

**The role of reflective dialogue in transformational
reflective learning**

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Supervisors : Professor David Sims and Professor Clive Holtham

I have found my supervision sessions with David Sims a truly reflective dialogue. I would like to register my appreciation of his support and confidence in me which has enabled me to complete this work. Thank you.

Co-authors: Dr Ian McGill and Professor Nic Beech

My work with Ian McGill has allowed me to engage in transformational learning and our work together has included reflective dialogue. Similarly with Nic Beech our work emerged from a respectful and productive dialogue. Thank you both.

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Abstract

Learning is a socially constructed process created by and with learners through their interactions with their experience and their environment. Many of the factors in learning are hidden – even learners themselves may not be aware of them. The affective domain, one of the three classical domains of learning, provides a potential key to these hidden factors in learning, and when included in a reflective dialogue with another, may access some of these hidden or unknown factors, which have the potential for transformation through double-loop learning. Some of the aspects of learning which are likely to be revealed **to the learner** through the gateway of affect are as follows: Power issues, the prevailing discourse, autonomy, connectedness, relationship, habitus, dispositions and emotion itself as a driver. My theory does not claim that this list is exhaustive. The impact of transformational learning is likely to extend to the organisation through the double hermeneutic effect. This is an issue currently under discussion in the literature. My theory proposes that it is in the double hermeneutic effect that dialogue may play its part, so that reflective dialogues between learners in organisations have the potential to influence the organisation itself. The publications offer my original contribution to the reflective learning field ie practical and usable methods in the form of reflective dialogue at three levels and in five dimensions.

Purpose of Overarching Statement

This application for the higher degree of doctor of philosophy is made through prior publication. I understand this to mean that the sixteen publications presented for consideration constitute the major part of the application with this overarching statement as supporting evidence.

My statement will: first, in section a, describe the evolution of the publications over time, with some accompanying detail; second, in section b, declare my theoretical stance towards the material with which the publications are concerned; and third, in section c, discuss how each publication has applied my theory to practice and to what extent my stance has been justified by the results of my work.

Section a: The publications

Outline of Section a

The publications have been numbered 1-16 for ease of reference and following their listing, this section summarises what the publications are saying, individually and collectively; how (and on what grounds) the author's thinking has developed over time; and what her current position is on the main themes.

Introduction

The publications examine:

'The role of Reflective dialogue in transformational reflective learning'.

My publications indicate that I have been engaged in scholarly activity in relation to reflective learning continuously for over fifteen years. In particular the texts which I have co-authored (with Ian McGill and Nic Beech) present the idea of reflective dialogue for transformation as an activity which is intentional and interpersonal, emphasises the affective domain, acknowledges the subjective and social context of the learner, includes support as well as challenge, and potentially, involves transformation for both individuals and their organization. The concept of transformational learning, which may be achieved through reflective dialogue is illustrated in five main relationships which foster reflective learning and change. These are learning partnerships, mentoring, coaching, action learning and supervision.

The published works for consideration in this application, presented in chronological order.

1. Brockbank A (1994) Expectations of Mentoring *Training Officer* April. pp 86-88.
2. Brockbank A & McGill I (1998) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education* Buckingham : SRHE/Open University Press.

3. Beech N & Brockbank A (1999) Power/knowledge and psychosocial dynamics of Mentoring *Management Learning* 30(1) 7-25
4. Beech N & Brockbank A (1999) Guiding Blight *People Management* IPD 6 May
5. Brockbank A & Beech N (1999) Imbalance of Power *Health Management* July 1999
6. Brockbank, A. McGill, I. & Beech, N. (2002) (eds) *Reflective Learning in Practice*
Aldershot: Gower
7. Brockbank A (2004) Therapist Illness and its Impact on the Therapeutic Frame In Luca, M (2004) (ed) *The Therapeutic Frame in the Clinical Context: Integrative Perspectives*
London : Brunner-Routledge
8. McGill I & Brockbank A (2004) *The Action Learning Handbook*
London : Routledge-Falmer
9. Brockbank A & McGill I (2006) *Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching* London : Kogan Page
10. Brockbank A & Patel U (2006) *E-mentoring: A contradiction in terms?* Proceedings: The London Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Sixth International Conference.
11. Brockbank, A & McGill, I (2007) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education* (2nd edition) Buckingham : SRHE/Open University Press.
12. Brockbank, A (2008) Is the coaching fit for purpose? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* 1 (2) 132-144.
13. Brockbank, A (2008) Is your supervision FIT for learning? A live demonstration. Proceedings. The London Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Seventh International Conference.

14. Abl, V & Brockbank, A (2009) The Phoenix rises: Peer Coaching at the Bilbao world cafe
International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching 7(1) June 2009
http://www.emccouncil.org/eu/public/international_journal_of_mentoring_and_coaching/international_journal_of_coaching_and_mentoring/the_phoenix_rises_peer_coaching_at_the_bilbao_world_cafe/index.html
(accessed 1.8.09)

15. Harris, M & Brockbank, A (2009) *Supervising Professionals: A model for Practice*
London : Jessica Kingsley

16. Patel U & Brockbank A (work in progress) Technologies of mentoring and Knowledge Management. This paper is in preparation for intended publication in *Management Learning*.

The publications

1. Brockbank A (1994) Expectations of Mentoring *Training Officer* April. pp 86-88.

This article reported details of a questionnaire survey for mentors which identified the different expectations of mentoring held by protégés and their prospective mentors, as well as their actual experience of the mentoring relationship. Results indicated that learning outcomes were influenced by the expectations of both partners as these affected the mentoring relationship. This was followed up by interviews with the mentoring pairs, reported in publication 3. In working with mentors I discovered just how mystified many senior doctors and managers were when asked to take on the role, as well as how disappointed they were when their allocated protégé chose not to consult them. The dysfunctional effect of ‘allocated’ mentoring pairs is well documented in the mentoring literature. (Kram 1988; Scandura 1998; Ragins et al 2000)

2. Brockbank A & McGill I (1998) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*
Buckingham : SRHE/Open University Press.

My collaboration with Ian McGill began when I left a senior position in higher education to become a full-time independent consultant. I had a number of clients in public and private

enterprises and a wide-ranging portfolio of work, including training, action learning and university teaching. In addition we worked together on some joint projects and I contributed chapters and material to Ian's then current opus. One result of our collaboration was a desire to communicate our methods to a wider audience and the first 'Facilitating Reflective Learning' book was proposed, jointly to the Open University Press. The reviewers liked what they saw and we started the writing. The work came to a standstill about half way through the process and we sat down to discuss what to do. At this point we realised that we were going through a learning process ourselves and we were trying to learn in the traditional way, operating separately without any dialogue. We resolved to include dialogue in our process and, when we practised reflective dialogue as we recommend for our readers, the chapters emerged and publication 2 gradually appeared. What occurred was a concrete example of the power of dialogue, as our exchange was respectful, involved listening and attending to each other, offering empathy about the fears, frustrations, struggles and ultimate satisfaction, so typical of the writing process, whilst at the same time offering each other a critical reading of the material. The dialogue process was not easy, and pulling teeth comes to mind as a metaphor, rather than the rose-tinted 'flow of meaning'! For this publication we drew extensively on our own work with clients, using case study material to support our argument. Our text corresponded with David Bohm's view of thought 'as an inherently limited medium' and presented dialogue as 'a multi-faceted process, looking well beyond typical notions of conversational parlance and exchange'(Bohm 1996 p vii). We went further and asserted with him that 'the traditional methods of introspection and self-improvement are inadequate for comprehending the true nature of the mind' (Bohm1996 p x).

The text included a theoretical treatment of the conditions for deep, significant, reflective and transformational learning in the higher education context, together with how such theory could be applied in practice. The material was directed at university teachers seeking to change their style of pedagogy towards a more facilitative stance and included an exhaustive treatment of Schon's work on reflective learning in terms of assessable outcomes. The presentation of theory in usable form for practitioners, which began with this text, is claimed as one of my significant contributions to the field of reflective learning.

3. Beech N & Brockbank A (1999a) Power/knowledge and psychosocial dynamics of Mentoring *Management Learning* 30(1) 7-25

This paper presented research about mentoring couples, in particular to what extent learning outcomes were achieved in a programme, provided by a higher education institution to support mentors and protégés employed by an NHS trust hospital. Mentors and protégés in the same couple had widely differing versions of their relationship and the quality of the mentoring relationships predicted learning outcomes for protégés. Implications for power relations were explored and debated in this publication. The research was outlined for NHS staff and managers in two further articles. This was my first collaboration with Nic Beech and we worked well together. When I considered an edited text with Ian, I invited Nic to co-edit with us and this is reported in publication 6.

4. Beech N & Brockbank A (1999b) Guiding Blight *People Management* IPD 6 May

This short article aimed to distil the material in publication 3 in a more user-friendly form for practitioners without however excluding some of the findings, one of the contributions I am claiming in this statement. The article stimulated a dialogue about the assumed beneficial outcomes of mentoring programmes and the commissioning editor, suggested that papers which questioned the popular conceptions of development ideas as totally ‘refreshing’ and asked for more of the same.

5. Brockbank A & Beech N (1999) Imbalance of Power *Health Management* July 1999

This was another short article summarising the Beech & Brockbank (1999a) findings with potential application in the health sector. The purpose was again the presentation of theory and findings in a usable form for health practitioners, one of the contributions I am claiming. This kind of journal is open to the message within the publications and perhaps I have rather neglected the medium as a route to having my ideas better known and accepted.

6. Brockbank, A. McGill, I. & Beech, N. (2002)(eds) *Reflective Learning in Practice*
Aldershot: Gower

My next project, as co-editor with Ian McGill and Nic Beech, was to be a collaborative venture, bringing together our colleagues from academia, public service enterprises like the NHS, business and commerce, as well as friends who worked in the voluntary or charity sector. In this edited text, published by Gower in 2002, we sought to discover and present evidence from a variety of contributors to support or refute the research statement given above. The cases are highly practical accounts of learning programmes in public, private and voluntary organisations which used forms of dialogue to promote the possibility of a transformational learning outcome for both individuals and the organisation concerned. The edited text comprised a collection of exemplars with theoretical underpinning from the editors. There were 17 stories about reflective learning outcomes in a variety of contexts, including, commercial, financial, pharmaceutical, the voluntary sector, health, education, and the helping professions. Reflective dialogue featured in almost every account and attempts were made to evaluate and assess a reflective learning outcome, for both individuals and their organizations. Ideal relationships to promote reflective dialogue emerge as action learning sets, communities of practice, management briefings and on line support as well as mentoring, coaching and supervisory connections. The evidence for learning outcomes is presented by individual contributors in different ways with an emphasis on organisational change.

The cases confirm that transformation tends to be a 'hit and miss' affair, with some unpredicted but often valuable results. This idea forms the basis for our proposed method of assessing reflective learning, described in detail in publication 11, using evidence of process rather than product as criteria. Analysis of the cases suggests that the frequency and quality of reflective dialogue correlates directly with learning outcomes, with single-loop functionalist results being an outcome related to less and less effective dialogue, while double loop transformational learning related to more and more effective dialogue.

7. Brockbank A (2004) *Therapist Illness and its Impact on the Therapeutic Frame* In Luca, M (2004) (ed) *The Therapeutic Frame in the Clinical Context: Integrative Perspectives*
London : Brunner-Routledge

This publication is a personal account of a period of illness and how it affected the ‘container’ known as the ‘therapeutic frame’ in psychotherapeutic work. This publication acts as a heuristic case study (myself) which illustrates transformational reflective learning as a consequence of life events, a frequent presence in the literature of therapeutic change. In addition the convalescence period was used to prepare the portfolio required for accreditation by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy as a registered practitioner. This had resonances of the journal activities recommended to students as evidence of their reflective learning in HE, and its connection with practice made this a worthwhile exercise. At around the same time I was invited to become a chartered fellow of the Chartered Institute of Training and Development through presentation of a similar portfolio. These projects gave me direct experience of preparing a portfolio of reflective material and identifying effective methods to achieve a successful outcome, leading directly to my practice of creating learning partnerships and journal templates to assist the reflective process in HE and professional education.

8. McGill I & Brockbank A (2004) *The Action Learning Handbook*
London : Routledge-Falmer

To complement the two earlier editions of *Action Learning*, a third was requested and this I co-authored with Ian McGill. Some of the ideas developed for publication 2 would be included in the new edition, a completely new text, *The Action Learning Handbook* published in 2004. In this book, theory about learning and reflection which applied to Action Learning was introduced, some of my experience as an action learning facilitator, and also material about group dynamics, not in the earlier books.

Action learning is a structured method of learning in groups or sets where dialogue is built into the method. Here together with a strongly practice-focused approach, theory was presented to support the rationale for the dialogue method, once again offering usable techniques to achieve the desired outcome. In response to reviewers’ comments, issues of power in organizations were visited in this publication. In this text evaluations were presented as evidence of a

reflective learning outcome. Evaluation of action learning is described through one detailed case study in the British NHS giving the outcomes for all stakeholders i.e. the set participants, the sets, the facilitators and the organisation. The chapter included a review of the evaluation process itself, an example of researcher reflective learning.

9. Brockbank A & McGill I (2006) *Facilitating Reflective Learning through Mentoring and Coaching* London : Kogan Page

While I developed as an author and editor, I had been offering alongside these activities, masters level modules in group dynamics, and Mentoring coaching and supervision at City University London. These modules were highly successful within the MSc in the Education Training & Development of adults, and led to several programmes for corporate clients, some of which are reported in this publication.. In the process of teaching the modules I had developed a theoretical framework for mentoring, supervision and coaching based which was new and necessary as all three professions are under-theorised.

The text presented four ways of enabling one-to-one reflective dialogue as a necessary but not necessarily sufficient condition for reflective learning. The mentoring and coaching approaches were defined in terms of theoretical constructs from social learning theory, suggesting that purpose and ownership influenced the learning outcome as well as the nature of the dialogue. Several case studies were included to illustrate the range of approaches and their learning outcomes. Most of these corporate programmes sought functionalist objectives, seeking to use a non-directive approach to mask the functionalist intent, a process identified by Helen Colley (2003) as engagement mentoring, and utilised in our framework as applying to both mentoring and coaching. This revealed that provision of a person-centred dialogue, with the potential to be reflective, was insufficient to promote transformational learning, without ownership of objectives by the learner. The purpose of 'engagement' is to directly address this difficulty by seeking to align the personal objectives of the learner with those of the organisation. The publication includes case material which supports a positive response to our research question, through the outcomes of independent mentoring and coaching and includes accounts from mentors, coaches and clients which replicate earlier findings about the significance of the mentoring or coaching relationship for reflective learning.

10. Brockbank A & Patel U (2006) *E-mentoring: A contradiction in terms?* Proceedings : The London Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Sixth International Conference.

As part of the MSc team at City University, and through collaboration with my colleague Uma Patel, an e-learning expert, I had begun to use electronic methods in my work. I was interested in how mentoring, coaching and supervision would fare in the virtual learning context. In this paper presented at the London conference in 2006, secondary sources were studied to explore the issue of e-mentoring and in particular the evidence for reflective dialogue on line. Findings suggest that relationships blossom on line and this is anecdotally supported by Facebook and Youtube, however there is sparse evidence about learning outcomes. (Anthony 2000). This paper is included as an example of how my theory may be applied in electronic media, one of the contributions I claim, and some of the material in this paper is being incorporated into the potential publication 16.

11. Brockbank, A & McGill, I (2007) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education* (2nd edition) Buckingham : SRHE/Open University Press.

This second edition, responding to reviewers comments, brought the earlier text up to date with numerous case studies and exemplars as well as a method of assessing reflective learning outcomes in the university context. The theoretical base is widened and deepened to include social activity theory and the concepts of habitus and disposition. The practical focus remains to enable practitioners to evaluate the learning dialogues they are using. As the second edition includes analysis of reflective learning as a stated learning outcome in university programmes, we were determined to find out if any of our ideas were being used in the field, and we contacted a small number of university teachers who had received high ratings from HEFC and the QAA. A short survey of students and tutors suggested that the idea of reflection and reflective learning remains mysterious to many.

The second edition coincided with the results of a survey by Peter Kahn and his associates into the role and effectiveness of reflective practices in programmes for new academic staff. This confirmed that for these respondents at least, the use of dialogue was a critical dimension in their

development as university teachers. (Kahn et al 2006) The characteristics of a dialogue which can promote such reflective practice were identified as ‘Planned to enable, support and direct the reflective process, taking into account the voices represented, the place of challenge, the role of language, connections to specific literature, aligned feedback, technological support, the social atmosphere and the role of facilitators and peers’ (Kahn et al 2006 p63) Indeed Kahn et al (2006 p 27) recommend reflective dialogue as follows:

A directed process...which must both be targeted and supported as this prevents the process from turning into ‘metacognitive rambles on minor aspects of teaching’
(Grushka et al 2005)

The second edition recommends methods for such a targeted process with the support of some very practical methods of enabling reflective dialogue in large groups and assessing the learning outcomes which ensue, which again includes specific case material.

12. Brockbank, A (2008) Is the coaching fit for purpose? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* 1 (2) 132-144.

This publication commissioned by the editorial team, offers a brief summary of the framework offered in publication 9. The text now forms part of most academic programmes dealing with mentoring or coaching, and is recognised as an important contribution in a field which is under-theorised, relying as it does on borrowed theory from psychotherapy. This paper is included as another exemplar of how my theory has been made accessible and usable for practitioners, a contribution I am claiming in this statement.

13 Brockbank, A (2008) Is your supervision FIT for learning? A live demonstration. Proceedings The London Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Seventh International Conference. (SoTL)

This session introduced a new model of supervision, the FIT model, which optimises the use of the three classical domains of learning, identified in the acronym as F for feeling, I for initiative or acting, and T for thinking. The interactive session gave aspiring supervisors the chance to try out the model with colleagues. This paper is included as an instance of how supervisors may

cover the three classical domains of learning in their work, and some of the material is included in publication 15.

14. Abl, V. & Brockbank, A (2009) *The Phoenix Rises: Peer Coaching at the Bilbao world cafe*
International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching 7(1) June 2009.

http://www.emccouncil.org/eu/public/international_journal_of_mentoring_and_coaching/international_journal_of_coaching_and_mentoring/the_phoenix_rises_peer_coaching_at_the_bilbao_world_cafe/index.html

(accessed 1.8.09)

This paper is an account of one instance of a type of event known as the world cafe, which optimises the power of conversation to promote a learning dialogue. The method relies on the assumption that a variety of dialogue partners is likely to result in a richer learning outcome. Other aspects of learning appear in the account such as art, vision, drama, music and movement. The paper developed from my supervision sessions with Valerie Abl, who works as a coach and trainer with blue-chip organisations and those developing new concepts in business. Valerie felt unable to compose a paper on her own to report her experience of the world café in Bilbao which we agreed constituted a version of reflective dialogue. The paper was a joint effort with equal contributions from both of us.

15. Harris, M & Brockbank, A (2009) *Supervising Professionals: A model for Practice*
London : Jessica Kingsley

This text develops the FIT idea for use in the supervision of therapists, working with three different therapeutic orientations to facilitate active learning in the three domains identified by the acronym, F for feeling, I for initiative or acting, and T for thinking. The text supports a newly validated postgraduate programme for supervisors at City University. The book is a joint effort with equal contributions from both of us and publication is expected shortly.

16. Patel U & Brockbank A (work in progress) *Technologies of mentoring and Knowledge Management*. This paper is in preparation for intended publication in *Management Learning* and will be a joint project with equal contributions from both of us.

Conclusions

The publications are presented as evidence in a variety of contexts which address the title of this statement, ie: *'The role of Reflective dialogue in transformational reflective learning'*. The role of dialogue as a necessary condition for achieving transformational learning is supported by the publications, but not its sufficiency. The focus of my work has altered from an earlier conviction that reflective dialogue is both necessary and sufficient for a transformational outcome, to my continuing confidence in the important part played by reflective dialogue in such learning outcomes, but without a guaranteed result. The key role of working in the affective domain is identified as linked to potential transformation, and the publications suggest that where emotive material is allowed in dialogue, many of the hidden facets of learning may be revealed.

Translating theory into usable techniques for those conducting a reflective dialogue is part of my contribution to the field. Defining what is transformative relies on self-report material, if behaviour is not to be part of the definition, and these reports are likely to be relative. Issues of power culture, social difference and opportunity remain as invisible factors in learning outcomes and my contribution is a method by which, in dialogue, attention to the emotional domain will uncover their impact on the learning process.

Section b: My theory

Outline of Section b

This section describes the development of my current theory of learning, which emerged from my understanding of social constructionism, the power of discourse, habitus, dispositions and social activity theory, as well as the person-centred movement. My theory suggests that a properly balanced focus on the three known domains of learning may reveal some of the factors which affect transformative learning by adults. My current theoretical position suggests that attending to the affective domain has the potential to bring to light the multi-faceted nature of learning, and that authentic reflective dialogue offers the potential for transformation for individuals and organisations. A reflective critique of my position completes the section.

Introduction

As an academic in HE and a facilitator/trainer in public, private and voluntary business sectors, for over thirty years, I have evolved a theory of learning which is presented below. The theory has academic roots in the concepts and writings of many respected scholars in the field. Their ideas form a background to my theory which is a combination of such conceptual material, new ideas, and practice-based evidence, provided by active practitioners and my own case studies. Learning theories are summarised in publications 2 (chapters 2 & 3) and 11(chapters 2 and 3), where their axioms are examined and critiqued. They include early concepts of dualism, (pub 2 p21; pub 11 p20and 99; pub2 p27) the ideas of John Dewey (1916) about reflection (pub2 p22-24; pub 11 pp16-63) and challenges to traditional approaches to education (pub 2 p30; pub 11 p120-129; pub 12 p140) and many of these have borne fruit in modern pedagogy (pub 2 p30; pub12 p134138; pub 6). My theory of learning is based on social constructionist theory (Berger & Luckman1966; Burr 1995) and the application of social constructivist approaches to learning by Giddens, Bourdieu and others (Giddens 1991;1992;1993; Tucker 1998; Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Grenfell & James 1988; Leontev 1978;1981; Vygotsky 1997a;1997b; Belenky et al 1986; Barnett 1990;1992a;1992b;1994;1997;2005)

My theory has recognised and valued some of these ideas, and does not seek to manufacture new concepts where there are existing models which are worthy of attention. However my dissatisfaction with existing models has stimulated me to develop an original and innovative theory of learning. My theory is a combination of a range of existing theory (rather than a uniform adherence to one model) and its translation into practical and usable methods. My theory is innovative because it departs from the traditional custom of presenting new ideas in propositional form and suggesting that practitioners adopt them, without indicating **how** this might be done. Exceptions to this are John Dewey and Carl Rogers (there may be others) who spelt out methods whereby their ideas could be realised in practice.

In applying the theories of Dewey (1916) and Rogers (1951; 1957; 1961; 1979; 1983) I became aware that the concept of learning is more complex and multi-faceted than I, and some others, had thought, and I searched the literature for an understanding of **how adults learn**. Taking aspects of learning theory, combining them, making sense of their outcomes, and comparing these with practice-based evidence, led to the development of my theory. Many aspects of my theory, like facilitation, are already in circulation, possibly influenced by my work.

What is my theory?

There are five stages to my theory.

1 Learning is a socially constructed process created by and with learners through their interactions with their experience and their environment. Many of the factors in learning are hidden – even learners themselves may not be aware of them.

2 The affective domain, one of the three classical domains of learning provides a potential key to these hidden factors in learning, and when included in reflective dialogue with another, may access some of these hidden or unknown factors, which have the potential for transformation through double-loop learning.

3 Some of the aspects of learning which are likely to be revealed **to the learner** through the gateway of affect are as follows: Power issues, the prevailing discourse, autonomy,

connectedness, relationship, habitus, dispositions and emotion itself as a driver. My theory does not claim that this list is exhaustive.

4 The impact of transformational learning is likely to extend to the organisation through the double hermeneutic effect. This is an issue currently under discussion in the literature.

5 The publications offer my original contribution to the reflective learning field ie practical and usable methods in the form of reflective dialogue at three levels and in five dimensions.

Sources of my theory

My theory of learning has developed from my dissatisfaction with existing theory as above and my encounters with social constructionism, socio-historical theory, and modern ideas about transformational learning. Sources discussed at length in publication 2 include : Belenky et al (1986) Brookfield (1986;1987) Giddens (1979;1991;1992;1993;1996) Habermas (1972;1974;1984a;1984b;1987) Mezirow(1990) Argyris(1982) Schon(1983;1987) Rogers(1951; 1957;1961;1979;1983;1992) and additionally in publication 11: Bourdieu(1977;1992) Vygotsky(1997a;1997b) Engestrom(2006) Lave & Wenger(1991) and Foucault(1976;1979;1988). Reflective dialogue in my theory takes a constructionist stance which recognises the prevailing discourse, power issues, the learner's habitus and dispositions, as well as the social nature of transformational learning.

Social constructionism and learning

A social constructionist stance, discussed in publication 2 (p4, 34) publication 6 (p6) publication 9 (p14, 29) and publication 11(p27, 30-32, 40) holds that our view of reality is deeply influenced by our past and current life experience. Social constructionists tell us that 'we create rather than discover ourselves' and we do this through engagement-with-others, using language in discourse (Burr, 1995 p28). The idea of a learner who both influences and is influenced by their experience and the environment, is known as the 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens 1991; 1993). For the social constructionist, the context in which learning happens is crucial, and this may be dominated by the prevailing discourse.

The prevailing discourse

The prevailing discourse, is defined as ‘a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements etc that, in some way together produce a particular version’ (Burr, 1995 p48) of events, person, or category of person. The prevailing discourse and its effects are discussed in publication 2 (pp 27-28) publication 11(pp27-28), publication 6 (p7-9) publication 8 (p114) and publication 9 (p14-15). The idea challenges the presumption of objective reality, by focusing on language or discourse as the medium through which individuals construct new understandings (Burr, 1995).

The learning context is defined by the concepts and ‘taken-for-granted’ of the prevailing discourse, and its acronym, tfgs, first appearing in publication 6, has been utilised by learners as a code to name aspects of the prevailing discourse. There is still a tendency to make assumptions in organisations about "the way things are done around here" and this is discussed in publication 8 (p116-123) and 9 (p 19-20) the discourse itself promotes particular power relations by naming and then silencing unwelcome voices as ‘political’. These silenced voices are placed in opposition to established norms, creating the conflict situation which may trigger the expression of power (Lukes.1974; 1986; 2005;Foucault 1979; 1988; Belenky et al1986; Habermas 1984a; 1984b; 1987) I discuss what happens when silenced voices are heard and respected through reflective dialogue in section c.

Hence, learners inhabit a system which is not value-free, and Smail (2001) maintains that ‘our environment has much more to do with our coming-to-be as people than we do as authors of our own fate’ (p.23) He introduces the idea of a ‘power horizon’ in any learning situation, educational, social, personal and organisational.

The power horizon

The power horizon is explained in publications 9 (p 16) and 11 (p 29-32). In any organization where members are required to perform specific and regulated roles, the individual tends to be held solely responsible for outcomes. Where individualism is the only theory available, the social context, with its power nexus is largely ignored and kept invisible particularly to those who are powerless. This is known as a ‘power horizon’ (Smail, 2001 p67) and is kept in position

by offering a version of objective reality as truth not unlike the unfortunate hero in the film 'The Truman Show' who was kept unaware that his life was actually a TV show.

The power horizon separates the nearby power effects on an individual, from the distant power effects exerted by larger political and social factors, keeping the latter invisible Smail (2001 p67) An example of this is in HE is a student's perception of their tutor as unavailable, while the tutor is experiencing timetable overload together with requests for material for the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise). An example in the workplace is an employee's perception of their manager as 'difficult' when he or she makes demands, whilst the manager is struggling to meet targets set by their superior, who is responding to board level panic, a consequence of share price insecurity. The employee's power horizon ensures that they attend primarily to their manager, without 'seeing' the more distant causes of their difficulty.

Power and learning

Many writings on learning and development, particularly management development, treat that development in an individualistic manner, so that the individual manager is responsible for their own development and their progress is a product of their own motivation, commitment and drive. Some of the tools for enabling managers to determine their progress, e.g. learning styles, assume a neutral context, as if the manager was somehow the same gender, class, and race and that the notions of diversity, status and relative opportunity did not exist. There is also a tendency to ignore the impact of discourse, culture and ideology on learners and this is discussed in publication 8 (p113-123) and this continues to keep those aspects of learning invisible to the learner.

Issues of power in learning bring to attention the essential tension which exists between organisational purpose and individual development. There will be difference and conflict in any organisation, particularly about its purpose and chances of survival. The political process of learning from difference, challenge and conflict is unfortunately dubbed as 'politicking' and viewed negatively, an example of how discourse can silence voices. The power of discourse lies in its invisible connection to how an organisation is run. Therein lies its power. As Foucault put

it 'Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself' from us (Foucault 1976 p. 86). The challenge of embedded discourse is the 'uncovering' of its taken-for-granted status, often by drawing on alternative discourses, considering multiple meanings and other's stories. (Lukes 1974; 1986) These matters were briefly alluded to in publication 2 (p86), under 'our philosophy' in publication 11 (p28) and as part of 'power and organisational learning' in publication 9 (pp18-20) as well as in publications 6 (p8) and 9 (p19) When the learner's desires, wants and dreams become explicit then there is a realisation of what has previously been hidden and there is potential for revision of existing power relations. (Lukes 1974;1986)

Within the prevailing discourse, the organization will be unaware of its culture; convinced of the 'truth' or validity of its position, and this ideological belief will be enjoyed by many of its members. These issues are explored in publication 9. (15-20) Organizations which seek culture change and transformation are seeking to dislodge the prevailing discourse and generate a new 'view of the world'. The difficulty is that the very structures and procedures which maintain the prevailing discourse may work against the prospect of transformation. French & Vince (1999) describe this paradox as follows 'organizations espouse and want learning and change at the same time as they prevent themselves from embracing them' (French & Vince 1999 p 18) The organization may ask for 'engagement' from its members, often through coaching or mentoring, keeping the functionalist purpose unseen, and the term is used in publication 9 where learners are coached to conform using a humanistic method.

Social activity theory

My theory of adult learning draws on the work of Vygotsky, a Russian teacher and psychologist who insisted that all learning is fashioned from existing social reality. Social activity theory is discussed in publication 11 (p30) The significance of the subjective world is not denied but for Vygotsky it functions within the parameters of social life and it works both ways, so that 'what is essential is not that the social role can be deduced from the character, but that the social role creates a number of characterological connections' (Vygotsky, 1997a: 106), confirmation of the 'double hermeneutic' idea. This places the whole idea of individual differences and personality types as nothing more than an individual's particular response to a set of social experiences.

So the socio-historical account of learning implies that not only does the social environment influence the learner but that in turn the learner has their impact on the environment itself.

The socio-historical approach to learning which insists that the individual and the world are not separate and independent was developed further in social activity theory (Leont'ev, 1981), expansive learning (Engestrom, 2006), and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), as discussed in publication 11. My theory proposes that it is in the double hermeneutic effect that dialogue may play its part, so that reflective dialogues between learners in organisations have the potential to influence the organisation itself. This issue is further discussed in section c.

The expansive learning described by Engestrom (2006) claims to transcend the given context and 'may result from confrontation between the recurrent alternative one takes for granted and a contrasting alternative' (Hundeide, 1985 pp314–15) In order to be able to make the 'move back' described by Hundeide (pub 11 p30-31) it is necessary to both participate and to maintain an objective distance and this is described by Lave and Wenger (1991) as Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). Learning takes place in a participation framework and 'it's not a one-person act' (Lave and Wenger, 1991 p15) but involves the whole person in relation to social communities as the learner is both defined by these relations and to some extent, has a hand in defining them - a description of transformational effects (pub 11 p30-31) This process tends to be influenced by what are known as habitus, field and dispositions.

Habitus, field and dispositions

The idea of dispositions and habitus is an important element in my theory of learning, as I drew on the work of Pierre Bourdieu to explore the meaning of these terms. (Pub 11 p32) Bourdieu tells us that habitus exists in learners; through their interactions with others; their ways of talking and moving; and in other aspects of humanity, such as gender, age, race, class, opportunity and disability. The habitus is believed to be 'beyond consciousness' and Bourdieu (quoted in Grenfell and James, 1988) tells us that 'when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product it finds itself as a fish in water. It does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu, cited in Grenfell and James, 1988 p14). These 'taken-

for-granted' (tfgs) can be challenged, as habitus is not fixed and unchanging, in a quotation from the Chicago Workshop:

Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it... is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in such a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992 p133)

These unconscious ways of thinking and feeling; ways of being – habitual states are named 'dispositions' by Bourdieu, because they are believed to 'dispose' individuals to do/think/feel in particular ways which may be further influenced by the constraints, demands and opportunities of the social 'field' in which the individual exists. In higher education and organisations generally, the field is likely to be taken-for-granted (tfg), and an individual's habitus and dispositions are not considered largely because they are unknown. My theory suggests a reason for this i.e. the traditional focus on the knowledge and action domains without attending to the affective domain.

The Affective Domain (see Pub 11 49-55)

Three 'domains' of learning were identified by educationalists, over half a century ago, (Bloom 1956;1964) and they cover the three aspects as follows:

Cognitive (knowing)

Conative (doing)

Affective (feeling)

They may be presented in terms which describe the outcome of learning in each domain, e.g. cognitive learning results in knowledge; conative learning results in action/changes in the world; affective learning alters emotional appreciation of self and others. If the approach taken is limited to one of these domains then clearly learning is limited to one dimension. The emphasis on cognition in higher education has neglected the development of conative intelligence and affective intelligence. Whilst projects and practicals have redeemed the doing part of higher learning, the denial of emotion in learning remains in place as the affective domain is thoroughly mistrusted as too "touchy-feelly" for many academics, confirmed by Swan & Bailey (2004).

My theory is supported by those calling for greater emphasis on the affective domain in learning contexts. 'Being is the most significant of the three dimensions in that without it the others cannot take off. A student cannot be expected to try to get on the inside of a discipline . . . unless the student has a firm sense of self'. (Barnett 1997 p. 164) Only by integrating the three domains of knowing, acting and being will that full potential be realized. Such an integration including as it does terms like becoming, emotion, insight, courage, and dialogue, is recognised as perhaps not receiving a positive response 'particularly among academics in certain disciplines but that does nothing to dent the idea in itself' (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 64). Pub 11 pp 49,59,102,112,116, notes this evidence of support but notes that there is no indication of **how this might be done.**

It is part of my theory that emotion holds the key to a higher level of learning, through reflective dialogue, because emotion offers a gateway to the energy and power needed to countenance alternative discourses and challenge prevailing ones. My theory of learning suggests that all three domains should be valued equally. In particular traditional learning has de-valued the affective domain and valorised the cognitive (Fineman 1993). Recent findings in neuro-psychology explain what happens when the emotional world is cut off from learning. (Lehrer 2009; Zander & Zander 2000). So why is the emotional domain important for learning? The rationale for extending the domains of learning to include emotion can be found through an exploration of single and double loop learning, discussed in publication 2 (43-45) publication 6 (p10-14) and publication 11 (p50-52).

Single and Double Loop Learning

The terms single and double loop learning were used by Argyris (1982) to distinguish between Method I where learners think and act 'in accordance with what is socially acceptable' and Method II where learners 'generate valid and useful information (including relevant feelings' which is shared to promote open and non self-sealing learning situations (Argyris 1982 p103-104). Single loop learning, sometimes named 'instrumental' (Swan & Bailey 2004 p105) may change strategies and assumptions, sometimes on the basis of experience, (Kolb 1984), in ways that leave the values or theory unchanged, while double loop learning, in challenging

assumptions and 'tfgs' in systems, has the potential to threaten underlying values by cracking their paradigms,. Such activity involves "shifting" a person's reality, a change which may be disturbing. Day-to-day single loop learning, meeting goals and altering practice on the basis of experience enables progress to be made, with the occasional burst of activity which leads to double loop learning rather than it pervading the life the learner. So for effective organisational development both types of learning are needed and the diagram in figure 1 below (originally Peter Hawkins and Bob Garvey) appears in publications 2 (p45) publication 11 (p52) publication 9 (p 35) publication 6 (p 12).

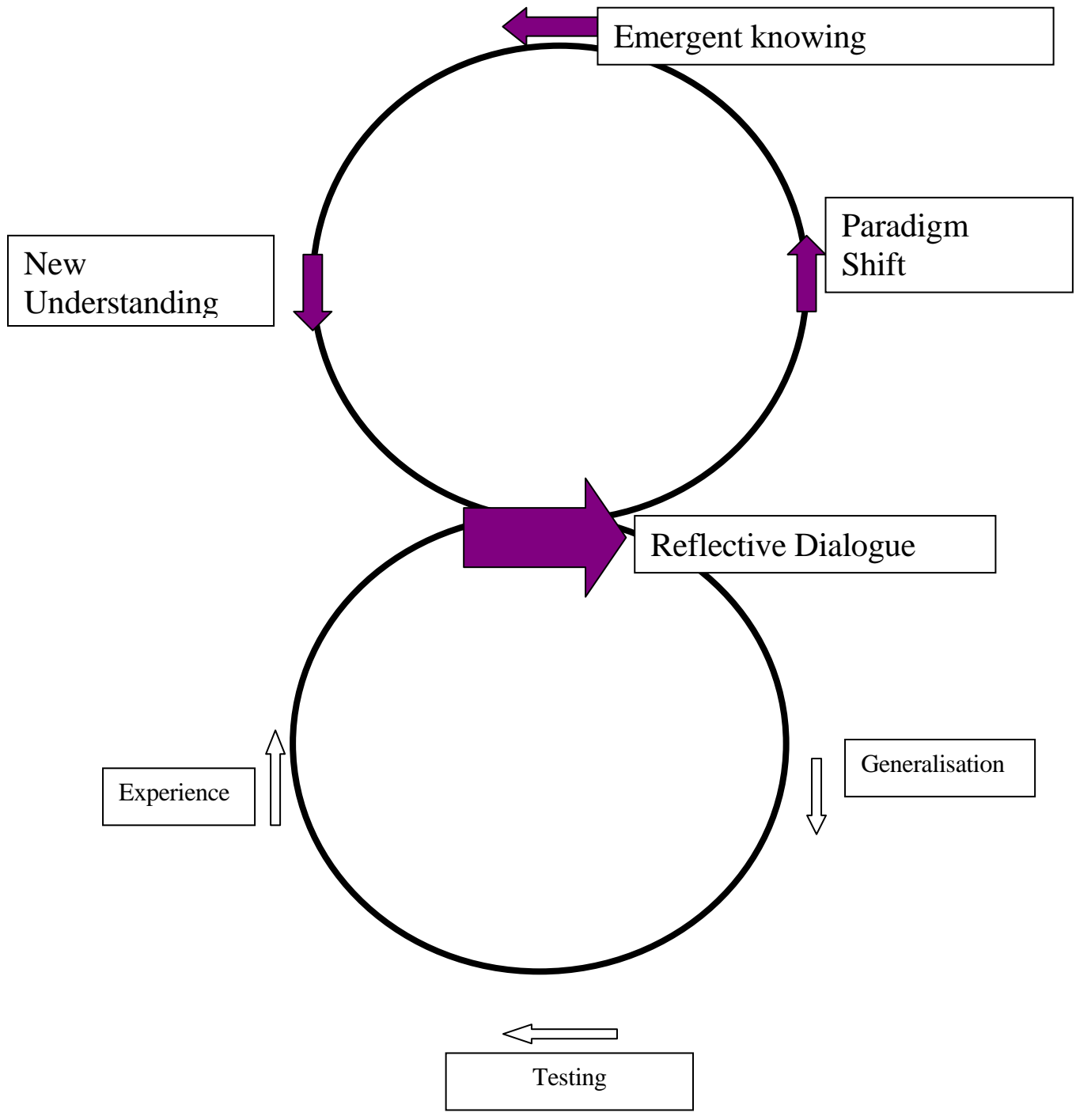


Figure 1 : Double Loop Learning

What is needed to enable the learner to traverse the exciting and potentially disturbing orbit of double loop learning? Using the analogy of orbits and rocket science the answer suggests that what is required is energy to fuel the 'burn' of a changed trajectory. When double loop learning occurs it requires the 'energy' for engaging in critical debate (Barnett 1997 pp 171-172) as 'critical energy has to have a head of steam behind it' where is this head of steam to come from?

Emotion and Empathy

The evidence suggests that emotion is the source of human energy (Hillman, 1997; Rothschild 2000) Emotion fuels our passions and our behaviour in spite of our espoused rationality. Giddens avers that 'emotion and motivation are inherently connected' (Giddens 1992 p201). The learner fuels energy from her emotional being, giving rise to expressions like 'passion to learn'; 'hunger for truth'; 'thirst for knowledge', which recognise that the double loop trajectory may be reached fuelled by emotional energy. (Brookfield 1987). Recent writings suggest that emotional factors are essential for learning and decision-making in every sphere of human endeavour. (Lehrer 2009 ; Zander & Zander 2000)

My theory includes using empathy in order to access the affective domain and offer a structure which will harness the emotional energy to support the learner who chooses to go into the double loop 'orbit'. The qualities needed for practitioners or colleagues to support potential double loop learning are those of a facilitator and many academics and trainers have acquired them and use them in their practice, often as a result of the influence of Carl Rogers who expressed the goal of education as 'the facilitation of change and learning' (p120 Rogers 1983) which rests upon....qualities that exist in the personal *relationship* between the facilitator and learner" (p121 Rogers 1983)

What are these qualities?

1 Congruence: Realness or genuineness, which implies some disclosure, a willingness to be real, to be and live the feelings and thoughts of the moment

2 Unconditional Positive Regard: Prizing acceptance and trust of the learner which implies a belief that the other person is fundamentally trustworthy...this means living with uncertainty

3 Empathy: empathic understanding and this must be communicated (silent or invisible empathy is not much use)

All three qualities call for a high degree of emotional intelligence, in that to be congruent implies a willingness to express feelings; unconditional acceptance relies on managing competing emotions; and empathy is the key skill for handling emotional material. My approach to learning emphasises emotion and seeks to tap the energy available there, offering the potential for transformative learning through access to the many facets of learning which may be hidden in traditional approaches,

Ownership/Autonomy

The question of a learner's autonomy was investigated by Ryan & Deci (2000) in their motivation research about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Using self-determination theory, based on the idea of organismic development, the research found that 'contexts which are supportive of autonomy, competence and an experience of relatedness for the learner, will foster greater internalisation and integration than contexts which thwart satisfaction of these needs' (Ryan & Deci 2000 p 76). Although the researchers do not acknowledge Carl Rogers work, their organismic theory draws on his definition of the human personality in terms of the organismic self and its development in conditions of worth. (Rogers 1951) Ryan and Deci, using a self-determination continuum from amotivation, through extrinsic motivation, to intrinsic motivation, identified autonomy and competence as conditions which facilitate intrinsic motivation and well-being, whereas, extrinsic motivation, with conditions of control, nonoptimal challenge and lack of connectedness were associated with lack of initiative and responsibility as well as less well-being and ill-health. Their findings suggest that the conditions under which people learn has important implications for those concerned with education and development.

Additional work by Deci & Ryan (2000) explore the concept of goals, another concept in learning theory. Deci and Ryan confirms many of the ideas given above, and conclude that extrinsic rewards, goals or evaluations can undermine the three essential psychological needs viz; autonomy, competence and connectedness, leading to a decrease in creativity, poor problem-solving, and an absence of deep conceptual processing. (Deci & Ryan 2000 p234)

Goals imposed by others lead to the lowest levels of intrinsic motivation. Indeed imposed goals have been described very negatively, as ‘thought which imposes is violent’ (Isaacs 1999 p68) Obviously the weight accorded to the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence and connectedness will depend on cultural contexts, and the balance will be culturally defined. My theory allows for learners to meet these psychological needs.

Connectedness and reflective dialogue

My discovery of the work carried out by Belenky et al (1986) at Columbia revealed how learners move through stages of maturity in learning and how many learners are stuck in the early stages of separation and the limited stage of received knowledge. Their work is discussed at length in publication 2 (p 38-41), publication 8 (84-90.) publication 9(46-50) and publication 11(44-48). The findings, later confirmed by Goldberger et al (1996) matched up to my theory of learning as socially constructed. Belenky et al identified stages of learning, from silence, received knowing, subjective, and separated knowing to connect and constructivist (sic) knowing. The research confirmed that separated knowing, as typified in some academic work, limits the development of connected knowing leading to constructivist knowing with potential for transformation. Their findings validate the need for reflective dialogue to achieve the connection required, so next I explored what was known about reflection to inform my theory, and I turned to the work of Donald Schon. The terms used by Schon based on a constructionist view of reality (Schon 1987 p36) (1983;1987) are as follows:

- Knowing that and knowing about
- Knowing-in-action
- Knowledge-in-use
- Reflection-in-action
- Reflective practicum
- Reflection-on-action
- Reflection-on-reflection

In publications 2 and 11, Schon’s various categories of reflection were scrutinised and a simpler structure developed which practitioners could use, especially for assessment. Five dimensions of

reflection in dialogue were distilled from Schon's work in publications 2 and 11, to give practitioners a usable method of recognising, and potentially, assessing, a reflective process, as follows:

- 1 The learning event
- 2 Reflection-in-action during the learning event
- 3 Description of the learning event and any reflection-in-action
- 4 Reflection-on-action and analysis/critique of 3.
- 5 Reflection on the process

Levels 3, 4 and 5 are likely to be in the public domain and they correspond, at level 3, to single loop learning and most surface or instrumental learning; Double loop learning and transformation being possible at level 4; with the concept of meta-learning, or learning how to learn appears in level 5.

Why a dialogue?

Researchers have started from a definition of reflection as 'the purposeful contemplation of thoughts, feelings and happenings that pertain to recent experience' (Kennison & Misselwitz 2002 p239) nearly always described as a mental process in which the student engages **alone**. Some researchers note with disappointment, that 'one might expect more evidence of challenge to received knowledge and practice wisdom, and more critical engagement with theory'. (Ford et al (2005) pp 405- 406) The need for something more than a journal is confirmed by Kember et al (1999) who attest that for the transformation of reflection, there must be evidence of a significant change of perspective and that 'premise reflection was unlikely to be observed frequently within student journals' (Kember et al 1999 p24)

Day (1993) discusses reflection for professional development and concludes that when reflection is defined as **intrapersonal** deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning, learning outcomes are limited to 'carrying out tasks more and more efficiently, while remaining blind to large issues of the underlying purpose and results of schooling' (Griffiths & Tann 1991 cited in Day 1993 p86) This description parallels the single-loop learning discussed in publications 2 and 11 and contrasts with double-loop learning where for professional learning 'individuals will no longer

be able to remain locked into their own unquestioned and unquestioning value system' (Day 1993 p 86) Basic reflection (meaning self-reflection) is insufficient for professional development because 'reflection will need to be analytic and involve dialogue with others.....confrontation by self or other must occur' (op cit p 86)

In a bid to promote 'reflective thinking' Griffin (2003) developed a programme designed to encourage pre-service teachers to engage in dialogue, enabling them to express their 'external voice of reflection'. (op cit p 211) Outcomes were tested against three modes of reflective thinking and disappointing results indicated that 75% of students used basic levels of reflection only. Griffin suggests that there may be a need '**to refine dialogue and feedback to include questions that would encourage teachers to examine the larger context of social and political influence**' (op cit p 218) **My contribution offers such an improvement for practice.**

The emphasis on individual help from tutors is replicated in various accounts of reflective learning programmes (Rutter 2006; Griffin 2003) and many conclude with a recommendation to provide dialogue through online communication technology. Use of blogging and posting is much in use where learners are geographically separated from each other, and there is evidence that reflective dialogue occurs in such 'chat room' contexts (Sims 2009 personal communication)

So there is plenty of research evidence supporting the idea that intrapersonal is insufficient for the high-level learning sought in universities, and recognition that a dialogue of some sort is what is needed. **However there is no indication in the literature of how this might be achieved and this is the contribution of the publications and the originality of this application.** In addition where researchers recognise the key role that dialogue plays in reflective learning, they recommend, rather hopelessly with mass higher education, that such dialogue must be conducted between learner and tutor. The implicit assumption here is that only a tutor has the requisite dialogue skills. Many teachers in higher education do indeed have such skills but many don't, and how practical is such an arrangement in today's mass higher education? The seemingly revolutionary idea of learner-to-learner dialogue in real time is discussed in section c, with an explanation of the learning partner method devised by me and used at City University.

Transformative Learning Theory

In higher education transformative learning has been explored at length, and the work of Harvey & Knight and Ron Barnett, discussed in publication 2 (p48) and 11 (p56) since the early nineties, proposed a different approach to learning in HE to promote reflection and stimulate transformative learning. There is broad agreement about what is wanted for graduates and postgraduates in modern universities and workplaces. Their theories lack the essential **how** that practitioners need to pursue their aims. **My theory addresses the essential how of transformative learning by providing usable structures and methods to achieve levels of reflection which may lead to transformational learning.** The ingredients of transformative learning have emerged in the literature as reflection, criticality, imagination, and in the latest work, dialogue, imagination and action (Dirkx 2001). In addition, Dirkx has defined the process as

- aiming to identify coercive and constraining forces in the prevailing discourse
- freeing the learner through ‘reflection, dialogue, critique, discernment, imagination and action’ (Dirkx 1998 p8-9)

This definition insists that transformative learning depends on ‘a full understanding of the social, political and cultural context’ and ‘in order to foster transformative learning we must understand the self of the learner in context.’ (Dirkx 1998 p10) His requirements for transformational learning may be listed as follows:

- Intentional reflection with another
- Reflective dialogue to include the affective domain
- Critique through support and challenge,
- Discernment through identification and consideration of alternative discourses
- imagination through free association leading to action possibilities

My theory builds on these latest writings about how adults learn, as it recommends an intentional reflective dialogue which offers critique, challenge, alternative discourses and the free association which characterises the affective domain.

A Reflexive Critique

After engaging in reflective dialogues with my supervisor and colleagues, and taking account of the most recent published work, issues have emerged as follows:

- Organisational v. Individual development or learning?
- Why is emotion needed in learning?
- What is reflection?
- Is critique possible through support and challenge?
- How does reflective dialogue stimulate Imagination and action?

The following critique will address them in order.

Organisations or individual?

The early publications were reviewed by colleagues who pointed out that there was no in-depth analysis of power relations in learning and in later publications I have contributed to correcting this shortcoming. However there may still be some rigour wanting in this regard and I am able to recognise this as a limitation. In attending to the development of an individual, does the social context in which they learn take second place? There is a point here in that the close connection required for true reflective dialogue which leads to transformation may lead to an emphasis on the individual and their experience without taking into account 'the broader social and cultural dynamics' (Gabriel & Carr 2002 p355). My theory proclaims that transformational learning is neither individual **nor** organisational, but has the potential to be both. My theory is both/and not either/or. Theories of organisational development offer worthwhile advice to organisations and many benefit from it, using recommended approaches to devise mission statements, strategies and visions for growth and survival in competitive environments. Within OD advice is often a recommendation for reflective processes to nurture transformative learning, without an indication about **how** to achieve this. One of my contributions, with my co-authors has been to demonstrate **how** such learning may be realised in organisations, using a method which may also stimulate but cannot promise organisational change. (Pub 6)

My Response

In HE the dialogue method is usually limited to dialogue with a journal. When present the concept of person-to-person dialogue is limited to tutors dialoguing with students. My contribution is the learner-to-learner dialogue, described in publication 11 (p 198) In organisations opportunities for dialogue are again presumed to occur between manager and employee, an even greater power differential than in HE, and, the corporate world has attempted to introduce true dialogue with mentoring and coaching initiatives, either in company or externally provided. The underpinning theory is discussed in publications 9 (p10-20) and 12. The growth of these activities, together with action learning type initiatives, confirms that some organisations at least believe in a ROI for resourcing such programmes. There may even be a dawning realisation that a double hermeneutic is operating as corporate mentoring and coaching programmes are seeking organisational transformation as a desired outcome. (Reynolds & Vince 2004) There is a perception in the learning literature that only individuals can learn, and my theory in practice, discussed in section c, demonstrates how this can happen. But the organisation is part of the learning landscape, part of the learning dramatis personae, and often the beneficiary of personal transformations in its midst.

The publications do not feature in depth discussion about power in learning and this is a failing in them. Whilst they refer to the social context and its impact there is less analysis or critique of power issues which affect learning and this must be a shortcoming in the works. The factors of class, race, gender, role, identity and relative opportunity impact on learning and these matters are alluded to in the publications, if somewhat obliquely.

Emotion in learning

Critical theorists in education have challenged what has been called the 'new romanticism' of Rogers, for failing to consider the significance of power relations, difference and the socio-political context of learning. The decontextualisation of learning which results, it is claimed, from self-direction or learner-centredness, leads to a denial of the patterns of social inequality in the wider society (Reynolds 1997).

My Response

The material argument presented by critics, that the learner is offered a theory of personal growth which denies the significance of external social and political factors, betrays an incomplete understanding of Roger's seminal thought. Rogerian practice is based on *The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Psychotherapeutic Personality Change* (1957) which establishes *empathy* as a response which includes recognition of the external social and political world. Such recognition includes identification of Rogers' 'conditions of worth', laid down in childhood and carried forward in adult working lives. (Pub 9 p21) Accurate empathy demands an appreciation of the other's world, the social systems in which she has been and is embedded, and the impact on the self as a consequence. This operational definition has been replicated by Mearns & Thorne (1988), giving empathy at four levels, including the social and political context.

Many so-called learner-centred approaches often rely on such incomplete understandings of Rogers and person-centred teaching may fall far short of that outlined above, hence the criticism and where practice is 'floppy' they are justified. The argument for emotion in learning is discussed in pub 2 (p45) pub 6 (p191), pub 8 (p155, p195), pub 9 (p36-37) and pub11 (p53).

Perhaps emotion already features in learning contexts?

Many trusted colleagues have informed me that the affective domain is alive and well in HE, that the affective domain is articulated and that reflective dialogue is practiced in many areas of the sector. These changes may or may not have been influenced by my work, but this statement is dealing with publications which have been in the public domain for some time and they may have played their part in this development. The business discourse is currently embracing emotional aspects of organisations, particularly in the matter of motivation and emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996; Fineman 2000), albeit in a dissociated form.

Reflection and dialogue

First, take the idea of reflection, commonly imagined as an intrapersonal process which takes place in private and in isolation.(Moon1999) In most of the literature the process is presumed to

be a lone operation (Barnett 1992a; Barnett 1992b; 1994;1997; Boud et al 1985;) In this respect Reynolds & Vince (2004) are correct in saying that ‘current practice of reflection’ is a ‘do-it-yourself’ operation and therefore of course is likely to be ‘a poorly developed aspect of organisational experience and action’ (op cit p 4) They maintain that the social, organisational and cultural nature of true reflection must be a ‘socially situated, relational, political and collective process’ (Reynolds & Vince 2004 p 6). These points confirm all that I have tried to say in publications 2, 6, 9, and 11, without perhaps emphasising them strongly enough, a matter of some regret.

My response: Why is there a need for dialogue?

Intrapersonal reflection is needed as much as interpersonal. My point is that the latter is largely absent in learning environments. Intrapersonal reflection is often a fertile ground for deep re-collecting of thoughts and potentially even feelings and actions. The potential for collusion is one counter argument to lone reflection as adequate for high levels of reflection. The idea of the lone and isolated learner is a powerful concept and there are reports of transformative learning occurring as a result of such lone activity. Indeed Descartes withdrew from all human contact to generate his famous ‘cogito ergo sum’ and libraries are traditionally silent to maximise the study process, dominated as it has been by thought. However without a reality check humans have been found to be prone to error (Damasio 1994) . The promotion of dialogue has come from unexpected sources in the persons of David Bohm (a physicist) and William Isaacs (a businessman) and their work has supported the idea of dialogue as a method which supports not just individual learning, but has important implications for organisational learning. Bohm (1996) and Isaacs (1994;1996) drawing on Martin Buber (1961; 1965; 1994.) identified some very good reasons for using dialogue for learning, particularly where adversarial methods have been the norm. They have established the crucial necessity of trust and safety for learning and the difficulty for intellectually driven individuals to suspend beliefs and begin the process of honest enquiry. All this research has already been done and reported (Isaacs 1994). Clearly there is more here than thought or action alone, supporting consideration of at least three domains in learning, and, more likely, a complex and multi-faceted process, some aspects of which remain unexplored.

The emergence in recent years of coaching and mentoring as management development tools, suggests that lone reflection is not perceived as providing the necessary transformative learning

which is urgently sought in business, government and service organisations. These are some of the methods where reflection with another takes place, a dialogue in which support and challenge are likely and the potential for change is maximised but not guaranteed and this is discussed further in section c.

Critique and discernment through support and challenge

A further criticism of my theory may come from a conviction that the approach is unlikely to stimulate critique and discernment because there is insufficient challenge in the method and this deserves consideration.

My response

Authentic reflective dialogue, conducted in person-centred mode, takes a full account of the environmental impact on the dispositions of learners. Drawing on Rogers (1951; 1961) the organismic self is constantly under the influence of societal factors, and although early effects are powerful in forming dispositions, the process is understood to continue throughout life. In dialogue with learners, their current experience, their feelings about that experience, their world view, in fact their full story (not history) is heard. This process itself offers both support and challenge, particularly the inclusion in dialogue of advanced empathy and immediacy. (Pub 11 p262)

For critique and discernment what must be available to the learner, is an alternative view, and this is less likely to be found from within the self, as the prospect of collusion is ever-present, so the contribution of another is needed. What form should this exchange with others take? The traditional adversarial method of critique has characteristics which are well-described in Belenky et al and dubbed 'separated knowing'. This process has also been called 'the doubting game' by Elbow (1973). Does it lead to transformation? There is evidence that the separated knowing model leads to a learner who conforms to the received wisdom, not what I have defined as transformational above. It serves for instrumental learning or improvement perfectly, and this is supported by the research findings of Ryan & Deci (2000) For true transformation a more delicate process is needed, leading to more connected knowing and ultimately, constructivist knowledge or adopting Elbow's 'believing game'. Much of the frustration in HE

may be traced to the continuing promotion of a separated approach to achieve reflective and transformative objectives.

My theory asserts that the social and political context of learning is more likely to be revealed when emotion is part of a dialogue, as this will influence the degree of autonomy experienced by the learner. When agency, as the potential of individuals to act, is accessed through dialogue, this allows the third way for power to be exposed for what it is. (Lukes 1974;1986.) Expression of emotion may enable learners to recognise the constraints of social systems in which they work, as well as acknowledging their desires, ambitions, respect, pride and dignity, so often missing in organisational life. When the gate of the emotive domain is opened, many other facets of learning may be revealed and accessible, a process likely to offer material for challenge.

The affective domain provides a route to some of the factors which are known to influence learning and others which remain mysterious. For example, emotive material in dialogue has the potential to uncover how learners are affected by gender, race, class, hierarchy, power, culture age etc. My theory, which is supported by the results of my practice, suggests that the multi-dimensional nature of learning is hidden when the affective domain is silenced and constructive challenge is less likely. This explains the failure so far of initiatives to develop high-level learning in educational, social, corporate and other work environments. The emerging drive to include reflective dialogue in learning situations through methods like mentoring and coaching is recognition that a different approach to propositional, separated learning is needed for growth and success in a variety of enterprises.

Imagination and Action

Imagination comes from the human tendency to countenance varied and adventurous ideas. Rogers' claims that the imaginative element of a person resides in their organismic self, mentioned above, which learns by its interactions with the environment, to operate under conditions-of-worth. (pub 6 p21-22). Is it possible that the person-centred approach in reflective dialogue as defined in my theory is not conducive to stimulating imaginative ideas and actions?

My response

Much of the person-centred approach is designed to undermine conditions-of-worth which strangle the imaginative instinct, preferring to keep the person behaving as required to maintain the approval of important others (Rogers 1959). The transformative learning process allows a learner to choose to re-consider those conditions-of-worth and edit their detail with outcomes which include discernment of matters previously masked by anxiety and imagination, and inhibited by concerns about acceptability. What if transformative learning occurs but no action or change of behaviour follows? This is a valid critique and deserves consideration. I believe this is where an understanding of learning as complex and multi-faceted may pay dividends as matters like context and power are included in my theory of learning. If the objective is changed behaviour, whose objective is that? The degree of autonomy is an important consideration when transformative approaches to learning are in use. For instance, the various types of mentoring, coaching, action learning and supervision are characterised by an exploration of the degree of agency held by the learner as ownership is an important factor in learning outcomes. Emancipatory action learning for instance, must always be voluntary to achieve transformatory effects, and the same applies to the others. Where this leaves an organisation like a university or corporate entity which seeks to impose a given outcome is open to question.

Conclusion

My theory draws on constructionist ideas and social activity theory to make sense of how adults learn and includes the provision of usable techniques so that my theory may be realised in practice. My theory proposes a stronger focus on the affective domain in learning, without excluding the domains of knowledge and action. My theory also suggests that attending to the affective domain in a person-centred reflective dialogue allows access to hidden or unknown facets of learning as well as revealing the (often invisible) prevailing discourse and power horizon. My theory, based on social constructionist ideas, combined with social activity theory and the expansive learning ideas of Engestrom and others, proposes a reflective dialogue which aims to be a socially situated relational and collective process that recognises the social and cultural dynamics of learning environments. Such a reflective dialogue has the potential to lead to transformation for the individual, and potentially, the organisation. What happens when my theory is applied to practice is reported in section c.

Section c: My theory in practice

Outline of Section c

This section offers a self- assessment of my theory-in-use, beginning with an explanation of reflective dialogue. Intervention methods reported and assessed here are: The Interpersonal Skills Module at Manchester Metropolitan University; Reflective practice workshops; Action Learning workshops; Coaching and mentoring workshops in organisations; Coaching and mentoring work with individual clients; learner-to-learner dialogue in an HE setting. Each intervention is described, interpreted and assessed and an overall conclusion completes the section.

The main points of my theory are given again below:

- 1 Learning is a socially constructed process created by and with learners through their interactions with their experience and their environment. Many of the factors in learning are hidden – even learners themselves may not be aware of them.
- 2 The affective domain, one of the three classical domains of learning provides a potential key to these hidden factors in learning, and when included in a reflective dialogue with another, may access some of these hidden or unknown factors, which have the potential for transformation through double-loop learning.
- 3 Some of the aspects of learning which are likely to be revealed **to the learner** through the gateway of affect are as follows: Power issues, the prevailing discourse, autonomy, connectedness, relationship, habitus, dispositions and emotion itself as a driver. My theory does not claim that this list is exhaustive.
- 4 The impact of transformational learning is likely to extend to the organisation through the double hermeneutic effect. This is an issue currently under discussion in the literature.
- 5 The publications offer my original contribution to the reflective learning field ie practical and usable methods in the form of reflective dialogue at three levels and in five dimensions.

Reflective dialogue

My theory outlined in section b, proposes that transformative learning for adults may be achieved through a process of reflective dialogue, based on a constructionist model of learning, which allows for access to the learner's experience, environment and prevailing discourse. My theory suggests that reflective dialogue has the potential to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions of the discourse in which they are embedded and allows learners to re-consider some of the givens of their situation and peep above the power horizon. In addition, in applying my theory, when reflective dialogue is understood **and practised** as an activity which values the three domains of learning, knowledge, action and, particularly, emotion, then an alternative discourse which includes the emotional domain can address some of the issues arising in the prevailing discourse. When such dialogue is offered there is hope of transformational learning through the double-loop learning route. In the case studies which follow I describe:

- how learners who engage in reflective dialogue characterised by careful listening and accurate responding, are able to access previously hidden aspects which influence their learning (item 1 of my theory above)
- how the affective domain, through the use of empathy at four levels, acts as gateway to such aspects and leads to reported transformational outcomes (item 2 of my theory above)
- the nature of some of these aspects (item 3 of my theory above)
- how organisational transformation may be a potential outcome (item 4 in my theory above)
- how I translate my theoretical propositions into usable methods (item 5 in my theory above)

Interpersonal Skills (IPS) training at Manchester Metropolitan University

When I joined the faculty at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), I was asked, alongside the research project in which I was engaged, to develop the IPS programme for final year retail management students. This was a course entitled Inter Personal Skills, using the powerful dynamics of a small group with minimal direction to allow members of the group to

discover important elements of their interpersonal behaviour, assess them for usefulness, and change or enhance them.

This course was challenging the prevailing discourse in an academic business school system, which tends to (or tended then) to deny emotion and maintain that distance and critique stimulate high level learning, not ‘touchy feely’ group work. I recall that the time-tabler chose to allocate me a three hour session on Friday afternoon, presumably to ‘test’ the new idea to destruction.

I facilitated this experiential group in what would be termed a humanistic way, using the principles laid down by Carl Rogers for effective learning (Rogers 1983; 1992) applying my theory to practice (item 5 above). The method, known as a laboratory group is explained in detail in Luft (1984) and draws on classical research by Lewin (1935;1947; 988). I had learnt the technique in earlier voluntary work, where I had facilitated a variety of groups of mostly young people. I had discovered that a ‘hands off’ approach where I said little and responded a lot, produced a much richer quality of exchange in the groups, as members accessed some of the factors which influenced their learning (item 1 above). I had learnt to listen before speaking and to respond, first in a simple re-stating- the- facts kind of way, and then, where appropriate, to respond with empathy at one of four levels (item 2 above). This method which I now recognise as reflective dialogue, transferred well to my group of young undergraduates who I found were hungry for self-knowledge and development, showing measurable changes in their interpersonal behaviours (item 2 above).

Critical Assessment of the intervention

Was the IPS module an opportunity for transformative learning? In terms of return rate it certainly was. The Friday afternoon slot, a notorious no-show for many students, achieved an almost perfect attendance record. Two examples of transformational reflective learning, observed or reported, were:

- At a placement visit accompanied by one of my final year students, we were delayed by traffic and arrived late for the meeting, to be met by a very angry regional manager. Of course we apologised but he continued to seem distracted and the purpose of the visit was in danger of being impaired. Although he had not directly expressed his anger, I

made an empathic comment i.e. ‘You must have been disappointed when we didn’t arrive for the meeting.’ He then expressed his disappointment directly and said how angry he was. We listened and in a few moments the whole thing was forgotten and the visit was satisfactory. On the way back my student said she was amazed by the instant effect of my empathic intervention and could now see how she could use it.

- As the students sought employment after graduation, several voluntarily came to me to report that their IPS training had enabled them, they believed, to perform well in assessment centres where their interpersonal skills were observed and appraised as part of the selection process. These reports suggested that the organisations which were recruiting my students were seeking the skills of reflective dialogue for use in their management roles, a selection which held the promise of organisational transformation (item 4 above).

Not every student reported benefits, so the method may not have suited all who experienced it. The challenging style of reflective dialogue within a humanistic experiential group, majoring as it does on emotion, may have been so uncomfortable as to inhibit development in students who were not ready to engage in double-loop learning, for whatever reason. In addition, although several members of staff welcomed facilitation training, others were not keen at all on a method they perceived as much too emotional and they believed, potentially damaging to participants. The ideal of voluntary participation is preferable to guard against such possibilities.

Reflective Practice Workshops for staff in HE and professionals

These workshops offered participants a model which translated my theory into practice (item 5 above), and were co-facilitated with Ian McGill and others. The institutions in which we offered these interventions included several UK universities, the British Council in Florence, and a section of the Chinese civil service in Beijing. The templates presented in publications 2 and 11 were used to offer teachers the opportunity to examine their practice and reflect upon it. They were attended by staff who were desirous of changing their teaching approach from all transmission to include facilitation. These early workshops focussed on a dialogue method using SLO triads, three people taking the roles of Speaker, Listener and Observer in turn, offering empathy where appropriate (item 2 above). The SLO triad is a powerful learning structure for skills development, and results confirmed this, as staff found a new confidence in sharing with

colleagues their hopes fears and concerns around their pedagogy. Their reported transformation was triggered by their experience of empathy, the operational skill needed to access the affective domain (item 2 above).

Assessment of intervention

When the attendees were unsure about their commitment to change they were less impressed and for some the dialogue method took them out of their comfort zone. In these cases reflective dialogue, covering three domains of learning, was insufficient for transformation, an indication that the learning process is even more complex than the three domains we were seeking to embrace. William Isaacs' dialogue project in MIT (Isaacs 1994) confirmed that facilitators need the abilities to create the level of openness and attention necessary for dialogue to happen. My theory described in section b insists that those engaged in dialogue must be comfortable in the affective domain in order to nurture transformational learning.

Did any of our participants report a change in their view of teaching? The most dramatic example was a scientist who was convinced that lecturing was the only way to teach his subject, an example of the prevailing discourse in which he was embedded (item 3 above). The demonstration dialogue with him unpacked his anxiety about covering the syllabus, which in science just gets bigger and bigger, so his existing approach was already causing problems. I used empathy and open questions to explore his feelings and what other options were available and how they would affect him (items 1 and 2 above). His very real commitment to his students made him feel very worried about how they would learn without his direction and those feelings, based on his sense of responsibility made him feel very unsure about a facilitative approach where students were invited to explore the subject themselves. These expressed feelings allowed access to his habitus and dispositions in relation to his role (item 3 above). As a result of our dialogue, at the evaluation stage, he reported that his view of the students had changed. He now saw them as adults responsible for their own learning (and potential failure) as opposed to children for whom he was responsible. He decided to try the new approach and compare grades before and after the intervention. Observers noted that his expressed and accepted feelings seemed to trigger his change of perspective as my theory predicts.

Workshops for staff in organisations

These workshops, for senior staff and trainers, focussed on how to facilitate action learning, how to mentor, or coach, and sought the same objective, reflective learning for the ultimate learner, usually an employee. They are an example of item 5 above, namely the translation of my theory to usable practice; attention to the affective domain (item 2); recognition of learners' social context and prevailing discourse (items 1 and 3); and, at the request of the contracting client, potential organisational development towards a desired transformation (item 4). Participants were non-plussed by the idea that experts might be more effective by not telling but listening first and responding with empathy immediately (items 1 and 2). To begin a group session with an invitation to participants to speak first requires high levels of confidence and I am aware of colleagues who work in this way. However there are many who are disinclined often for lack of confidence, hence the provision of these workshops. Once learnt, however, the technique is powerful and the expert input is then received by alert and interested learners. This supports my theoretical proposition (item 2 above and in section b), that the affective domain may act as a gateway to other facets of learning, like curiosity, imagination and experimentation.

The SLO triad method (see page 45) worked well for mentoring or coaching training as the process mirrors what the mentor or coach will want to be doing with their client. The definition of the terms mentor and coach remain problematic and the framework explained in publication 9 was useful here to work within the discourse of the client, so that whichever term is used, the learning outcome and process define the activity as functionalist, engagement or evolutionary.

Coaching has become a popular method of learning and development for staff in public, private, commercial and voluntary sectors. Senior staff are not ashamed to have a coach, indeed it has become a sign of how important they are. Managers may use external coaches to deliver unwelcome feedback which they are unable or unwilling to give to their staff. With flatter, more democratic, organizational structures, managers are often required to coach their staff rather than order them about. In addition a vast lucrative life coaching movement has developed which offers low-grade counselling from unqualified practitioners to unwary punters. Coaching, recently described as 'still the least understood learning intervention' we are told, is used by 71% of organisations (Howe 2008) My typology of coaching and mentoring is given in detail in publication 9 and is based on my theory as described in section b.

Assessment of the intervention

How are these workshops different to current sensible practice? Many of my colleagues use such methods routinely in their work and my earliest publications dated from a different time. There are still many who find the idea uncomfortable, especially managers who are asked to become coaches, for example. My theory offers user-friendly methods for practitioners who are not yet comfortable with facilitation (item 5) . My theory addresses the affective domain which is often a neglected field for practitioners, with its potential to uncover hidden aspects of the learner's situation, like power issues, the prevailing discourse and their own dispositions (items 1 2 and 3). My theory suggests a style which allows the learner to both influence and be influenced by their learning environment.

Addaction

The coach training for the drug charity Addaction described in publication 9, was launched under a re-organisation at Addaction, in which all managerial staff were required to coach their teams to a minimum NVQ qualification. This type of coaching activity I recognised as purely functionalist, with the non-directive process masking imposed objectives making it engagement coaching. The functional purpose was in-house teaching for teams, to replace institutional courses, to be carried out by middle managers who also picked up a managerial style which the organisation wished to foster. The training sessions included examples of the coaching process through live demonstration where I offered to coach a volunteer in front of the whole group, while they observe and record what I am doing. One of my workshop participants, a senior manager, chose to volunteer for the demonstration dialogue. His issue was his relationship with a social services manager with whom he was working as a partner. He experienced her as aggressive and demanding, and found himself in contention with her, making him feel uncomfortable. He described the relationship clearly, but without verbally expressing any emotion. His body was very tense (almost wooden) and his voice varied in tone, volume and pitch, so I chose to offer advanced empathy (Egan 1973; 1976; 1990) where I was hunching about his probable feelings of fear (item2). My intervention suggested that he might be feeling wary of this woman and he immediately connected with this, saying 'how did you know?' We explored the consequences of his caution with her particularly how he might be expressing it to

her, based on his demeanour with me. This was the kind of instant feedback he had never received before and he declared an intention there and then to somehow let her know how he was reacting to her (item 3). I asked for the usual commitment to action and the session ended. The group observing the demonstration had no trouble in identifying the moment of 'breakthrough' as the connection we made around his feelings of fear, supporting my theory that emotional engagement was the key to his learning as described in section b.

Critical Assessment of the Addaction intervention

Did any transformation occur as a result of this intervention? There were reports of individual transformations in the workshop sessions as described above, but the purpose of the intervention was not transformation but equilibrium. The organisation hoped for transformation but this is unlikely when learners have limited autonomy, although the managers themselves asked for more in-depth training, a request which I took to indicate a desire for more evolutionary methods (described in publication 9).

Webb Institute, Ruskin College

I have delivered mentoring workshops for Russian and Georgian trade unionists for the last three years. Although there is translator provision, I manage the sessions to include SLO sessions (as on page 45) where participants work in their own language, and receive feedback in their own language. The workshops are part of a programme of learning and development offered to trade union activists who influence industrial practice in their home countries, and are seeking to stimulate managers to begin to take more responsibility after being used to a Stalinist regime where orders were mindlessly obeyed (item 4). As before, the sessions include examples of the mentoring process through live demonstration where I offered to mentor a volunteer in front of the whole group, while they observe and record what I am doing.

Some interesting findings come from this. First the volunteer is amazed (occasional exceptions) at the outcome they achieve, which has been reported as transformational. Secondly the observing group mostly cannot identify the skills I am using (unlike my MMU students to whom I **taught** the skill before using it) the discussion about process is energetic, interested and enthusiastic. I am told that before the process was invisible and now they understand some of what is going on. They are dazzled by the demonstration and immediately want to have a go at doing it themselves.

Critical Assessment of the intervention

I have learnt to limit the theoretical input in these workshops to a minimum, using a group brainstorming method to first identify the level of understanding which already exists in the learning group. This often allows previously unheard voices to express ideas about learning which address the prevailing discourse and discuss social factors which influence the learning process, as described in section b and item 1 and 3 above. When participants express an interest in theory my book is made available for them to purchase.

As mentioned above, using the live demonstration method is powerful. When it hasn't worked, the volunteer was pretending, or I became too nervous to operate effectively, both useful as demonstration of what can inhibit learning and I ensure that this process issue is made explicit.

What about reports of transformation? One volunteer acted as union co-ordinator in her region of Georgia and her issue was her role as change agent for a team of trainers with the purpose of cascading a new approach based on entrepreneurial ideas to replace the traditional top-down practice of the past. She struggled to adopt a stance towards her team which would persuade them to change their style from 'tell' to facilitate. She was passionate about the need for change and wanted to give her team and their workers a new way of learning and development in their organisations. Her expression of emotion was clear and I was able to offer empathy without difficulty (item 2). My questioning focussed on what she was driving to achieve and how she might manage to achieve it. The process felt repetitious as I asked, in one form or another, 'what has to happen for your team to take responsibility for their own development as facilitators?' After some wondering and looking at the consequences of a variety of options she suddenly said

‘I could ask them like you are asking me’ (items 1 2 and 3). She reported this at evaluation as a completely new realisation about different approaches to adult learning.

Reviews of the workshops reveal for some a dawning realisation that there is something here that they hadn’t been aware of previously i.e. the process that is occurring, an example of translating theory to practice for learners. Participants reported that their views of learning had been transformed. The transformation which they report is a revision of their concept of how adults learn and a meta- learning about how they themselves have realised this. Such transformation implies a change in behaviour that may or may not happen, as well as the new understandings which can emerge in double-loop learning. Participants witnessed how emotional expression, acceptance and recognition, within a given social context and discourse, may act as a driver to double-loop learning, an example of a usable technique based on my theory. As before not everyone finds the method comfortable and body language confirms this. My estimate in these workshops is that there may be one or two individuals who are left unsure of the method, and some of this may be due to language difficulty, but the constant 10% who are uncomfortable, is a familiar proportion, in my experience.

Action Learning

Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group, known as a ‘set’ of colleagues, not necessarily or indeed usually, from the same work place, working on real issues with the intention of getting things done. The process is described in detail in publication 8. I have facilitated sets in local government settings and educational groups.

Critical Assessment of intervention

Where organisations introduce action learning they may want all managers at a given grade to be offered the opportunity to take part. Where participants are overtly or covertly conscripted the method does not work and sets lose their safety and effectiveness. Ideally sets should be made up of volunteers, as if set members are bringing issues over which they have little or no control, then their room for action is limited. However the action learning set is a safe place where the

prevailing discourse which may be part of the limiting environment, can be identified and assessed. The possibility that action learning smoothes over some of the sticky organisational issues is a point for consideration and the method may not always confront oppressive discourses head on, and this is an admitted weakness.

A recent set meeting worked with a regional health officer engaged in a re-construction of the area services. He was a member of a team each of whom were experts in their own field and he brought to the set his burden of responsibility for the whole change programme which was wearing him down. Set members first empathised with his state of stress and distress and explored the situation in which he was feeling so trapped (items 2 and 3). When set members questioned him around the relative responsibilities of the team, he discovered that he was carrying almost all the concerns around the programme's outcomes. His team seemed to be colluding with this and the set members challenged his role in allowing this to happen. He identified this issue as one which had arisen before in his managerial work and he resolved to take a different tack with the team (item 1). On reporting back he told the set that his intervention was welcomed by other team members who said something like 'we wondered when you would let us take on some of the burden'. His transformative learning (reported in learning review) was realisation of his own part in the burdening process, which he recognised as a familiar pattern which was not helpful to him or his colleagues/staff. Action learning values encourage this kind of learning to be shared in organisations which has the potential to transform the discourse and affect organisational learning culture (item 4).

XXXX

My most recent work with a trade organisation XXX which serves the IT industry (no permission to quote their name) was a mentoring programme which I designed to include individual coaching for board members who were acting as mentors. This organisation, seeking Investors in People recognition, wanted to introduce a more humanistic management culture and retain young ambitious staff (item 4). The programme involved volunteer mentor training, protégé orientation and individual coaching for mentors as required. I offered the coaching sessions as an executive coach, outside the organisation, with no feedback to it.

Critical Assessment of the intervention

Participants at the mentor training were amazed by the process, which used the SLO method (see page 45) to invite reflective dialogue and group dynamics to deal with power issues, and 90% of those present offered positive anonymous evaluation. By positive I mean that they reported some gain in learning or change in understanding. At its recent interim evaluation, the programme was on target to achieve its objectives, in management terms, but I am unsure about transformative learning by protégés. The mentors are still at the learning stage, and, in coaching sessions, report typical learning curve insecurities and discomfort. Protégés are unused to defining and declaring their ownership of objectives, being rather afraid of offending powerful figures in the organisation. Reflective dialogue using three domains may be in position for some mentoring pairs but it seems that the power of influence and fear are having a limiting effect on transformation.

A volunteer for the live demonstration was a highly qualified financial executive with senior responsibility in the organisation. She expressed honest doubts about the whole process (having initially rated it 3 or 4 out of 10) and said she would volunteer to 'give it a try'. Rather than talking about sensitive work-related matters, she chose to discuss a personal issue around her relationship with her aunt. This kind of issue was agreed by the group as a likely topic which might arise in the mentoring relationship. She was torn between spending time with her aunt who was not in good health and having the benefit of her own free time as well as rest and recuperation from the demands of her high-powered job. The process was as before with her story being heard, re-stated and the affective elements attended to by empathic responses (item 2). Her feelings about her aunt turned out to be mixed and included some resentment as well as affection. She also expressed her impatience with her siblings who were not helping or 'doing their share'. When questioned she realised that she was trying to make up for the resentment by taking all the responsibility for looking after her aunt (item 3). When her true feelings were expressed her view of the situation changed, she recognised her right to her own leisure time, and she resolved to negotiate with her siblings and discuss this honestly with her aunt. This corresponds to my theory about the affective domain described in section b.

At evaluation this person changed their rating to 9.5 as she believed the process had changed her view of the situation completely and transformed her stance towards what had previously

seemed an insurmountable problem. She also noted that we had worked within a new discourse for her.

One-to-One Reflective dialogue: Coaching and mentoring

The process of one-to-one dialogue follows Isaacs (1999) and includes deeper exchanges between practitioner and learner. Such a dialogue involves the whole of us ‘our emotions, our ways of feeling in the body, our ideas and our qualities of character and being’ (Isaacs 1999 p51) and involves ‘learning to tell the truth about what we feel and know (Isaacs 1999 p63) The key skills needed include:

- Active listening
- Re-statement or clean language
- Self-disclosure/congruence
- Summary
- Empathy
- Questioning
- Challenge
- Confrontation
- Immediacy
- Feedback

(See Publications 2, 8, 9 and 11)

My one-to-one interventions come from my work as a mentor, coach and supervisor. I offer a small number of sessions (usually six or less) to individuals who would not normally ‘go for’ therapy, but are ok with coaching. My clients seek sessions with the intention of changing something important in their life. As I review every case, the notes tell me that some of my clients achieve a transformation of some kind in their personal or professional lives. I hold a bank of such notes under confidentiality constraints, one of the reasons for the lack of evidence-base in my kind of work. Some of them are discussed below, with their identities anonymised.

How has the transformation happened? My process for mentoring coaching and supervision, based on Rogerian principles, and an example of my theory translated into practice,(item 5) is given below. (Rogers 1951;1961; 1979; 1983; 1992). This cognitive description does not do justice to the process in action, which includes non-verbal cues and background material relating to social context, power issues and the prevailing discourse within which my client is working:

- They talk
- I listen
- They talk
- I re-state what they have said
- They talk
- I listen again

(these first stages can be repeated several times and usually lead to expression of emotion by the client in verbal or non-verbal forms)

- They talk
- **I offer empathic response to emotion expressed verbally or non-verbally (this is the point of access to the affective domain)**
- I listen again
- I say how I feel as appropriate (congruence and immediacy)
- They talk
- I listen
- I question or re-state
- I listen again
- I summarise (at the end)

The process initially involves very few questions, and in later sessions questions feature more. The client is far from passive here as they work on their own issue, supported by our dialogue.

The use of re-statement as a powerful method for personal development has been confirmed by David Grove's clean language approach (1996), where the coach uses only words which the client has already offered, so that the learner is an active contributor to their learning construction (item 1). For both support and challenge I use empathy at one of the four levels identified by Mearns & Thorne (1988), so as to access the affective domain (item2). Where the client is unable to 'hear' empathy and denies emotion totally the method may not be so effective although many clients who deny emotion find empathy soothing, and may discover in themselves and their environment, some of the factors which have influenced or impeded their learning. The method of listening, re-stating, empathy and summary, has delivered consistently powerful results with a variety of clients and some of these are described anonymously below.

My work has been deeply satisfying with many clients reporting a transformative experience. The review process for clients takes place in the last session and is often validated by further messages, sent to me after the work has ended, from clients who confirm that their change or transformation endures (item2) When the work is carried out for a corporate client the feedback suggests that one-to-one coaching or supervision, based on my theoretical emphasis on emotion and usable techniques, may impact on the organisation as a whole as well as the individuals with whom I have worked (item 4). I have mentored, coached, and supervised senior staff in a range of organisations as they deal with transition, intractable problems and work/life issues. I have also mentored, coached or supervised middle managers struggling to survive in oppressive work environments. This does not pretend that such environments do not exist, on the contrary, the approach here confronts the issues of power and discourse head on (item 3).

The client approaches me for a purpose, and part of our work involves establishing how much of this purpose is owned completely by my client, and what degree of agency he or she enjoys in addressing it. During our work the possibility of transformation may emerge and there is still a decision to be made by the client alone. Will they move into the double-loop of transformation or not? This is where the many aspects of learning remain mysterious. When learning is viewed from a consideration of one aspect, traditionally, it appears to be a cognitive process only. When viewed in another way it appears to involve at least three domains, and from another, additional aspects become important, like power issues and the prevailing discourse. For instance in some of my work, clients are unable to overcome the oppressive power of their surrounding discourse and are left with an alternative learning outcome which may include manipulation or evasion rather than confrontation. Only my learner can decide. For those with the appetite for

confrontation our rehearsal process gives confidence and a way back to safety. A surprising number of instances reveal that when discourses are named and powerful interests identified and articulated, they tend to lose some of their power. However for many the system continues to inhibit their learning and my clients frequently make a 'move on' decision rather than continue in a life-draining organisational environment. The loss of these individuals must represent a considerable cost to organisations.

Client A

A, a high-powered graduate and a barrister-at-law, came to see me about her work and the relationships with colleagues in chambers. After an exchange as on previous page, she became tearful, anxious and worried about her work as a self-employed member of chambers (item 1 and 2). As an Oxbridge graduate her education had been skewed towards the cognitive domain and she had almost no emotional vocabulary (item 3). This meant that when distressed, angry or vulnerable, she was wordless, not a useful state for a lawyer. Her work discourse tended to the adversarial, and although used to the adversarial style they favoured, she found herself unable to manage her emotional responses to aggression from some colleagues and the marginalisation she was experiencing from the chamber's clerk (item3). Her situation, in an environment redolent with power issues, a prevailing discourse, and a learning context which seemed to lack access to the emotional domain, allowed for my theory to be applied as before. My process was exactly as described above, listening and re-stating until the client's story was told, empathy gave her some of the emotional language she lacked, and questioning led to ideas for dealing with her situation (item 2). The prevailing discourse was of course a powerful one and part of her strategy was to have her voice heard within that discourse, using the language of the law to express appropriate emotion. The rehearsal method for preview coaching worked well with this client and she prepared for several key meetings in this way. She was surprised by the result, and realised that her colleagues could be challenged with safety. At evaluation this client reported a revision of her view of life (previously primarily rational) to a more complete outlook which included some of the emotions she had so feared to express. This work led to a series of lady lawyer clients who came to me for coaching/mentoring sessions about their work environment.

Client B

B is a government inspector in the education sector and sought coaching sessions to deal with changes in her work due to re-organisation of the service. She sought coaching sessions after being rejected for her own job and then being taken on in a new challenging position. The focus of the sessions were a) an immediate meeting for the new post b) her rejection by her erstwhile employer and c) the challenge of new methods of working using electronic methods.

The first session was a crisis situation as she prepared for the imminent meeting with her new boss and colleagues. B expressed terror about the meeting, partly because of the earlier rejection and partly because of her fear of being not up to the job, and these expressions were non-verbal. Because the meeting was imminent the session focussed on strategies for B to feel 'together' for the meeting. When offered empathy she was able to express her fears, and then she was able to consider what was needed to prepare for this important meeting. She identified her unfamiliarity with the venue and decided to visit it beforehand. She recognised that her panicky feelings may lead to her talking too much or fidgeting and decided to use a pen or object to defuse her panic in the moment. She resolved to limit her intake of food at the event as this helped her to feel in control and drink plenty of water. She also prepared her outfit, makeup and style of personal presentation. She identified a friend to accompany her to give her support 'hold her hand' so to speak and promised to 'park' some of the feelings in the meeting until we met again. This coaching was recognisably functionalist (pub 9), lying within the single loop domain, with the client improving and developing their ability to behave more effectively in a given work situation. When we next met she smiled and said 'I did it'.

In later sessions B expressed her feelings about being rejected when she was forced to apply for her own job. She accessed her fury at the way she was treated and the betrayal she had experienced by colleagues. In addition she recognised her previous job as a 'warm blanket' which she had enjoyed for 30 years and which she had now lost. She mourned the work environment where she had felt cared for and looked after and grieved the loss of good friendships and the security of familiar work systems (item3). When she had processed her feelings of loss she was ready to address her new challenges and the main one was learning the electronic systems which her new job required. Her previous practice had been paper- driven and this was a complete change for her (item 1). She was frightened of the computer and was using a lot of energy in hiding her fears and feelings of inadequacy from her new colleagues and new boss. We discussed how she could express some of the difficulties in terms of her need for

support and when she expressed this openly in a work meeting she found that her feelings were shared with most of her new colleagues so that provision for training was extended for all of them. She had never experienced leading in this way and was excited by being able to do it, thereby constructing her own learning environment. B became confident with her electronic systems, and found that she could be just as efficient using them, which she reported as a complete change in her self image. This I interpret as transformational learning for B (item 2).

Client C

C is an Oxbridge graduate who initially sought career coaching. She was unsure about her future and what she wanted to do with her life. The sessions were focussed on her transition from student life to potential employment. C was afraid of the world of work, and those fears were about a) not being good enough and b) being trapped in a worthless job. She was unused to dealing with emotion, so my theory about the affective domain had relevance in this case.

When C's feelings were expressed, her fears about not being good enough revealed their origins within the family where she felt invisible, excluded and unheard, although she believed herself to be loved (items 2 and 3). She was currently living at home and felt helpless to change how her family perceived her and when she accessed her anger about her role in the family she decided to try to separate, grow-up, find her own space and live apart from them. This 'ploughing her own furrow' was not easy as family members did not understand why she wanted to leave and she struggled to stand her ground while maintaining relationships. C was apprehensive about moving out on her own and decided to share with a friend and when she achieved the move successfully, her life, by her own account, was transformed. She said she felt powerful and in charge of her life for the first time and her family were changing their attitude to her (item 1), as she contributed to her own learning environment. My theory suggests that accessing the affective domain allowed C to discover a power and role issue in the family which she sought to change, and reflective dialogue provided a method to address this (item 2).

From her new base C explored her career options. As she had some funds available she was able to engage in a number of short-term projects in her chosen field. This enabled her to try out a variety of areas of interest and consider how they suited her aspirations. Again accessing her

feelings about different activities enabled C to learn that her original intentions were not taking her to the work she desired and she found an alternative job in a surprising place (items 2 and 3).

C reported transformation in her learning about herself, her place in the family, and how that affected her stance towards work. Her move to 'plough her own furrow' had enormous impact on her perception of what was worthwhile work. When she finally took up a permanent position, her self-knowledge enabled her to identify what 'good enough' would be in that situation, which she reported she would have been unable to do previously, an example of how my theory-in-use has the potential to access hidden aspects of learning and stimulate double-loop paradigm shifts.

Critical Assessment of my interventions

Why do I need theory to achieve the results claimed above? Many might claim that these were no more than normal everyday interchanges with sympathetic colleagues. This may be so and those lucky enough to have such colleagues are unlikely to seek me out. In publications 2 and 11 the point is made that reflective dialogue is not casual, but intentional, confidential and skilful. My theory suggests that reflective dialogue with these clients led to the possibility of transformation, through application of my theory in usable form; attention to the affective domain; recognition of the social context, power issues and discourse environment of my clients. My work with clients reveals some evidence of what I have called transformation based on their self-report. For many this kind of evidence is insufficient and how can I be sure that transformation has really occurred? There is always the possibility that my clients tell me what they believe I want to hear although some reports are sent indirectly and all reports are at the end of the relationship. So how many of my clients report transformative learning? Many may choose not to let me know about their transformation (or lack of it) so the data is far from complete or replicable. I have noticed that many of my clients present issues which on exploration involve power issues in their work discourse and my method provides a means of access to their power horizons. What happens in their organisations? Taking the family of client C as an indicator, client transformation led to altered attitudes there so, if replicated, may well lead to changes within organisations too.

Learner-to-learner reflective dialogue

While reflective learning is prioritised in higher education the structure of programmes offer limited guidance about how their desired learning outcomes can be achieved. The prevailing discourse offers students learning journals, both on and off-line, with the concept of reflection mainly limited to individual internal thought, which is then reported for assessment. The Kahn report critiques the limitations of this approach, and warns ‘Fostering reflective practice requires far more than telling people to reflect and then simply hoping for the best’ (Russell 2005 p 203) and it is noted that ‘those who rely on adopting a specific task, such as employing a portfolio or making use of critical incidents, miss the opportunity to support and direct the reflective process along more targeted and productive lines’ (Kahn et al 2006 p62)

In order to promote reflective learning in my courses at City University I developed the idea of learning partnerships for every module I teach (item 5). Reflective journal guidelines suggest that in their portfolio students should include records of reflective dialogue and include reassurance that there would be opportunities for such dialogue in their classroom sessions through the provision of learning partnerships. Thus the portfolio seeks to record a process rather than an outcome, to accommodate different experiences of transformation.

Initial workshops included provision for students to choose a learning partner from among their colleagues. A variety of ways for making this choice were tried and the best outcomes emerged from students taking responsibility for the choice they make, i.e. the tutor taking no part in the eventual pairings. This activity, itself giving rich material for reflection, has never failed. Within the initial workshop learning partners were offered facilitated time slots for ‘getting to know’ each other, with structured worksheets (pub 11) to assist the process. An important pattern, established from the start, was the practice of learner speaking while reviewer listens, responds with empathy, questions, summarises and **writes**. The record of the reflective dialogue is dated and handed to the learner before the pair change over roles. Thus begins the portfolio building process, based on items 2 and 3 above. The learning partnerships endure for the entire module and learning partners are given a few minutes at the start of every session and 10 minutes at the end of every session for reflective dialogue. Acting on the recommendation that adult learners are most effective when they start from their own experience, the initial few minutes dialogue was found to be immensely helpful for bringing students into learning mode for the evening session. The last ten minutes of the session (five minutes for each learner) was always utilised

well by students where reflective dialogue was facilitated and recorded, providing material for inclusion in their reflective portfolio. Many students referred to publication 2 for ideas about the five dimensions of reflection and this was echoed in their eventual presented work. The five dimensions are a clarification of the terms used by Schon (1983; 1987) and given earlier in this statement as follows:

- 6 The learning event
- 7 Reflection-in-action during the learning event
- 8 Description of the learning event and any reflection-in-action
- 9 Reflection-on-action and analysis/critique of 3.
- 10 Reflection on the process

These dimensions are an instance of my contribution as they offer practitioners usable categories, based on my theory, for assessment as well as guidance to learners about what constitutes reflection.

Critical Assessment of intervention

The process of reflective dialogue was carried out by the students themselves, with support and guidance from their tutor, but it was their responsibility, primarily, the tutor only occasionally filling in where a learning partner was absent from class. The journal template (Appendix) was developed to give students a structured document which represented dimensions 3, 4 and 5 and this offered a further powerful development for reflective learning, as students used their dialogue records to complete the relevant dimensions.

Feedback from students consisted of recognition that the learning partner process was unusual in higher education, appreciation of the structured nature of the journal template for building a portfolio, reduced anxiety about completing it, relative clarity about what was required, and confidence that assessment would be fair and understandable. The method has echoes of self-managed learning approaches and this may account for the reluctance to use it of teachers in higher education, although most are enthusiastic about on line versions of the same thing, but unfortunately such versions carry the disadvantage of public exposure, which accounts for their

failure in stimulating the deep, significant and transformative learning which appears in the exemplar given in publication 11.

When the learning partnership process was less successful I realised that members of the partnership were individuals who I had noted were lacking in dialogue skills, being unable to listen carefully and lacking empathy and patience. This means that students may not have access to the best quality dialogue through their course, and in these cases I was told that students had sought alternative partners with the requisite skills.

Conclusion

My interventions, in applying my theory to practice, have found that reflective dialogue may be necessary for transformational learning but is not established as sufficient. Clearly there are aspects of learning which reflective dialogue as presently defined is unable to address: power issues; hierarchy; discourse; learner autonomy; culture; gender, age, race, class, opportunity and other factors. These many aspects of learning tend to remain hidden behind prevailing discourses until the dialogue enables expression of how they are affecting the learner **emotionally**. Those who suggest that reflective methods are a 'poorly developed aspect of organisational learning' (Reynolds & Vince 2004) confirm that dialogue is needed but are unable to describe **how** this is to be achieved. In dismissing current methods of reflection, the power of authentic dialogue has not been properly considered.

When the situation in higher education is examined, findings (in section b) reveal that, whilst many teachers in HE are committed to developing students as critical and reflective practitioners, the methods currently being employed are not achieving the desired outcome, i.e. graduates, masters and doctors who are deeply and critically reflective. However, my own work in HE, as well as that of my colleagues, has proved to my satisfaction, that, given the opportunity for reflective dialogue, students are able to use dialogue to promote their own reflective learning at high levels, some leading to deep and significant changes.

Organisations in the business arena are introducing reflective dialogue methods through mentoring and coaching programmes and this offers hope of more testing of the method. My interventions with individuals and in organisations suggest that, properly structured, authentic

reflective dialogue which includes the affective domain, and reaches some of the social and organisational factors influencing learning, may stimulate transformative learning for some but not all, confirming that hidden or unknown aspects of this multi-faceted human activity remain to be explored. My theory also proposes that organisations which nurture reflective dialogue may benefit by achieving the holy grail of organisational learning.

Appendix : Journal Template in two stages

Stage 1 : reflection at levels 3 and 4

What occurred in the last session?

What did you notice about yourself?

What did you notice about others?

How did you feel in the session?

How do you think others felt?

What would you have liked to do differently?

How would you have liked to behave?

How will you bring this to the next session?

What do you hope to achieve in the next session?

Stage 2 : reflection at level 5

Use the entries in your journal to identify the following:

1 What you have discovered about yourself

2 What you now know about learning and development which you didn't know before

3 What you realise about your own learning and development

4 How your new understanding will influence your future practice

5 Your feelings about all this

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