

The Emerald Research Register for this journal is available at
www.emeraldinsight.com/researchregister



The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at
www.emeraldinsight.com/0025-1747.htm

RESEARCH PAPER

Optimising the effects of leadership development programmes

Leadership development programmes

975

A framework for analysing the learning and transfer of leadership skills

Veronica Burke

University of Luton, Luton, UK, and

David Collins

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to discuss a framework for analysing the learning and transfer of conflict handling skills via leadership development programmes. The framework links the role of knowledge in skill acquisition to the process of learning transfer to suggest how different methodologies may influence learning outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach – In order to explore the veracity of the framework, content analysis was conducted on 22 UK leadership development programmes. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 managers acting in leadership roles and ten leadership development providers.

Findings – Results confirmed the model to be tenable insofar as providers reportedly utilised both design paths represented in the framework and as managers used the approaches in handling business conflicts.

Research limitations/implications – The framework remains to be tested longitudinally with a large sample of managers and providers. Given the lack of empirical work to support an expressed link between design and outcome to maximise effect, a mixed methodology examining both approach and rationale would be essential.

Practical implications – It is suggested that clients question the training provider about the philosophy underlying skills learning and transfer. Due consideration should also be given to the circumstances under which learning transfer may be optimised.

Originality/value – It is proposed that the framework may offer clients an evaluation tool in respect of particular methodologies or course designs and that this may help to maximise the chances of focused learning and subsequent skills transfer.

Keywords Leadership development, Conflict management, Skills

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Increasingly, businesses are investing in leadership development (Industrial Relations Services, 1992). Unfortunately, the expansion in provision has not been matched by sufficient empirical evidence to explain how transfer of learning may be optimally achieved (Williams *et al.*, 2003; Burke *et al.*, 2002). The terms leadership education and

Management Decision

Vol. 43 No. 7/8, 2005

pp. 975-987

© Emerald Group Publishing Limited

0025-1747

DOI 10.1108/00251740510609974

leadership development are often used interchangeably (Drew-Smith *et al.*, 1989), with consequent confusion for clients and providers alike. Leadership education is characterised by structured university or college-based programmes, while leadership development is likely to include a broader spectrum of learning activities such as seminars, executive coaching or mentoring interventions. As referred to here, the term “leadership development” is a process whereby facilitators lead participants through a series of activities or mental exercises, encouraging them to reflect on learning experiences in order to promote transfer of knowledge and skills to work contexts. Hence rather than covering technical job skills, such programmes focus on self-awareness, changing attitudes, building teams and improving interpersonal interactions. Common objectives include, for example, development of leadership skills such as team-working and communication – competencies believed to be instrumental keys to organisational performance and productivity. Indeed, given the rapid expansion in course provision, it is worth asking questions about what these programmes expect to achieve and how the training interventions are linked to relevant and transferable learning.

The framework

Focusing on this context, this paper offers a framework to represent the conduct and implementation of programmes (see Figure 1). It suggests that the framework could be used as an evaluation tool for particular methodologies or course designs and that this may help to maximise the promotion of focused learning and subsequent skills transfer. To exemplify this process, the discussion will consider the development of skills related to conflict handling – an important component of effective leadership and management and a domain frequently addressed by leadership development interventions (Beer and Walton, 1990).

Organisational conflict takes many forms – grievances, boycotts, or moves to replace particular managers with others (Deutsch, 1994). Consequently, individuals working in leadership positions require skills of a trained negotiator to effectively handle conflict (Clements *et al.*, 1995). Such skills involve (for example), abilities which enable trust of opponents during interaction, co-operative approaches which allow parties to explore their options for resolving the conflict, empathy, and taking responsibility for one’s own actions (Arak, 1990). However, skills practice on its own is likely to be insufficient to enable individuals to intervene constructively either as third parties, or on an individual basis when they are, themselves on one side of the dispute. Following this logic, individuals in leadership roles require knowledge as well as skills practice to become competent at conflict handling (Deutsch, 1994).

A framework for a comprehensive and sound design is suggested that represents a decision making chain comprised of two distinct (but not mutually exclusive) design pathways, namely “procedural – tactical – high fidelity” and “declarative – strategic – low fidelity” (see Figure 1). In order to provide a structure for these design pathways, the decision making chain is related to three main features of programme design, i.e. the knowledge base, the learning approach and the practice setting.

The knowledge base

Anderson (1982) offers a structure built on three types of knowledge, two of which are well documented. Procedural knowledge concerns knowing how to perform something

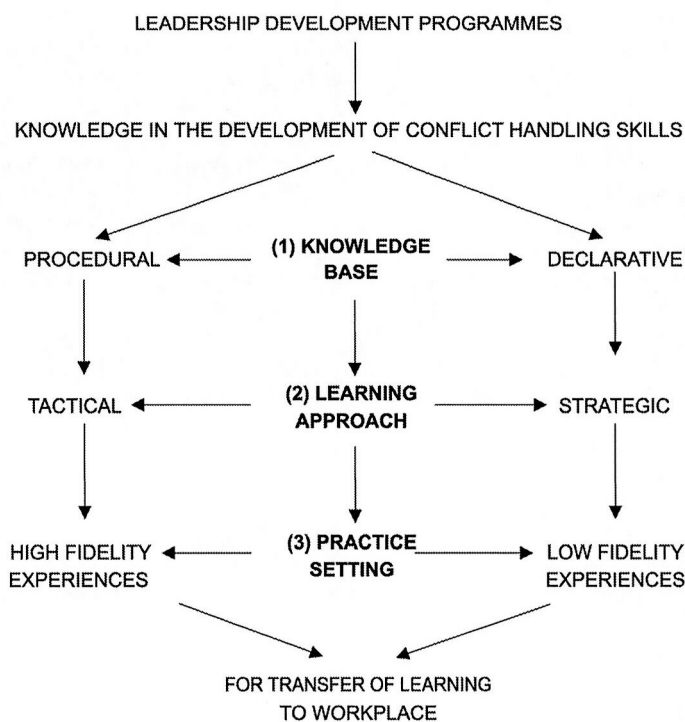


Figure 1.
A framework for analysing the learning and transfer of conflict handling skills via leadership development programmes

(Anderson, 1982). This is where the learning is automatised into a series of “productions” which are acts of cognition that make things happen. The aim of this process is to gradually reduce the number of productions required for a particular outcome so that application of the knowledge becomes automatic. To clarify this idea the learner would follow a set of “if ... then” procedures which move them progressively towards the desired outcome. If this type of knowledge were to feature as an aspect of programme design, participants would be offered opportunities to solve conflict problems by working through influencing techniques specific to particular situations.

The second category, “Declarative knowledge” concerns “schemata, frames, scripts or knowledge structures” (Starkes and Allard, 1993, p. 110) and refers to the network of facts which take up our working memory. It has been argued that declarative knowledge has an important contribution to make in promoting “learning by understanding” (Pennington *et al.*, 1995). So, in terms of conflict handling, declarative knowledge would be apparent where participants were required to compile facts about the underlying conflict issues, the parties involved and the consequences associated with various courses of action. This context would provide a foundation for a process whereby participants uncover some general rules and constructs to guide their behaviour in conflict interactions.

The learning approach

The second component of the decision-making chain relates to the learning approach. The framework suggests that procedural knowledge is likely to be utilised in tactical

approaches to conflict handling that are specific to the situation. Under these circumstances, participants would be encouraged to decide the conditions under which knowledge could be applied and engage in appropriate actions, depending on the particular conflict scenario. The emphasis here is therefore on knowledge of procedures pertaining to the conflict situation and consistent with messages in the conflict literature which recommend matching styles to situations (Hart, 1991; Thomas, 1992).

Alternatively, declarative knowledge is likely to be used in strategic approaches, which are applied generically across a range of conflict scenarios such as accommodating, competing or avoiding techniques (Thomas and Kilmann, 1974). This approach is represented in research that identifies broad strategies for dealing with conflict such as contending, yielding, problem solving or avoidance (De Dreu, 1997). Thus, declarative knowledge would provide the foundation for development of general constructs underlying the process of conflict handling and the development of knowledge and skills applicable across a range of conflict situations.

The practice setting

The decision about what balance of “learning approach” to use is not the only concern for providers of leadership development. This component of the decision making chain links the role of knowledge in skill acquisition to the issue of learning transfer – i.e. the use of knowledge or skill acquired in one situation in the performance of a new, novel task (Pennington *et al.*, 1995). Hence the “practice setting” refers to the nature of the environment utilised for skills development and practice (see Figure 1). Indeed, given the differences between the training environment where the skills are learned and the business settings in which they are applied, transfer is arguably *the* crucial factor.

Debates about the transfer of cognitive skills have hitherto focused around the issue of “fidelity” i.e. the extent to which tasks in the learning domain are similar to those in the real life situation where the learning is to be applied. Once again, these considerations hold considerable importance for providers of leadership development, especially since contrasting approaches, both apparent in the commercial sector, may either emphasise or consciously minimise the contrast between the learning domain and the business application setting.

Transfer of learning has been considered from two theoretical perspectives, both of which have implications for the design and potential outcomes of leadership development programmes. Anderson (1982) has proposed that, in order for learning to be optimally transferred from one situation to another, the tasks must closely replicate reality. Under this approach, the knowledge acquired while learning a skill is encapsulated into procedures called production rules. Transfer of learning is said to occur when the tasks share similar production rules. This is in fact an argument for high fidelity, where there is a close match between the tasks in the learning domain and the tasks required in the real life setting. This idea is represented in research emphasising “specificity of knowledge” – i.e. it is not the knowledge acquired through training and practice but a particular use of knowledge that must be emphasised. In short, this method fits this problem.

In contrast, Bransford *et al.* (1979) maintain that low fidelity is needed for transfer. In this view, transfer may occur by increasing the degree of similarity between the cognitive processing requirements of the tasks in each situation. What is important therefore, are the cognitive processes involved in the tasks, not the tasks themselves.

This perspective is consistent with the proposals of Pennington *et al.* (1995) and other *Gestalt* psychologists, in which the role of declarative knowledge in skill acquisition is emphasised – an approach which could be summarised as these principles can be modified to meet this problem in this way, or that problem in that way.

If these ideas were applied to the design of leadership development programmes, methodologies that emphasise knowledge of procedures pertaining to specific conflict scenarios (i.e. tactical approaches) would be expected to maintain high fidelity. Thus, in the learning activities, explicit links would be made with conflicts at work in order to promote transfer of learning and the elements of the tasks undertaken by managers would be similar to those they would undertake in organisational contexts. This type of design would appear to optimise benefit through training intact units from one company in order to maximise opportunities for transfer of procedures learned to the workplace (see the left hand design pathway in Figure 1).

Conversely, one might expect programmes that focus on the use of declarative knowledge (i.e. reflective of a strategic approach to conflict handling) to sustain low fidelity. In this type of design, the aim would be to achieve transfer via activities in which the cognitive processing requirements (but not the task elements) share similarity with conflict scenarios in organisations. Training providers who subscribe to this philosophy may prefer to work with participants drawn from a variety of different organisations in order to facilitate the application of broad constructs applied to diverse settings (see the right hand design pathway in Figure 1).

The tactical and strategic approaches to conflict handling described above are not mutually exclusive and it is probable that managers will use a combination of procedural and declarative knowledge in skills application. Indeed, many conflict problems require a combination of “fit for purpose” skills driven by knowledge of underlying principles concerning the process of conflict handling. However, since these types of knowledge may be differentially developed via different types of learning approach, it seems crucial that providers and clients should at least understand the balance and its implications for the types of activities offered.

Initial support for the model

While a series of more comprehensive studies are planned, preliminary testing has shown support for the model. This work was conducted in three stages. The first study (content analysis of leadership development brochures) was designed to assess the initial applicability of the framework in relation to leadership development provision. In order to check for consistency from the perspective of both potential clients and established providers, two further studies were completed. The second phase (semi-structured interviews with managers) investigated the broad types of knowledge and skills used by managers to deal with conflict in business and the third (semi-structured interviews with leadership development providers) was designed to elicit data about perceived approaches to the learning and transfer of leadership skills.

Content analysis of leadership development brochures

A content analysis of brochures produced by providers of leadership development in the UK was conducted to assess the extent to which procedural and declarative designs were evident. A request for information was sent to 30 providers of management development selected from the *Management Development Yearbook* (Addico, 1995).

The sample included large providers as well as the smaller, less well-established organisations. Requests were sent to 15 providers with a record of contracted services to large organisations (category 1) and 15 others, with a less well-established client base (category 2). In order to qualify for category 1, providers must have been in the business for more than two years, have a minimum of five employees working for them on a regular basis and possess a track record of contracted services to a range of organisations. All other providers were assigned to category 2. Content analysis was completed on 22 courses.

The course content revealed the use of both procedural and declarative designs, with some providers using a combination. A final category included courses that did not appear to employ any particular focus in respect of the design framework. Hence there was no evidence of an orientation towards the development of either specific or generic skills, despite a course rationale suggesting skills development.

Procedural designs

Procedural designs were evident in descriptions that emphasised progressive approaches, moving participants towards focused outcomes. A programme offered by Guardian Business Services (1992-1993, p. 1) offered the following rationale:

This 2 day course identifies the steps involved in making swift and informed choices, Delegates will be presented with a 5 stage model which will help them to analyse the situation, develop appropriate selection criteria, choose between people, assess the match and mismatch between the chosen person and the task and anticipate the consequences of their choice.

This example was extracted because it was orientated towards particular skills or functions. Hence the approach was deemed to be representative of practical skills training that was situation specific.

Declarative designs

In contrast, declarative approaches were highlighted in descriptions offering help with broader issues and the development of generic skills applicable across different situations. A course from Sundridge Park offered the following:

The programme is highly appropriate for male and female executives who have moved or wish to move into general management. It is of equal benefit to those functional managers who realise the imperative of a broader understanding beyond their own specialism (Sundridge Park Executive Development, 1994, p. 6).

This (and other) examples were extracted from descriptions offering broader, process based skills, such as listening, questioning, self-disclosure and giving feedback. Hence the material aimed to develop behavioural skills and strategies that supported future learning and facilitated greater workplace impact.

Combinations of procedural and declarative designs

There were a number of examples where both approaches were used in combination. In these instances, courses appeared to offer opportunities for both specific and generic skills application:

On completion you should have improved your skills in managing the relationship between yourself and your primary work group and how you and they interact with other groups. The

individuals and the groups you manage will be better able to develop to their full potential and contribute to a culture in which positive influencing facilitates the delivery of desired results (Civil Service College, 1999-2000, p. 37).

In this example, the learning involved both specific and generic skills application, whereby general competencies were included alongside more focused skill areas.

Courses not offering declarative or procedural designs

A course titled "How to lead a team" promised participants the opportunity to "learn the skills considered most critical by team leaders". This included skills such as "starting off on the right foot with a new team", "making sure team meetings are worthwhile – and not just a time wasting experience" and "knowing the best places to invest your time for the biggest reward" (CareerTrack International, 1999, p. 2).

In these examples, it was difficult to glean the underlying rationale for knowledge and skills development. Such courses did not appear to have any notable design characteristics, and thus it was difficult to determine the overall philosophical approach from the descriptions provided.

From this initial analysis, it appears that managers were offered a variety of leadership development opportunities based around programme designs supporting the development of either procedural or declarative knowledge, or both. The findings also revealed a number of programme designs that did not appear to be orientated towards any of these categories.

Semi-structured interviews with managers acting in leadership roles

Further work appeared to offer support for the use of procedural and declarative knowledge in tactical and strategic approaches to conflict handling. A sample of 18 managers (12 male, six female) acting in leadership roles were interviewed about the skills they used to deal with conflict at work. They came from a variety of business sectors including travel, education and construction and ranged in age from 25 to 71 years (median age = 42 years). They were recruited through personal contact and purposefully sampled to represent the full cross section of business type, size and structure (Sunderland and Nelson, 1995). The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, the text was analysed using the procedures and techniques of grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Gould *et al.*, 1993). The responses revealed a variety of approaches, including both tactical ($n = 5$), and strategic ($n = 4$) skills. A combination of both tactical and strategic approaches was cited by half the managers in the sample ($n = 9$).

One respondent demonstrated the use of a tactical approach involving attempts to regulate conflict in a manner specific to particular circumstances:

It's no good using the same approach across the board. The approach must be adjusted, depending.

In a similar vein, another respondent commented:

If the conflict is due to a lack of understanding, I try to anticipate it and develop understanding. If this can be achieved, a mutually satisfactory compromise can usually be found. If the conflict is due to different priorities between departments, these have to be tackled "head on". When the conflict is over personal factors, it's better to skirt 'round them, to circumvent them.

The use of strategic methods was abstracted from comments such as “all conflicts must finish up beat and with a feel-good factor” and similarly:

My strengths lie in my lobbying – influencing, persuading and motivating. I can get myself out (or round) of most conflicts by talking and listening. I try and be conciliatory, to involve people in what they are doing, to encourage them to own up to their role in things and take responsibility.

A combination of both tactical and strategic approaches were cited by nine respondents. Hence in some circumstances, the skills were adjusted to fit the situation, while in others the general approach was the same. These data suggest that, for this sample at least, managers applied their skills in one of three ways, namely tactically, strategically, or in combination. Additionally, these groupings are not inconsistent with the skills categories of “procedural”, “declarative”, “both” and “neither” highlighted as a result of the content analysis.

Semi-structured interviews with leadership development providers

Finally, in order to explore the veracity of the framework from both a learning (how it might happen) and a real life (how providers think it works) perspective, data were gathered about the methodologies used to develop the acquisition and transfer of conflict handling skills from ten major providers of leadership development.

The criteria for selection of providers were as follows, each provider must have:

- worked in leadership development for a minimum of two years;
- run this area of work as their full-time main line of business;
- employed a minimum of five employees on a regular basis; and
- hold a record of regular contracted services to a range of clients.

Half of the sample had a substantial international client base. Each of the providers meeting the criteria for selection was assigned a number which was subsequently entered onto the SPSS for Windows 9.0 file (Chicago, USA). A random sampling of these data produced the final ten providers, who, when approached, all consented to participate.

Development of the conflict video and interview guide

A video of four conflict scenarios was developed to facilitate and standardise the acquisition of data and to provide a methodological link between participant's responses to different conflict situations (see Patton, 1987). The content was derived from training videos and intended to represent the types of conflict encountered by managers in business, namely inter-organisational, inter-group, intra-group and inter-individual (Tjosvold and Chia, 1989). All participants received a copy of the video and a covering letter two weeks prior to the start of the investigation. An interview was then conducted with each participant after they had watched the video twice.

Based on the model structure presented in Figure 1, the interview guide included questions pertaining to how programmes would be designed to equip clients with the knowledge and skills to deal with the conflicts portrayed, the underlying rationale for such approaches, and questions relating to learning transfer. The schedule included standardised probes to ensure that responses from all participants were explored in equal complexity and depth (Torrington, 1991). As per the objectives set for the

investigation, no structure or system was offered to participants, in order to test for the existence and veracity of the decision-making structure in real life.

All interviews were conducted by the first author, recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, the interview text was content analysed by three researchers, employing a deductive approach and using consensus validation procedures to identify common themes from the raw data (Scanlan *et al.*, 1989). Those of highest abstraction were labelled “dimensions”, second order categories were characterised as “higher order themes” and raw data themes comprised the most specific forms of information.

The knowledge base

Overall, 46 raw data themes were extracted from the transcriptions regarding the perceived role of knowledge in skills development. Subsequently, these raw data themes were compiled into three higher order themes from which the general dimension of “Knowledge” was constructed. The three higher order themes were:

- (1) generic;
- (2) specific; and
- (3) theoretical.

All of the providers sampled ($n = 10$) reported knowledge development to be important.

One provider made comments subsequently conceptualised exclusively under the theme of “specific knowledge”, which comprised 17 raw data themes. This category referred to knowledge applied to particular situations or workplace conflicts:

It's all very specific to that person or that team, that organisation, that business. We use project work to recreate a specific business problem that we know is happening in their organisation. We try to make it very specific to the workplace.

In contrast, five providers reported “generic knowledge” or understanding to be an important foundation for conflict handling skills. Under these circumstances, respondents cited broad understanding of conflict issues as being important:

I guess the knowledge that we develop is generic knowledge if you like. The knowledge I would say is self-awareness about individuals, awareness about teams, creating knowledge about themselves but also business knowledge.

In addition, four providers perceived a combination of specific and generic knowledge as essential features of programme design. Hence these findings suggest the likely use of both procedural (specific) and declarative (generic) knowledge to underpin skills development.

Finally, eight providers made comments conceptualised under the higher order theme of “theoretical” This category represented theoretical models or tools used to promote skills learning, such as psychometric tests or experiential approaches.

The learning approach

A total of 91 raw data themes were extracted from the transcriptions pertaining to how programmes would be designed to develop skills to deal with the four conflicts portrayed in the video.

All of the respondents reported the development of interpersonal skills to be useful in dealing with conflict. Within this category, one provider made comments conceptualised exclusively under the theme of "tactics", which included the application skills adjusted to fit the situation:

We look at building skills in quite a positive way, so by getting people to work together on small projects and taking out of these what works well and always as a cycle making the transfer of what happens there and what goes on at work.

Five providers emphasised the use of strategic approaches, which referred to the acquisition of generic skills applicable across a range of conflict scenarios. One respondent said:

We would develop systems for managing people's objections. I might give them steps to assertiveness but the real knowledge they would have gained is about themselves, how they react, how they can do things.

Overall, four providers reported the utilisation of both tactical and strategic skills as aspects of programme design. Under these circumstances, some of the skills were applied generically while others were deemed to be contingent upon the situation. Reassuringly for the framework, these three groups of participants demonstrated a consistent and coherent link between the knowledge base and consequent learning approach used, albeit that the logic of, or reasons underpinning this link were not explicitly expressed.

The practice setting

A total of 66 raw data themes were extracted from the interview transcripts for questions pertaining to learning transfer.

In the category of "approaches to learning transfer", six providers were able to articulate the rationale underpinning the use of particular methodologies. One example included the following:

On a face level, some of the insights gained from the activities have nothing to do with work because the transfer is emotional, intellectual and at a "team understanding" level. We're not talking about personality change here (I make this distinction) and it has to be a very careful process that is caring of the individual.

Another respondent said:

I would say that the main thrust of our programmes has to do with developing skilled behaviour. The biggest skill that we pass on is the skills where you can feedback to people. The approach to conflict management is about working through your differences.

The remaining four failed to offer any link. When probed, these participants merely reiterated the operational aspects of their chosen approach, rather than the reasons underpinning it. For example, one respondent said:

What we know about the experience is that it enhances self-confidence over and above everything else that it does. What else it does is very, very, specific to the individual.

Hence with regard to the final stage of the decision making chain, results were mixed. Some providers mentioned the logical chain evidenced in stages 1 and 2, reporting the use of methodologies that fitted consistently with their chosen approach. Others were

less consistent however, or even failed to show any logic in the decisions made. Specifically, the ten providers sampled in this investigation indicated the use of four basic designs to facilitate skills transfer. These were low fidelity ($n = 1$), high fidelity ($n = 3$), a combination of both ($n = 4$), and designs in which neither approach was utilised ($n = 2$).

An example of a high fidelity approach (i.e. in which there was a close match between elements of the tasks in the learning domain and those in the work environment) was abstracted as follows:

What we can do for a client is to have an exercise that somehow replicates what is going on at work. It works extremely well for them because they were able to make those direct links. It can really make the experience more transferable for them.

In respect of low fidelity designs (i.e. where the emphasis was on matching the cognitive processing requirements of the tasks with workplace scenarios), one provider commented:

It is more about seeing yourself from different perspectives and then thinking about how you might manage things in a different way. People will pick and choose the skills depending on where they are. I don't believe in teaching specific skills to people anyway.

Interestingly, two providers reported little or no follow up to facilitate skills transfer, although this factor was acknowledged by them as being important:

We only get transfer via manager's abilities to pick up the skills while they are on the course. There's no follow up. We should, but we don't.

The findings also revealed a high degree of variance concerning the linkage between the stated programme objectives, the chosen methodology and the learning outcomes. Given this situation, it is unlikely to be clear to the clients that such processes/methodologies will result in these outcomes. In short, even if the provider has demonstrated explicit awareness of the fidelity issue, they don't necessarily know how to manipulate this variable to maximise desired effect.

Applied implications

The initial fieldwork broadly supported the use of procedural and declarative knowledge as a basis for deployment of tactical and strategic approaches to conflict handling, insofar as providers of leadership development reportedly utilise procedural and declarative designs, and in respect of both approaches as utilised by practising managers in business. The data also suggest the use of high and low fidelity designs to facilitate learning transfer and hence the results broadly confirm the concepts outlined in the framework. Crucially however, the results do not appear to suggest a clear philosophical rationale for adoption of these designs, nor offer users any structured means by which to evaluate the potential efficacy of course content or method.

The distinctions highlighted above demonstrate that there may be very different design philosophies in operation, each of which has implications for the learning and consequent efficacy of leadership development programmes. The choice of leadership development provider may therefore be mediated by the need to ascertain how their particular methodology fits with the organisation's current and future needs, and the balance between these and its approach to leadership development. There are several issues to consider which tend to favour the declarative model for long-term benefit and

the procedural model for short-term objectives. Indeed, course designs emphasising broad-based approaches to conflict handling may offer greater development potential in the longer term because of the emphasis on skills application across different settings. Therefore, procedural designs may be more appropriate for training intact units from one company whereas declarative approaches may be more suited to open programmes involving delegates from a variety of organisations. Notably, courses incorporating a mix of "fit for purpose skills" (tactical) as well as those driven by knowledge of underlying principles (strategic) may offer distinct advantages in terms of minimising this short-term/long-term trade off and this may prove to be especially pertinent, give the fluid nature of business in the current global environment.

We also recommend that client organisations give consideration to the circumstances under which transfer may be optimised. Relevant issues include the degree of post-course follow up that is provided to reinforce skills transfer, the extent to which pre-course audits are utilised, the competence of the course team to provide relevant and focused learning and the congruence between the activities and the skills requirements of the work setting. We also suggest that organisations consider in-house provision for quality skills practice. The use of a sound structural framework both informs and facilitates these decisions.

The framework remains to be tested further with a larger sample of managers and providers. We also suggest that large scale longitudinal research to assess the extent to which procedural versus declarative designs are utilised in leadership development programmes would offer a useful foundation for further work to assess the efficacy of provision. Given the lack of empirical work to support an expressed link between design and outcome to maximise effect, a methodology examining both approach and rationale would be essential.

References

- Addico (1995), *The Management Development Yearbook*, Addico, London.
- Anderson, J.R. (1982), "Acquisition of cognitive skill", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 89 No. 4, pp. 369-406.
- Arak, C. (1990), "Dispute Management in Schools", *Mediation Quarterly*, Vol. 8, pp. 51-62.
- Bear, M. and Walton, E. (1990), "Developing the competitive organisation: interventions and strategies", *American Psychologist*, February, pp. 154-61.
- Bransford, J.D., Franks, J.J., Morris, C.D. and Stein, B.S. (1979), "Some general constraints on learning and memory research", in Cermack, L.S. and Craik, F.I.M. (Eds), *Levels of Processing in Human Memory*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale NJ, pp. 331-54.
- Burke, V., Collins, D. and Earle, M. (2002), "Using the outdoors to promote the learning of managerial skills: analysing the process of learning transfer", in Berridge, G. and McFee, G. (Eds), *Partnerships in Leisure, Sport Tourism and Management*, Leisure Studies Association, Brighton, pp. 137-60.
- CareerTrack International (1999), *How to Discipline Employees and Correct Performance Problems – Seminar Information*, CareerTrack International, Redhill.
- Civil Service College (1999-2000), *Development Directory*, Civil Service College, Sunningdale Park, Ascot.
- Clements, C., Wagner, R.J. and Roland, C. (1995), "The ins and outs of experimental training", *Training and Development*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 52-6.

- De Dreu, C.K.W. (1997), "Productive conflict: the importance of conflict management and conflict issue", in De Dreu, C.K.W. and Van di Vliert, E. (Eds), *Using Conflict in Organizations*, Sage, London, pp. 9-23.
- Deutsch, M. (1994), "Constructive conflict resolution: principles, training and research", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 13-32.
- Drew-Smith, S., Chas Pell, S.C., Jones, P., Sloman, M. and Blacknell, A. (1990s), *Management Challenge for the 1990s*, Training Agency, July.
- Glaser, B.F. and Strauss, A.L. (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Aldine, New York, NY.
- Gould, D., Finch, L.M. and Jackson, S.A. (1993), "Coping strategies used by national champion figure skaters", *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, Vol. 64 No. 4, pp. 453-68.
- Guardian Business Services (1992-1993), *Course Descriptions*, Guardian Business Services, London.
- Hart, L.B. (1991), *Learning from Conflict: A Handbook for Trainers and Group Leaders*, 2nd ed., Human Resource Development, Amhurst, MA.
- Industrial Relations Services (1992), "Training evaluation: an IRS survey", *Industrial Relations Review and Report*, Vol. 512, pp. 2-12.
- Patton, M.Q. (1987), *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.
- Pennington, N., Nicholich, R. and Rahm, J. (1995), "Transfer of training between cognitive sub-skills: is knowledge use specific?", *Cognitive Psychology*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 175-224.
- Scanlan, T.K., Ravizza, K. and Stein, G.L. (1989), "An in depth study of former figure skaters: introduction to the project", *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, Vol. 11, pp. 54-64.
- Starkes, J.L. and Allard, F. (Eds) (1993), *Cognitive Issues in Motor Expertise*, North-Holland, Amsterdam.
- Sunderland, S. and Nelson, R. (1995), *Norms Reference Manual 3*, General Reference, Durham.
- Sundridge Park Executive Development (1994), *Guide to Open Programmes*, Sundridge Park Executive Development, Bromley.
- Thomas, K.W. (1992), "Conflict and negotiation processes in organizations", in Dunnette, M.D. and Hough, L.M. (Eds), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 2nd ed., Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto CA, pp. 651-717.
- Thomas, K.W. and Kilmann, R.H. (1974), *Thomas-Kilmann MODE Instrument*, Xicom, Tuxedo, NY.
- Tjosvold, D. and Chia, L.C. (1989), "Conflict between managers and workers: the role of co-operation and competition", *Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 129 No. 2, pp. 235-47.
- Torrington, D. (1991), *Management Face to Face*, Prentice-Hall, London.
- Williams, S.D., Graham, T.S. and Baker, B. (2003), "Evaluating outdoor experiential training for leadership and teambuilding", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 45-59.

Further reading

- Weaver, M.J. (1999), "Beyond the ropes: guidelines for selecting experiential training", *Corporate University Review*, p. 1.