th year and from September 2002, the Authority will be setting up new personal development plans, new learning agreements and a refined mentor system to support students on the programme, all of which are part of an overall HR Strategy. These HR systems are being piloted for use within the new MA programme, with the intention of implementing them across the Authority from 2003. Whilst the literature is divided on the subject of learning agreements (Section 8.5.3) it has been a success in the context of this research. The key learning element in terms of the learning agreement is to tailor them for the specific requirements of the organisation and to consider more open-ended commitments, rather than detailed service level type agreements.

Whilst the consultation stage was an open forum with senior representatives from the organisations and LBS, the ideas were tested out with a group of potential managers. The group however was quite small, some of whom did not end up attending the programme and on reflection, a questionnaire could have been developed at this stage which would have attracted information from a far wider group of managers.

9.6 Programme Success Factors and Development Areas

The first thing to note from Table 9.1 is that there are nearly equal success factors and areas for development. As described in the introduction to the thesis this is an opportunity to reflect on management and whilst we have developed some excellent practice, there have been a range of issues which have not been as successful. However in learning terms these have been revealing and have led to better understanding and good practice.

9.7 Cross-Departmental Learning/Group work

This was arguably the most innovative but also challenging issue. To achieve cross-departmental working it was agreed that managers would work in-groups on work-based, live projects presented to the top management groups. In 1994 this was a completely new concept in the postgraduate areas within LBS, there was one precedent for group work on an undergraduate programme, but the assessment for this was still an individually based written report. Whilst the group assessment is still a significant feature of the programme, there have also been a number of problems experienced. These include problems concerning groups working together, in one case causing a virtual walk out by the whole group. This was overcome with help from the organisational co-ordinator who worked with the group to help them achieve an agreed compromise. This is an issue that would have been difficult for University representatives working at distance to overcome and highlights the importance of the Co-ordinators role. Another major issue was that top managers wanted to be part of the assessment process. This was achieved through compromise (documented in Sections 5.3.2.2, 6.3.2.2 and 7.3.2.2) and is still seen in 2002 as a major innovative assessment feature. When the Managing Director or Chief Officer was present, the participants reported that although they were nervous beforehand, they were strongly in favour of this process which overall had been a good learning experience and heightened their profile in the organisation. The groups normally presented work of a very good standard, but when presenting to lower status panels, the success fluctuated and there was a lower evaluation rating score from the participants. From this it can be concluded that top management involvement is motivational to managers. Another issue regarding the group work concerns the implementation of recommendations arising from the projects, presented by the participants. The organisations have not been proactive in the development of the topics for the group assessment, tending to rely on LBS staff for suggestions (Section 8.6.1 and Section 8.8.1). Additionally, when the recommendations are presented to the organisations, they have been patchy and no further communications made. On reflection the method of working has been a success but gaining the longer-term commitment from the organisation has been far harder to achieve. A variety of different methods have been considered to improve this, such as better communication system, including focus groups with Directors. This is an ongoing issue that has still not been resolved.

Other issues arising from the success factors and areas of development include the importance of theming the programme (Best Value) for ACC and the impact of a residential outdoor management event for Littlewoods. To achieve this we used an external management development consultant who ran the event supported by academics, and the assessment was a report of the activities and how this linked to relevant theory with individual and group reflections on learning. These types of management development training methods have worked well on the programme but have been received with a certain amount of suspicion within the university. This is due to a reluctance to allow a third party (MD consultant or senior manager) to award academic credit. Again negotiations and discussions have led to a compromise where the third party has given feedback about the activities to the tutors who then combine this with their own feedback, allocating a mark accordingly. The impact of the residential module was so great that the organisation (LL) paid for another event as an induction at each stage of the subsequent programmes. This module was constantly referred to by the participant as the module that had the most impact. Reflecting on these success factors, it was the teambuilding activity that was the key factor – where the managers were together in a confined area, working on a range of group based activities. The managers developed a sense of team spirit in presenting their work and has led to the design team considering increasing the group work element of the new programme but a the same time, considering different teaching and learning methods.

9.8 Stakeholders

The stakeholders have been articulated in Table 9.1. Gaining a clear understanding of who the stakeholders are, disseminating the information and allowing time to brief them has been a key contributory factor. This is the first area that has been taken up for action from the PhD and has been developed into a paper which is attached (Appendix 5). The key area of learning from this research will be taken as separate issues and developed using a wide literature base, and disseminated to the academic and professional community, conferences and in journals.

9.9 Research Methods

It was agreed at the consultation stage that the university evaluation strategy was inadequate for the needs of this programme. The university strategy is designed for use primarily with the undergraduate programmes. The evaluation strategy is reaction led rather than illuminative, and the level of detail does not provide programme leaders with enough detailed information. There are Boards of Study, which include participant representatives, where monitoring and evaluation is discussed, but often the timing of these (one per semester) is not helpful. One of the early requirements from the consultation group of the pilot programme (KMBC) was a request by the organisation to continuously monitor the effectiveness of the programme and be willing to take action wherever appropriate. It was my experience working as a programme leader on mainstream postgraduate management programmes that the quality and commitment of student representatives is patchy. The experiences of the pilot programme described in this research suggest that the role was not needed due to the high level of involvement that the programme leader and the organisation co-ordinators had with the managers. For these reasons, and to progress and to develop an effective research methodology for the programmes, an action research based, inductive, case study approach was taken. To be most effective the research required a range of methods upon which to evaluate the programme and bridge the gap, in terms of the university evaluation strategy. This led to a multi-method approach.

There have been a range of improvements, which I now feel could have strengthened in this area. One improvement would be to have used the university evaluation questionnaire and to extend this to provide more relevant data that could analysed using more quantitative methods. One of the problems I have faced in describing the research methodology when developing academic papers is the lack of factual information and statistics. Additionally this would have impacted upon and improved the university mechanisms which were described as inadequate in the LBS Business and Management postgraduate Subject Review 2000. This could have been achieved relatively easily, had I considered it at the time. The strengths of the research methodology is that it has been taken from a wide range of different stakeholder perspectives described in Section 3.5.4. One innovative perspective was each stakeholder has had a voice in terms of their involvement in the research project and have been encouraged to develop their own evaluation mechanisms which together have provided a wide range of views on the research.

Other elements that have been considered were in terms of the use of Information Technology support and software packages in the research methodology area. I had considered using NUDist to interpret the data emerging from the interviews, however I had already started a very effective manual system to determine the patterns emerging from the data, which has been extracted from the reflections on learning, learning diaries and focus groups. The coding for this was influenced by literature on grounded theory coding and whist time consuming, I found the degree of control and knowledge of the developing outcomes a benefit that outweighed the need for use of software.

9.10 Actions to take Forward

The results of the overall thesis are wide reaching, however they are limited to the context in which the research took place. I would not suggest that the framework described in Chapter 8 is relevant for all management learning, nor do I maintain that it is a definitive framework for all management learning programmes, the results of the research are a starting point for dialogue in the wider academic and professional community. The results of this work will be disseminated through papers and conferences in both areas. Through the dissemination of the work and further research, this framework can be refined and developed as a practitioner aid in the academic and management community when developing management learning programmes.

The framework emerging from the data described in Chapter 8 will be taken forward in a number of ways. Firstly by taking the framework, extracting the main learning areas and developing a range of papers utilising other literature areas. This process has been stated since completing the thesis, in the areas of stakeholders and participants. The results of the programme design issues can now be considered for use on mainstream programmes. I have already discussed the issues with the Programme Leader for the MBA and this framework will be tested on the next programme to see if similar results can be achieved. We intend to use the research methodology structure with the MBA student however recognise the need to adapt this. Finally I would like to explore the possibilities of working with the University to review the University evaluation strategy and consider whether the strategy used as the programme can influence this and improve the evaluation practice in JMU.

REFERENCES

Angot and Milano, cited in Thietart (1999)

Argyris, C. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.* Temple-Smith, London.

Armstrong, M. (2001) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice,* 8th.ed. The Bath Press, Bath

Ascher, K. (1984) *Masters of Business? The MBA and British Industry.* Harbridge House, London

Balogun, J. et al (1999) *Exploring Strategic Change.* Prentice Hall, London

Barnett, R. (1990) *The Idea of Higher Education.* Open University Press, Milton Keynes

Barrington, H. and Reid, M. (1994) *Training Interventions – Managing Employee Development.* IPM, London

Baruch, Y. and Leeming, A. (1996) 'Programming the MBA programme – the quest for curriculum'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 15 (7)*

Baston, R.H (1989) *The Company-based MBA.* Harbridge House, London

Bateson, F. (1989) *Tailored Management Education: Myth or Reality.* Harbridge House, London

Boak, G., Martin, C. and Thompson D. (1997) 'What do senior managers do?' *Career Development International, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 6-10*

Boot, R. and Evans, J. (1990) 'Partnership in education and change'. *Management Education and Development, Vol. 21 (1), pp. 13-21*

Bourner, T. and Flowers, S. (1997) 'Teaching and learning methods in higher education: A glimpse of the future'. *A Journal of the Higher Education Foundation, Vol. 9, pp. 77-102*

Bramham, J. (1997) *Benchmarking For People Managers.* Cromwell Press, Wiltshire

Bratton, J. and Gold, J. (1994) *HRM: Theory and Practice.* Macmillan, UK.

Brown, P.J (1993) *Corporate qualifications survey,* Sunley Management Centre, Northampton.

Brown, P. (1999) 'Client-based management qualifications: A case of win-win?'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 18 (4), pp.350-361*

Burgess, R.G (1982) *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual.* Allen & Unwin, London

Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M. (1997) *Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice.* Sage Publications, London

Burgoyne, J.G. and Stuart, R. (1978) *Management Development: Context and strategies.* Gower, Aldershot:

Burnes, B. (1996) *Managing Change.* Pitman Publishing, Wiltshire

Cannon, T. (2000) 'Management and leadership: issues for integration in the emergent economy'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol. 3 (1). pp.121-127*

Carnall, C.A. (1999) *Managing Change in Organizations.* 3rd.ed. Prentice Hall, London

Carr, A. (1997) 'The learning organization New lessons/thinking for the management of change and management development?'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 16 (4).*

Codling, S. (1998) *Benchmarking. Gower, Vermont, USA*

Constable, T. and McCormick, R. (1987) *The Making of British Managers.* British Institute of Management and Federation of British Industry, London

Davies, J. (1996) cited in Redman and Story

DeGeus, A. (1988) ' Planning as Learning ' *Harvard Business Review*,03/04: pp70-74

Easterby-Smith. M., Thorpe. R., and Lowe. A., (1991) *Management Research: An Introduction.* Sage Publications, London

Fox, S. (1997) cited in Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M.

Frank, H. D (1996) 'Learning to learn at university'. *Education and Training, Vol. 38 (8).*

French, R. and Grey, C. (1996) *Rethinking Management Education.* Sage, London

Fripp, J. and Wilson, A. (1996) *The Qualified Manager.* Institute of Management, London

Fryer Report (1977) ' Learning for the twenty first century' *National Advisory group for continuous and life long learning.* London

Ghauri et al.(1995), cited in Saunders (1997)

Gibb, A.A. (1996) ' Small firms' training and competitiveness: Building upon the small business as a learning organisation' *International small business journal* Vol. 15 (3) pp 13-29

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (1991) *Research Methods for Managers.* Paul Chapman, London

Glaser, D.G and Strauss, A.L (1967) *the Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Aldine, New York*

Greenbaum, T.L (1998) *The Handbook for Focus Group Research.* 2nd.ed. Sage Publications, London

Hamlin, B., Reidy, M. and Stewart, J. (1998) 'Bridging the HRD research-practice gap through professional partnerships'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol. 1 (3). pp. 273-290*

Handy, C; Gow, L; Gordon, C; Randlesome, C ; Maloney, M. (1987) *The Making of Managers.* MSC/NEDO/BIM, London

Harris, J. et al (1992) 'MBA courses: Learning from diversity and similarity'. *Management Education and Development, Vol. 23 (4). pp. 333-344*

Harris Report (1996) "R*eview of postgraduate education"*, London .

Harrison, R. (1997) *Employee Development.* Cromwell Press, London

Hilgard, D. (1997) *Introduction to Psychology*

Humphreys, P. et al (1995) 'Customer-focused management development: a case study'. *Journal of European Industrial Training, Vol. 19 (5). pp.26-33*

Hussey. J. and Hussey. R (1997) *Business Research.* Macmillan Press, Hampshire

Jankowicz, A.D (1991) *Business Research Projects for Students.* Chapman and Hall, London

Jones, S. (1987) *Choosing Action Research: a Rationale,* cited in, Mangham, R. (ed.) *Organisation Analysis and Development.* Wiley, Chichester

Kable, J. (1998) cited in Margerison, C.

Kanter, R.M. Applebaum, K. and Yatsko, P. (1997) *Men and Women of the Corporation.* Basic Books, New York

Keithley, D. and Redman, T. (1997) 'University-industry partnerships in management development: A case study of a "world class" company'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 16 (3), pp. 154-166*

Kennedy and Mason (1993) cited in Brown (1993)

Kirk , J. and Miller, M. L (1986) *Reliability and validity in Qualitative Research*, Sage, London

Koo, L.C, Koo, H. and Tao, F.C (1999) *Managerial Auditing Journal, Vol. 14 (1)*

Kretovics, M. (1999) 'Assessing the MBA: What do our students learn?' *The Journal of Management Development, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 125-136*

Kuit, J.A et al (2001) 'Experiences of reflective teaching'. *Active learning in higher education, Vol. 2 (2). pp. 128-142*

Lee, M. (1998) 'Understandings of conflict: a cross-cultural investigation' *Personnel Review, Vol. 27 (3). pp. 227-242*

Lees, S. (1992) 'Ten faces of management development' . *Management Education and Development, Vol. 23 (2), pp. 89-105*

Lewin, K. (1946) 'Action Research and Minority Problems'. *The Journal of Social Issues, Vol.2, pp.34-36*

Loan-Clarke, J. (1997) 'The Implications for Organizations of In-house Management Qualifications'. *Management Learning, Vol. 28 (4), pp. 439-454*

Macfarlane, B. and Lomas, L. (1995) 'Client-based management education: values and quality'. *Management Development Review, Vol. 8 (1)*

Mangham, I. and Silver, M. (1986) 'Management training: context and practice?' *Research Report, University of Bath, Bath*

Mansfield, B. (1993) 'Competence based qualifications; A response' *Journal of European Industrial Training* Vol. 17 (3)

Margerison, C. (1991) *Making Management Development Work: Achieving Success in the 90's.* McGraw-Hill, London

Marsick and Watkins (1997) cited in Saunders (2000)

Maund, L. (2001) *An Introduction to Human Resource Management.* Palgrave, Suffolk

Mesdag, M.V (1998) 'Viewpoint: An unscheduled meeting with action research'. *Marketing intelligence and Planning, Vol. 16 (7)*

Molander, C. (1986) *Management Development.* Chartwell-Bratt, Bromley

Monks, K. (1995) 'Combining academic rigour and transferable skills: a business degree for the 1990's'. *Education and Training, Vol. 37 (1), pp. 17-21*

Mumford, A. (1995) *Learning at the top.* McGraw - Hill, London

Mumford, A. (1998) 'Managing learning and development'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol.1 (1). pp. 113-118*

Myers, D.G (1995) *Psychology*. (3rd Ed.) Worth, UK

O'Hara, S., Webber, T. and Reeve, S. (1996) *Action Learning in Management Education and Training, Vol. 38 (8)*

Ormerod, R. J. (1996) ' Combining management, consultancy and research' *International Journal in Management Science.* Vol.24 (1) pp 1- 12

Paraja-Torres, M.D. (2000) Postgraduate Customised Management Development programmes in the UK. Liverpool Business School dissertation.

Pavlica, K., Holman D. and Thorpe, R. (1998) 'The manager as a practical author of learning' *Career Development International, Vol. 3 (7).*

Pedlar, M. (1999) 'Making organizational processes visible for the purposes of learning'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol.2 (3). pp.273-282*

Pell, G. (2001) 'Action learning vs. traditional learning in a management development Context: a longitudinal study of MBA candidates'. *The International Journal of Management education, Vol. 1 (3). pp. 36-49*

Peters, T. (1987) *Thriving on Chaos: A Handbook for Management Revolution.* Macmillan, London

Prince, C. and Stewart, J. (2000) 'The dynamics of the corporate education market and the role of business schools'. *The Journal of Management Development, Vol. 19 (3). pp. 207-219*

Purcell, J. and Ahlstrand, B. (1994) *Human Resource Management in the Multi - Divisional Company.* Open University Press, London

Ramsden, P. (1998) *Learning to Lead in Higher Education.* Routledge, USA

Reason (1994) cited in Hussey and Hussey (1997)

Redman, T. and Story, A. (2000) ' Do training agreements reduce failure rates in university-provided management development courses?'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol. 3 (1). pp.101-103*

Revans, R. (1971) *Developing Effective Managers.* Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York

Rigg, C. and Trehan, K. (1999) 'Not critical enough? Black women raise challenges for critical management learning'. *Gender and Education, Vol. 11 (3). pp. 265-280*

Robertson, D. (1998) 'Who Won the War of Dearing's Ear?'. *Higher Education Review, Vol. 30 (2). pp. 1-18.*

Robson, C. (1993) *Real Work Research.* Blackwell, Oxford

Sadler-Smith, E; Gardiner, P; Badger, B; Chaston, I; Stubberfield, J; (2000) 'Using collaborative learning to develop small firms'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol. 3 (3). pp. 285-306.*

Salaman, G. and Butler, J. (1990) 'Why manager's won't learn'. *Management Education and Development, Vol. 23 (3), pp. 183-91*

Sargeant, A. and Matheson, R.A (1996) 'Management Training – Are business schools out of touch with there market?'. *Journal of European Industrial Training, Vol. 20 (4).*

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill. A. (1997) *Research Methods for Business Students.* 1st .ed. Pitman, Essex

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill. A. (2000) *Research Methods for Business Students.* 2nd .ed. Pearson Education, Essex

Selen, W. (2001) 'Learning in the new business school setting, a collaborative model'. *The Learning Organisation: an International Journal, Vol. 8 (3).*

Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction.* 2nd. ed. Sage Publications, London.

Sparrow, P.R. (1994) 'Corporate challenges in 1990's and the implications for European management education'. *Executive Development, Vol. 7 (5).*

Statt, A. (1991) *The Concise Dictionary of Management.* Mackays of Chatham, Kent

Stewart, J. and McGoldrick, J. (1996) *Human Resource Development.* Pitman Publishing, London.

Storey, J. (ed.) (1989), *New Perspectives on Human Resource Management.* Routledge, London

Storey, J. (1992) *Developments in the Management of Human Resources.* Blackwell, Oxford

Storey, J; Edwards, P; Sisson, K, (1997) *Managers in the making: Careers, Development and Control in Corporate Britain and Japan,* Sage, London

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research.* Sage, Newbury Park

Stredwick, J. and Ellis, S. (1998) *Flexible Working Practices: Techniques and Innovations.* The Cromwell Press, Wiltshire

Thietart, R. et al (1999) *Doing Management Research: A Comprehensive Guide.* Sage Publications, London

Thomson, A. et al. (1997) *A Portrait of Management Development.* Institute of Management, London

Torrington, D., Hall, L. and Taylor, S. (2002) *Human Resource Management.* 5th.ed. Pearson Education, London

Vignali, C. and Jones, P. (1995) 'Developing a postgraduate programme for a company's sales management workforce'. *Industrial and Commercial Training, Vol. 27 (6)*

Waddell, D. (1998) 'Resistance: a constructive tool for change management'. *Management Decision, Vol. 36 (8).*

Walliman, N. (2001) *Your Research Project.* Sage Publications, London.

Walton, J. (1999) *Strategic Human Resource Development.* Pearson education, Harlow

Weitzman, E. A and Miles, M. B (1995) *Computer Programs for Qualitative Data Analysis.* Sage, London

Wickens, P. (1987) *The Road to Nissan: Flexibility, Quality and Teamwork.* Macmillan, Basingstoke

Wild, R. (1998) 'When customer becomes competitor in the realms of academe'. *Professional Manager, Vol. 7 (5), pp. 6.*

Wilkinson, D. and Pedlar, M. (1996) 'Whole systems development in public service'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 15 (2), pp. 38-53.*

Woodall, J. and Winstanley, D. (1998) *Management Development: Strategy and Practice.* Blackwell, London

Yin. R.K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods,* 2nd.ed. Sage Publications, London

Yorke, M. (1998) ' Quality Assurance in Education' Vol. 6 (1), The Times ' League Table' of Universities (1997) A statistical appraisal

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (1996) 'Developing a learning organisation through management education by action learning'. *Vol. 12 (5)*

OFFICE OF POPULATION CENSUSES AND SURVEYS (1993) *1991 Census County Report: Merseyside (Part 1) H.M.S.O*

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (1997) *National Report – A vision for 20 years: the learning society*

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
(2000) *Subject Review Report*

APPENDIX

ONE

JMU
Liverpool Business School

Responding to Best Value through Management Development: The Case of a Welsh Unitary Authority

A Thorne, C Edwards and J Wilson

Address for Correspondence:

Ann Thorne
Liverpool Business School
Liverpool John Moores University
John Foster Building
98 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool
L3 5UZ

Tel: 0151 231 3807
Email: E.A.Thorne@LIVJM.AC.UK

Paper presented to the annual conference of the Centre for Enterprise and Management, Bolton Institute of HE, September 1998

Responding to Best Value through Management Development: The Case of a Welsh Unitary Authority

A Thorne, C Edwards and J Wilson
Liverpool Business School

Abstract

Following the election of the Labour Government, May 1997, local authorities are confronted with the challenge of 'best value'. The Government intends to abolish the centrepiece of the previous Conservative Government's policy towards local government, *ie* compulsory competitive tendering, and to replace it with best value. Although the details are in the process of being determined, it is clear that all local authorities will be expected to display value for money, effectiveness and innovation in service delivery. Failure to do so is likely to result in services being externalised.

In meeting the challenge of best value, local authorities will need to be creative and adopt a collaborative approach. This may entail the adoption of new methods in determining and providing services.

In considering their ability to respond to the new agenda, authorities will need to reflect on the extent to which officers and members are committed to the principles which underpin it. An emphasis may need to be placed on management development as adversarial competition is potentially replaced by collaboration.

This paper reports the response of one authority which has placed the theme of best value at the centre of its management development programme. The programme has been designed and delivered in partnership with Liverpool Business School and provides participants with an opportunity to acquire, should they so wish, a postgraduate award. The paper also reports on the effectiveness of the programme to date and considers lessons which may be of wider applicability to local authorities.

Introduction

Following the election of the Labour Government, May 1997, local authorities are confronted with the challenge of 'best value'. The Government intends to abolish the centrepiece of the previous Conservative Government's policy towards local government, *ie* compulsory competitive tendering, and to replace it with best value. Although the details are in the process of being determined, it is clear that all local authorities will be expected to display value for money, effectiveness and innovation in service delivery. Failure to do so is likely to result in services being externalised.

In meeting the challenge of best value, local authorities will need to be creative and adopt a collaborative approach. This may entail the adoption of new methods in determining and providing services.

In considering their ability to respond to the new agenda, authorities will need to reflect on the extent to which officers and members are committed to the principles which underpin it. An emphasis may need to be placed on management development as adversarial competition is potentially replaced by collaboration.

This paper reports the response of one authority which has placed the theme of best value at the centre of its management development programme. The programme has been designed and delivered in partnership with Liverpool Business School and provides participants with an opportunity to acquire, should they so wish, a postgraduate award. The paper also reports on the effectiveness of the programme to date and considers lessons which may be of wider applicability to local authorities.

Best Value: background and nature

The election of the Labour Government, May 1997, brought to an end 18 years of Conservative rule and ideological hostility to the public sector. Between 1979 and 1997 successive Conservative governments sought to reduce the scale and change the nature of public sector activity in the United Kingdom (UK). An economic and political agenda was pursued involving a broad range of measures, *viz* privatisation, internal markets, compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) and contracting-out, designed to improve efficiency and service quality through a reduction in the size of the public sector and the introduction of competition to public service provision. This agenda, which has been an international and not merely domestic phenomenon, has in turn contributed to the development of a new form of management within public services, involving the replacement of traditional public administration by 'new public management' (NPM) (Hood, 1991; Dunleavy and Hood, 1994). This change can be characterised by a number of features but a key one is that of an emphasis on the preferences of the consumer.

The related objectives of public sector contraction and competition, augmented by NPM and the emphasis on the consumer, have been given specific expression in local government in the concept of the 'enabling authority'. Here, the intention was that local authorities would be less involved in direct service provision but would, rather, enable services to be provided, *ie* they would steer rather than row (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).

All of these related features - contraction, competition, new public management, consumerism and enabling - led to a situation in which:

> The overwhelming impression is one of change and the creation of a new agenda for the public sector. Conventional wisdoms have been undermined and a fundamental re-assessment has taken place concerning the functions, scope, size, processes and people within the public sector.
>
> Lawton and Rose (1991, p147).

Central to this 'new agenda' was CCT. It was first implemented in 1988 and was initially applied to blue collar services but, in 1991, it was announced that it was to be applied to white collar services. This extension of CCT was extremely contentious, not least because there were doubts as to the beneficial impact of blue collar CCT, doubts which were certainly shared by the Labour Party when in Opposition and which led it to state that CCT would be abolished if elected. In government, Labour has honoured its promise to abolish CCT, on which its view is unequivocal: 'In short, CCT has provided a poor deal for employees, employers and local people. CCT will therefore be abolished' (DETR, 1998, p6).

In respect of local authority services, CCT is to be replaced with Best Value (BV). Although the practicalities of BV have yet to be determined, and the threat of compulsion lingers should authorities fail to demonstrate effectiveness and quality in service delivery, the introduction of BV provides an opportunity for local authorities to influence the evolution of the initiative. The absence of compulsion reflects the new environment within which authorities are now operating. Both the Labour Government and the Conservative opposition are stressing the need for a constructive relationship with local authorities. The question remains, however, whether local authorities are well-placed to meet the challenge of BV.

The precise meaning and nature of BC have yet to be determined. However, within the 12 principles that define the BV framework (see Box 1) principle 4 states:

> There is no presumption that services must be privatised, and once the regime is in place there will be no general requirements for councils to put their services out to tender, but there is no reason why services should be delivered directly if other more efficient means are available. What matters is what works.

This pragmatic approach helps distinguish BV from CCT. However, there can be little doubt that Labour is not committed, as a matter of ideology, to in-house provision. The onus is on local authorities to demonstrate that they can achieve the economic objectives of CCT but without the compulsion and in a manner which is more efficient and customer-focused. To do this, it is necessary that their workforces, both blue and white collar, are committed to the pursuit of customer-focused, rather than producer-driven, policies. In many respects this may require a culture shift or a determination to build on the positive aspects of CCT. 'The commitment of local government to the cultural changes which best value is designed to bring about is therefore vital' (DETR, 1998, p7). However, the likelihood of local authority personnel displaying such commitment is open to debate, as also is their ability to do so. Nonetheless, the experience of CCT (combined with the threat of its re-introduction in some form should local authorities fail to respond positively) should mean that the degree of cultural change required successfully to respond to, and to demonstrate, 'best value' should be less than would have been necessary had CCT never happened.

Box 1

Best Value – 12 Provisional Principles

The duty of Best Value is one that local authorities will owe to local people, both as taxpayers and the customers of local authority services. Performance plans should support the process of local accountability to the electorate.

Achieving Best Value is not just about economy and efficiency, but also about effectiveness and the quality of local services – the setting of targets and performance against these should therefore underpin the new regime.

The duty will apply to a wider range of services than those covered by CCT.

There is no presumption that services must be privatised, and once the regime is in place there will be no compulsion for councils to put their services out to tender, but there is no reason why services should be delivered directly if other more efficient means are available.

Competition will continue to be an important management tool, a test of Best Value and an important feature in performance plans. But it will not be the only management tool and is not in itself enough to demonstrate that Best Value is being achieved.

Central government will continue to set the basic framework for service provision, which will in some areas as now include national standards.

Detailed local targets should have regard to any national targets, and specified indicators to support comparisons between authorities.

Both national and local targets should be built on the performance information that is in any case needed by good managers.

Audit processes should confirm the integrity and comparability of performance information.

Auditors will report publicly on whether Best Value has been achieved, and should contribute constructively to plans for remedial action. This will include agreeing measurable targets for improvement and reporting on progress against an agreed plan.

There should be provision for intervention at the direction of the Secretary of State on the advice of the Audit Commission when an authority has failed to deliver Best Value.

The form of intervention should be appropriate to the nature of failure,

Source: DETR (1998) Figure 1 p9.
Even so, Labour is seeking an enthusiastic response to Best Value and will seek evidence of innovation and collaboration, not least with the private sector, in service delivery. The cultural change this may require should not be underestimated, even after 18 years of Conservative rule. Local authorities will be more or less willing and capable of responding to this challenge. For many, the changes which CCT brought about will need to be built upon as Members and Officers seek to reconcile market mechanisms with the traditional values of public service provision, in order to behave in a manner which is 'business-like but not like a business' (Gray, 1998).

To this end, local authorities will need to evaluate the nature and appropriateness of current levels of service provision and the extent to which they consult service users and stakeholders. More fundamentally, however, they will need to consider the gap which may exist between prevalent culture and that required by Best Value and, insofar as there is a gap, to determine how this may be corrected.

It is clear that the commitment of Members and senior managers will be required if, where required, cultural change and improvements in service delivery are to be achieved. To this end, the appropriateness of existing or planned management development programmes needs to be evaluated.

In the case of a Welsh unitary authority, such an evaluation led to a management development programme being designed, and delivered, in conjunction with Liverpool Business School.

Management Development in a Welsh Unitary

<u>Background</u>

Ynys Mon- Isle of Anglesey County Council came into being on 1st April 1996 with the re-organisation of local authorities in Wales. This merged a small borough council at Ynys Mon with a larger county council at Gwynedd. This brought about major change to draw together two very different cultures. The main differences and issues faced included:

- size, (Ynys Mon Borough Council employed 500 staff, the newly formed County Council comprised 1900 staff (excluding teachers)
- structure, one was a County Council, the other a Borough Council
- location, Ynys Mon is an island mostly with a farming, agricultural and tourism history, Gwynedd, was on the mainland where industry was predominant
- politically, independents had controlling interests within the Authority
- modernising local government was embraced and seen as a major issue for Wales with backing from the Welsh Office.

The Need

The old Borough Council had always given high profile to training and was one of the few Councils to have a full time Training Officer. This emphasis on training was maintained after the merger, and was seen as a way to affect the changes required to fulfil the new authorities needs.

In the past, funds for training had been allocated mainly for basic qualifications to enable staff to do their jobs. As individuals moved up the career ladder, they obtained higher graded posts, which held a managerial aspect. Hence well qualified professional staff became managers by default, without the necessary skill of experience.

Although management development was recognised as a priority, due to the massive internal changes no action was taken until 1997, when the Training Officer conducted a training needs analysis amongst managers. This identified a wide range of managerial and leadership requirements including:

- effective resource management through innovation
- financial management
- business planning and performance indicators
- commercial skills and marketing

Key components of programme

Based on previous work with Local Authorities, such as Knowsley, Liverpool Business School (LBS) developed a programme which included:

- commitment from councillors
- senior management involvement
- recognition of importance of management development
- honest and open feedback and evaluation
- Best Value focus
- Champions from within Council who acted as the link between Council and LBS
- group work was cross functional and multi disciplinary, design and delivery of programme was collaborative, assessment was based on live issues at the Council

Outline of Programme

The programme led to an MA in Change Management. It comprised 3 levels, Certificate, Diploma and Masters.

At Certificate and diploma stage, the programme consisted of three day modules delivered in two parts. The first comprised two days taught input with the third day, one month later, incorporated any new learning identified be the participants and covered any issues arising from the 2 day module which required clarification and focused on the assignment set as a learning support strategy.

Certificate stage

- Self development
- team building
- local government and change
- managing resources
- managing finance

Diploma stage

- financial management
- organisation learning and behaviour
- quality and resource management
- strategies management

Assessment for both Certificate and Diploma

- individual pieces of work
- group assignments

Dissertation stage

- action research dissertation

Evaluation of the Programme

- Increased team working through cross functional teams working on group tasks
- High profile programme where group projects are presented to councillors, and /or a Best Value committee requiring feedback on the adaptability and relevance of project recommendations
- Enhanced career prospects for individuals through improved academic qualifications
- projects worked on have led to change within the council

- Best Value has been woven into the whole programme with emphasis on improving Best Value within the council
- Champions on the programme are senior members of the council who enable participants to manage change within the Authority

References

DETR (1998). *Modernising local government: Improving local services through best value* (London: DETR).

Dunleavy, P. & Hood, C. (1994). 'From Old Public Administration to New Public Management' *Public Money & Management* Vol 14 No 3 pp9-16.

Gray, A. (1998). *Business-like but not like a Business* (London: CIPFA).

Hood, C. (1991). 'A public management for all seasons?' *Public Administration* Vol 69 No 1 pp3-19.

Lawton, A. & Rose, A. (1991). *Organisation & Management In The Public Sector* (London: Pitman).

Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1992). *Reinventing Government: How The Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming The Public Sector* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley).

APPENDIX

TWO

Strategic Partnerships and Management Learning

E A Thorne, Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University, John Foster Building, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UZ, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)151 231 3807, Fax: +44 151 231 3234
E-mail: e.a.thorne@livjm.ac.uk

G H Wright, Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University, John Foster Building, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5UZ, UK
Telephone: +44 (0)151 231 3521, Fax: +44 151 231 3234
E-mail: g.h.wright@livjm.ac.uk

Abstract

Management learning is described as an area of both professional practice and theoretical enquiry, that has as a particular concern, the linking of these two domains in a way that advances both. The synergistic relationship between theory and practice means that professional practice advances theory, while theoretical insight enhances competence. The management of the relationships and the impact upon the stakeholders in management learning has not yet received much attention in the management learning literature. The aim of this paper is to investigate how effective management of key partner collaboration is central to the effective operationalisation of management learning. The research is based on three case studies incorporating document analysis, in-depth interviews with directors and senior managers from the public and private sector (n=15), focus groups with learner-managers (n=5), analysis of individuals written reflective learning accounts (n=30) and evaluation evidence utilising the University Quality Assurance mechanisms. The methodology has provided data which has been analysed and collated from the perspectives of the three key stakeholders involved in the partnership, the University, learner-manager and organisation. The partnership led to the development and delivery of bespoke management programmes. The concept of effective strategic alliances provides the basis for a framework to manage the application, processes and outcomes of management learning. We propose a proactive structured approach to partnerships and alliances as a robust method of operationalising the effectiveness of theories and concepts of management learning.

Introduction: The Importance of Partners

This paper contributes to our understanding of an increasingly important practical problem, that of the effectiveness of managing service outcomes and stakeholder partnerships in the area of management learning. The relationship between partners in the supply chain of management education and learning are considered as a strategic alliance. The paper explores the increasingly important concept of management learning in the context of its related domains of management education and management development. It considers the importance of partnerships, the nature and management of alliances, the criteria for successful alliances, and the nature and measurement of excellence. It then presents the results of a study in which the issues of working in partnership are explored in the context of the development and delivery of bespoke management programmes. We conclude by advocating a conceptual framework for successful stakeholder alliances.

The paper proposes that managing relationships for service excellence, management learning, should be approached as the challenge of managing partnerships as a form of strategic alliance. We put forward a framework for educating managers to establish successful alliances.

Management Learning

Management learning is an emerging subject area, drawn from longer established areas of management education and development. According to Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997), management development and management education have become increasingly blurred, and it is argued that management learning was created in response to two main influences. These were:

- doubts and criticisms of management education and development which created a demand for research
- shortage of management educators, trainers and teachers that created the need for teaching and good quality design and curriculum

Source: Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997:8)

Management learning is described as an area of both professional practice and theoretical enquiry, whereby professional practice enables management learning, and theoretical insights enable practitioner activities. Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) emphasise the relationship between practice and theory, and stress the importance of theoretical insight. Management learning has, as a special concern, the linking of the domains of professional practice and theoretical inquiry in a way that advances both. They identify the two main localities as educational institutions, (including Business Schools) and public and private sector organisations. Research described in this paper addresses the establishment and development of links between professional practice and theoretical enquiry. Resultant advances in both domains are then linked to the third partner in this research which is the University.

The first domain is within the organisation where improvements in the development of management learning are made by increasing managerial knowledge and leadership capacity which will impact on change strategies within the organisation. The second domain is through the intervention of the manager's learning and organisation change. This has led to a body of knowledge, which the University has utilised. Knowledge from the case studies described in this paper have in turn added to theory. All three partners involved in this research have benefited from the experience.

The Dearing Report (1997) emphasises the importance of the role and contribution of higher education to a knowledge-based economy, and promotes the notion of lifelong learning. It states that in a dynamic, competitive business context, the nature of managerial work is changing, creating a requirement for new skills and knowledge, and a need for the higher education sector to provide a value-added element when educating managers.

This report is significant, and these themes have been developed by politicians and members of the educational establishment. They emphasise the importance of changing the way in which higher education operates. To bring about change on the scale suggested is likely to be problematic. Dearing (1997) is suggesting changes that go beyond higher education and advocates collaboration with industry. Such changes will not be easy and require time and resources to nurture such relationships. Moreover, resources are rarely mentioned in the Dearing and Harris Reports (1997). Lee (1995) suggests that funding for UK higher education has reduced over the last few years, and that many people now believe the quality of higher education to be seriously threatened. Franks (1996) has considered the implications of reduced funding and states that many employers and organisations have put pressure to make education more effective, so that it can better equip students for work or careers. This pressure has been experienced within a major North West University Business School, and one of the ways in which this University is meeting the demand for management learning, is through growth in collaborative programmes and providing support for organisations and managers - some of whom still regard academia as inaccessible and an "ivory tower".

There have been a number of attempts to bring about radical change. These include bringing industry and higher education together in ways that will generate revenue and resources. The Fryer Report (1997) and the establishment of the University for Industry (UFI) have both contributed to the current changing face of higher education in terms of:

- widening participation in learning (accessibility of learning opportunities, regarding time, place and pace),
- stimulating national demand for learning
- modernising the supply of learning

UFI is charged with taking forward the Government's vision of a 'University for Industry', working as a public-private partnership in the UK. It's aim is to put individuals in a better position to get jobs, improve career prospects and boost business competitiveness (www.ufiltd.co.uk). Whilst help and support, including financial, can be provided through Learning Skills Councils (the Government body responsible for UFI), this demand will impact on the higher education sector. It must be met without prejudicing standards and quality, and with limited additional resources and financial support to develop the range of programmes and necessary support such as open-access programmes.

Irrespective of who the provider of education is, Sadler-Smith (2000) cites De Geus (1998) who suggests that learning is the key to maintaining and sustaining an organisation within a competitive environment where new products can be quickly and easily imitated. Gibb (1996) and Fryer (1997) state that learning leads to competitiveness and promotes commitment to employee development and life-long learning. They state that learning is developed through:

- a methodology informed largely by action research
- participation through a stakeholder approach and collaborative action
- increased attention to personal and organisational learning rather than training
- an emphasis on work-based learning

Each of these factors are found in the management learning partnership that is now discussed.

Business School Collaboration with Industry

In response to Dearing (1997), a number of University Business Schools recognised the need to collaborate with industry, and to provide research and teaching specifically within a purpose-built environment for management education. Business Schools are also undergoing change, to create a learning environment with more flexibility in terms of learning options and delivery of teaching including on-line delivery of subjects (Selen, 2001). His view is that whilst Business Schools are embracing some change, many are not addressing the learning needs of a rapidly changing organisational environment. Reasons for this include (Selen 2001:106):

- rigid organisational structure of Universities
- changes in, and reductions to, funding
- outdated methodology
- lack of collaboration within and outside the Business School

Selen suggests that, whilst this paints a grim picture, the business context presents higher education sector with a range of opportunities for curriculum development, diverse learning methodologies, and growth. It also enables higher education to collaborate more closely with organisations and business practitioners. Business educators often advocate integration in their own specific subject specialisms. However, this can be to the detriment of overall programme aims, as well as to evolving business models and strategies. For example, a modular approach is favoured by many HE institutions, as shown by the growth of University modular frameworks and credit rating systems for modules and programmes. Assessment frameworks for evaluating learning outcomes in relation to the needs of business can also be adversely affected by this lack of integration (Brown and Knight, 1994; Yorke, 1998). This highlights the need for management learning and education to change by embracing the business community; and by establishing cohesive, integrated programmes of study that incorporate the best elements of training and development in an effective learning strategy within higher education. Business Schools have grown in number and are now regarded as major revenue earners within the University sector. Growth will continue through more whole-hearted collaboration with the business community and the development of programmes that meet organisation needs, as well as those of the student.

Stakeholders and Management Learning

In any partnership, it is essential to identify the key stakeholders (Boot and Evans, 1990; Ormerod, 1996; Keithley and Redman, 1997). In the Business School context, these are the organisational co-ordinator, the University programme leader and the learner-manager (participant). Management learning impacts on a number of people, and stakeholders in such partnerships must be aware of the implications. The identification of stakeholders should take place at the consultation stage of a management learning programme, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders formalised within a learning agreement. The list of stakeholders referred to in this paper are contained in the results section.

Partnerships

This paper examines the partnership between the providers of education services (Universities), those who commission and purchase management education on behalf of consumers (organisation), and consumers (learner-managers). Crosby et al. (1990) demonstrate that opportunities in service partnerships depend significantly on trust and satisfaction, which in turn influence partnership quality. The development of successful partnerships requires an organisation view its dealings with clients as a long-term commitment. Effective relationships are crucial to successful client retention, which cannot be secured solely on the basis of superior technical aspects of a service. It is difficult to quantify the benefits of partnerships between organisations, as their impact does not appear in financial analyses. Rather, the benefits of positive partnerships for business organisations are long-term loyalty and customer retention (Hakansson and Snehota, 1995). The partnership element of a service has an impact on the perceived value of the service supplier by supplementing specialised skills, techniques and experience (Ravald and Gronroos, 1996). Those involved directly with managing partnerships therefore need to balance technical, administrative and social competencies (Paulin et al., 2000).

The supplier of management education and development is normally drawn from the further/higher education from the private, in-house training and consultancy market. The customer or student is normally a manager. This traditional customer-supplier model in management development and management education is being replaced by a "learning partnership" (Keithley and Redman, 1997), which involves a mixture of learning, consultancy and research. Although there maybe initial difficulties, such as pre-course arrangements, specification of the programmes, discussion with the client about knowledge and skills needed and contents; the best way to deliver/receive management education is through "complementary contributions" (Keithley and Redman, 1997:154) between providers and users. Ormerod (1996) suggests that when setting up such partnerships, the importance of securing the active interest of a top manager is crucial, and this was the situation in the three case studies described in this paper. Ormerod (1996) suggests the strategic importance to the organisation in forming 'professional partnerships' between Universities and organisations, as opposed to 'service agreements.' The differences in the two terms are that professional partnerships are ones that are based on a number of partners of equal status, while service agreements are normally more contractual and set up as a client-supplier relationship.

One of the earliest partnerships between education and organisations was described by Boot and Evans (1990) and was between British Airways and Lancaster University. The University was primarily looking for a distinctive position in the business education market place from this collaboration (Boots and Evans, 1990) and the outcome of the collaboration was described as producing "effective practice and effective practitioners" (Burgoyne and Reynolds, 1997:2).

This collaboration led to the development of the concept of the collaborative continuum. At one end of the continuum, an organisation takes a product from the University; which is then designed, run and assessed by the University, and the organisation send their staff on to the programme. At the other end of the continuum, the programme is designed, run and assessed by the organisation, and the University awards the qualification. In the latter case, the organisation has complete control over the learning inputs, but the University oversees the assessment process.

The focus of the research in this paper, is towards the end of the continuum where the organisation purchases a product from the University. However it is hoped by the partners described in this paper that over a period of time, movement along this continuum could be achieved and the organisations may become sufficiently qualified, and able to provide more of the input.

Strategic Alliances

Strategic alliances, once the domain of the private sector, are now a way of working that is becoming more attractive to the public sector and public services. Management literature concentrates on the alliances of firms to enhance skills or market access. Public services must now begin to work in partnership to deliver quality in public service that enhances both effective/efficient service and customer satisfaction.

A strategic alliance may take many forms; from direct investment or integration with another organisation, to contractual arrangements, to partnerships and opportunistic networking, (Harrigan, 1988; Contractor and Lorange, 1988; Doz, 1996). Alliances are categorised as scale or link alliances (Dussage and Garrette, 2000). Scale alliances give access to markets and link alliances are based on competencies. Scale alliances tend to be amongst competitors and link alliances are generally between organisations with complementary skills. This paper addresses the management of link alliances.

Managing Alliances

The study of strategic alliances has moved from categorisation and purpose to outcomes, evaluation and risks/challenges. Research interest is now focused on understanding alliances; on anticipating success (Dussage and Garette, 2000), problems and instabilities, (Das and Teng, 1999) and strategies for success (Segil, 1998). Most recently, emphasis has been on outcomes, evaluation, risks and challenges. Outcomes have been shown to depend on formation and process (Bleeke and Ernst, 1995; Harrigan; 1988; Kanter, 1994). Forming alliances with strong equals, based on inter-organisation trust and in an environment of complementary resources works best. Alliances between competitors, between the weak, and between the strong and weak, tend to fail. Cultural fit and compatibility, trust, similar objectives and complementary skills and resources help make alliances work (Forrest, 1998). Segil (1998) suggests a checklist of factors for successful alliances: including compatible culture, monitoring customer responses, processes to forge strong relationships, open communication, the collaboration/competition dilemma, tiering of involvement, linking rewards to success, flexibility, managing personalities, and finally the need to measure, monitor and review.

The evaluation of alliances cannot be globally prescribed for all relationships. Rather they depend on the objectives of the relationship, the time horizon of effectiveness and on both tangible (financial and market) and intangible (co-operation and morale) outcomes (Doz, 1998). The risks and challenges of alliances for managers have been identified as: impact on control, security, balancing flexibility and rigidity, setting appropriate levels of productivity, optimal use of resources, imitation, developing new resources, acquiring partner resources, protecting resources, and avoiding unintended transfer and imitation (Das and Teng, 1999).

Though most of the alliance literature is based in the private sector, these insights into form, outcome and evaluation and risks/challenges, have face validity for the situation that public services find themselves in.

Research Problem

The contemporary literature on the emerging area of management learning is synthesised from a diverse literature base, grounded in both management education and development. The literature is complex and fragmented, and because of these different contributions to the body of knowledge, there is a lack of cohesiveness in the application of management learning to management practice. The research problem and challenge is to integrate these ideas, to develop a framework that can be used to design and develop management learning provision within the University sector, taking into account three stakeholder groups: managers undertaking University programmes in management learning, organisations sponsoring programmes, and Universities providing the programmes.

The research problem gives rise to a number of issues. The research describes an action research-based collaboration, which is work-based and leads to both personal and organisational learning and change. The stakeholders in this collaboration (University, employer and manager), want to maximise the learning which is implicit in the aims of other postgraduate programmes offered in the Business School, whether they are open or for a specific client group. This action research-based activity is set in three organisations, two from the public and one from the private sector. The research question arising from this which is pertinent to this paper, is in what ways could collaboration with other stakeholders such as the sponsoring organisation, affect the management learning experience?

Research Methodology and Methods

This action research-based activity is set in three organisations, two from the public and one from the private sector. The emerging research strategy uses a 'grounded' approach which led to a case study methodological framework for this paper, which allows use of a range of sources of information collected from a range of research methods.

Each of the three case studies has similar aims, which are to develop management potential and promote organisational change. The emphasis on change led to an action research approach, drawing on theoretical insights from both management research and management learning. The strategy is based on a multi-method approach, which includes the evaluation method, interview and focus group information, as well as reflections on learning, which is part of the assessment strategy for the programmes. Data was drawn from the providers of the education services (the University Business School), the purchaser (the organisation) and the consumers (learner-managers).

An additional reason why the case study was a chosen research method was due to the fact that the programme was seen as ground-breaking within the Business School. The requirements from the organisations were not clear at the beginning of the process. There was an overall aim and a couple of research questions. There were also organisational and University considerations and demands, which would require an evaluation of the programme, but the methods and the sources of the investigation would need to be developed.

Results

Presenting the results from a longitudinal research study of an inter-organisational partnership, this paper explores the contributions, experiences and perceptions of the central stakeholders in management learning (HE, organisations and students). The results include :

1. Consultation Phase

The consultation stage is seen as an important and crucial stage in the development of management learning programmes. It is also important to spend time with the organisation to help break down any barriers or preconceptions about Universities, and to gain the trust of the organisation. This stage consists of the stakeholders discussing the partnership agreement and making explicit what each party requires from it. The consultation stage for each of the programmes lasted between 3 and 6 months and the stakeholders were all senior managers and academics. Whilst the information that follows relates to the research described in this paper, the results have been consistent over the three case studies which represent both the private and public sector. It is therefore proposed that these factors could be applied to other Master's level management learning partnerships and programmes. The key elements from the combined evaluation of the three case studies are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 Consultation Stage Key Elements

Consultation Stage Key Elements
• Prior knowledge • Pre-programme information • Participant motivation • Managerial requirements of programme • Setting performance indicators • Qualifications • Progression

2. Action Research

As part of the articulation of requirements from a management learning partnership, it is recommended that action research principles be adopted, so that impact on organisations maximises the opportunities to bring about change (Gill and Johnson, 1991; Saunders et al., 2000). The research suggests that action research principles are not being effectively used within Business and Management schools. A plethora of Master's programmes claim to be based on action research, but according to Mumford (1995), this activity is often limited to final year dissertation students through the provision of action learning sets. These sets provide backup and support for managers, but the interaction and dialogue is between two key stakeholders, the University and the learner-manager, and there is normally no external validation of the effect of the research on the organisation. Both manager and academic have different agendas, and in the discussion that takes place in action learning sets, it is conjectured that organisational impact is diminished. The impact and involvement of senior managers within organisations has been discussed in the literature and is backed up by the results reported in this research study. Through this involvement the impact of change within organisations will increase. The two main issues emerging from this research include:

- Action research should be integrated for use throughout a management learning programme. In this research study, groups worked on individual change projects as part of the assessment strategy, which were then presented to senior managers. They then considered these change projects for implementation. Although some participants thought this was a daunting task, the overall feedback was positive and increased the profile of the participants, as well as providing the programme with a higher profile, and the organisation gained from the changes. There was therefore a significant gain for each of the three stakeholders. This was on-going from the Certificate stage.
- Action learning sets normally involve the manager and the academic; both have positions to defend or uphold. The academic will want to ensure that the qualification meets academic requirements and is rigorous. The manager may, having considered the academic requirements, decide to go for a low-risk strategy ensuring that academic needs are met, arguably at the expense of organisational change, which may be a higher-risk strategy. One potential way around this is to adopt a third party into the learning agreement. This third stakeholder will verify what organisational change is required in negotiation with the manager and the tutor and may also provide on-going coaching and/or mentor support.

3. Learning Agreements

It is essential to articulate the nature of the management learning relationship. This can be done informally, but when developing Master's provision, which requires explicit quality assurance mechanisms, it is recommended that a learning agreement be set up. The degree of formality will depend on the organisation and stakeholder relationships. To develop this framework it is essential that relationships between the three parties should be made explicit, and one of the conditions of this research is the development of an explicit learning agreement between stakeholders.

The research conducted within a major UK University Business School, determined that the nature of the partnership should be made explicit, and one way of doing this is through the use of a learning agreement. A learning agreement is a key reference and working document agreed by a student or employee, the employer and the University. Learning agreements differ depending on the detail required by the parties concerned. They can include the expectations of each party, targets set and respective roles and responsibilities.

Learning agreements can make a partnership more explicit, ensuring that all stakeholders review the nature of their relationships with each other. The terms, 'learning agreement' and 'training agreement' are used interchangeably in the literature and in this paper, the term used by the author of the literature will be used. Keithley and Redman (1997) state that formal training agreements between the employer and the employee are not used effectively in higher education. Training agreements are established conditions under which an employer is prepared to fund an employee. There is often a financial penalty on the voluntary termination of a trainee's employment in a defined period (usually 1-3 years).

The standard training agreement for local government employers normally commits the employee to obtaining the qualification at the earliest opportunity, and to refunding all or some of the funding if an employee fails to make satisfactory progress, withdraws or leaves.

This is consistent with the experience of staff involved in the research described in this paper, when working with UK local authorities.

Human Resource Development (HRD) literature focuses on the legality of partnerships and collaboration between key stakeholders (Davis, 1996), deterring the "poaching" of trained staff (Cann, 1993), and where this fails, recovery of training costs by the employer. A neglected aspect within the literature relates to those who are given the incentive to complete training when entering it under a formal training agreement e.g. when a manager commences a 3 year Master's programme, here the organisation may not be able to sponsor the next stage of the programme, or may delay until there is sufficient demand for the next stage.

The concept of a newly developed learning agreement was formed in the University's partnership with a major UK Local Authority (Case A) and was subsequently adopted in a further two organisations - a Welsh Local Authority (Case B) and a large, private organisation (Case C). Case B developed a learning agreement based on stakeholder commitments and entitlements. This was issued at open days, discussed there, and referred to again at the induction stage of the programme. The manager, organisation and the University were parties to the document but it was not signed by the stakeholders. Case C wanted its learning agreement more formalised. The document was far more detailed than those for Cases A and B, and each party signed it. It was felt that articulating the positions of all three stakeholders and their responsibilities, would result in a more effective management learning partnership. The process of negotiating and developing the learning agreement with participants, organisation and University was an important part of the process which clarified and informed the parties and led to improved communication and value.

From this analysis of the learning agreements described we recommend that learning agreements are included within management learning programmes wherever possible. The degree of formality will depend on the organisation and the stakeholder relationships. A key consideration when developing this framework is the extent to which relationships between the three should be made explicit.

4. Stakeholders and Management Learning

Management learning affects a number of stakeholders, and those in any partnership must be aware of its implications. Stakeholders identified within this research include:

Table 2 Key stakeholders for a Local Authority Management Learning Programme

Key stakeholders for a Management Learning Programme (Local Authority A)	
• Participants • Participants' family • Group members • Champion and/or mentor • Organisation Co-ordinator	• Line manager • Senior managers • Councillors • University Programme Leader • Tutors

In any partnership, it is essential to identify the key stakeholders (Boot and Evans 1990; Ormerod, 1996; Keithley and Redman, 1997). In this programme they comprised organisational co-ordinator, University programme leader, and the learner-manager (participant).

Management development and learning differs from staff development, since managers have the additional dimension of being responsible for staff. Manager development directly impacts on particular stakeholders whose support and feedback is vital. In the research study cited these included line managers, champions who acted as mentors and presented personal examples of best practice, as well as senior managers and councillors who were a key part of the assessment process.

When developing support infrastructure for the programme learning activities, consideration should also been given to incorporating the participants' family within the programme's support infrastructure for learning, as the type of management learning programme suggested has for far-reaching effects and its commitment is considerable.

Discussion and Implications of Research

The cases demonstrate that as well as a diagnostic tool, the framework underpinning strategic alliances - the formation, risks and challenges; can provide the basis of an anticipatory and proactive approach to successful management learning partnerships. The research shows that if stakeholders in a management learning relationship are to achieve their individual objectives, managing stakeholder interaction and input is essential. The need for partners to be clear about each stakeholder's objectives, and how stakeholders will collaborate is paramount. The learning agreement is a mechanism through which these desired outcomes can be made explicit and provides a protocol by which the strategic partnership can be managed. The paper also explains how strategic alliances can be utilised to facilitate partnership approaches to management learning. A key consideration is how service providers and purchasers perceive their roles in management learning. Another, how the concept of strategic alliances provides both insight and a practical framework to enhance the management of management learning. We also argue that the absence of a framework for evaluating outcomes of management learning in the extant literature, confirms that establishing criteria for successful stakeholder alliances is a useful and appropriate approach.

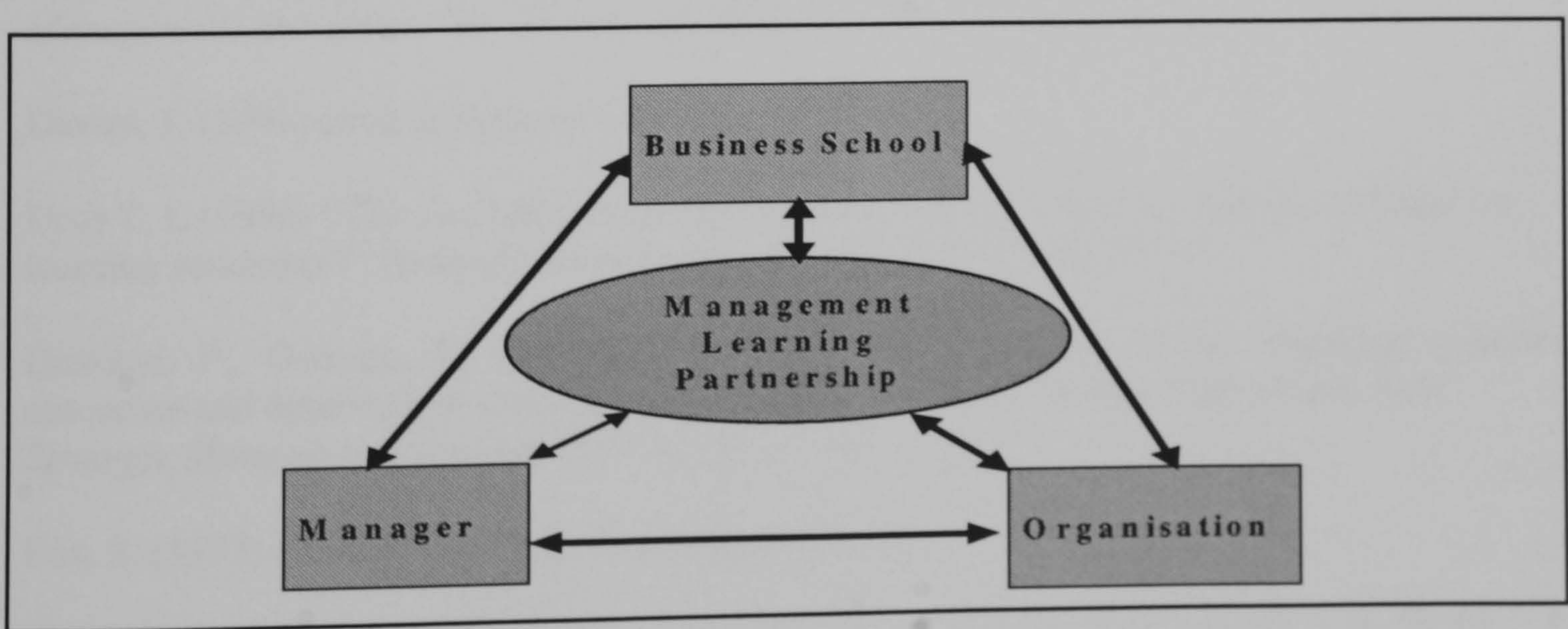
There is a need for universities to develop practice in this area. Not only for networking and educational purposes, but also as a means of sustaining growth and financial benefits (Kennedy and Mason, 1993; Fox, 1997; Brown, 1999). The literature overall supports the use of partnerships and other forms of collaboration between organisations and higher education. Results from the cases cited are consistent with these in the literature. Further support comes from the success of the collaborative programmes, which confirm benefits for all three partners that significantly outweigh any negative impact.

However, conceptual frameworks are limited in this area and this is an area we seek to address. Drawing from the political and business world the term 'joined-up thinking' best describes this gap. In particular this relates to an overall strategy for management learning. Burgoyne and Reynolds (1997) argue that when defining or mapping the field of management learning, the most appropriate approach is a 'no map' approach which encourages an 'open door' attitude, and freedom to draw on a wide range of literature. The authors suggest that if the area of management learning is to be utilised more widely by management practitioners, it should be more clearly defined. The framework for management learning proposed enables managers to operationalise the concepts more widely and effectively.

Establishing a Framework for Management Learning

The figure offers a framework for management learning, derived from research described in this paper to bridge the gap that currently exists. It is offered as a framework rather than a definitive model for researchers to consider and apply to their own situations, and is derived from our review of the conceptual basis for management learning.

Figure 1 Partnership Framework for Management Learning



In summary, management learning is viewed as an amalgam of management education and development. Within the model 'organisations' include corporate universities. The interaction of the organisation and the manager with the third party, the University Business School (which could be extended more widely to the HE sector) creates the management learning partnership. This framework builds on the interaction that already exists between manager and organisation, manager and University Business School and University Business School and organisation. Management learning inextricably links the three areas.

References

Bleeke, J and Ernst, D (1995) "Is your strategic alliance really a sale?" *Harvard Business Review, Vol. 70 (1, pp. 97-105*

Boot, R. and Evans, J. (1990) 'Partnership in education and change'. *Management Education and Development, Vol. 21 (1), pp. 13-21*

Brown, P. (1999) 'Client-based management qualifications: A case of win-win?'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 18 (4), pp.350-361*

Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M. (1997) *Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice.* Sage Publications, London

Contractor, F. J. and Lorange, P. (1988) "Competition-Vs-co-operation: a benefit/cost framework for choosing between fully owned investments and co-operative partnerships" *Management International Review, Vol. 28 (special issue) pp. 5-18*

Crosby, L, Evans, K and Cowles, D (1990) "Partnership quality in services selling: an interpersonal influence perspective" *Journal of Marketing, Vol. 54, pp. 68-81*

Das, T. K and Teng, B. S (1999) "Managing risks in strategic alliances" *The Academy of Management Executive, Vol. 13 9(4), pp. 50-62*

Davies, J. (1996) cited in Redman and Story

Doz, Y. L (1996) "The evolution of co-operation in strategic alliances: initial conditions or learning processes?" *Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 17, pp. 55-83*

Dussage, P., Garrette, B. and Mitchell, W. (2000) "Learning from competing partners: outcomes and durations of scale and link alliances in Europe, North America and Asia" *Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 21, pp. 99-126*

Fox, S. (1997) cited in Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M.

Frank, H. D (1996) 'Learning to learn at university'. *Education and Training, Vol. 38 (8).*

Gibb, A.A (1996) ' Small firms' training and competitiveness: Building upon the small business as a learning organisation' *International small business journal. Vol. 15 (3) pp 13-29*

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (1991) *Research Methods for Managers.* Paul Chapman, London

Hakansson, H. and Snehota, I. (1995) *Developing Partnerships in Business Networks.* International Thomson Business Press, London.

Harrigan, K. R. (1988) "Strategic alliances and partner asymmetries" in F. J Contractor and Lorange, P.

Kanter, R. M. (1994) "Collaborative advantage: the art of alliances" *Harvard Business Review, Vol. 72 (4), Pp. 96-108*

Keithley, D. and Redman, T. (1997) 'University-industry partnerships in management development: A case study of a "world class" company'. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 16 (3), pp. 154-166*

Kennedy and Mason (1993) cited in Brown (1993)

Lee, M. (1995) 'Learning for work: short-term gain or long-term benefit?' *Personnel Review, Vol. 24 (6). pp. 29-43*
Mumford, A. (1998) 'Managing learning and development'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol.1 (1). pp. 113-118*

Lorange (Eds.) *Co-operative strategies in International business.* Lexington Books. Pp 141-158.

Ormerod, R.J (1996) ' Combining management, consultancy and research' *International Journal in Management Science. Vol.24 (1) pp 1- 12*

Ravald, A. and Gronroos, C. (1996) "The value concept and partnership marketing". *European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 30 (2), pp. 19-30*

Sadler-Smith, E. et al. (2000) 'Using collaborative learning to develop small firms'. *Human Resource Development International, Vol. 3 (3). pp. 285-306.*

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill. A. (2000) *Research Methods for Business Students.* 2nd .ed. Pearson Education, Essex

Segil, L. (1998) "Strategic alliances for the 21st Century". *Strategy and Leadership, Vol. 26 (4), pp. 12-16*

Selen, W. (2001) 'Learning in the new business school setting, a collaborative model'. *The Learning Organisation: an International Journal, Vol. 8 (3)*

Yorke, M. (1998) The Times 'League Table' of Universities (1997) A statistical appraisal *Quality Assurance in Education Vol.6 (1)*

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (1997) *National Report – A vision for 20 years: the learning society*

Fryer Report (1977) ' Learning for the twenty first century' *National Advisory group for continuous and life long learning.* London