

Submission No. 11395

Where's the Reflection in Action Learning?

Short Title: Reflection in Action Learning

A Symposium Proposal Submitted for Presentation at the
2006 Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management

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Abstract

This symposium proposes to take up the most controversial aspect of action learning, its focus on reflection as a means of understanding: a) action learning's limited use as an educational and developmental learning modality in various parts of the world, and, b) when it is used, the over-deployment of action at the expense of critical reflection. We propose that action learning's classical format might be overly ambitious with audiences so unaccustomed to self-directed reflection and learning from experience. Accordingly, in some cultures and sub-cultures, achieving this level of directness in personal exchange may come across as overly blunt or even forced.

Yet, if action learning is to realize its promise as one of our most important methodologies to achieve experience-based adult learning, we need to find a way to bring reflection back in. We believe that in order for managers to act heedfully – to be at the same time attentive, conscientious, and critical, they will need to develop both a taste for and an ability to reflect in action. Thus, in this symposium we plan to not only begin the inquiry into why reflection has been so overlooked in action learning, but also to propose a number of ways to re-introduce it successfully. In this way, we hope to engage in a dialogue with our audience to construct a vital bridge between theory and practice in management education, organization development, and critical studies.

Submitted To:

MED, ODC Divisions and the CMS Interest Group of the Academy of Management

Keywords for the Symposium

For the Management Education and Development Division:

- 1) Action learning
- 2) Adult learning
- 3) Reflective practice

For the Organization Development and Change Division:

- 1) Facilitation
- 2) Developmental change
- 3) Structured conversations

For the Critical Management Studies Interest Group:

- 1) Critical reflection
- 2) Praxis
- 3) Cultural competence

Overview of the Symposium

“Where’s the Reflection in Action Learning?”

Joseph A. Raelin and Victoria J. Marsick

Despite the over 50-year presence of action learning as an increasingly reputable form of management education, its contribution as a learning modality, especially within the management and organizational development disciplines, still appears to pale in comparison to standard classroom and training provision (Hernez-Broome and Hughes, 2004). One of the reasons for this plight of action learning is that in its original form, it invites participants to reflect by themselves and with colleagues on their workplace interventions. This approach is not particularly well-received by participants in most educational and training settings so that when action learning programs are initiated, they often proceed without sufficient focus on the reflection and learning that are fundamental to its founding principles (Revans, 1982). Rather, participants have a tendency to launch into the project work, considering performance on their project to be their main goal. There are many reasons to be offered for this state of affairs. For one, it is easier to provide rote instruction, consisting of the transfer of representations from an expert into the mind of a receptive student, than it is to facilitate reflective practice. We can also measure the results from rote instruction far more easily than we can from reflection on experience (Mabey, 2002; Mintzberg, 2004). Reflection may also be psychologically threatening when it results in exposing our weaknesses to ourselves, let alone to others. And, of course, learning from standard classroom modalities is the way we have always done it!

Rather than knock our heads against the wall and decry this unfair neglect of reflection in action learning, it might be worth wondering if its classical format, characterized by Pedler,

Burgoyne, and Brook (2005), might be overly ambitious with audiences so unaccustomed to self-directed reflection and learning from experience. It may be particularly discomfoting to throw people into a team and ask them to not only immediately learn to work together, but to also share their emerging feelings about one another. In some cultures and sub-cultures, achieving this level of directness in personal exchange may come across as overly blunt or even forced.

But if we are to benefit from the reputed immense value we can generate from action learning programming, both in terms of its economic as well as pedagogical value, we may need to find a way to bring reflection back into action learning (Fulmer and Vicere, 1996; Brenneman et al., 1998; Raelin, 2000; Boshyk, 2002). Consider that in today's turbulent global environment, companies must constantly reinvent their strategy (Kuhn and Marsick, 2005), redesign their organizations, learn to succeed with a multi-cultural work force or in countries outside their national boundaries, and re-think mental models. Under such conditions, the taken-for-granted reality of managers and the organizational systems they create often need to be problematized and re-considered. Reflection that is also critical, i.e. that examines underlying values and beliefs, can lead to a re-framing of the personal and sometimes shared perception of the presenting problem, leading oftentimes to innovative ways to both view and solve the problem.

Marsick and Cederholm (1988) encouraged greater use of reflection in their model of Action Reflection Learning (ARL), which was originated in Europe. Marsick later surmised that differences between ARL and versions of Action Learning that do not incorporate or emphasize reflection:

. . . do not lie in particular tools or techniques, many of which are shared by both versions of this practice, but in an underlying spirit or philosophy. . . . All forms of Action Learning are built around question-driven learning from and through experience. But Action Reflection Learning advocates believe that to get maximum benefit, learning coaches should actively help people reflect on what they do in order to draw out a deeper set of lessons learned. And, often, learning

coaches find ways to startle their set members into deep questioning and reflection about why they see things the way they do (Marsick, 2002, 304-305).

Conger and Benjamin (1999) in a research-based analysis of leadership development programs, concluded that action learning is being used, though differently, in three different modes of leadership development: developing individual leaders, socializing company vision and values, and promoting strategic leadership initiatives. The authors then suggested that an essential ingredient for successful leadership development is multiple opportunities for reflective learning. They noted that “better-designed programs powerfully blend reflective learning experiences with the pressures and deadlines of a significant undertaking” (p. 223). Better-designed programs build many opportunities for reflection into programs, rather than saving it for a one-off presentation at the end. And finally, in better-designed programs, “reflective learning opportunities are not only targeted at what was learned through the projects themselves but also on the personal approaches and styles of the individual team members” (p. 224). Unfortunately, Conger and Benjamin also concluded that such reflection does not happen frequently.

If we truly believe that a fundamental purpose of education is to encourage managers to act heedfully, that is, to be at the same time attentive, conscientious, and critical, then we need them to develop both a taste for and ability to reflect in action (Ryle, 1949; Weick and Roberts, 1993). This means that they will need to take into consideration data beyond their personal, interpersonal, and organizational taken-for-granted assumptions (Raelin, 1997). They will need to understand how knowledge has been constructed and managed and how what is deemed to be relevant or even commonsense has been arrived at. And lastly, they will need to learn to “reflect-in-action” so that they can reframe unanticipated problem situations in order to see experience in a new light (Schön, 1983).

In this symposium, we plan to not only begin the inquiry into why reflection has been so overlooked in action learning, but also to propose a number of ways to re-introduce it successfully across a range of cultures and sub-cultures. For example, as we have determined that its avoidance in the North American culture may stem from a disproportionate action orientation, we will propose a way to slow down the culture. As its avoidance in Asian societies seems to stem from its susceptibility to cause loss of face, we will propose how managers may reflect together while sustaining their integrity (Saner and Yiu, 1994).

We have carefully assembled our symposium panel to examine the issue of reflection in action learning from what we consider to be the most critical cultural and epistemological dimensions. First, Victoria Marsick and Joe Raelin, two notable spokespersons on behalf of action learning in the United States, will in a brief introduction make the case for the value of reflection in action learning. Victoria and Terrence Maltbia, both at Columbia University, will then expound upon how, in using “structured” conversations, they and their colleagues at Teachers College have been able to assist busy executives to not only quickly learn the skills of reflective practice but also to begin to see its value as a gateway to personal and organizational learning. Lichia Yiu from CSEND, the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development in Geneva, Switzerland, will demonstrate, using an action research methodology, the complications of introducing reflection in Asian cultures that historically have found this practice to be culturally improper. Next, Jonathan Raelin from George Washington University, Phil DiChiara from the Boston Consortium for Higher Education, and Joe Raelin from Northeastern University’s Center for Work and Learning will introduce a new approach to action learning called DAL, or developmental action learning, which they used to successfully launch the reflective component of action learning over time using a number of researched principles from developmental cognitive practice. Finally, Henry

Mintzberg, principal of the innovative graduate experience spanning three continents and five different mindsets, the International Masters Program in Practicing Management (IMPM), will demonstrate how he and his colleagues insert reflective practices throughout the year-long IMPM as well as within the more intensive three-week senior executive program known as the Advanced Leadership Program (ALP).

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Why the Symposium Should be of Interest to the Specified Divisions and Interest Group

We are submitting this symposium proposal to the Management Education and Development and Organization Development and Change Divisions and the Critical Management Studies Interest Group. A rationale for these choices follows after a brief explanation for its connection to the 2006 Conference Theme.

Academy Theme: Our ability to share our evidence-based knowledge with the public concern will only go as far as our ability to understand the public concern through concerted reflective practices. It is only through public reflection that we might recognize the connection between our individual problems and the social context within which they are embedded. If we are to use our knowledge effectively, we need to examine its fit and actionability within the world around us.

MED Division: Although action learning has been in existence for some 50 years, it is still considered to be a relatively novel approach to management education and development in the United States. We submit that its slow start has largely been due to its reflective orientation that may not fit a North-American culture oriented to action. We will explore this theme and also suggest ways to revise action learning to become more culture-friendly.

ODC Division: Our proposed panel focuses on both change and development occurring approximately at the same time. An important question in action learning is the value of using facilitation as a systematic means to induce reflection on experience. It is our view that without reflection, there can be no learning, and without learning, there can be no change.

CMS Interest Group: This symposium proposal has a critical element rooted in its focus on praxis, which can be interpreted as a reflection on one's practice with others. Our reflection can become critical when we become concerned with how we consciously or unconsciously use power, privilege, and voice to exert influence and suppress dissent. Thus, action learning has the opportunity through reflection to examine whose interests are being served by the forms of knowing in popular use.

Description of the Session's Format

We are requesting the standard 80-minute time frame for this presenter symposium, to be allocated as follows:

10 minutes: Joe Raelin and Victoria Marsick will welcome the audience and offer a conceptual frame for understanding the problem of reflection in action learning methodology. Then, Joe will introduce each panelist and his/her presentation.

50 minutes: The four panelists will then present in sequence. Each will speak for no more than ten minutes, whereupon they will each take a few questions of a clarification nature. We expect this segment to take approximately 50 minutes.

20 minutes: In this last segment, audience members will be invited to ask questions to any or all of the panelists. During this time, panelists will be encouraged to query and engage in a dialogue not only with the audience but with each other as a way to broaden the discourse and emulate the very reflection principles that this symposium espouses.

Presentation Synopses

Using Structured Conversations to Build Reflective Practice

Victoria Marsick and Terrence Maltbia

Some managers in action learning programs enjoy the opportunity for a time out to review what has or has not been working in order to make informed choices about next steps. But others get impatient when asked to use a learning journal or review action, their own or the group's, with the help of peers. However, over time, we have observed that managers greatly value reflection once they understand how this step can improve the quality of results, especially when it is coupled with probing questions of peers in an action learning set. Critical reflection, that is reflection that helps identify underlying values, beliefs and assumptions, is especially powerful because it often enables people to see how they can change a situation by changing the way they frame it and act on it (Yorks, O'Neil and Marsick, 1999).

Our observations led us to create a structured conversation protocol to slow down action and enable managers in action learning programs to see how reflection could improve their thinking and the solutions to challenges in which they were engaged. Judy O'Neil (1999) began developing Action Learning Conversations for use within action learning programs by drawing on her own experience and protocols used in England. We initially used these protocols only within action learning programs. But we have now used them for stand-alone reflection "exercises" or as part of a shorter development experience. We have used them with executives and managers, school superintendents and principals, executive coaching program managers, teachers in professional development programs, and graduate students in organizational psychology and adult learning programs. While we have not evaluated their use systematically, participants invariably walk away from their use with satisfaction and new insights.

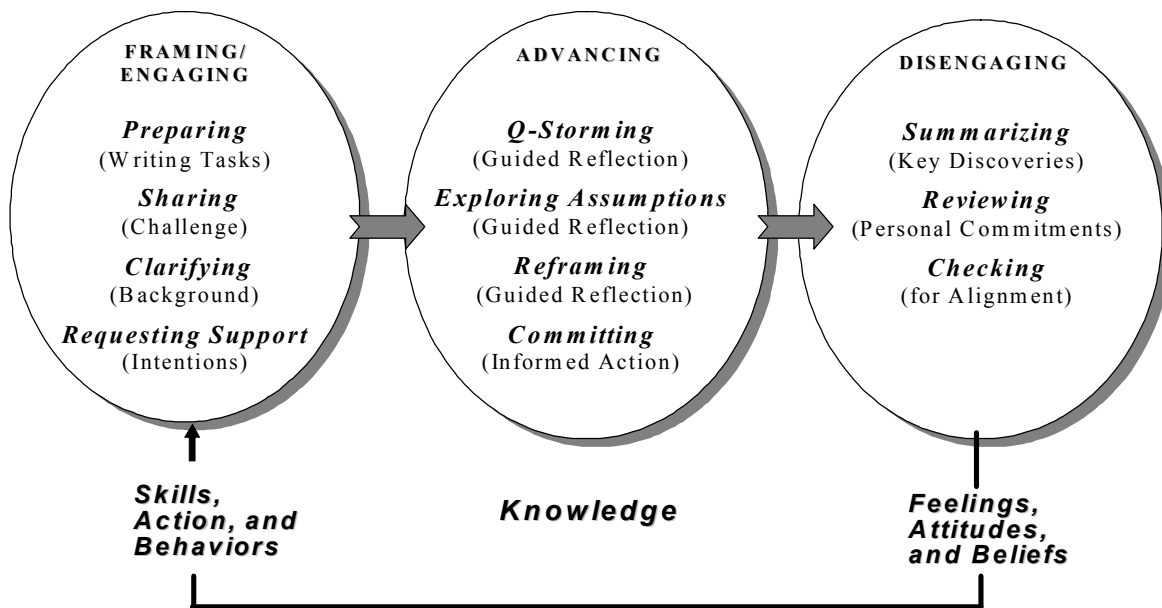
Here, we will describe the protocol and its use in a recent format designed as learning tools for executive coaching. We will then discuss ways that a variety of participants in Action Learning Conversations indicate they gain value from the use of this tool to learn the skills of reflective practice and begin to see its value as a gateway to personal and organizational learning.

Action Learning Conversations Protocol

Figure 1 shows that we have structured the conversation in three phases: framing/engaging, advancing, and disengaging. Work is done in groups that are selected for maximum diversity. It typically takes at least an hour to work through all three phases with the attention/support of peers. We frame the overall flow and then work with each group at its own pace as it works through each phase. We also warn members that it will feel “unnatural” to work through the protocol because it artificially channels conversation. Peers are helped to ask questions or offer observations *without giving advice about how to address the challenge*. The person receiving the consulting help *does not respond* to questions or observations in the moment, but does write down what he/she hears. Each phase includes an opportunity for short, selective responses by the person receiving the consulting help, but remarks are held until that point in the protocol.

Framing and Engaging. The first step involves framing and engaging the challenge. Everyone writes a key challenge in the form of a question, along with background information. Writing focuses attention. Members briefly share each challenge, after which the group picks a person with whom to begin work. That person takes about 10 minutes to fill people in on the background. Peers help by asking objective questions to clarify the context and surface essential background information.

Figure 1: Action Learning Conversations



Soon questions move beyond facts. At that point, the group is ready for Phase 2 where the bulk of the action learning reflective practice work takes place. Phase 2 is divided into four key segments, each of which can take between 10 and 15 minutes. During each segment, while members of the group talk, the person receiving the help listens and writes *but does not respond to what he/she hears*. At the end of each of segment, he/she can respond selectively to what he/she has heard before moving to the next segment.

Advancing. Phase 2 begins with questions. Questions have always been at the heart of action learning. Questions free people to think in new ways whereas advice giving can reinforce prior mental models that inhibit fresh solutions. Weinstein (1995) provides a framework for asking different kinds of questions (reflective, interpretive, decisional) that we use. We also draw on work by Marilee Goldberg Adams (2004) on Question (Q) Storming. Members are asked to first silently think and write down questions, which they then share through a round robin

process. If the person receiving the help wishes to comment on any of these questions at the end of the Q-storming, he/she can selectively do so, or may choose to remain silent.

The second step in Phase 2 involves exploring assumptions. People are frequently not aware of assumptions, yet they powerfully shape actions. In this next round, members again first silently write down assumptions they think the person being helped might be holding. Members also identify assumptions they would hold were they in that situation. We often introduce the “ladder of influence” (Argyris, 1985, p. 59) as a tool for helping groups make evaluations and attributions more explicit. As in the prior round, assumptions are shared through a round robin process with the person listening and writing, after which he/she may selectively share thoughts and reactions.

The third step in Phase 2 involves reframing the original question. New information typically leads to fresh thinking. Often the person begins to see how he/she is part of the problem as originally defined, or has identified missing views of other stakeholders that alter understanding of the situation in important ways. In this step, members again first write down possible ways they might now reframe the challenge and then, in round robin fashion, share these reframes. At the end of this step, the person receiving help can share his/her reframes based on new thinking. The final step in Phase 2 is a commitment to action, based on new insights, e.g., to gather more information, check out assumptions, or behave in new ways. This prepares the way for Phase 3, that of disengaging.

Disengaging. During the final phase of the process, either the learning coach, a member of the group, or the person who has received the help will summarize key discoveries, review commitments, and check for alignment in the group. Sometimes this becomes a group-facilitated process. As Figure 1 shows, this process enables a feedback loop in which feelings and attitudes experienced around the challenge can be informed by new insight and knowledge, which in turn gets fed back into the way the person frames and engages the situation through action.

Gaining Reflective Practice Appreciation and Skill

People who experience the Action Learning Conversations protocol say that it feels uncomfortable and unnatural to be forced to write down their thinking before sharing it, to share it without the other person responding, and to phrase their thinking in a way that does not turn into advice giving. Having experienced the protocol, however, participants invariably are pleased with the way their thinking deepens through the process.

When used within the structure of an action learning program, this protocol is utilized every time the group meets which is often about 4 - 6 times over a period of as many months. The insights offered by peers who share similar contexts and who understand the organization and its leaders provide valuable ways of seeing the situation that are otherwise hard to gain in fast-moving politicized environments. This protocol opens minds and hearts to the power of reflective practice. Participants are able to put new insights into practice and check back with peers the next time they meet to better understand the ramifications of their new actions. When used as a stand-alone, the protocols also help participants gain new insights into a particular challenge and into the pay-off of reflective practice. But we still need to inquire if participants continue engaging in reflective practice when returning to their normal “home” environments.

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Cultural Variance of Reflection in Action Learning

Lichia Yiu

The mantra of “Learning by Doing” resonates well with my mainland Chinese colleagues and participants of management development processes. After years of undergoing a mixture of traditional rote memorising and strict (and numbing) indoctrination, Chinese teachers, trainers, and students have enthusiastically embarked on a journey of adapting Western-style learning methods, among them being active learning and action learning.

However, while Asian managers and executives responded with high spirit and enthusiasm to active learning, they were more reluctant to adopt action learning. While methods of active learning, such as case studies, role plays, and experiential exercises were all adopted with great success, the action learning variant in China was often implemented without its key practice features, such as qualified facilitators and open reflection. Hence, despite the celebrated success in the application of action learning in China (Gordon, Meininger and Chen, 2004), the Chinese AL variant remains long on solving organisational problems and short on facilitating personal development.

In contrast to the common expectation regarding action learning outcomes in the West, which stresses Level 2 or Level 3 learning goals as a minimum requirement (as defined by Yorks, O’Neil and Marsick, 1999), the learning goals of the Chinese action learning design tends to focus on Level 1 and possibly Level 2 learning goals. Both foci emphasise a contextualised learning process which tends to be de-personalised and content driven.

Looking back over more than 20 years of project work in China consisting of training-of-trainers and action research components (Yiu and Saner, 2002), I would like to reflect on my extensive field experience in China and argue that the reasons for the Chinese preference for the

more “business-driven” action learning variety (terms used by Pedler, Burgoyne and Brook, 2005) are indicative of strategic choices.

A case example I will cite concerns CSEND’s project in China (1993-1997) on building internal capacities for change in Chinese public administration and state-owned enterprises (Yiu and Saner, 2002). This project involved the teaching of P knowledge (defined as programmed instruction by Revans, 1971) and action learning in solving real workplace problems important to the reform processes in China. Participants were selected from both the in-service training institutions and the training management unit of the provincial party apparatus to undergo an 18-month professional development process. A “business-driven” action learning design supported by action research was chosen for this project in order to achieve real organisational impact, such as developing new management training curricula and materials, adopting of an active training methodology, and consequently improving the training effectiveness and efficiency of the Chinese in-service training system. All together, approximately 10,000 institutes were in operation during the time of this project and were in need of transformation.

A number of different organisational and cultural constraints led to this particular action learning variant, which de-emphasised the public personal reflection of the action learning cycle. Instead, reflection tended to focus more on theory and was devoid of criticism and/or evaluation. Some of these design constraints were:

Design constraint 1: A perception of similarity between public reflection and self-struggle sessions.

Design constraint 2: Participants' lack of prior experiences with relevant technical and theoretical content in Western management theories and techniques

Design constraint 3: Lack of qualified set advisers versed in human relations theory and practice and equipped with sufficient experience in managing organisations in a market economy

Design constraint 4: Lack of a psychological mindedness among participants and the general deficiency of Chinese language in expressing affective experiences

Design constraint 5: The importance of conflict avoidance and preservation of individual "face" in Chinese culture

Design constraint 6: Different cognitive styles among the Asian and Western participants, leading to different developmental needs regarding cognitive skills

In order to accommodate these constraints, the reflection component of action learning was relegated to the private and tacit domain of the learning process. Instead of public reflection, participants kept a personal learning journal that was later submitted for review by the Chinese programme director and tutors (set advisers). Critical reflection concerning the organisational reality and operating assumptions occurred only through systematic collection of data (action research) and discrete feedback to the client organisations. Institutional resistance was mitigated by a promotional tour for the programme management team, orientation sessions, and overseas study tours for the stakeholder groups and institutional hierarchy.

By presenting factual data in a learning context, participants were able to present information about their respective organisations without incurring the danger of being seen as “negative,” challenging the authorities by being seen as subversive, or proposing alternative ways of organizing and delivering training. Today this business-driven variant of action learning continues to operate within the Chinese public sector for which this CSEND project was designed and implemented.

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Preparing for Reflection Using Developmental Action Learning (DAL)

Jonathan D Raelin, Philip DiChiara, and Joseph A. Raelin

This presentation will propose a revised model of action learning, based on cognitive developmental theory, which systemically prepares participants for the in-process reflection that brings out learning from experience. It starts with the premise that most participants in action learning programs are thrust prematurely into autonomous learning conditions without sufficient cognitive development or experience in precursory forms of knowledge acquisition.

Consider how most action learning programs operate. Participants are placed into either individual or team projects that have strategic value to the client organization. Once assigned to a project, participants are often expected to inductively and rather immediately work on the project, incorporating such requisite steps as project planning, resource acquisition, implementation, and evaluation. While pursuing the project, participants are also assembled into learning sets or teams where they are encouraged to focus on their individual and team learning. The learning may also support a theme espoused for the program, be it leadership, team development, knowledge management, and the like. Although some participants may be psychologically ready for the level of openness required in these teams, others may not be and might consequently choose to resist personal exposure induced through the experience.

The DAL Approach

The developmental action learning (DAL) approach seeks to overcome some of the limitations of classical action learning, while also taking into consideration the developmental nature of the interpersonal relations among staff engaged in the workplace. DAL is based on the

fundamental assumption that people will open up with one another on a spectrum: from routines that are familiar and recognized as safe, to experiences that are less structured and that allow more self-disclosure and feedback among participants. The DAL program proceeds as a three-stage process:

1. Perspectives Discussion – Collectively study different perspectives of an important topic in management.
2. Learning Team – Individually adopt some of the perspectives and apply them through experimentation in one's own organization, reconvening to dialogue about it within the team.
3. Project – Launch into a team project making use of the knowledge and new practices acquired.

In greater detail, in Stage One, the participants are assembled to intensely interact with a facilitator and with one another regarding alternative perspectives concerning a topic of deep mutual interest. The participants decide in advance how many and which perspectives they would like to consider. Each perspective is supported by readings that are carefully selected not only to characterize the perspective in question, but also to provide alternative, even contrary, ideas in order to stimulate thoughtful discussion and provoke experiments in practice.

In Stage Two, the discussion group becomes prepared to entertain a new level of experience, evolving into what may be referred to as the learning team. Having digested some alternative theories in Stage One, participants should be prepared to engage in a series of experiments in the workplace. In doing so, they attempt to change their behavior by deploying one or more of the new perspectives presented earlier. They journalize about their experiments

in practice and, when the learning team next assembles, come prepared to share their experiences with their team members and receive feedback.

In Stage Three, the team transitions into an even higher level of experience. Those from the prior stage who wish to continue on embark on a team project of collaborative strategic change. At this point, they become a project team. This stage is based on the idea that there is no greater opportunity for real-time experience and collective reflection on that experience than from performing work together. It is the ultimate test of formulating and engaging in theory in practice. During Stage Two, participants were only able to provide “hearsay” on what they tried to accomplish in their work setting. In contrast, during Stage Three, participants can directly observe each other as they attempt changes in their personal and professional behavior. They are able to provide direct feedback to one another on such practices as interventions that did not go according to plan, real-time accomplishment of personal learning goals, and differences between what they said they were going to do and what they actually did. At Stage Three, the learning team and project team become one and the same.

A Case Study of DAL

Following the exposition of the DAL model, a case study will be presented to illustrate how DAL was applied with a group of high-level administrators within a consortium of area universities and colleges. The consortium has as one of its primary missions the development of a collaborative mindset and a commitment to collaborative behavior. Accordingly, the directorate of the consortium organized an Executive Development Series based on developmental action learning principles to enhance the participants’ leadership role as one of

promoting mutual learning and mutual action. The Series was designed to take participants through systematic stages each requiring increasing personal and professional risk.

The DAL experience will be depicted on the basis of a learning journal prepared by Jonathan Raelin as a historical account that not only served to inspire self-reflection by the group but that could also be used by future consortia, be they in higher education or in other fields, to develop their own collaborative learning processes. Some of the lessons derived from this experiment in DAL will be shared to include a review of the critical factors that can lead to successful action learning interventions, especially in social networks. In particular, we hope to show that DAL can introduce action learning as a change vehicle without incurring so much resistance that it upends the experiment before it can really get started. Further, DAL appears to have great potential to link action learning with collaborative change processes within and across organizations.

Here's our Actions in Reflective Learning

Henry Mintzberg

Where's the reflection in Action Learning? The short answer, all too often, unfortunately, is nowhere. Companies and their managers, especially in the United States, tend to get so caught up in the action that they forget the reflection. T. S. Eliot wrote in one of his poems: "We had the experience but missed the meaning." Saul Alinsky wrote in *Rules for Radicals* that "happenings" only become "experiences" when we get the meaning through reflection.

Sure companies need to get things done. But they don't need courses to do that—boot camps laid over a life of boot camp. They need courses to slow down, step back, and reflect on the actions that they take all too pervasively. So we have created a family of programs to do just that. We think of them as third generation management education and development.

The first generation built the learning on other people's experiences. In other words, it used theory and cases. That was fine as far as it went; it just didn't go far enough. The second generation constructed experiences, or at least happenings. This was the world of "Action Learning" and "Work-Out", where people worked diligently to get things done. That, too, was fine as far as it went; most of it just didn't go far enough. Much of the action was artificial—superimposed on top of busy schedules—and too little of it was reflected upon to make meaning—to become "experience."

Third generation management education and development uses first generation and reverses second generation. It brings the natural experience of managers into the classroom for reflection, making use of theory especially, and sometimes cases, to stimulate it. The faculty

bring the concepts, the participating managers bring their experiences, and the learning takes place where these two meet, in multiple workshops, etc.

We have developed two educational programs that do this, the International Masters in Practicing Management (www.impm.org) for business, which has been going for ten years, and the McGill-McConnell Program for Voluntary Sector leaders, which ran for its scheduled three cohorts. And in June 2006, we launch a third, sister program, for health care (www.imhl.ca). Reflection is a key part of all this. In this symposium, I shall discuss, in particular, “morning reflections,” “multiple workshops” around “apostrophe tables”, the “reflection papers,” and “competency sharing.”

We are also running a management development activity called the Advanced Leadership Program (www.alp-impm.com). This takes our ideas of reflecting on lived experience farther. Open only to groups sent by their organizations (usually 6 in number), each brings a key issue faced by their organization, to be reflected upon and progressed in the classroom. So whereas conventional Action Learning creates work back at work, the ALP brings natural work into the classroom for reflection. To be discussed here are “friendly consulting” by which these groups of managers help each other on their issues, “field studies” to probe more deeply into the issues; and the “reflective seating” to help bring out the meaning of these issues.

We might call all this our actions in reflective learning.

Statement from Symposium Organizer

I have received signed statements or emails from all intended participants formally agreeing to participation in the symposium.

Jonathan D. Raelin

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