Participants' Strategies in Management Learning Events:

An Ethnographic Study of Five Bank Training Programmes.

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for

the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Business

Administration.

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Abstract

This thesis builds on the previous work of Fox (1987) who investigated the experiences of managers in a British university's business school. It extends the previous work, however, by moving to the industry's arena to investigate the experiences of participants in five bank training programmes.

This work uses ethnographic methods to understand the experiences of the different participants and links the experiences of the learner-managers to those of the instructors in the same programmes in a model of strategies. Presenting how both learners and instructors coped with their situations in the same thesis was thought to be important in order to present a more complete picture of how both parties influence each other and how they are both influenced by the different contexts the training programmes were embedded in.

The results point to the importance of the contextual factors which influenced how the participants (both learners and instructors) approached their different tasks of learning and/or instructing. They also acknowledge the importance of the latent functions of training programmes. These observed training programmes could be perceived as 'institutional learning events' which did not only serve as 'learning events', they also served other functions for the individual, the organisation, and the wider society.

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No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

For my parents Layla and Hussain,

whose commitment to my education as a child has been a glittering candle throughout this challenging experience.

and **for Ebrahim,**

whose love, patience, and support has made this **our** achievement.

List of Abbreviations

MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBS	Manchester Business School
ACIB	Associated Chartered Institute of Banking
ACT	Associate Corporate Treasurer
Q1	A classification quadrant for dominant/hostile behaviour.
Q2	A classification quadrant for talkative/hostile behaviour
Q3	A classification quadrant for talkative/warm behaviour
Q4	A classification quadrant for dominant/warm behaviour.
OHP	Overhead projector.
SWOT	A marketing analytical tool used for analyzing competition interms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
FT	Financial Times.
BCG	The Boston Consulting Group.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to more people than I can name. First and for most my gratitude goes to the three banks who gave me access to this research and to the managers who let me invade their privacy. I have learned so much from them and became more critical of actions that I would not have questioned before as a result of this experience.

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Huda Al-Maskati
September, 1995

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 **The problem under investigation:**

Most organisational training programmes prepare participants for existing or future positions within their organisations. The formal goal of most learning experiences is the enhancement of the learners' emotional and intellectual growth. There is, however, a body of knowledge that cannot be thought of as formal but which nevertheless constitutes an important part of any formal training programme. This is what Snyder (1971) called the 'hidden curriculum' which, he explained, was part of all formal training programmes. Snyder (1971) argued that:

"The question for the student is not only what he will learn but how he will learn. These covert, inferred tasks, and the means to their mastery, are linked together in a hidden curriculum" (Snyder, 1971, p. 4).

In this research I set out to investigate the experiences of participants in management training programmes. What do participants in management training programmes do in them? What do they learn? In answering these questions, I seek explanations, interpretations, and meanings because as Mann (1975) said:

"if we don't understand why these things keep happening, then they will probably happen over and over again" (Mann, 1975, p. 237).

Douglas (1971) also argued that:

".. social actions are meaningful actions, that is that they must be studied and explained in terms of their situations and their meanings to the actors themselves" (Douglas, 1971, p. 4).

Given that my problem is interpretative, the suitability of the functional methodology (which is mostly concerned with

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output measures) was called into question and I chose the phenomenological tradition which stands in opposition to scientific orthodoxy in that it regards ".. the realm of experience as the basic unit of analysis.." (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984, p. 167).

This thesis builds on the previous work of Fox (1987) who investigated the experiences of part-time MBA students at a British university's business school. But, because the development of management education was and continues to be an area of struggle between different interest groups (e.g. universities, businesses, and the state) (Thomas, 1980; Reed and Anthony, 1992), it could be argued that Fox's work was related to managers learning formally at a university's business school and that the old gaps between academia and industry (Thomas, 1980) could have fostered what he had observed. These gaps have long been experienced by business schools' personnel who sometimes get caught-up in the conflict between the academic rigour and respectability of the university on the one hand, and the relevance and 'street credibility' of the world of practice on the other (Thomas, 1989).

In contrast to Fox's (1987) work this thesis moves to the industries' arena in general and to the bank industry more specifically. To the best of my knowledge this thesis could be the first to examine corporate training programmes for managers in banks. This thesis investigates how the

participants in five training programmes in three different

banks coped with the learning in these learning events. It

is a study of learning in action in five different

management training programmes. The study draws on

ethnographic methods in interpreting and translating the

experiences of the participants (whether learners or

instructors) in these training programmes. In so doing it

is with the understanding that as Becker and McCall (1990)

explain:

"ethnography... can be both 'transformative', that is, can
'help create the possibility of transforming such
institutions as schools-through a process of negative
critique' (Brodkey, 1987, p. 67) and 'empowering' so long
as it rests upon the assumption that 'each person (has the)
ability to understand and critique his or her own
experience and the social reality 'out there'' (Weiler,
1988, p. 23)" (Becker and McCall, 1990, p. 9).

This is because as Manning (1971) argues:

"Informal or irrational forces in the organisation are
those that are not included in the managerial view but
nonetheless must be dealt with in some day-to-day coping or
managing basis, the tension between the ideal and the
actual requires somebody's (usually the manager's) constant
attention if the organisation is to survive" (Manning,
1971, p. 241).

1.2 **The Author:**

Herzfeld (1983) stated:

"In 'good' ethnography... the presence of the ethnographer
must not be allowed to disappear from view. It is not just
that in some entirely trivial sense, we would like to know
more about the personality behind the book. The fundamental
problem is that the personality in question is virtually
indispensable" (Herzfeld, 1983, p. 163).

Although this is not an ethnography of life in management

learning events, it is still an ethnographic study and as

such I, the author, become part of the study which the

readers should know about.

This author is a Bahraini Arab female who left Bahrain at the age of fifteen after winning a government of Bahrain's scholarship to study for a university degree at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. At the age of nineteen I returned to Bahrain with a Bachelor degree in Commerce to start a job at the Bahrain Monetary Agency (BMA, the central bank of Bahrain). I joined as a trainee bank inspector and remained there until I reached the position of senior inspector with my main responsibility being heading inspection teams to inspect different banks around the island and completing inspection reports. I was sponsored during my employment period with the BMA to study for a part-time MBA degree at the University of Bahrain which I completed in 1990 with the highest GPA of my class. I joined the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance later on that same year as an associate instructor, and a year after that I joined the Manchester Business School's doctoral programme at the University of Manchester to study 'training evaluation' for a Ph. D. degree. This topic has gone through many stages of focusing from 'training transfer' to 'management learning' to 'participants' experiences' until it reached its present focus. At the time of writing this thesis I have presented in two local and one international conferences (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1994; 1995a; 1995b)..

1.3 **Objective of the Research:**

Having come from a banking background and participated in several banking training programmes (both as learner and instructor) I felt I was equipped to venture into this ethnographic study. My aim from this study is to help all stakeholders (Tanton and Fox, 1987) in formal training programmes look at themselves, to turn their attention to what goes on in these formal training programmes as opposed to what they think goes (or ought to go) on in them. This is especially so since I (whether as instructor or learner in past training programmes) never looked at them with the conceptual understanding that I possess now.

The thesis should be of interest not only to Human Resource managers, but also to the designers of training programmes, and to any other party which contributes to the development of managers. It is hoped that by being aware of what goes on in these programmes each party can become more sensitive to the others's perspective (whether it be trainers or learners) and in so doing cope better with future learning or instructing experiences. As Fox and Smith (1986) point out:

"For managers to *manage* events, rather than be managed *by* events, the first requisite is awareness of the process of micro strategic interaction between individuals. It is hoped that reports of case studies such as this one help in this respect" (Fox and Smith, 1986, p. 14).

Snyder (1971) also states (although his argument relates to university students):

"The encounters that take place among students and between

faculty and students have to be understood if one is to assess the way the university operates, the reasons why students learn the things they do, in the way they do, ..." (Snyder, 1971, p. 141).

At the very start of this thesis, I think one disclaimer is in order. It is not the intention of this thesis to judge the participants in the study nor the organisations sponsoring these learning events. I only wish to raise important issues which emerge within institutional learning contexts.

The study begins at the level of intentions, motives, and activities of the participants in management training courses and allows for the explanation of patterns of behaviour in terms of the structural features of the training programme, the institution, and the wider society.

Also, this research draws on symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and so uses terms like 'negotiation' (Delamont, 1983; 1984) between instructors and learners in learning events. In this sense it argues that negotiation leads to the establishment of particular 'definitions of the situation' (McHugh, 1968) and that these definitions provide guides for the future behaviour of both the instructors and the learners. These negotiation processes provide the basis for the establishment of a 'working consensus' in the classroom context and it is translated in terms of routines, conventions, and expectations.

Delamont (1983) discusses symbolic interactionism. She

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says:

"The central notion of symbolic interactionism theory is that all humans are possessed of a self, and that they are *reflective*, or self-interacting. That, simply means that we think about what we are doing and what goes on inside our heads is a crucial element in how we act. This self is .... a dynamic ever-changing *process*" (Delamont, 1983, p. 26, emphasis in original).

1.4 What is Observation?

The term 'observation', which is a central concept in symbolic interactionism, will be used regularly in this thesis and so deserves an explanation at the outset. Blumer (1969) explains the term at length. He argues that in observation of human conduct, the observer can detect one of two things: a physical act which happens when one observes another person acting aggressively, or angrily, or respectfully, ..etc. This kind of activity cannot be reduced to a physical act or translated into a 'space-time framework' while still retaining the character suggested by the adverbs employed. One observes an act by interpreting the social relations between actors in a situation and by examining the act from the viewpoint of rights, obligations, and expectations involved in that situation.

Another way of interpreting an act in a certain way (e.g. respectful) is by noticing gestures of behaviour familiar to observers' own experiences. As Blumer (1969) states:

"It may be argued that the designation of an act as being respectful, hateful, aggressive, etc.; is actually an inference and so is not properly a part of the observation. That it is an inference is, I think, unquestionable, but in many instances it is an inference that is fused immediately

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into the observation itself. This is true of every act of observation; even the observation or designation of a physical act is in the nature of a judgement or an inference" (1969, p. 179).

Blumer (1969) also argued that some observations might require the observer to make judgements about the intentional character of the act. Included under this are the wishes, attitudes, drives, thoughts, feelings,.. etc. of the actor. He said:

"This kind of observation is present in everyday empirical experience; all people make such observations; if they didn't, they couldn't get along. Theoretically, such kind of observation could be scrupulously abjured; but the question is if so avoided, can one get descriptions of human behaviour that are true to the character of empirical experience, that are of significance to such experience and that offer any hope of handling the problems set by such experience ?" (Ibid. p. 180).

Blumer pointed to the problem of imprecise concepts in the social sciences but stated that the solution was not to ignore the "observational demands set by the character of social life" or to "confine our observations to the physical acts" because although, when we do this the data would give us dependable and verifiable accounts, this is only done at the expense of ignoring abstract concepts that could have been used in explaining the problems at hand. He argued that the improvement in judgement, in observation, and in concepts is always a slow and gradual process and that during this process of development concepts continue to remain imprecise but less so as observations become wider and grounded in different contexts. He pointed out that researchers can not jump the stage of imprecise

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concepts because although imprecise, these concepts still serve a valuable function of directing observations and making judgements about these observations.

1.5 Significance of the Research:

Although it was not the plan of this thesis to investigate the instructors/tutors' perspectives or behaviour, it, nonetheless, did that. In so doing, it contributes to the needed research on teachers in general and on management teachers more specifically. Delamont (1983) states:

"Teaching is a continuous process of decision making, and the pupils are never static. Rather they are a seething mass forcing the teacher to make new decisions constantly. There is little research on teachers' perspectives on their day-to-day work.." (Delamont, 1983, p. 71).

Fox and Smith (1986) also argued that interaction is always a matter of strategic action even if tacitly or informally done and they spoke of 'persuasive accounts of reality' rather than an objective reality. They explained that this 'persuasive account of reality' "does not determine but 'persuades' people to act and interact in the way that they do" (Fox and Smith, 1986, p. 13) and so in choosing an ethnographic perspective one hopes one is in a better position to investigate how this 'persuasive account of reality' comes into being.

In order to protect the confidentiality which was promised to those contributing to this research, their names and the names of the organisations have been changed. I have

eliminated any references which could identify the persons or the institutions in question unless it was thought the references formed an important part in the emerging theory. I have also chosen to make greater use of the plural pronouns to eliminate any gender bias. When I thought it was better to use the single pronoun I have sometimes used she rather than he.

As to the organisation of this thesis; it is divided into three parts. The first is the theoretical part which covers the literature review of the field and the methodology used in collecting and analyzing the data. The second part; the substantive part, is divided into two sections; the learners' strategies, covered in three chapters, and the instructors' strategies, covered in two chapters. The last part is the conclusion of the thesis which is covered in one chapter.

The results of this thesis point to the importance of context in learning. The institutionalization of learning (i.e. learning that is restricted to what organisations sponsor) affects both what participants learn and how they learn. The results also point to the need to scrutinize the purposes of learning events.

Part I

Chapter Two

Managing to Learn: Learning to

Manage - the background

2.1 **Introduction:**

When I first started my Ph.D. I was interested in investigating the training transfer phenomenon and so most of my readings during the first three months were about that subject. However, as I completed my literature review project as part of the taught first year of the MBS doctoral programme I came to the conclusion that a change in methodology was needed if one wanted to know more than what was known already. So, I started reading into the management education, learning, and development, and then into the education and schooling literatures in addition to the evaluation literature under which the training transfer literature was subsumed.

Becker et al (1968) stated that:

"an area of interest becomes a scientific problem when it is put into a theoretical context, and the kind of problem, obviously is a function of the particular theoretical context used" (Becker et al, 1968, p. 4).

Through the period of conducting my Ph.D. starting in September 1991 and until the time I commenced writing in July 1994, the research problem was focused gradually (more will be said on this in the methodology chapter). Suffice it to say that the literature review started at the beginning of my Ph.D. and continued throughout my field work, analysis, and write-up stages. In writing the thesis I first wrote the methodology chapter and then moved to the literature review chapter before writing the substantive chapters. I, then, returned to the literature review chapter to update it.

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In this chapter the aim is to set the stage and to put the problem in its theoretical context and so I will cover the two main approaches to the study of learning events, the evaluative and the interpretative. While evaluation is concerned with measurement of outcomes the interpretative approach is more concerned with understanding what goes on in learning events. Under the evaluation literature I will discuss both the educational and the management evaluation literatures while under the interpretative mode I will discuss both the sociology of schooling literature and the newly established management learning discipline literature.

Although the 'evaluation versus understanding what goes on' distinction is not an absolute one, especially with 'illuminative evaluation' which is more concerned with understanding rather than evaluation as such, it was thought better to classify illuminative evaluation under the evaluation literature for presentation purposes.

2.2   The Evaluation Approach:

Although this thesis is not couched in terms of evaluation research, the reported experience of evaluation studies provided a starting point from which the thesis emerged and as such I thought it was important that I cover some of the evaluation literature that influenced the way this research developed.

According to Easterby-Smith (1986) there are three general purposes to evaluation which parallel the historical developments in evaluation literature during the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. These purposes are proving, improving, and learning. Proving is more related to conventional evaluation research where the point is to prove that something has happened as a result of a certain treatment (e.g. training). Improving is where the evaluation results are fed into the system to improve future training (i.e. formative evaluation). When evaluation is considered to be part of the training and development process itself, however, the Hawthorne effect of investigating the phenomena (when a pre-course questionnaire is administered) can be used to improve the outcome of learning. It is in this way that evaluation serves the third purpose. i.e. learning.

Easterby-Smith (1986) also discussed the different schools of evaluation. They are: the experimental school, the illuminative evaluation school, the systems model school, the free goal evaluation school, and the interventionalist evaluation school. In this literature review I will only concentrate on the first three as they represent the bulk of evaluation research and they also represent the three purposes of proving, improving, and learning. I will first start with the educational evaluation research and then move to the management evaluation research.

2.2.1 Educational Evaluation Research.

The conventional educational research like much social research has been mostly experimental in nature (Torbert, 1981a). It has largely adhered to the control and predication criteria in the methods of experimentation it used. The main features of the experimental school are the comparison between two or more groups, the preordinate designs, and the before and after treatment measures.

Educational research has gone through some changes, however, as Burgess (1985) notes:

"A brief glance at the contents page of textbooks, collections of essays and sets of readings devoted to the conduct of social research in educational settings quickly reveals that quantitative approaches to social investigation no longer hold the dominant position in this field of study. Alongside discussions of questionnaires, formal interviews, and survey methods can be found reviews of participant observation, informal or unstructured interviews, and personal documents which are brought together under such terms as ethnographic methods, field methods, or case study methods depending upon the theoretical perspective that is taken by the writer" (Burgess, 1985, p. vii).

This change was necessitated by the dissatisfaction with the results of educational research exemplified by an article by Torbert (1981a) titled "Why educational research has been so uneducational". Researchers in the field started calling for an alternative method. Some called it 'illuminative evaluation' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972), others called for 'democratic research' (Hall, 1981), or 'collaborative inquiry' (Torbert, 1981a, 1981b).

Torbert (1981a) said:

"The reason why neither current practice nor current
research helps us to identify and move towards good
educational practice is that both are based on a model
of reality that emphasizes unilateral control for
gaining information from, or having effects on,
others". (Torbert, 1981a, p. 142).

These unilateral efforts assumed that the researcher

knew what was significant before starting the research

and so she used this knowledge to control the setting

and implement a pre-defined design. Stenhouse (1975)

argued, however, that evaluation should be aimed at

understanding. He stated:

"It can be argued that conventional objective-type
evaluations   do   not   address   themselves   to
understanding the educational process. They deal in
terms of success or failure. But, a programme is
always both a mixture which varies from setting to
setting" (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 109).

Parlett (1981) also argued that the success of any

evaluative study was questionable because of the

sensitivity of questions asked and the resistance of

individuals to being investigated. This sensitivity to

being investigated can be counter-acted by Torbert's

(1981a, 1981b) model of 'collaborative inquiry' which

involves both learners and researchers having an

influence on the decisions of what is to be done and

how it is to be done.

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) criticized conventional

experimental methods in education. They stated:

"Students - rather like plant crops - are given pre-
tests (the seedlings are weighed or measured) and then
submitted   to   different   experiences   (treatment

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conditions). Subsequently, after a period of time, their attainment (growth or yield) is measured to indicate the relative efficiency of the methods (fertilizers) used" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. 4).

They recommended a new method which fuses anthropological ethnographic approaches with evaluation. It was called 'illuminative evaluation' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett and Deardon, 1977; and Parlett, 1981). They presented 'illuminative evaluation' as:

"belonging to a contrasting 'anthropological' research paradigm. Attempted measurement of 'educational products' is abandoned for intensive study of the programme as a whole..". (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972, p. i).

Elsewhere, Parlett and Deardon (1977) also described 'Illuminative evaluation'. They said:

"The basic emphasis of this approach is on interpreting, in each study, a variety of educational practices, participants' experiences, institutional procedures, and management problems in ways that are recognisable and useful to those for whom the study is made. The illuminative evaluator contributes to decision-making by providing information, comment, and analysis designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the programme under review. Illuminative evaluation is characterized by a flexible methodology that capitalises on available resources and opportunities, and draws upon different techniques to fit the total circumstances of each study". (Quoted by Parlett, 1981, p. 219).

Parlett (1981) argued that illuminative evaluation was particularly suited for intensive study of small-intermediate size programmes. He also explained that the evaluator's intentions in illuminative evaluation were not prescriptions or recommendations. Rather:

"The evaluation provides within a single analysis, information and comment (including many different

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persons' 'evaluations') that can serve to promote discussions among those concerned with decisions concerning the system studied". (Parlett, 1981, p. 221).

So, illuminative evaluation is a collaborative inquiry through which different individuals' interpretations (or evaluations) are sought and used to help decision makers make decisions about training programmes. In this sense as Torbert (1981b) said:

"..in collaborative inquiry the primary interest is not in generalizing to other settings, but rather in applying knowledge to improve actors' effectiveness in the situation under study. Consequently, the prospective action scientist should develop skills in analyzing data from each member's point of view. Of special interest are incongruities between a member's espoused values and actual behaviour, or incongruities between a member's description of self and other members' descriptions of that person. Such apparent incongruities can generate conversation which can lead either towards more valid research instruments or towards a more inclusive, less distorted view of their own social reality by the group engaging in the inquiry". (Torbert, 1981b, p. 442).

And so illuminative evaluation does not rely on interviews and participant observation (as data collection techniques) only, but also uses document analysis as well as open ended questionnaires in investigating phenomena. Parlett (1981) explains the illuminative evaluation investigative design:

"Right from the beginning, the evaluator is formulating particular *thematic lines of inquiry*. This occurs in the following way. Each observational period, discussion, or interview is scrutinized as a data record: *major points* are noted (e.g. a reported phenomenon, a contradiction between two opinions given, a succinct expression of a widespread attitude) and are grouped according to content. A cluster of major points may be identified as a tentative theme that in turn helps to organise other information being gathered...". (Parlett, 1981, p. 223, emphasis in original).

Parlett (1981) also stressed the importance of investigating any system (e.g. an academic department within a university) within its wider contexts which dictates probing beyond 'surface' or local features. He argued that without discovering the 'individual biography' of the system investigated (i.e. the experiences of the individuals 'subjective' as they are) reports could be rejected. However, he also cautioned against exclusive reliance on reported experiences and stressed the necessity of observing what participants do in practice.

Other researchers like Hall (1981) advocated the democratization of research which he pointed-out takes longer than a one-off survey research. He argued for a participatory research that has three characteristics:

"It is at the same time an *approach* of social investigation, an *educational* process, and a means of taking *action*".(Hall,1981, p.455, emphasis in original).

Another benefit of illuminative evaluation is that it addresses the political issues that evaluation studies face. Parlett (1981) explains that:

"..there are numerous different perspectives, many of which - in uncontentious realms - enjoy consensual validity, but others which are not shared at all widely. The investigator, in an illuminative evaluation, is therefore at pains to consult widely, teasing apart the different outlooks and - from a position of the *neutral outsider* - not endorsing anyone *viewpoint*, outlook or set of beliefs to the exclusion of others". (Parlett, 1981, p. 224, emphasis in original).

Illuminative evaluation stands a better chance of being accepted by participants and gaining their cooperation if they believe the researcher is genuinely interested in all parties' opinions.

One problem with this approach to investigation (whether it is called illuminative, democratic, or collaborative), however, is that of using and trusting accounts. This was discussed by Sims (1981) who quoted Harre and Secord (1972) who argued that a basic quality of a person is awareness (which they defined as "being capable of commenting upon action") and as such Sims (1981) advocated questioning participants in settings about their actions. (Quoted by Sims, 1981, p. 374).

All these calls for a different methodology in investigating educational settings led to the adoption of ethnographic methods which will be covered in the coming section of the sociology of schooling literature. This encouraged me to adopt an ethnographic approach in an attempt to understand processes and not just evaluate outcomes. I, however, have to point out that I do not adopt a fully collaborative model of inquiry either, because the degree of collaboration differed between the different participants in these five events. Although I elicited participants' understanding whenever possible and

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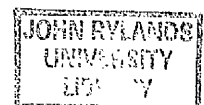
tried to reconcile their espoused theories with my observations of their theories-in-use (Argyris and Schon, 1974; 1978), my understanding was affected by the different levels of cooperation and acceptability by instructors versus learners (more will be said about this later).

2.2.2 Management Evaluation Research.

Moving to the management evaluation literature, the two key management evaluation books (apart from Easterby-Smith, 1986) were a product of the 1970s (Warr, Bird, and Rackham, 1970; Hamblin, 1974). Both relied on the systems model of evaluation where emphasis is on the measurement of outputs from a certain process. This information is then fed back into the system again as Hamblin (1974) explains when he defines the evaluation of training as:

"Any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effects of a training programme, and to assess the value of that training in the light of that information" (Quoted in Roback, 1989, p. 146).

Roback (1989) discussed the various typologies of training evaluation that were developed over the last several decades. Among them he mentioned the CIRO (Context, Input, Reactions, and Output) classification of Warr et al (1970). Another approach was Kirkpatrick's (1971) four-level hierarchy which has been extended by Hamblin (1974) into a five-level measure of training effects: reaction, learning, job behaviour, organisation impact, and ultimate value

outcomes.

Easterby-Smith (1986) stated that an important feature of Hamblin's work was:

"..the emphasis on measurement of *outcomes* from training at different levels. It is assumed that any training event, will, or can, lead to a chain of consequences, each of which may be seen as causing the next consequence.. The important point stressed by Hamblin at this point is that it is unwise to conclude from unobserved change at one of the higher levels of effect that this was due to a particular training intervention, *unless* one has also followed the chain of causality through the intervening levels of effect". (Easterby-Smith, 1986, p. 32, emphasis in original).

Training transfer is the criterion measured in evaluation studies investigating training outcomes at the job behavioural level. Positive transfer of training is defined as the degree to which trainees effectively apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training context to the job (Wexley and Latham, 1981). Given this definition, there is a growing recognition of a 'transfer problem' in organisational training (Michalak, 1981).

Reviews of the literature of training (Goldstein, 1980; Wexley, 1984) indicate that the issue of training transfer has not received the empirical attention it deserves. Wexley (1984) argued that the existing training transfer literature offered little practical value to trainers attempting to increase positive transfer. Garson (1983) also pointed out that

"A great deal of money is wasted each year on the assumption that learning equals behaviour" (Garson, 1983, p. 218).

Different authors have offered various strategies for facilitating positive transfer from training. A recurring theme in recent writings is that the traditional approaches (content and design related) are deficient because they focus only on the period of the acquisition of the skills within a training programme. Leifer and Newstrom (1980) proposed that broadening this traditional perspective to include strategies for three time periods (before, during, and after training programmes) might enhance transfer. The three phases recommended were: create positive expectations, create performance opportunities with ample feedback, and create mechanism to reinforce positive behaviour.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) classified the training transfer literature into three different typologies:
1. The training input factors studies which concentrated on training design, trainee characteristics, and work environment.
2. The training outputs studies which concentrated on original learning and retention from the training programmes.
3. The conditions of transfer studies which included

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both generalization of material learned in the programme to the job context and maintenance over a period of time.

I will not go into the details of these studies but suffice it to say that the training transfer literature (like most other evaluation) has been dominated by experimental methods with input-output measures and that the dynamic perspective has been mostly ignored. This dynamic perspective argues that individuals should be seen as active information processors who adapt their attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs to their social context, past experiences, organisational procedures and reward systems, ...etc.

Information obtained from interactions with peers and superiors in the work environment also affect individuals' construction of reality within the work setting including perceptions of expectancies (Daft and Weick, 1984). This implies that once integrated into a person's construction of reality, new experiences can result in changes in these expectancies. Indeed, one of the key challenges to trainers seems to be to equip managers to 'do more' with their experiences and to allow experiences to become learning experiences. As Aldous Huxley pointed out "Experiences is not what happens to man. It is what man does with what happens to him" (Cited in

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Silver, 1991, p. 110).

Easterby-Smith (1981) summarized the stages which 'interest in the context of training' has gone through between the mid 1960s and early 1980s. This interest moved from:

"1. attempts to negate the effects of context, to
2. acceptance that context must be included, but where it is seen as a set of 'givens' which determines the nature and content of the programme, to
3. realization that context (as value and belief systems) may have a very major impact on the way a programme unfolds, and on the messages and ideas that participants take away with them". (Easterby-Smith, 1981, p. 30).

Schon (1983) (who uses the concept of personal repertoire in developing his theory of reflection-in-action) elaborates on the experience argument. He states:

"a practitioner's repertoire includes the whole of his experience in so far as it is accessible to him for understanding and action" (Schon, 1983, p. 110).

With particular reference to managers, Schon goes on to suggest:

"the reflection-in-action of managers is distinctive in that they operate in an organisational context and deal with organisational phenomena. They draw on repertoires of cumulatively developed organisational knowledge, which they transform in the context of some unique situation" (Ibid, p. 265).

Many articles addressed issues specific to the problem of intervening in organisational environments. Levine (1974) warned that there were no procedures that could completely account for pre-existing differences. Cook

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and Campbell (1976) cautioned that randomization could produce reaction processes for the participants. In these instances, the research itself affects the organisation such that it is difficult to determine the source of any resulting change.

People have cumulative experiences and it is these cumulative experiences that affect behaviour. As Casey (1981) pointed out the traditional view of the transfer problem assumed that training and work occur in different times and places. This he referred to as "transfer problem (a)" and he contrasted this with "transfer problem (b)" which assumed that work and learning could be an integral part of the same process, and the problem was therefore, one of enabling the manager to obtain the maximum learning from work experiences as they take place in such a way that this learning would naturally become part of the manager's repertoire in subsequent experiences (cited in Easterby-Smith, 1986).

This was also in congruence with Boot and Reynolds (1983) who argued that the search for procedures and designs that maximize transfer of learning may be misguided because these studies deal with the symptoms rather than causes and that if learning was not so institutionalized and separated from other activities there might not be a transfer problem. In any case,

the unsuitability of experimental designs is well explained by many authors (Weiss and Rein, 1970; Hughes, 1981; Mintzberg, 1979; and Morgan & Smircich 1980). The latter say:

"In manipulating data through sophisticated quantitative approaches...social scientists are in effect attempting to freeze the social world into structured immobility and to reduce the role of human beings to elements subject to the influence of a more or less deterministic set of forces. They are presuming that the social world lends itself to an objective form of measurement, and that the social scientist can reveal the nature of that world by examining lawful relations between elements that, for the sake of accurate definition and measurement, have to be abstracted from this context...Once one admits that human beings are far from merely responding to the social world, but may actively contribute to its creation, the dominant methods become increasingly unsatisfactory and indeed inappropriate" (Morgan and Smircich, 1989, p. 498).

Despite these fundamental deficiencies in positivistic research it is still widely in use. Most evaluation studies, including the ones on transfer, have examined the measurement criterion (e.g. transfer) from a static perspective, gathering information at one period of time. Researchers seem to have ignored the cumulative experiences of trainees and simply measured the effect of a specific influence on the measurement criterion chosen at a specific moment in time thus providing only snap-shot pictures of a dynamic process. These empirical snap-shots which do not give justice to the nature of the subject understudy led to a feeling in the field that evaluation research had failed to provide the breakthrough that was expected of it. Burgoyne (1973a) states:

"I believe that most evaluation research has been based on a set of assumptions that has been rejected in current thinking and practice in management development, with the result that the former has been able to contribute little to the latter" (Burgoyne, 1973a, p. 40).

Burgoyne (1973a) argued for a change of the underlying assumption of much evaluation research from a passive 'patient' to an 'agent' view of learners in training programmes. Evaluators, he explained, should acknowledge that learners in training programmes can choose to resist training that is not acceptable to them because the agent view regards 'self control' as a fundamental element in any learning that takes place in training programmes. What is needed is an approach that understands how people make sense of their worlds, with training transfer (the action) being conceived as purposive and meaningful action.

We are thus confronted with a philosophical choice regarding the nature of human action and its explanation which has direct methodological implications. If we accept the philosophical assumptions of positivism and its consequent epistemological prescriptions, we are invariably drawn towards the exclusive utilization of nomothetic methodology. Conversely, if our philosophical orientation is interpretative the ensuing epistemological mandate impels us towards a more interpretative methodology. This lack of agreement on

the philosophical orientation is what some authors called the "epistemological crisis" in the field of management (Hughes, 1988).

2.3 The Interpretative Approach:

The last section dealt with evaluation literature as an approach to studying learning events. In this section I will move to the interpretative approach to studying learning events. I will first discuss the state of the management learning field; a field that includes both management training and development before moving to the sociology of schooling field.

2.3.1 Management Learning Literature

It is argued that because managerial skills should ideally adapt to changing environments over working lifetimes, management development programmes should equip managers with 'flexible' skills and concepts so that managers are able to adapt to new situations (Whitley, 1989). There is, however, no general agreement about what managers do, nor is there agreement about what managers should do (Thomas, 1993). This situation led to the development and use of a diversity of approaches to improving managerial performance (Easterby-Smith, 1986) including training, education, and development. First, I will present some definitions.

Wexley and Baldwin (1986) defined management training
as:

"those activities designed to impart specific skills
(e.g. time management, delegation) which would be
immediately applicable in a particular organisational
setting" (Wexley and Baldwin, 1986, p. 230).

Bennet (1984) defined training as a:

"process that is concerned with the acquisition and
development of specific skills to do particular
activities or jobs. So, management training will be
geared towards helping a manager carry out a
particular function or set of activities within that
function" (Bennet, 1984, p. 219).

Easterby-Smith (1986) rejected the traditional

distinction between training and development which

views training as aimed at improving managers' current

performance and development as aimed at improving

future performance. Instead, he viewed training as:

"a procedure involving managers attending, at least in
part, courses or workshops...Training may also take
place on the job without the framework of any course
structure" (Easterby-Smith, 1986, p. 9).

Davies and Easterby-Smith (1984), on the other hand,

distinguished between learning and development. They

explained that learning could be viewed either in

quantitative terms (e.g. the addition of knowledge and

skills) or in qualitative terms (e.g. seeing or

feeling things differently). Development, they argued,

referred to an individual's state of being and any

changes in this. This distinction was in line with

Boydell's (1982) interpretation of development which

he argued was related to stages of learning and

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involved "moving from one stage to the next - making a significant qualitative change" (Boydell, 1982, p. 13).

Management development is often used as a generic term which includes both training and education as Storey (1989) argued:

"Routine use of the phrase 'management education, training, *and* development' would suggest that a common usage is to view 'development' as something potentially distinct from, and additional to, education and training rather than a process which encompasses them. In fact, both meanings enjoy popular currency: management development is seen as generic and yet it is also seen as something which can be distinguished from training and education - at least in their formal sense. In the literature it is certainly the case that many articles claiming to be about management *development* are in fact about managerial *training*". (Storey, 1989, p. 5).

Burgoyne (1988) has, however, defined 'management development' "as the management of managerial careers in an organisational context" (Burgoyne, 1988, p. 40). Elsewhere, Burgoyne and Stuart (1977) defined 'management development programmes' as "any form of event intended to influence management performance through a learning process" (Burgoyne and Stuart, 1977, p. 5). Fox (1994), also distinguished management learning from management training, education, and development, all of which, he explained, were topics of inquiry within the management learning field. He used Kenney & Reids' (1988) definitions of the latters. Education was defined as:

"activities which aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in all aspects of life rather than a knowledge of and skill relating to only a limited field of activity. The purpose of education is to provide the conditions essential to young people and adults to develop an understanding of the traditions and ideas influencing the society in which they live and to enable them to make a contribution to it. It involves study of their own cultures and of the laws of nature, as well as the acquisition of linguistic and other skills which are basic to learning, personal development, creativity and communication" (Kenney and Reid, 1988, p. 3)

Training was:

"a planned process to modify attitudes, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organisation" (Ibid, p. 3).

Development was defined as:

"the growth or realization of a person's ability, through conscious or unconscious learning. Development programmes usually include elements of planned study and experience, and are frequently supported by a coaching or counselling facility" (Ibid, p. 3).

Fox (1994) defined management learning as the study of

a. the learning of management, and b. the management

of learning in both its incidental and formal forms.

He discussed how both 'management' and 'learning' have

become formal processes in modern societies and how

this has involved an increased degree of

institutionalization of them both. He also quoted

Mumford (1989) who pointed to the importance of

informal learning and cautioned against its exclusion

from our definition of management development because

in doing so:

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"We are being unhelpful to managers by dismissing that part of their learning and development which many of them will recognize most readily and which in their own ways they use most effectively". (Mumford, 1989, p. 5).

Fox (1994) then concluded that "both management and learning are 'informal' or 'natural' as well as 'formal' and 'contrived' processes" (Fox, 1994, p. 89). He questioned people's ability to,

"say where the line lies between the managing and the learning? the learning is managed and the managing is learned all at once. It is this recognition that opens the space for the study of management learning" (Ibid, p. 90).

Tanton (1994) also argued that 'management' and 'learning' are not opposites, but in a world which has dichotomised practice and academia, they represent the tension between the two fields. She said:

"This tension between the terms management and learning is valuable for those studying the subject because it encapsulates not only the paradoxes inherent in learning with the context of management but also the term highlights the constructed representation of knowledge" (Tanton, 1994, p. 139).

Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) raised "the question of natural managerial learning (i.e. learning that happens outside of teaching/training situations deliberately contrived to bring about learning)" (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983, p. 391). They conceived of learning as an experience "after which an individual should conceive of something in the world around in a qualitatively different way than he did previously" (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983, p. 393) and

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Davies and Easterby-Smith (1984) discuss "an increasing interest in the ways managers learn from normal work experiences" (Davies and Easterby-Smith, 1984, p. 169).

So, an increasing body of literature points to the relevance of the concepts of learning theory to formal management and organisations (Binsted, 1978; Burgoyne and Stuart, 1977; and Daft and Weick, 1984). This interest culminated in 1975 when Management Learning was developed into a field deserving of a specialized study in a department of its own at the University of Lancaster.

A little less than twenty years ago Burgoyne and Stuart (1977) argued that differences between programmes which could determine the extent of their success lay in their designers' assumptions (which were mostly implicit rather than explicit) about how people learn. Burgoyne and Stuart (1991) also discussed teaching and learning methods in management development and pointed out that Revan's Action Learning was based on three principles of Roger's (1969) ten principles of learning (i.e. subject matter's relevance to learners' purpose, learning through doing, and the learning of the process of learning).

Action learning is a:

"European idea only recently introduced in the United States. Begun as a self-development technique in the British coal mining industry, action learning calls for group meetings of line managers with a focus on basic questions that must be asked in order to alter the operating system being reviewed (Revans, 1982). The entire process is designed to facilitate open-ended learning and to create the capacity for intelligent action rather than contributions to formal knowledge (Morgan and Ramirez, 1983). It has subsequently evolved into a process where the learner chooses an organisational problem, writes an operating case, and joins a group facing similar problems assisted by common advisors" (Keys and Wolfe, 1988, p. 217).

So, instead of conceiving management development (a concept that includes both training and education) as something that is done to managers rather than done by them, action learning, in contrast, takes the view that managers must be responsible for their own development and learning and contribute to decisions of what to learn, and how.. etc. (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993) as Revans (1982) argued "Managers unable to command change in themselves cannot constructively change the conditions in which they command others" (Revans, 1982, p. 545).

Boydell (1982) also raised the issue of self responsibility in learning. Fox (1989b) argued, however, (although his argument related to management education only) that there has been little attempt within the field to "research and evaluate the experience of business education gained by individuals

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and their employers at the micro-level and more generally, at the societal and cultural level" although several approaches have been suggested by, for example, Burgoyne (1973a, 1973b), Easterby-Smith (1981,1986), Fox (1987), and Tanton and Fox (1987).

The importance of the organisational context was also discussed by Davies (1981), Reynolds and Hodgson (1980), Hodgson and Reynolds (1981), Binsted and Stuart (1979) and Salaman and Butler (1990). Light (1979), for example, argued against the 'blaming the victim' argument where,

"we put the victim in a structure that creates obstacles and then attribute any unsatisfactory or troubled performance to the victim. We then react in a conservative (by telling the victim to sink or swim) or a liberal (by helping the victim) but in neither case do we examine how structural forces shape the victim in the first place" (Light, 1979, p. 555).

Hodgson and Reynolds (1981) pointed out the importance of the congruence between content and structure of training programmes which unless attended to could result in hidden messages and confusion on the part of learners and their experiences of training programmes. And, Binsted and Stuart (1979) suggested that unless there is a congruence between any activity in a learning event and other experiences that are (or can be) encountered in the work context, the learning event would not be experienced as having 'reality' for the learner.

This point was also stressed by Preston (1993a) who argued that management development activities could act as symbols of organisational cultures and that there was a need to study these activities not only from the perspectives of the creators or senders of these messages but that it was also "important to look at how they are recognised and understood" by the parties they were aimed at (Preston, 1993a, p. 27).

Hague's (1988) first criterion for success in management development was the development of a partnership between trainers, employers, and employees. Related to this is Tanton and Foxs' (1987) suggestion that evaluation studies should include at least these same three parties which they called 'stakeholders'. They were: the course participants, their bosses, and the course director. Tanton and Fox (1987) also advocated the use of ethnographic methodology in evaluating management development programmes and argued that use of this methodology would not only describe "what seemed 'to work well' in this one-off case", but also "analyze the 'hows' and 'whys' of this from the detailed data collected via ethnographic methods" (Tanton and Fox, 1987, p. 38).

Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983, 1984) advocated a phenomenological approach to understanding managerial action processes using 'protocol analysis'. This would

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mean,

"examining the basic transcripts for similarities and difference in the descriptions of experience and attempting to identify a number of general categories of descriptions that describe the (significant) similarities in the managers' descriptions of their experience" (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984, p. 170).

Other studies have pointed to the importance of investigating the tutor-learner interaction in management development courses (Binsted and Snell, 1981; Snell and Binsted, 1981). These studies pointed to the effect of the tutors' strategies on learners' feelings and learning. Snell and Binsted describe and analyze "a sample of tutor behaviour in management education and training..where the espoused 'participative' approach appears to differ from the actual behaviour" (Snell and Binsted, 1981, p. 3). Such a situation involved what they called a 'tutor game'. These games that they discussed were part of the learning event climate rather than as a result of it.

In all, there seems to be a view in the literature that there is a need to investigate management development from the managers' perspectives (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983, 1984; Storey, 1989; Preston, 1993a, 1993b) and a need to report such studies so that cumulative theorizing can take place (e. g. Tanton and Fox, 1987; Fox and Smith, 1986).

2.3.2 The Sociology of Schooling Literature.

Hammersley (1980a) argued that although the sociology of schooling was a product of the late 1960s and early 1970s, classroom research as such was an established tradition before that. He said:

"There was a well established applied social psychological tradition going back to before the second world war. This research was motivated by a twin concern with 'authoritarian' versus 'democratic' teaching on the one hand and with teacher effectiveness on the other.... However, while for the most part it was carried out in established classrooms rather than research laboratories (that is in 'natural' rather than 'artificial' settings) it nevertheless adopted a 'positivistic' approach emphasising the importance above all else of reliable quantitative measurements of classroom events". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 48).

This positivistic approach was rejected by many sociologists on the grounds that it treated classrooms as a black box, measuring inputs and outputs, and largely ignoring what went on inside this black box. For example, Snyder spoke of the 'hidden curriculum' which he argued "determined to a great extent the way in which the various participants played the game, read the cues, adapted to their immediate educational circumstances" (Snyder, 1971, p. xii). He also pointed that "it is this hidden curriculum, more than the formal curriculum, that influences the adaptation of student and faculty" (Ibid, p. xiii).

Stenhouse (1975) also argued that:

"The curriculum is not the intention or prescription but what happens in real situations. It is not the aspiration, but the achievement. The problem of

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specifying the curriculum is one of perceiving, understanding, and describing what is actually going on in school and classroom" (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 2).

The methodological response to these arguments was ethnography which is described as:

"the traditional research method of cultural and social anthropology which sets out to view classroom interaction not as a familiar phenomenon, whose nature is already in large part known, but precisely as though it were part of a strange culture..". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 48).

Delamont and Atkinson (1980) also define ethnography as:

"research on and in educational institutions based on participant observation and/or permanent recordings of everyday life in naturally occurring settings". (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980, p. 139).

Although researchers in the field are divided on whether to place emphasis on the micro or macro level of classroom research, Hammersley (1980a) argued that classroom ethnographies can provide a basis for a 'model of classroom process' which is:

"both sensitive to the complexity of social interaction and at the same time provides links with macro level analysis". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 49).

Delamont and Atkinson (1980) also acknowledge that many of those who adopted the ethnographic approach have done so in reaction to the 'positivistic' method. They argued that while most ethnographic research in Britain was conducted by sociologists, that conducted in the U.S. was primarily done by applied anthropologists. They also pointed out that although most British researchers saw themselves as

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sociologists, most of them, nevertheless, had their origins in anthropology. For example, the Manchester based studies of Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) were both conducted within a joint department of sociology and anthropology. However, most ethnographic research since then has identified with the sociological paradigms such as symbolic interactionism and most recently ethnomethodology. Delamont and Atkinson state:

"If we were to characterize the British material, then, in terms of the sorts of schools studied, their location and so on, we would be forced to conclude that it is predominantly urban in character. By and large, secondary schooling has predominated over other segments of the education system". (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980, p. 145).

On the other hand:

"the American ethnographies thus have this in common. They serve to document one of two things. Either they celebrate the cultural uniqueness of the researcher's chosen setting, or they go on to stress the 'clash' between the pupils' culture and that of the school, that is a culture representative of white urban middle-class America". (Atkinson et al, 1988, p. 237, emphasis in original).

Although school ethnographies conducted in Britain adopt various theoretical perspectives, most have been influenced by the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980). Most symbolic interactionists in the U.S., however, have concentrated their educational research in higher education (e.g. Becker et al 1961, 1968 which investigated students' life at a medical and in an undergraduate programme respectively). Woods and

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Hammersley (1977) document how various 'interpretative' theoretical approaches (e.g. symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology) became incorporated into the British sociology of education. Hammersley (1989) argued that all these 'new' approaches shared one same idea. That human beings play an active role in their social world and are not 'cultural dopes' that can be programmed to behave in identical ways.

Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the self, processes, and construction of meanings. It focuses on perspectives, cultures, strategies, and contexts (Woods, 1990) but is not the only theoretical framework within which ethnography can be applied. The ethnomethodological approach has also encouraged the investigation of naturally occurring interaction in educational settings. (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980).

This does not mean that researchers adopting these approaches have delivered what was expected of them either. Delamont and Atkinson (1980) argued that the lack of *theoretical* development in symbolic interactionism has prompted some authors like D. Hargreaves (1978) to inquire 'Whatever happened to symbolic interactionism?'.

According to Delamont and Atkinson (1980) one

difference between sociological and anthropological studies of schooling is that the sociologist concentrated on the 'organisation and negotiation of everyday life in schools and classrooms'. For them this negotiation process was an important topic for research in schooling. In contrast, the anthropologists tended to treat the schooling process as unproblematic.

As a result, British interactionists studies of schooling have frequently presented the classroom as a ground for conflict where participants engage in 'strategic interaction' (Atkinson et al, 1988). Interactionists used concepts like 'the definition of the situation', 'perspectives', 'negotiation' to describe classroom conflict situations.

It has been argued, however, that the concentration of British sociologists on the negotiation of everyday life in schools has tended to over-shadow the relationships between schooling and culture, social structure, and society at large (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980).

One of the most important concepts in the sociology of education literature is that of 'strategy'. This concept has been argued to suffer from lack of clear and consistent definition, a situation which led to

the use of the term to refer to anything that a teacher does at any time in any context (Scarth, 1987). In this thesis I will use the term strategy in line with Woods' work. Woods argued that strategies were ways of achieving goals. He used Paisey's (1975) definition of the term. According to Paisey, strategies are patterns of:

"specific and repeatable acts chosen and maintained in logical relationships with one another to serve the larger and long-term rather than the smaller short-term objectives" (Paisey, 1975, Quoted in Woods, 1980a, p. 18).

An individual has different goals and these have to be seen with a range of priorities with some being unattainable and others which are. Woods (1980a) also pointed out that the more complicated the goal, the more complex will the strategy for attaining that goal be. Moreover, Woods' strategies are individually motivated, culturally oriented, interpersonally adapted, and situationally adjusted. The more stable the setting the more routinised the strategies would be while the more rapid the change the more would the demand be for replacing outworn strategies with new ones.

One of the strengths of the 'strategy' framework is that it holds out the possibility of relating patterns of interaction and their outcomes in particular settings to the wider society because the concept

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'strategy' presumes that action is contextual and adaptational (Hammersley, 1980a).

Hammersley (1987) summarized the work of four leading authors in the field. That of Woods, Lacey, A. Hargreaves, and Pollard. He started with Woods':

"Woods is primarily concerned with teaching in British secondary schools during the 1960s and early 1970s, and he argues that during this period teachers in these schools have increasingly come to employ what he calls 'survival strategies'. He defines survival strategies as actions directed towards securing the teacher's own security and ease, and he contrasts them with teaching, defined as actions designed to encourage learning on the part of pupils (Woods, 1979, p. 147)" (Hammersley, 1987, p. 286).

Woods (1977, 1990) used the notion of commitment to link maintenance of the self with maintenance of the system teachers worked within. Woods (1990) argued that teachers' motivation was linked to internal factors like commitment and interest, and to external ones like constraints both institutional and societal. He argued that a process that accompanied commitment was that of accommodation. This referred to "the solving or riding of problems thrown up by the organisation so as to effectively neutralize the threat to the actor's continuance in it" (Woods, 1990, p. 94). Rationalization, he pointed, was the most common form of accommodation and it usually follows decision making. According to Woods, teachers accommodate by developing survival strategies and he identified eight general survival strategies:

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socialization, domination, negotiation, fraternization, absence or removal, ritual and routine, occupational therapy and morale boosting.

Although Woods' schooling research did not identify the different strategies that can be adopted in pursuit of the same goal, he still pointed to the displacement of goals. This is where the goal of teaching gets displaced by that of survival. Woods (1980a) argued:

"Increasing pressures on the teacher frequently completely frustrate educational aims, and raise a prior concern to the totality of experience. That concern is 'survival' and in many of our secondary schools the law of the jungle operates. Professional considerations, however, tincture many of the strategies employed to keep one's head above water, and cause them often to appear *as* teaching" (Woods, 1980a, p. 10, emphasis in original).

Woods did not explain why teachers adopt one survival strategy instead of another. His argument centred rather on his explanation of why teachers adopt survival strategies at the expense of teaching (Hammersley, 1987). Woods analysis shifted the responsibility for the displacement of goals from the teachers to the situation in which they found themselves (Woods, 1990).

'Survival' as a concept included a teacher's:

"physical, mental, and nervous safety and well-being...continuance in professional life, his future prospects, his professional identity, his way of life,

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his status, his self-esteem..".(Woods, 1979, p. 45).

Hammersley (1980a) listed other teachers' strategies identified in the literature. These included: confrontation avoidance, negotiation, truce and indulgence, fraternisation, various kinds of impression management, domination, and humour.

Hammersley (1987) then moved to the work of Lacey (1977) on the socialization of student-teachers in which Lacey introduced the concept of 'social strategy' which he explained was a way of expressing 'the autonomy of the individual' while still recognising the effects of 'coercive social pressures' (Lacey, 1977, p. 67) from within the institution and from the wider society. For Lacey the concept strategy implies a:

".. purposive, guiding autonomous element within individual and group behaviour... The implication here is that constraints of the situation and the individual's purpose within the situation must be taken into account" (Lacey, 1977, p. 67).

Lacey (1977) argued that much action took the form of situational adjustment and he distinguished this into two types: 'strategic compliance' and 'internalized adjustment'. The difference between the two was that under the first one the individual merely complied with the definition of the situation within which she was operating but might still keep her private reservation while in internalized adjustment the individual complied with the definition of the

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situation believing to do so was in the best interest of all. So, while under the first the individual 'merely seemed to be good', under the second the individual 'really was good' (Lacey, 1977, p. 2).

Andy Hargreaves contributed the term 'coping strategy'. These are "the product of constructive and creative activity on the part of teachers" (Woods, 1980a, p. 12). A. Hargreaves (1984) defined coping strategies as 'adaptive'. For him, coping strategies were a way of dealing with constraints experienced by teachers. These constraints were almost always bound-up with the wider society. They were:

1. The fundamentally contradictory educational goals in capitalist society.

2. The effects of scarcity of material resources which leads to the prevalence of decision-making in terms of 'administrative convenience'.

3. The proliferation of and changes in influence of educational ideologies (such as progressivism) which come to be accepted as the 'correct' practice of the time.

A. Hargreaves (1980) called for the synthesis and reconciliation of alternative approaches and for the development of broad models which link classroom and society.

Finally, Pollard (1980, 1982) developed Hargreaves' work by stressing the macro-level forces operating on teachers. He used the concepts of 'self' and 'interest-at-hand' in understanding the purposes and goals of teachers adaptations which he explained were important elements in understanding what 'coping' was. He argued that maintaining self-image was a primary active interest of not only teachers, but also of their pupils and that both teachers and pupils act the roles expected of them at school. They both want to present particular self-images to the others in their 'role-set'. These role-sets are comprised of both teachers and pupils who serve as audience at any one time (Pollard, 1982).

According to Pollard (1982) each pupil or teacher seeks to 'realize' her own self conception by acting and presenting themselves in ways which are most advantageous to their perceived interests. Pollards's 'interest-at-hand' concept is linked to motivational relevance and in explaining it he quoted Wagner (1970) who said:

"..motivational relevance is governed by a person's interest prevailing at a particular time and in a particular situation. Accordingly, he singles out the elements present in the situation which serve to define the situation for him in the light of his purposes on hand. This motivational relevance is imposed in so far as he has to pay attention to certain situational elements in order to come to terms with them; or it springs from the spontaneity of his volitional life". (Wagner, 1970, p. 22).

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Pollard (1985) also identified different interests that are associated with maintaining teachers' selves in the classroom. These were: maximizing enjoyment, controlling workload, retaining autonomy, maintaining one's health and avoiding stress, and maintaining one's image.

So, according to Pollard (1980, 1982, 1985), teachers have many interests-at-hand and the particular prominence of one over the other will depend on the individual teacher. Pollard (1980) argued that different contexts present imbalances in the interests-at-hand and when these imbalances occur, the teacher tries to restore the situation by adopting a different strategy. Pollard introduced the notion of 'Juggling' explaining that as classroom processes evolve, interests-at-hand would be 'juggled' so as to achieve an acceptable balance for 'self-interests overall' (Pollard, 1982). Pollard (1982) devised a comprehensive model of classroom coping strategies which linked the classroom to the institution to the social structure.

Pollard (1982) emphasized the connection between teacher and pupil strategies and argued that it was unrealistic to study one group's strategies in isolation of the other. He identified the three major factors under-played by A. Hargreaves' teachers coping

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strategies model: the pupils, the teachers' culture, and the social organisation of the school (what he called 'institutional bias').

So, whereas Woods used the term 'survival strategies' to explain why survival strategies displace teaching strategies, others did not distinguish between teaching and survival. They only concentrated on strategies as situational adjustments. Apart from Woods, all interactionists shared the same understanding of the concept of strategy. That actions were developed over time and were based on the interpretations of situations individuals faced (Hammersley, 1987).

In evaluating the research in the field of the ethnography of schooling, Hammersley explained:

"Most of this research has been relatively exploratory and descriptive, and diverse in focus, opening up new areas rather than systematically investigating those where work has already begun". (Hammersley, 1987, p. 283).

Woods (1983) also argued that interactionist research in schools has gone through a "first stage" discovery period of work in schools. He argued for a "stage two work" which would build on the earlier studies and which would investigate at a higher level of abstraction the similarities, differences, and inconsistencies in these studies. This second stage requires,

"attention to three major concerns: 1. Further mapping of uncharted areas of school life, 2. Formal theory, and 3. Macro links" (Woods, 1983, p. 180-183).

Woods (1985) continued his call for a move away from 'descriptive' to 'sensitizing' concepts in a phase two work that is needed in the ethnography of schooling field. He cited work done on teachers' strategies as an example of an area where theoretical cumulation has already begun:

"In some areas there has been cumulative work which illustrates the promise in maintaining the dialectic between theory and data collection. One of these areas is that of 'social' (Lacey, 1977), 'coping' (A. Hargreaves, 1978), or 'survival' (Woods, 1979) strategies. It is interesting that these three approaches to essentially the same phenomenon were all made in the first instance, independently of and unknown to the others. In my study I documented and categorized teacher 'survival' strategies, a particular form of 'social' or 'coping strategy' at one end of a continuum governed by resources and policy. Hargreaves was interested in developing the theoretical base behind the notion of 'coping' as it was acted out at the intersection of micro-interaction and macro-structures, while Lacey was concerned to fill out a balanced model which allowed for consideration of personal redefinition of situations as well as situational redefinition of persons..". (Woods, 1985, p.60-1).

Whether strategies are social, survival, or coping, Hammersley (1980a) argued,

"The immediate origins of teachers' classroom problems lie in those cultural and institutional formations which directly surround it; in the school itself, the local school system, and the local community". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 52).

Denscombe (1980a, 1980b), for example, discussed how the structure around which secondary schooling was organised (i.e closed classrooms) affected how teachers approached the problem of classroom control.

He argued that the strategies teachers and pupils adopted in coping with the differing contexts of open versus closed classrooms would differ accordingly.

Hammersley also argued that because of the complexity, multi-dimensionality, and unpredictability of much classroom action, a lot of what happens in there is routinized. He, however, distinguished routines from rituals in that routines involve:

"subconscious, relatively automatic categorization of events and selection of appropriate lines of action..". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 58).

They are where:

"rules are generally used in the light of circumstances, not literally applied....within the routine framework there are choice points where the teacher has consciously to select his course of action from a more or less standard set of alternative options". (Ibid, p. 58).

D. Hargreaves also (1980) discussed how the occupational culture of the teaching profession influenced the strategies teachers developed. He identified three elements that according to him lead to 'uncertainties and self doubt' that teachers feel in the classroom. These three elements were: Dissatisfaction with the status of the teaching profession, competence anxieties, and the emphasis on autonomy both from inside and outside the profession. He argued that this concern for autonomy is what leads teachers to keep their classes private from

observations by outsiders.

Moving to pupils' strategies, three studies have concentrated on the differentiation-polarization theory; Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), and Ball (1981). These studies identified pro- and anti-school subcultures among students and have pointed that streaming/banding was a key factor in this subculture polarisation. They suggested three mechanisms through which differentiation could lead to polarization. These were: reaction formation, substitution of alternative cultures, and labelling theory.

Hammersley (1980a) summarizes:

"it seems clear that pupils' goals and interests are as complex as those of teachers, and that pupils, too, are frequently faced with the task of balancing different principles and interests and resolving dilemmas... Like teachers, they engage in a variety of strategies to achieve their goals and protect their interests rather than simply conforming to norms..". (Hammersley, 1980a, p. 61).

As discussed earlier, an important concept in theorizing the pupil-teacher interaction was that of 'negotiation' (Pollard, 1980; Delamont, 1983). Classroom interaction is seen here as governed by a working consensus negotiated by the teacher and the pupils. This idea made the analysis of initial encounters between teachers and pupils of prime interest and that was what Ball (1980) investigated in a comprehensive school. He argued that these encounters were characterized by a 'pessimistic

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environment' where each party thought of the other as problematic. He also pointed to the dual role played by pupils at these initial encounters. Not only did they try to find out as much as possible about the teachers to guide their future behaviour (e.g what they would or would not tolerate, how strong they were in enforcing their plans...etc). Pupils also worked on shaping the working consensus with the teachers which guided the future encounters between the two parties.

Hammersley and Turner (1984) advised that research on classroom must begin with action:

"identifying the intentions, motives, and perspectives which underlie it. Once we do this we can see that at any moment in time a pupil is faced with choice from a range of different possible courses of action... Each of these lines of possible action will have certain actual and perceived consequences. These will be evaluated as pay offs or costs in terms of both extrinsic and intrinsic gratifications, including identity implications". (Hammersley and Turner, 1984, p. 170).

The importance of action in terms of 'interaction sets' was introduced by Furlong (1984) and he used the term to describe fluid groupings (however short-lived they may be) that come to share a common definition of the situation at any one point in time. These interaction sets included but were not exclusive to friendship groups. Furlong (1984) explained that pupils within the same interaction set see what is happening in the same way and communicate this (symbolically through actions as well as words) to

each other. He argued that this was how pupils within the same interaction set agree to behave in one way or another. Delamont (1983) also spoke of pupil power as being group power.

So, both teacher and pupils adapt their initial strategies to their new experiences and evaluations and a gradual process of stabilization takes place as they 'get to know' each other. Central to the idea of working consensus is the difference in interest and in power between the two parties. Denscombe (1980b) argued that pupils have less power than teachers and that their strategies constitute reactions to those of their teachers so that pupils' strategies can be seen more as 'counter strategies'. This was one reason why Pollard (1982) argued that it was unrealistic to analyze pupils' or teachers' strategies in isolation of one another. Snyder (1971) also argued that if teachers experience difficulties in performing their roles or in meeting the explicit or implicit demands made on them their difficulties would be experienced by their students in their education.

Moving to higher education research, Becker et al (1961) investigated student culture in a medical school and argued that group perspectives gain strength "by virtue of being held in common with others" (Becker et al, 1961, p. 36). He also discussed

the effects of 'institutional participation' on the way these students learn. He said:

"Students do not simply become what the medical school wants them to become. Indeed their own broad idealistic notions about what they ought to become are pushed aside as they turn their concern to the immediate business of getting through school...they become 'institutionalized'. That is, they become engrossed in matters which are of interest only within the school and have no relevance outside it" (Becker et al, 1961, p. 432).

Light (1980) wrote of Becker et al (1961) study. He said:

"Another 'school' of research on medical training and practice led by Howard Becker emphasizes the situational nature of socialization: the person being socialized takes on perspectives related to the problems and alternatives built into the structure of the situation at hand" (Light, 1980, p. 317).

According to Becker et al (1961), values learned in medical school only persist when they agree with the immediate situation and in their analysis man was seen as purely utilitarian (Light, 1980).

In another study, Becker et al (1968) investigated students' academic life in a U.S. university and argued that grades become important to students because they are 'institutionalized'. They suggested that at least in the academic area college students are almost completely powerless. They further discussed the difference in realities between the students and faculty in terms of the importance they placed on grades and how students devoted much effort

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to discover the terms of the contract between them and their teachers so that they could work to hold up their end of it.

2.4 Summary:

The emphasis in research in management education and development has been mostly evaluative and often from the point of view of the researcher rather than the researched (Fox, 1987). Fox (1987) also argued that in management education and development 'the first stage' was yet to be done. Although there is a trend towards learners' centredness in evaluative research and an emphasis on learning in informal settings or 'on the job' (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983; Berry, 1980), there is still a need for research of management development programmes (used in the generic sense of the word) from the learners' point of view. There is also a need to report the results of such studies in the field (Fox and Smith, 1986; Preston, 1993; 1993b).

The present thesis originated from this background although its focus is not evaluative in the sense of studying the outcomes of learning (e.g. learning retention or learning transfer). It is not my intention to evaluate either the organisations and their policies, or even the learners' and instructors' actions. Rather, the focus of the thesis is on the interactional practices and strategies that were developed to cope with learning and/or teaching and the

effects of the use of these strategies on the what and how manager-learners managed to learn in the institutional context the learning events were embedded in.

In acknowledging the inter-disciplinary nature of management learning (Cooper and Burgoyne, 1984) I extracted some concepts from the schooling literature (i.e. strategies) and applied them to the ways in which the participants in management learning events coped with their task of learning/teaching. I understand there is a thin dividing line between understanding and evaluation and I will admit at the outset that in some cases I found that to understand why the participants behaved in the ways they did I had to evaluate their actions. But again I stress this thesis is not based on an evaluative approach. Rather, it is an inquiry into the hows and whys of the ways the manager-learners and the management developers managed their tasks in these learning events.

This literature review could be perceived to be 'too extensive', but the reason why I felt I had to review the literature in such detail was because this material provided me not only with the methodological basis for my work but also with a source for the theoretical/conceptual basis for it. The concept 'strategy', for example, provided the opportunity to link the micro interactional practices (within the training context) to the macro contexts of the organisation and society at large. And with this being an

ethnographic study I felt I had to take the reader to my starting point.

In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology that I adopted in both collecting and analyzing the data.

Chapter Three

The Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This thesis utilizes the ethnographic perspective in gaining an understanding of how participants experience management learning events. How do the learners' lives in training programmes affect what they learn and how they learn it? It is not, however, an ethnography of management learning events. Although I lived the day to day life of the participants, I do not document the lives of the learners or the instructors in detailed descriptive analysis. I instead concentrate on the learning as experienced and use descriptive ethnographic analysis in explaining how life in the five training programmes affected it.

In this chapter I document the procedures I used in investigating the ways the participants experienced, interpreted, and constructed their learning reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This documentation of method was considered essential with a view of increasing the study's reliability because as Yin explained: "without such documentation, even you (the researcher) could not try to repeat your own work"(Yin, 1989, p. 45). With all the stress on the importance of rigour in social research I aimed to make as many steps operational and documented as possible so that a record of the decision-making process that was in operation is produced. I think if someone followed the procedures outlined in this chapter in conducting these same case studies all over again, she

would arrive at similar conclusions (given that her theoretical sensitivity to the data was at the same level as mine).

The chapter is divided into nine sections: Justification of methodology, Focusing the research topic, Gaining access and securing cooperation, Choosing sites/cases, Making observations, Recording data, Analyzing data, Theorizing, and Reactivity, validity, and reliability.

3.2 Justification of Methodology: Why Ethnography?

As I explained in the previous chapter, when I first started this research, I was interested in the 'Training Transfer' phenomenon, and this would have suggested a positivistic methodology. But, as I read more into the literature and gained a deeper understanding of methodological issues and how they affect what one can gain from a study, I became interested in qualitative methods. I believed that such methods could tell me more than the existing management education and development literature did. This feeling was especially strengthened after reading in the education and classroom research literatures which are fields of their own, and which the management education and development field has yet to draw on to any extent. My view can be summarized by Light's observation that:

"A full understanding of how a training programme works requires field observations that examine the deep structure as well as the surface behaviour of those in it". (Light, 1979, p. 558).

In choosing from tools like questionnaires, interviews, and

observation, only observation focuses on process and so is more likely to provide valuable information on how a training programme affects participants. Light (1979) argues that instruments like questionnaires and scales often produce 'surface data' that describe certain attributes of the learners but say nothing of the underlying processes of the training programmes.

A key element in the decision to adopt qualitative methods, other than they fitted well with my personal style (Wolcott, 1975), was the need for a new perspective in studying learning events (Eisenhardt, 1989), and a new way of looking at what learners in formal training programmes actually do and learn in them. Light (1979) compared two educational studies (Coleman et al, 1966; and Rutter et al, 1979), one of which quantified output measures while the other observed students and studied social processes. He concluded:

"In contrast to the wastefully expensive Coleman Report, which tried to analyze a training programme by isolating a few variables from the whole, the British study examined the whole and discovered key dimensions of educational programmes that only systematic observation over time could cover". (Light, 1979, p. 558).

Learning events are temporal settings and any individual encounter between instructors and learners in learning events can be conceived as an intersection of the learners' and instructors' careers (Delamont, 1983). This career is not static and in order to gain more understanding of the participants' experiences I had to choose methods that

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suited the nature of the dynamic problem I was investigating, and so the ethnographic perspective of the experiences of the participants in management learning events.

Hammersley and Atkinson defined ethnography as:

"One social research method, albeit a somewhat unusual one, drawing as it does on a wide range of sources of information. The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned". (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 2).

This is not to say that ethnography is defined solely in terms of method as this is a danger identified in the literature (Delamont and Atkinson, 1980). Van Maanen explains that ethnography as practised:

"allows a field worker to use the culture of the setting (the socially acquired and shared knowledge available to the participants or members of the setting) to account for the observed patterns of human activity. In organisational studies, the patterns of interest are typically the various forms in which people manage to do things together in observable and repeated ways". (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 539).

He goes on to say:

"Analytically, the aim of these studies has been to uncover and explicate the way in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation"(Ibid, p. 540).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) also explain how ethnographers, in reaction to a mounting positivism, developed an alternative view as to what proper social research should be. It was termed 'naturalism'. Blumer (1969) states with regard to choice of methods:

"Reality exists in the empirical world and not in the methods used to study that world, it is to be discovered in

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the examination of that world..Methods are mere instruments designed to identify and analyze the obdurate character of the empirical world, and as such their value exists only in their suitability in enabling this task to be done. In this fundamental sense the procedures employed in each part of the act of scientific inquiry should and must be assessed in terms of whether they respect the nature of the empirical world under study- whether what they signify or imply to be the nature of the empirical world is actually the case". (Blumer, 1969, p. 27-8).

So, in living the day-to-day life of the participants in the learning event, one hopes to have done justice to the phenomena under study.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) do not recognize ethnography as an 'alternative paradigm' to experimental, survey, or documentary research. Rather:

"it is simply one method with characteristic advantages and disadvantages, albeit one whose virtues have been seriously under estimated by many social researchers owing to the influence of positivism. The value of ethnography is perhaps most obvious in relation to the development of theory" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 23).

It is realized that one cannot, even as participant observer, derive anybody's theory in use from what one observes. All is interpretation, espoused theory, as Fox states:

"Participant observation may be a 'deeper' potential method for probing social reality than unstructured interviews, structured interviews, surveys and questionnaires, but it does not necessarily give us any greater access to the 'facts' about what happened, why and/or what it all meant". (Fox, 1987, p. 175).

Hammersley (1985) argues that developing theories in ethnographic studies involves focusing not on given events, but rather on a particular theoretical idea within those events. Ethnographic studies lend themselves well to theorizing where the aim is to focus on any aspects of

events that can facilitate the development of the theoretical idea.

Another main advantage of ethnographic methods is their flexibility. They do not require heavy pre-field preparation in terms of focused research questions. In ethnography, research questions and the research framework develop during field work itself. The flexibility of ethnography, for example, was evident in the ease with which it was possible for me to change direction from 'training transfer' to 'experiences of learning events'. This was done basically because I thought one could not study training transfer without studying the whole career of a learning event (before, during, and after a learning event). Also, employing ethnographic methodology makes it easier to play the role of the 'honest broker' in recognizing that this research is part of a political process (Fox, 1989). When all participants (whatever their group affiliation) are ensured that the researcher is interested in all viewpoints and that she gives equal weight to all groups' contributions, the results of the research stand a better chance of being recognized as having 'reality' by the different stakeholders contributing to the research.

This study draws heavily on symbolic interaction and ethnographic approaches in research. The rejection of stimulus-response model of human behaviour is the basis on

which symbolic interaction stands. Interactionists view of people is that they are interpreters of stimuli. The same stimuli can mean different things to different people. They can mean different things to the same person at different times. This is because these interpretations are shaped and reshaped as events develop (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

I must also admit that as I developed an interest in qualitative methods and their suitability for my research I still had some reservations and fears about using ethnographic methods. Although I knew I was a people oriented person, I was still what people would call a 'financial expert' whose mind-set could possibly have got used to 'positivist' methods and who could be argued to have had comparatively very little experience in qualitative methods. After a while, however, I thought that this same liability could be converted into an asset, and as Wolcott (1975) suggests:

"..I think that every effort should be made to encourage researchers who are not of anthropological persuasion to draw upon facets of the ethnographic approach....there is a bit of ethnographic talent in each of us". (Wolcott, 1975, p. 116).

The fact that I was an ex-banker (which gave me the banking background in financial analysis), and a new banking instructor (with less than a year experience in training) meant that I was not a total stranger to the environment of bank training centres since I had attended some as a learner, and worked in one as an instructor. This did not only make it easier for me to understand the material

presented (especially in technical courses), but it also meant that I had more time left to observe and come up with tentative explanations of actions and what Van Maanen (1979) calls 'second order concepts' (which he explains are more related to the culture of the researcher than the researched) based on my own experiences. Coming from a different national culture could also have made it easier for me to distance myself and to look at the familiar as strange (Delamont, 1981, 1983).

3.3 Focusing the Research Topic:

Even though I did not have a very well worked out hypothesis at the time I entered the field (Turner, 1983), I, nevertheless, had some general questions in mind: How do learners in formal training programmes experience these programmes and how do they deal with learning? What is the nature of the relationship between the instructors and the learners? How does the structure or the organisation of an event affect members' learning? Are there any unexpected consequences of these learning events? My substantive area of interest was bank management since I myself work for a bankers' training centre. As such, I expected to be (and was) familiar with the contents of these training programmes so that it left me ample time to concentrate on my observations. As to my theoretical area of interest; I wanted to learn how the managers experience learning events and how that affects their learning. I, however, did not hold too tightly to that theoretical interest and as I

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moved into the field I found myself observing how managers control their new learning environment which was, I thought, more interesting because it substantiated the idea that learning is not something that happens to learners in training programmes. Rather, learners are responsible agents in any learning that takes place (Burgoyne, 1973a).

Another important point to note here is that I started this research investigating how the learners cope with the learning milieu (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). But, as I moved into the field I found myself observing how instructors deal with their environments too. I must admit that I never told the gatekeepers when seeking access that I would be observing instructors too, maybe because I was not planning to. Some instructors may have felt it because there had been times when I had stopped writing while instructors were lecturing after noticing that they were looking at me and that their voice was flattening. They never asked me who I was observing and I never told them. Actually, it just dawned on me while I was sitting at the back of the classroom one day that I was observing some of the ways the instructors go about dealing with their job in a learning event too, especially after recording detailed field notes about things I never knew the value of until later. I then found myself asking questions like: How do instructors define their positions in a management training programmes? What strategies do both instructors and learners use in defining, redefining, and negotiating their

realities?, and to what extent do these activities influence learning from the perspectives of the learners?

So, as the research topic focused gradually, it provided me with leads to which I had to be sensitive in deciding which ones to follow and which ones to ignore. I also had to be flexible in being able to turn to other leads when some proved futile.

3.4 Gaining Access and Cooperation:

Coming from Bahrain, I had planned and arranged access into the banking community in Bahrain at the proposal stage in June 1992. I was requested, however, by the proposal committee to conduct a pilot study in the U.K. and to present the results to the committee before being registered as a Ph.D. student. The pilot study was conducted in September 1992 and the results were presented in January 1993. During that period I changed supervisors and both my present supervisor and I thought it would be better for me to conduct the research in the U.K. This was not only because I would be researching a phenomenon outside my national culture, and that would increase my ability to distance my self from it, but also because we both thought it would be better to remain closely supervised, at least at the initial stages of the research, especially since this was my first exposure to ethnographic methods. We agreed that the investigation could be a nationally comparative one if access was not fully secured

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in the U.K. after the initial stages.

After the pilot study presentation and after securing Ph.D. registration, I spent the next two and half months unsuccessfully trying to secure access in the U.K. The more I struggled with trying to gain access the more I felt banks, especially in Britain, were notoriously difficult to get research access to. It seemed to me that I wanted to get access to a setting that was generally hard to penetrate. In the end I had to use the internal contacts of my father who requested the help of his bankers in the U.K. and through whom I obtained access to the second case study in April 1993.

The instructor of this course and I worked closely, and after completing the case and more unsuccessful attempts to secure more cases through the British Chartered Institute of Bankers I contacted her again and explained the situation. She then introduced me to a colleague of hers who was going to conduct a new managerial course in July and who did not object to having an observer in her class. This new instructor expressed her preference for me not to observe the new course on the first occasion on which it was run and to delay it until the third time which was at the beginning of October 1993.

By that time I knew the only way I was going to gain more access was through my father's contacts again. I had by

then met all the clearing banks' gatekeepers to no avail and was getting depressed about wasting my time arranging meetings and travelling across the country with no results. I then got access through the third bank to the last two case studies one of which took place at the end of November 1993 and the other at beginning of February 1994.

I do realize that the fact that I had to rely on the contacts of my father could have some bearing one what I observed and I discuss this point in section 3.10 but suffice it to say here that although I do not think I had a lot of choice in choosing the banks, I did to some extent have some in choosing the courses. I did not want courses similar to each other in the same bank (in terms of content, length, instructor,..etc). In the end, I had four more cases (excluding the pilot study) from two different banks with four different instructors and courses of different lengths.

This research relied mainly on four data sources: 1. The pre-learning event semi-structured interviews. 2. The during learning event observation. 3. The during learning event open ended questionnaire, and 4. The after learning event semi-structured interview. In addition, I used documents to some extent (e.g timetables). Also, test sheets of the learners in the learning events served as valuable sources of data when the instructors let me see them.

All interviews were carried out in the learners' territories (usually a conference room) to allow them to relax during the interview. Also, a point has to be made that although the plan was for semi-structured interviews, these interviews were sometimes unstructured depending on the style of discussion of the learner. Some were talkative while others needed more questioning and probing.

In the pre-learning-event semi-structured interview which lasted about half an hour, I asked questions that gave me background information about the training programme, the learners, their jobs, their bosses, their families..etc. It served as an introductory interview since I did not want to be a stranger to everyone in the course on the second stage. That would have made me the only stranger in the training programme which would have delayed the process of research by my trying to break through friendships that have or are developing. Also, if my face was familiar to some at least, or if I developed good rapport with some of the learners, then they might help me reaching others. As it turned out only a minimal number of people knew each other before the training programmes. They might have heard about each other or even talked to each other on the phone but still have not met in person.

In this first interview I was basically negotiating cooperation and I talked with the learners about any topic that interested them after covering certain questions in

all interviews so that data could be compared. The aim was that of presenting this Ph.D. researcher as a 'normal' person they should have no worries about. In some cases, where the learners received briefings from their bosses and there was no objection to me observing these briefing sessions, I did so, and I usually learned more about the organisation and the manager-learners' work environment from my observations than I did through the interview only.

I conducted all the five cases in terms of Tanton and Foxs' (1987) three stakeholders model which included the learners, their bosses, and the learning event director (usually the main instructor), but this was not always possible. It was not always possible to gain the cooperation of all stakeholders in the same case and that was especially so for the bosses. It was easier to get the cooperation of the junior managers' bosses (who were middle managers themselves) than it was to get the cooperation of the middle managers' bosses (who were senior managers) within the same bank. In these cases I settled for asking the middle managers about their briefing sessions and about their bosses.

3.5 Choosing Sites/Cases:

I did not have an exact number of cases in mind before the start of fieldwork. I thought that between 4-6 cases should cover the theoretical saturation that is needed and would be good for my purposes given the time constraints and

resources available. This hunch was strengthened when it agreed with Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion of a number between 4-10 cases as being an adequate basis for case study work.

As explained in the previous section I chose courses different from each other in the nature of subject (technical vs. behavioural), length (short vs. long), and in the organisation sponsoring the learning event. This was done to maximize the difference between the cases covered following Glaser and Strauss' (1967) theoretical sampling and to enhance the applicability of the emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). I also tried to make the familiar strange and then attempted to translate this strangeness into the familiar again (Burgess, 1984).

(Committing myself to a multi-case investigation required some structure to be planted into the data collection methods (Smith and Robbins, 1982) so that data could be compared. This meant that relevant concepts had to be developed into questions in an interview guide. This interview guide was, however, just that, a guide, and so some questions were cancelled and some were modified or added as the research developed. This was necessary for the flexibility of ethnographic research not to be lost.)

As expected, randomness was not something I was concerned with when choosing informants. Burgess (1984) discusses the

selection of informants. He explains that although the traditional approach in much sociological research is for individuals to be chosen by random sampling methods, this approach is not problem free. Random sampling relies on formal lists of individuals from which the sample is drawn. This can lead to concentrating the study on formal rather than informal groups for which lists are not usually available. He recommends the use of 'intensive work with informants' approach as a solution to this problem. Ball (1984) also explained that his study of a comprehensive school relied on the use of five informants who might not have been representative teachers but whom he got to know well and with whom he could discuss situations. My informants were drawn from different groups: males and females, instructors and learners in the training programmes, younger learners at the start of their careers as well as older ones in more senior positions attending the same programme. I tried to talk to any one who was interested enough to talk to me, and who I thought had the social abilities to tell me about the things I could not observe or to get me the trust of a group I had difficulties with. But my main criterion for developing contacts was knowledge and candour (from my perspective that meant if what they had to say was logical and believable) in any informant.

3.6 Making Observations: Access, Coverage, and Role Problems.

The during-learning-event observation continued for the whole period of the learning event. In following Junker's (1960) typologies of roles the researcher takes in the field I would say I was between observer as participant and complete observer. During the lectures I was 'completely detached' observing and taking field notes where appropriate, while during breaks I would be 'comparatively involved' interacting with the learners and the instructors and writing notes afterwards (Tanton and Fox, 1987). I tried to maintain a more or less marginal position following Lofland's (1971) advice of maintaining a simultaneous insider/outsider position. Even though I developed friendships with some of the learners and one instructor, I still had to maintain some distance when reporting observations or hypothesizing explanations for certain actions.

I, of course, cannot say that I heard, saw, or participated in everything that went on in the learning events. Sampling of what to see, who to talk to next, and what group to go with was necessary and at times difficult. I chose to go around the classroom observing groups in turn unless there was something I wanted to check with a specific group. I always asked for permission from the group itself before I joined them and was always welcomed except for one occasion in the pilot study, where a group member refused me joining

his group for a behavioural syndicate exercise saying that I would obstruct the candour in the group (although I felt the others were surprised by his action).

Another point is the self restraint I found I had to exert on myself. Because I had an MBA in finance (which some of the learners and instructors knew about), this meant that I was familiar with at least some of the lectures, assignments, or group projects the learners dealt with. I found it very difficult not to tell the learners when they were looking at the problem from a wrong angle or just leaving them to experiment with their own learning when I knew they were not doing it 'right'. It was also normal for the learners to ask me if I agreed with their solutions to which I usually responded by saying I was not following the discussion. Only on one occasion did I correct a group's assumption set and only because I felt that if I did not they were going to spend the whole afternoon working out the 'wrong' solution.

But even on occasions where I kept my silence (or as one of the learners described me "you do not interfere at all, you just sit there so quietly I sometimes forget you are there") I still, however, developed the 'expert' reputation where some of the learners wanted to show me their solutions, and others asked for my 'psychological' opinion of their behavioural conduct in the learning event...etc. Although I kept silent all through the class lectures and

group syndicate discussions, I found some learners looking at me while presenting their suggestions to their groups as if watching for approving or disproving signs. I learned how to keep an expressionless face during these occasions.

3.7 Recording Data: How, where, and when.

During the learning events I kept separate journals for each training programme. These journals contained not only descriptions of my observations at the time and conversations that took place, but also my feelings, interpretations, hunches, developing theoretical ideas, and things to be checked. These were written in the form of little memos to myself headed by the initials O.C standing for 'Observer's Comments' (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). I found these memos of immense help in distancing my self from the data during the analysis stage. As expected these journals were always joked about at the start of a new programme, but learners soon got used to seeing me writing in group syndicate rooms. Except for the pilot study case when I sat with the learners as part of the horse-shoe seating arrangement, from then on I sat at the back of the class so that the learners could not see me. Only instructors did and some were sensitive about it.

In the first two cases I tried to note everything I observed even though I sometimes was not sure if I was going to need this information or not, and this proved to be beneficial during the comparison-between-cases stage of

analysis. I also distributed a questionnaire during the learning event as a precaution against the possibility of having no cooperation from the learners. In that sense I thought if I miss observing or discussing something during the learning event, the learners might still mention it in their questionnaire replies and so would alert me to a lead that could be pursued with them in the after-learning-event-interview. I must say, however, that it remained on the side. Although questionnaire replies served as another confirming evidence to conclusions reached through other data-collection methods, the quality of data observed or collected during discussions with the learners during the learning event was much better (in terms of depth and detail) than the questionnaire results, where the respondents, unless interested, would write a line or two maximum for each question asked.

The after-learning-event interview, which was conducted about six or seven weeks after the end of the training programme, was purposely left to that time to give the learners some time to go back to their jobs and into the flow of things before investigating how the learning event contributed or did not contribute to any change of behaviour. The before and after learning event interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. I felt that people gave me permission to tape interviews with no hesitation at all, and I think that most of them forgot about it after the first few minutes, maybe because I kept

the small tape recorder out of their immediate line of vision. Sometimes, after the interview was completed and the learner and I started to talk about other issues regarding the course, only on rare occasions did I feel that the learner was more free to talk than when the tape recorder was on. This also meant that I had to rush and write my notes right after the meeting before the start of the next one since several interviews were usually scheduled in the same branch of the bank on the same day.

3.8 Data Analysis:

In developing theory this study attempts to understand and explain the actions of the actors involved. Data collection and analysis went hand-in-hand. All through observations, interviewing, or when reviewing documents, I tried to make sense of the data and how it is to "walk into the participants' shoes" (Wolcott, 1975). I explained earlier how I started my readings on 'training transfer', learning theories, and the management education and development literature, but as I realized that in order to gain an understanding of what happens in the black box, I had to get as close to the phenomena as I could, I then moved to educational ethnographies. This was necessary because I felt I had to equip my mind with the developments in other fields and be prepared to borrow concepts from those fields and to try to apply them to the management education and development field. These concepts are what Strauss (1991) calls sociological concepts. So I developed hypotheses in

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explaining action and then tested those out against further information collected in the same case and watched for them occurring or not occurring in the other cases that followed. This is in line with Burgess's (1984) principle of comparison which he argued should be pursued in all sampling approaches.

In carrying out the field work I wrote up each of the five cases investigated as I completed my field work in each case. The context in which the action occurs is important in deriving explanations and it was important for me not to start confusing cases. Also, this provided the gaps I needed, or 'periods of detachment', where I stepped out of my involvement in the field and studied my notes from the outside (Borman et al, 1986) before going into the next stage. Further, it was an added advantage which forced me to deal with analyzing and reducing data at a very early stage, and it gave me the familiarity with the individual cases that was needed.

In each case I generated possible meanings and explanations for actions deriving from the culture surrounding the context where action occurred. I continued to compare cases as I went through, asking questions like: "Did I observe this in the previous case or is it a new phenomenon?". Most of the formal analysis and comparison between cases, however, was done after the write up of the fifth case. In the mean time the alternative hypothesis developed in

previous cases were tested by new observations so that each hypothesis was examined for each case with the underlying logic as that of replication (Yin, 1989).

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) explain the difference between grounded theory and analytic induction approaches in theory development analysis of qualitative research. They argue that most qualitative researchers opt for a combination of both grounded theory which deals mostly with theory generation, and analytic induction which concentrates on verification, in their approach. My analytic approach is not different from that position. It draws on elements from both the grounded theory approach and analytic induction. It is not only concerned with developing descriptive concepts and theories. It also deals with understanding settings "although it falls short of imposing systematic search for generalizations and universals entailed in analytic induction"(Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 130).

I have used the constant comparative method for theory development. This was explained by Taylor and Bogdan as where:

"the researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts. By continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships to one another and integrates them in a coherent theory" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 126).

I also attempted to test the theory while developing it as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), and Hammersley (1985) advocate. In developing concepts following Glaser and

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Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method, not only did I continually compare incidents within cases and tried to refine the concepts, I also compared statements and acts to see if they agreed and if they could be united by a higher order concept. For example, the concept of 'performance' applies equally to the learners' tactic of not showing what they do not know as it does to the instructors' tactic of not telling the learners their true experience and background. This is also in line with Van Maanen (1979) who stressed the importance of the researcher's seeing the difference between 'operational' and 'presentational' data. Operational data, he argued:

"document the running stream of spontaneous conversations and activities engaged in and observed by the ethnographer while in the field..These data..pertain to the every day problematics of informants going about their affairs" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 542).

While presentational data:

"concern those appearances that informants strive to maintain..in the eyes of the field worker, outsiders and strangers in general.." (Ibid).

I aimed at being 'theoretically sensitive' to the data by reading wide and different literatures as this is advocated as a necessity for both ethnographers and qualitative researchers more generally (Delamont, 1981, 1983; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The latter say:

"This knowledge even if implicit, is taken into the research situation and helps you to understand events and actions seen and heard, and to do so more quickly than if you did not bring this background into the research" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 42).

I continued to read during all phases of the research and this helped to broaden my initial questioning and areas of

observation. In developing theory, I also used Strauss and Corbins' (1990) paradigm model which stresses the importance of denoting conditions, context, strategies, and consequences in hypothesizing explanations of phenomena.

I made two copies of the journals I kept during my observation in the field. I kept the original intact even though I marked on its margins tentative themes and concepts that came to my mind during my work in the field. Also, as a preliminary to the analysis I created a set of coding categories./These were intended to focus the data collected to only that which relates to learning and coping with the task of learning or facilitating that learning(I started by listing every theme, concept, or interpretation identified before or during the initial stages of analysis. Some of these codes were expected from the related literatures, but they were refined as more cases were conducted. Some were added, others were dropped, expanded, or refined.)

Sorting is assembling the coded data according to categories and I did this manually by cutting field notes, marking the related interview transcriptions and questionnaire replies, and then placing data relating to each coding category in a separate envelope. Through this process of coding and sorting (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984) I was able to compare incidents with incidents within the same case. When not sure of which category a data segment

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should go under, it was filed under the two categories concerned and this was easily resolved at a later stage when all the items relevant to the same category were put side by side and compared. This also helped to find the range of variations in a category.

Strauss (1991) explains that there are two types of categories used in coding. Sociological constructs and 'in vivo' codes. Sociological constructs are codes formulated by the researcher and "are based on a combination of the researcher's scholarly knowledge and knowledge of the substantive field under study" while 'in vivo' codes, are those "taken from or derived directly from the language of the substantive field: essentially the terms used by the actors in that field themselves" (Strauss, 1991, p. 33-34). Some concepts in this thesis were provided by the actors themselves during discussions (e.g. 'fudging an answer as long as people will buy it'). Others, were developed by the researcher, and still others were generated by borrowing concepts from other disciplines. Also, in developing codes I did not use line-by-line analysis. Rather, I, coded by paragraphs unless a word or a sentence caught my attention within those paragraphs.

3.9 Theorizing:

A theory is just another 'persuaded version' and, as Hammersley (1985) notes: "..it has its origins in commonsense knowledge; and, of course, like other types of

theory, social theory also reacts back upon commonsense"
(Hammersley, 1985, p. 246). As the social world unfolds in
front of one, one has to make choices about alternative
explanations of what is happening and act based on her
interpretation of what is going on. As Burgess (1984)
states:

"The researcher has to cope with a variety of social
situations, perspectives, and problems. Doing field
research is, therefore, not merely the use of a set of
uniform techniques but depends on a complex interaction
between the research problem, the researcher and those who
are researched. It is on this basis that the researcher is
an active decision maker who decides on the most
appropriate conceptual and methodological tools that can be
used to collect and analyze data. Field research is
concerned with research processes as well as research
methods" (Burgess, 1984, p. 6).

I moved between inductive and deductive theorizing. When I
deductively thought of properties or relationships between
categories, I attempted to verify this against the data.
This is in line with Mintzberg (1979) who explains that
developing theories needs not only detective work of
tracking down patterns and consistencies but also that
detective leap beyond one's data. These properties or
relationships were held provisional until verified by data.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) also quote Davis (1974) who
points that part of an ethnographer's task is that of
"telling a story...to find some kind of story which will
give you an opening, a beginning working stratagem with
respect to the data" (Davis, 1974, p. 311). So, in trying
to discover the main story line, it was important to
discover the core category (phenomena) around which other

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categories could be related. The relating of other categories to the core category was also done by means of the analytic paradigm suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The categories were arranged and rearranged in terms of the paradigm until it analytically represented the story.

In trying to find a more general theory, I tested data across data sources to see if the pattern from one data source is corroborated by the evidence from another. I investigated negative cases, to discover 'intervening conditions' if any (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that do not necessarily negate the theory but just modify it, and I saw the conditions that cause this variation of theory. Also, as an analytical tool that could help me to think of the phenomena in terms of the wide range of conditions or contexts, and consequences related to it I thought throughout the analysis (or at least as early as the second case) in terms of the 'conditional matrix' suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This is because as they argue:

"A point always important to remember is this: Regardless of the level within which a phenomenon is located, that phenomenon will stand in conditional relationship to levels above and below it, as well as within the level itself" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 162).

So in developing theory I tried to trace the 'conditional paths' and this meant that the analysis moved from the level of action/interaction to the various conditional levels of group, organisational, and societal levels respectively to determine how they relate. This is in

accordance with what Yin (1981) called the 'chain of evidence' that has to be followed in case study analysis.

Striving for a formal theory is expected from ethnographers according to Wolcott (1975) who says:

"It is appropriate to expect the ethnographer to look for connections between little problems and big ones, and for him to organize his account so as to show some comparability between a problem immediately at hand and the recurring themes among problems shared by humans in all times and places" (Wolcott, 1975, p. 125).

So, I followed Turner (1983), who discussed Glaser's advice for qualitative researchers to concentrate on a single activity, one which can be expressed as a gerund (e.g performing) which can then be taken as the central phenomenon which needs explanation in terms of conditions, variations, and consequences.

Theoretical sensitivity is being sensitive to theoretical issues when analyzing data, and I must say that even as early as the completion of the second case, I felt that my first case analysis lacked theoretical sensitivity. This, however, is normal since sensitivity increases with time. Strauss (1991) explains:

"For theoretical sensitivity, wide reading in the literatures of one's field and related disciplines is very useful, and probably requisite: not for specific ideas or for scholarly knowledge, but for authors' perspectives and ways of looking at social phenomena, which can help to sensitize one to theoretical issues" (Strauss, 1991, p. 300).

I felt I had failed to pick certain important concepts from incidents and so as I gained more sensitivity and insight I made sure I went back to old material and, as expected,

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the older the case the more re-coding had to be done.

In stating the contexts I aimed to be specific in terms of how, when, where, and with what consequences institutionalized learning affects what learners learn or instructors teach as well as the strategies used to deal with the described learning milieu. This was done because I thought unless I am specific in my explanations, then theories developed in terms of the conditions under which the phenomena operates, the action/interaction related, and the consequences associated will be vague and so meaningless, and this is one of the most frequent criticisms of generalisations in qualitative educational research (Tripp, 1985). Also, in tracing the conditional paths, it helped me in putting boundaries around the studies as well as developing the story line which is important in writing ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). It was easier to think in terms of relevant and irrelevant data to the story line.

I sometimes saw the effect of conditions through action/interaction during my field work in terms of action/interaction and consequences, but on other times, I deduced that effect either from the literature or even from my own experience or common sense, but I always looked to find evidence for this deduction in the data. In tracing a path Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain the procedure:

"To trace a conditional path, you begin with an event, incident, or happening, then attempt to determine why this

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occurred, what conditions were operating, how the conditions manifest themselves, and with what consequences. You determine the answers to these questions by systematically following the effects of conditions through the matrix. What levels were passed through? With what effects?" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 168).

By following this I was also in agreement with Hammersley (1985) who advocates theorizing as a set of conditionally universal claims.

It must be noted, however, that I only traced incidents that seemed important to the central phenomena of experiences of learning. Also, since this is a processual study, this was brought into analysis in the form of the change in action that occurs due to the change in conditions.

I searched for cross-case patterns as soon as I completed the second case by listing the similarities and differences between each two cases and this forced comparison helped in generating concepts across cases that seemed at first sight either very similar or very different.

Lastly, I think I should say something about why I chose the present style for reporting the results of my study. I considered presenting the five case studies separately but that would have made comparison more difficult, and great differences of interpretation would have been noticed since both my theoretical sensitivity and insight increased with time. I then thought about comparing perspectives and experiences of the participants (both learners and

instructors) at different stages of a learning event which would have covered the chronological order that I thought was important in highlighting the careers of the participants as they go through a learning event, but I was not sure it was going to cover the chronology in the detail I thought was necessary. If, on the other hand, I had chosen analyzing conceptual themes emerging from the five cases that would ignore the participants' careers. In the end I settled for conceptual themes presentation which was more or less an arbitrary choice after weighing the advantages and disadvantages of all the alternatives.

3.10 Reactivity, validity, and reliability:

It is understood that just by investigating phenomena in their natural setting does not guarantee a solution to the problem of 'ecological validity', that is the influence of the "researchers and the procedures they use on the responses of the people studied" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:10). This influence was taken into consideration throughout the research with the aim of minimizing the effect, or at least to be aware of it and report it when it happened. That is why I made a conscious effort to minimize my intrusion on the learning event 'milieu' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972).

I know both learners and instructors (but especially instructors) were conscious of my writing notes, and this is why I sometimes preferred not to write notes depending

on who was present and how I thought they would feel about me writing notes in front of them. I would sometimes wait until we went into the classroom (if we were on a break) and would write my notes then when everybody was either writing class-notes or listening to the instructor and not looking at me sitting at the back of the classroom. I also sometimes stopped writing during a lecturing session or during a group exercise if I felt people were conscious of my notes (especially at the beginning of the learning event) and waited until the break when every body left the classroom. Even though that meant some loss of detail, I thought it was worth it in order to minimize my influence.

During the field work I thought that my influence was minimal on the learners. I was a little worried about the fact that I got access to at least three courses through my father's contacts and how that would influence how people treated me if I was perceived to be the daughter of a 'valued customer'. I, however, found that participants treated me normally and I did experience the traumas of other researchers (e.g. being ignored by instructors, having to work on my relationships with my informants to secure the level of cooperation I wanted,..etc.).

I could also have been the least well-dressed person in these training programmes and I think that might have helped to counteract any expectations of what a high 'net worth' individual's daughter might be like. I presented

myself as the average person that I was and I think I was accepted as such.

My feeling of being accepted was especially strengthened after some learners approached me in every learning event about the possibility of getting feedback on the results of the research. It was a case of collaborative enquiry (Torbert, 1981a) where the learners having contributed to the research wanted to see the end product. More importantly, however, the feeling of being a member of the group was strengthened when learners included me in the jokes they played on each other or on the instructors. I certainly was there to witness the change in their behaviour before and after instructors joined them in groups. I was also invited to join them in their outings during weekends.

I am not saying I did not have any influence at all. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) note that social researchers are part of the social settings they study and they can not escape having an influence on the phenomena they study because the researcher in these cases is actually the research instrument (Wolcott, 1975). What I am saying is that although I sometimes tried to minimize my influence when I thought it was going to affect what the actors were going to say or do, I sometimes exploited the situation and benefited from the information it provided (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). By keeping silent during classes and group

work, sitting either at the back of the class or in a corner in the syndicate room, I kept out of the way of the learners. But, at the same time, the way the learners in the early interviews reacted to my presence was just as informative to me as my observations of them in other situations and I used that information in developing my propositions of the how and why explanations of the learning experiences.

As the research progressed I had a feeling that the only way that the participants (whether instructors or learners) were going to trust me and tell me about their experiences was if I trusted them enough to tell them a little about my background, my research, and my career. I also discussed preliminary results with a very few learners and one instructor (Barbara) whom I felt could provide me with an objective opinion about my observations. So, instead of walking about with my little note book that was always joked about at the beginning of a case, I started discussing the emerging themes, hunches, and hypotheses as they were developing with a few informants and noticing their reactions, and I must say that this was a great help in accepting, rejecting, and modifying a hypothesis. This was done only with the participants whom I felt I could trust and following the rules of choosing informants that I discussed earlier.

I also followed the advice of Taylor and Bogdan (1984) in

giving a little to the informants. I was "truthful, but vague, and imprecise" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 25). I made it clear to them that I was not particularly interested in their institution or the people there. I was simply interested in the 'managerial learning processes' as far as every one was concerned. This made it easier for me from an administrative point of view since I did not have to specify who or what I was going to observe. If the gatekeepers assumed I was interested in observing only the learners in the training programmes, then I let it be. This also meant that I had the freedom to 'muddle about' in the setting and pursue hunches that I thought were worthy of attention (Wolcott, 1975).

As covered earlier, the sampling technique used for this study was a combination of theoretical and opportunistic sampling (Burgess, 1984), opportunistic in that I did not have much control in choosing the banks, but theoretical in terms of what group to observe or who to talk to next. In each of the five cases the researcher could not have been everywhere all the time so developing informants was a priority. Naturally, the researcher got closer to some members than to others. The reasons can be attributed to age, to interest on the part of some members in the research progress, or even as a source of self-identity where association with the doctoral researcher served to maintain a positive image. Also, I think that being a woman and from another culture meant that I was less threatening

than otherwise would have been the case.

I did find, however, that I got close only to one instructor who was about my age. I thought that some of the other instructors given the choice would have refused to have me observe their classes. As time passed and as friendships developed over the course of a learning event (this usually started on the third day of the learning event), however, I tried not to associate myself with any member or group. I always joined large groups for lunch and made a conscious effort to talk to every one in the learning event. For example, in the Eastern Bank case, when the first two days went by with the graduate trainees (university graduates who were going through a special training programme and who were planned to take their first managerial post within one-and-a-half years of employment) sort of avoiding me, I approached them during a coffee break on the third day and asked them what they were doing for lunch the next day and if it was possible for me to join them. This pre-arrangement was necessary during the first three days because during that period, it was common to see that as soon as lunch breaks began, the learners would leave for lunch in groups ignoring my presence completely unless I forced my presence on one group which I usually did.

I have to admit that the first three days were always very anxious and frustrating for me. I always worried if the

group was going to be welcoming or if they were going to ignore me and not cooperate and, of course, I needed their cooperation for the study to succeed (in terms of gaining deeper understanding of the learners' experiences). As I said, however, as time passed, the learners, I felt, learned to accept me as a member of the group.

In some cases I developed contacts that could have continued after the learning event but I did not feel comfortable providing research results to some members and not others, and I suspected that was the main interest in the continued contacts. This was a matter of difference of interest in the research between the different learners. It was the informants who were always willing to sit during lunches to discuss an incident that took place during a group syndicate or in class that day and who were willing to spend more time thinking back about the implications of behaviour who were interested to see the final product. I, however, did not want to commit myself to communication of results because at that time I was not sure how sensitive these results were going to be.

When I did give the initial case reports to some informants of the Eastern bank I during the after-the- learning-event interview, I found my main informant in that learning event concentrated on where his Pseudonym occurred and skimmed through the rest (although when asked he said he thought the way I had organised the material into strategies was

interesting. I took this as a general agreement with the analysis although it did not tell me much about my construct validity which deals with "establishing the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied" (Yin, 1989, p. 40)). Another informant in that same learning event asked me what his pseudonym was before he even glanced at the report. This was not different from the experiences of Miles (1979) or Ball (1982) who wrote:

"Many of the staff had apparently read my chapter solely in terms of what it had to say about them or their subject. There was little or no discussion of the general issues I was trying to raise or the overall arguments of the chapter..I had taken as my task as ethnographer the description and analysis of large scale trends which extended as I saw them across the whole school, an overview. The staff responded from their particular view of the school, from the vantage point of the position they held" (Ball, 1982, p. 18-9).

Also, I did feel that even if the informants reacted adversely to my theoretical explanations, that would not provide enough evidence for me to reject those explanations because people often react adversely when they are presented with individualized data regardless of the research method used (Yin, 1981).

I think that at least in some cases the perception of me as an audience was strong. Three different learners from three different cases acted as if they wanted to impress me and always answered my questions in a self-guarded way but as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) say:

"ethnographers sometimes regard any effects of their presence or actions on the data simply as a source of bias. And, of course, from the point of view of ecological validity it is indeed a threat to validity. However, participants' responses to ethnographers may nevertheless

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be an important source of information. Data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 190).

I think, however, that the instructors and panels, when appropriate, represented other audiences which were more powerful and influential in affecting the future of the learning event members and that my presence was mostly forgotten when those other audiences were present. Lastly, it is hoped that by documenting in detail the operations of this research one has increased its reliability (Yin, 1989).

3.11 Summary and Conclusion:

I adopted ethnographic methods because I wanted to give justice to the phenomena under investigation and present them from the participants' point of view. I feel I have succeeded in gaining the cooperation of the learners and that, at least in their case, their contributions heavily influenced how the analysis of this thesis progressed. At the same time, however, I feel I have succeeded in securing the cooperation of two instructors only although one more than the other. To most other instructors I felt I was a nuisance they could have done without and in that sense I had to rely on my interpretations of what was going on. That does not mean that these instructors were written off. I still continued with my questioning but in a guarded and sensitive way and only of the more accepting instructors.

One advantage of participant observation was that it allowed me to become 'immersed' in the culture of the learning events, but at the same time to keep a simultaneous outside/inside position which was necessary to produce deeper insights of the experiences of learning/teaching in these management learning events.

I will now move to the substantive chapters which will describe how the participants dealt with their tasks of teaching/learning in these training programmes.

Part II

Introduction to Part II: The Substantive Chapters

Learning events can be viewed as social systems. The learners are removed from their job environments and put into new ones where they remain for the duration of the event. In adapting to the new environment they learn how to deal with other learners, with the instructors, and with the organisation in addition to learning the content that the organisations are sponsoring them to study.

Wilson (1971) argued that in current sociological work, actions are understood in terms of one of two ways. The first one includes dispositions that have been acquired by the individual (e.g. attitudes, interests, sentiments, conditioned responses, and need dispositions). The other one is the sanctioned expectations to which the individual is subject (i.e. role expectations). The difference between a disposition and an expectation is that a disposition is a "rule that has been learned or internalized" while an expectation is a "rule that has been institutionalized in a social system" (Wilson, 1971, p. 60).

Both dispositions and expectations are elements of the psychological boundaries that influence how people conduct themselves in organisations. According to Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992) these psychological boundaries can be identity, political, task, or authority related and they tend to generate interactional contexts which mainly engender a 'win-loose' value system in which defensiveness and self-protection are the norm (Schon, 1987). The

question that governs human action in these circumstances is "what is in it for us?" where individuals,

"...by negotiating and bargaining with each other, ... form coalitions to further their ends and develop strategies and tactics for advancing their interests"(Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992, p. 109).

Participants have to find a balance between defending their own interests without undermining the system within which their interests are embedded (e.g. the learning event, the organisation) because without the system they will have no interests. They must distinguish between 'win-lose' and 'win-win' strategies (Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992).

An important medium through which dispositions and expectations are transmitted is cultures. Deal and Kennedy (1982) defined strong cultures as those which present their members with "a system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time" (1982, p. 15). They argued that by knowing what is expected of them, individuals waste little time in deciding how to act.

So, participants enter situations with both dispositions and expectations, and with all human thought being intentional and purposeful (Douglas, 1971) and all interaction being strategic (Goffman, 1970), these two features affect what participants think and do in their specific contexts. Dispositions and expectations interact with actors' definitions of the situation within particular structures to define individuals' goals. These goals underlie the strategies that participants ultimately choose

to develop (and/or) use in their contexts to produce the outcomes they strive for. As Silverman (1970) argued:

"Since action is goal orientated, that is concerned with the attainment of certain subjectively perceived ends, the actor chooses, from among the means of which he is aware, the action which seems most likely to produce what he would regard as a satisfactory outcome" (Silverman, 1970, p. 130).

The empirical focus of this research is on the immediate context of action, specifically the actions of both the instructors and learners in the five training programmes. But, understanding action requires an understanding of the context in which the action took place (Douglas, 1971). This can mean concentrating on the micro context of the different learning events or aiming higher at linking the micro with the macro context especially in view of the criticism interactionists have received (Woods, 1980a; Becker and McCall, 1990) with calls for linking the micro to the wider society (Hammersley, 1980b, Salaman, 1978).

I struggled for a long time with 'how to choose an appropriate framework' that links the strategies used at the micro level to the values in wider society. I wanted a 'story line' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) that links these two worlds together because somehow, it did not seem enough to describe the strategies observed. At the same time, to attempt to link strategies to societal values seemed to be a little too ambitious and somehow arbitrary. Methodology books like Strauss and Corbin (1990) helped as they advocated tracing 'conditional paths' of phenomena, but, as Mintzberg (1979) discussed, the two essential steps

in inductive research are detective work and creative leaps and in this thesis (at least in the concluding chapter) I will attempt to move away from the data and try to theoretically explain why the participants used the strategies they did.

In the midst of the struggle for a framework I came across Pettigrew's contextualist framework (Pettigrew, 1985) and decided to borrow some of its elements. This multi-level framework of analysis incorporates levels of analysis with varying distance from the micro context of the learning events under study which enabled me to explore the connections between the micro and the macro contexts. Again I stress the importance I felt of connecting the micro and the macro. The more I read my field notes and the more I thought about ways of connections and interpretations the more the importance of the macro context accentuated itself. Douglas (1971) also argued that although the context in which action occurs is important, trans-situational meanings are also important because man, after all, is a symbol maker and user and he is able to go beyond himself and his situation and to use past experience in constructing meaning and action for his immediate situation and to coordinate this immediate situation with other situations he has experienced before.

In the context of this research the most immediate level of analysis is that of the micro-context. It can be

represented by one module of a training programme, one day, one session, or even by a particular event within a session. At a higher level, the inner context can consist of both a programme context and an organisational context. Different programmes have different structures, different contents, and different physical locations and this provides the setting for the micro-contexts. The organisation, on the other hand, through its structure and culture influences the dispositions (i.e. interests) of the programme participants and in so doing it represents a higher level of the inner context of a learning event. Lastly, the outer context consists of the wider social structure, culture and market conditions within which the organisations and their members are embedded.

This model is useful in understanding the dynamics and processes in a micro context but at the same time to transcend situational meanings to higher levels. In so doing I assume a common similarity in all human existence based on the encounter between individuals and a common external world (Douglas, 1971).

To summarize, participants' interests can be derived from both the outer social context through socialization processes, and from the organisational context through organisational cultures which sometimes equate success with advancement. Interests derived from different contexts can be contradictory but, as Pollard (1982) discussed, the many

interests-at-hand operating at any time get juggled to achieve a satisfactory balance of self-interest overall. Any organisational knowledge also acts as a resource that together with participants' dispositions inform the generation of specific goals that in turn influence the selection and development of strategies (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995a).

The term strategy can imply some kind of deception. Holt (1969) discussed strategies (although his discussion was in the context of childrens' schooling) as: "the ways in which children try to meet, or dodge, the demands that adults make on them in school" (Holt, 1969, p. 10). In other words, to reach our goals we might have to, sometimes, outwit our opponents and give the impression that we have reached certain goals even when we have not in an attempt to deceive our opponents and reach our long term goals (Woods, 1980a).

Berne, one of the writers on Transactional analysis, has used 'Games People Play' as an explanation of interpersonal relationships (Berne, 1976). The term refers to "exchanges between people that have ulterior, or hidden motives. If uninterrupted these games tend to progress to predictable outcomes" (Snell and Binsted, 1981, p. 3). Binsted and Snell have written a series of five papers that concentrated on the relationships between tutors and learners, the strategies tutors can use to facilitate

learning, and the effect of these on learners' feelings and learning (Binsted and Snell, 1981, 1982a, 1982b; Snell and Binsted, 1981, 1982). In one of these articles they concentrated on the games tutors play and argued that mild professional games (games played in work role contexts):

"may be played for 'benevolent' reasons. Such mild *games* may continue even after all participants have found out what is going on. Such interaction may then continue in the form of a 'pastime', a semi-ritualistic sequence of behaviour, where all parties know the 'name of the game' and play along with it without discomfort" (Snell and Binsted, 1981, p. 4, emphasis in original).

Tanton (1994) also used Berne's term 'games' to delineate these strategies, but expressed her dissatisfaction with the term, adding:

".. and perhaps the word 'game' is inaccurate, the actions were more like performances or roles" (Tanton, 1994, p. 285).

The importance of the strategies that participants develop in learning events and what they learn from each other is that all this has an effect on the relations between the learners and the instructors, the instructors and the learners, and between the instructors and each other as well as between these two parties and the organisation. As the substantive chapters unfold I hope to illustrate the complexities in institutional management training programmes. By using a wider framework I hope to demonstrate how it is not only the learners who are subjected to conflicts in learning situations which force them to choose coping strategies, but that the instructors

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too have to cope with the conflictual demands of the same system. The substantive part is divided into two sections. The learners' strategies, covered in three chapters and the instructors' strategies, covered in two chapters.

In Chapter Four, I cover how the learners utilized the 'performing to impress' strategy to reach their long-term objective of passing off as good employees of the organisation and getting promotions.

In Chapter Five, I cover how the learners evaluated not only the instructors and compared them to one another but also how they compared themselves to one another and evaluated other learners present in the training programme based on their performance relative to the others present. Utilizing this strategy of 'Comparison and Evaluation' enabled the learners to find out each others' strengths and weaknesses. They also evaluated their organisations' policies and the learning event they were attending.

In Chapter Six I explore a pervasive strategy used by the learners in all the five learning events. This is what I have called the 'Having Fun' strategy and is related to the use of humour in training programmes. This strategy helped in understanding the social reality it represented and was utilized by the learners not only to relieve boredom and anxiety but also to communicate certain messages to others in the learning milieu.

In Chapter Seven, I move to the instructors' strategies. The first strategy covered is the 'Performing to impress' because not only did the learners perform to impress others, the instructors too performed for the different audiences present in their learning events.

Chapter Eight covers the 'Power and Control' strategy. Although this chapter is included in the instructors' strategies section, it explores how both learners and instructors bring the power game into play to their benefit. The chapter also explores how team-instructing can affect the power relations between not only the instructors but also the instructors and learners present in a learning event.

Before starting the next chapter I think it might be helpful if I presented an outline of the five learning events as well as some background information about the participants (Tables I & II).

As will be seen from the tables, the nature of the five training programmes was different from each other. While the pilot study (i.e. Cross Pacific) covered a combination of technical and behavioural skills, two of the other four courses covered behavioural skills and two covered technical skills.

Two of the three banks sponsoring this research were large

international banks, one of which was American. The third bank was a wholly owned subsidiary of a large international bank-holding-company. Except for the pilot study which was conducted in a major British business school, the other four courses were all conducted in the city of London. Also, as expected, because these banks were international, the learners in these events represented an international group from countries like HongKong, Oman, Bahrain, India, Turkey, Cameroon, Spain, and Portugal. It was also common to have people of different experience attending the same course.

In chapter Four, the first in the learners' strategies chapters, I will discuss how the learners 'performed to impress'.

Table I

Outline of the Five Learning events

Bank	Learning Event	Period	Venue	Lecturing Staff
Cross Pacific	5 Module learning event covering both credit and behaviour skills.	2 Weeks. From 28-9-92 To 9-10-92	Business School. Residential	Combination of business school and bank staff as well as out side consultants.
Eastern Bank I	Credit analysis	2 Weeks From 19-4-93 To 30-4-93	Bank's training centre	Two bank staff on a training assignment
Eastern Bank II	Behavioural	1 week From 4-10-93 To 8-10-93	Bank's training centre	One training centre staff
Washington Bank I	Behavioural	4 days From 22-11-93 To 25-11-93	Hotel. Residential for participants from outside London	Team of two, one from the bank and the other from the training centre.
Washington Bank II	Credit analysis	2 weeks From 7-2-94 To 18-2-94	Bank premises	Outside consultants with only one lecture given by a staff member

Table II

Participants' Background Information

Learning Event	Number of Tutors	Number of Learners			Average Age of Learner
		Male	Female	Total	
Cross Pacific	Five (M)	14	2	16	Late Thirties
Eastern Bank I	Two (M&F)	8	4	12	Middle Twenties
Eastern Bank II	One (F)	4	4	8	Late Thirties
Washington Bank I	Two (M&F)	16	2	18	Late Thirties
Washington Bank II	Three (F)	10	3	13	Late Twenties

Learners' Strategies

Chapter Four

Performing to impress

4.1 Introduction:

Training programmes can be viewed as 'situated activity systems' (Goffman, 1961a). They are closed systems in which activities take place within a single social establishment with participants (learners and instructors) being brought together for the single joint activity of learning/teaching. These situated systems are time-bound and are repeated within organisations with some frequency which leads to the participants acquiring situated selves based on the roles they play (Goffman, 1961a).

A person tries to influence the definition of the situations that others formulate so that they behave according with her plans and form an impression of her that will serve her interests. This is part of the every day activity of life, and although some will approach this impression management in a calculative way others will not become aware that this is the case (Goffman, 1959). Rogers (1989) also argued that in industrial training programmes it was natural for learners to be concerned about their performance because of the stress put on that performance by their organisations in future promotions. She discussed how as adults, individuals have come to occupy different roles (e.g. husbands, wives, parents, managers,.. etc.) and how these different roles have statuses that are assumed to be robust but which can easily be threatened when learners are put in learning positions.

In learning events learners face a dilemma. Because they are simultaneously being observed by different role-partners, this calls on them to make decisions on where their loyalties lie. Hargreaves (1972) discussed how actors occupying two conflicting roles resolve this conflict by giving priority to one role over the other. This is done through the individuals' ability to mesh 'a simultaneous multiplicity of selves' into a coherent self-image (Goffman, 1961a) which is shaped by the expectations of the role-partners the individuals are dealing with at any one time.

When individuals take on an established social role (e.g. a member in a training programme) they usually find that they have to accept its established front and as Goffman argues: whether the individual's "acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both" (Goffman, 1959, p. 37). This led Hopfl (1995) to draw the conclusion that management development:

"leads to the construction of managed roles and management performances.. The desired norms of managerial behaviour require that contradictions are concealed by the professional mask... Discretion is....limited merely to the repertoire of options which attach to a particular role" (Hopfl, 1995, p. 4).

Attending training programmes is part of the secondary socialization that individuals go through in their lives and it is through this secondary socialization that members

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in new organisations learn the accepted fronts associated with their organisations. Berger and Luckmann defined secondary socialization as:

"the internalization of institutional or institution-based 'sub worlds'... the acquisition of the role-specific knowledge... role specific vocabularies... and tacit understandings" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 158).

Because not all roles mesh naturally with established selves individuals cope through what Goffman (1961b) called 'secondary adjustment' which he defined as:

"any habitual arrangement by which a member of an organisation employs unauthorized means, or obtains unauthorized ends, or both, thus getting around the organisation's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be. Secondary adjustments represent ways in which the individual stands apart from the role and the self that were taken for granted for him by the institution" (Goffman, 1961b, p. 172).

The way the medical students and university students at Becker et al (1961) and Becker et al (1968) coped with their training was an example of how students cope with the immediate demand of learning how to become students. In secondary socialization individuals can learn to distance themselves from the roles they take and not internalize them. It is through this 'role-distance' (Goffman, 1961a), Woods (1980b) argued, that pupils adapt in secondary socialization. Woods used the term 'colonization' and he argued that the:

"individual colonises other areas of activities in the outer world, gets out of them what he can to further his own interests in true imperialistic fashion...though in some areas he might feel more at home than in others and on occasions shift the locus of his identity to one of these sub areas"(Woods, 1980b, p. 15).

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Cultures (which could be used as a medium for socializing people into the way of doing things) are influential in how individuals (subscribing to them) construct their environments and the identities they develop in these environments (Watson, 1994). In the following sections, and before moving to the details of how learners used the performing to impress strategy, I will discuss the cultural factors that necessitated the strategy's use.

4.2   Cultural Factors:

4.2.1   The Promotion Culture

The pursuit of promotions as one of the major motivational factors that influence managerial behaviour has been documented in the literature (Thomas, 1983; Lee, 1985a). The latter argued against the unquestionability of what he called the 'text book approach' to promotion. In a second part of the same paper Lee (1985b) discussed how intuitive judgement was an important part of promotion decisions. Two out of the three banks I studied advertised vacant positions for perspective promotees within their banks. The number of job applicants was sometimes very large (as many as fifty applicants per job) which called for the potential promotees to convince people in power of their abilities or as Sarah (from the Eastern Bank II) said 'no one will take them on'. Frances and I discussed how she got to her present job during a pre-course interview. She said:

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"Nathan (her present boss) knew me already (because she had worked for him in another department). Nathan chose me because I had all the right experience and he knew I could deliver. And we do this for other people, I mean we have a vacancy in our department and you know two or three of the applicants and you think if they are going to fit in. I mean life is like that, it's very much who you know and the impression you give".

<div align="right">Interview, 23-9-93</div>

Lee (1985b) argued that for promotees 'making the right impression' is a long term objective that is not activated at the time a vacancy is publicized but rather is a continuous process through-out a person's career. This is what he called the preparation phase of the advancement process which he argued was the most important of the two phase process. Knowing the right people and impression management were very much part of the promotion culture at the Eastern Bank although not every one admitted it. When I told Frances she was the first one to mention the impression one makes as an important factor in her career she added in defense:

"Isn't it right for me to a certain extent, on the learning event, there are people there that look to me as the divisional service manager (which is a support position for the service and sales managers), so there is a little bit of pressure on me in terms of will I be accepted in that role? will I be able to be totally natural? There are people there that do contact me and I have to be seen to be credible. Although they won't talk to me irrespective of their needs, it still is important for me that they not say 'Forget about Frances, she doesn't have a clue about what she's on about. She can't give us any support, she's got nothing to say when you talk to her'. I'm being very honest with you...".

<div align="right">Interview, 23-9-93</div>

These learning events presented good opportunities for learners to make good impressions in their

organisations. In all five learning events the learners thought the long term phase of making the right impression was very important and saw the learning event as an important contribution to it. Sara of the Cross Pacific told me during the learning event that she did not know if there was going to be a report going back to the management about the learners, but had she known that there would be one she "might have been more pressured to ask questions.. It does not hurt to put an intelligent front". Moreover, this is what Bob (who was the most senior of the learners (job-wise) in the Eastern Bank I learning event) said during a conversation that took place on the third day of the learning event,

" 'You have to understand one thing. Even though this course is not reportable, the area of corporate analysis is too small, it is between six to seven hundred people in total within the whole of the bank group and I have been in the bank long enough. Some of these people (the learners) are new and are thinking about being senior managers. They are worried about this member of the panel being tough. I know him. I talk to him. He's no problem for them but they worry'. I said 'but why?'. He replied 'I tell my junior people that banking is perception. We all come to this course. I go back and somebody mentions someone's name and I say he's good. He comes across very well or he doesn't. The fact of the matter is that a lot of people get promoted or given more responsibility or don't, simply based on talks that take place in pubs, corridors,..etc. People will contact Barbara (the instructor) about different people who apply for different jobs and saying that he or she is very good is a good front and is certainly different from saying he or she is not bad'".

Field notes 22-4-93

This led to the learners putting an importance on the display of dramaturgical skills in appearing as good learners even when they were not. Learners presented

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themselves before others by acting in accordance with the accepted front associated with the role of good manager-learner.

The following excerpt is another feature of the accepted front of learners in the Eastern Bank. Here I was observing during the fourth day of the Eastern Bank II learning event where the learners were role playing their real life case studies. The learners had prepared for these case studies by completing a questionnaire in their pre-work booklet. This questionnaire was supposed to help the second learner who was playing the subordinate role to familiarize herself with that role while the superior role was played by the learner who prepared the case herself. I was with Sarah, Sophie, Matthew, and Bill. In this exercise Sarah briefed the group about the case and what her problem was with her subordinate, she then had to leave the room while the group discussed with Sophie (who was playing the subordinate role) the strategy she should use with Sarah in order to be as close as possible to how the subordinate would act. This is an excerpt of the discussion between the three learners when Sarah was out:

"Sophie said that the subordinate in the case was acting as if he had a list of what he should do to get to where he wanted to get (He had told Sarah in a previous interview that he wanted to be an area manager in ten years which was two levels higher than Sarah in terms of the organisational chart). Sarah had explained that the subordinate was not a hard worker, that his output was low, but that he had extra

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curricular activities like he was the treasurer of the Junior Chamber Of Commerce, he had his ACIB qualifications, but that he lacked interpersonal skills, he was aloof with other staff and sought status. He was very qualified, very experienced, and he wanted to move up the ladder. Bill asked Sophie if the subordinate was working for his Diploma and Sophie said 'I would expect him to because that is one of the recommended things if you want to be an area manager'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 7-10-93</div>

It is evident from the excerpt that employees were aware of the things that would get them the rewards they aspired for. It was by acting according to the accepted front of the role they were playing. The promotion culture dictated this front (e.g. how a person ought to behave, what qualification he should get, and what extra activities he should get into). Sarah of the Eastern Bank II also told me during the course that lending was considered to be macho and that to be a woman lending officer one had to be one of the lads. She gave the example of drinking pints of beer rather than glasses of wine. Now, whether management would say that was not the case is irrelevant. The point is that the employees were behaving according to what they thought was expected of them, and this knowledge acted as a channelling and controlling force in individuals' decision-making processes. These tacit requirements became part of the 'corporate ethos' that demands loyalty from employees and punishes those who do not follow them (Willmott, 1993).

The danger is that the more people perform according to the roles they are occupying the more the subjective distance between their real selves and their roles would be narrowed as they start seeing themselves in terms of these roles. When learners put on the appearance of being 'good learners', as opposed to actually being good learners, they start believing that performing the role of good learner is equitable to being one. It then becomes more important, for example, to appear busy when instructors come into syndicate group rooms while spending the rest of the time having fun (as will be discussed in Chapter Six) than to struggle with the learning in front of the instructors. Learners convince themselves of the reality of the roles they are enacting.

The importance put on appearance was the subject of many conversations with different learners in different learning events. Both Pete and Richard from the Eastern Bank I agreed that putting on a good front or impressing others was a good thing to accomplish because, as Richard said, "there is this <u>grapevine reporting</u> (his wording not mine) that is going to get there any way". Lee and Piper (1988) discussed the 'grapevine' as a:

"normal conduit for information dissemination about major organisational matters, including those related to promotion" (Lee and Piper, 1988, p. 17).

In their research about promotion processes Lee and

Piper have shown how the rational promotional decisions were related to managers' perceptions of their employees who sometimes get labelled with characterizations that are transmitted through the grapevine and how that could affect their prospects (Lee and Piper, 1988; 1989).

Learners looked at the learning events (especially the technical ones) as cornerstones in their advancement in their careers, and making an impression was an important step in that direction. I am aware that making an impression is not a bad thing in itself and that it can be a motivator for putting in more effort. But this is not the case if the goal of learning is displaced by that of impressing others.

A clear example of this is when a group member falls behind the group but does not stop them. If she works up enough courage she might ask the member sitting next to her how she got to her figures, for example, and even if she did not understand she will still nod her head agreeably and copy the figures and get on with it. Faster people did not seem to want to waste time explaining things to slower ones. They sometimes did, but not if it was going to slow the group as a whole, and slow people did not seem to want to show how slow they really were. In the end the slower learners decided to follow others, work up the courage

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every now and then to ask, but they, I think, knew that they had already lost a good opportunity to impress others.

4.2.2 Confidentiality:

The learners' concern with impression management was also evident from their concern about confidentiality. The subject of confidentiality was usually brought up on the first day of the behavioural courses. It was a typical learners' concern at the beginning of a course, but in the Eastern Bank II the subject was brought up again on the fourth day of that learning event just before playing the real life case studies. In the following excerpt I was not actually sitting with the group but could hear their conversation from where I was sitting at the back of the classroom (there were only two groups in this learning event with four people in each):

"Sarah was telling her group how she was concerned about confidentiality and how she was not sure if the knowledge gained about a person during the course was going to be used against him in the future. She argued 'When you make a judgement about a person it is very hard not to take this with you. Even if that person changes in the future, it is very difficult for you to change your opinion'. Matthew said 'I think if some one applies for a job in the future and I get asked about him/her I will say I met her but not in a real environment. I spent four and a half days with her but I did not work with her so I don't know her. Bill then added 'What are the chances that I would meet you for a job in the future, where are you from?', and she said 'Surrey, but that is not acceptable, I have moved from the Midlands to the south and then to Surrey, so you don't know what will happen in the future'. The discussion continued until Margaret ended it by saying 'we shall agree that every thing that goes on here will be kept here'. They all nodded, but Sarah

unconvincingly".

The worries Sarah expressed in the above excerpt were, I think, legitimate because of the situation I have briefly discussed earlier about reporting which "would get there anyway". Grapevine reporting was an important aspect of the promotion culture that seemed to have a major influence on how learners conducted themselves in learning events, a subject I will turn to now.

4.2.3 The Grapevine:

Even when the instructors stated that there was not going to be any reporting back to organisations, learners still expressed mistrust when they moved to the 'back stage'. The learners were convinced that the training programme was not just for their learning and that they had another purpose; that of informing the management about learners' performances. Ahmed from the Washington Bank Case Study I, for example, was convinced that every action a learner makes during a learning event affects his prospects with the bank in the future. The following is an excerpt from a lunch conversation between Doug, Chris, Ahmed, and I:

"During lunch we discussed how reporting is going to affect the learners prospects within the bank. I told them I thought there wasn't going to be any reporting going to their bosses. Both Ahmed and Chris jumped at me and asked 'how do you know that?'. Ahmed then said 'I am sure there is some evaluation otherwise how are they going to know if we fit'. I then asked 'Who is evaluating you?', and he replied 'one at the front and one at the back' (referring to the instructors). Ahmed

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also brought the example of another course he'd attended at another American bank describing the course's reputation in the banking community as the MBA of banking. He said the course was a killer and that it was designed to distinguish between those who would make it and those who wouldn't. He explained that they'd spend a tough week and every friday there would be a party that was called 'Thank God it's Friday' and that if one of the learners did not show up for the party, then, the person responsible for him would come and ask him why he didn't come and that if he said he hadn't felt like it, the organiser would ask 'why?' Don't you like your colleagues?'. Ahmed added 'So although it was up to you, it really wasn't. If you don't go they will take it as if there is something wrong with you'. He also added 'the impression they make of you can affect your prospects'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

This mistrust was not a difficult thing for me to understand. Among the factors that Dalton (1951, 1959) had observed in studying the informal factors used in promotions of American industrial managers was whether a manager conformed to the social preferences of the upper management. More than forty years later the case did not seem much different. Keeping a good profile was definitely very important for promotional decisions, not only from the learners' perspective but also from their bosses' perspective.

This is what one of the bosses told me when I asked him about his influence in affecting his employees' promotions. His answer highlights the importance of making an impression, the evaluation that informally takes place in learning events, as well as the informal influence that bosses have on employees' promotions:

"My influence is not that formal. The banking industry is about people and in our business we have to know about the people that we have. That's our job as managers, and as managers not only of the business but of the bank as a whole we ought to know who are our good resources because banking is all about people, and in the role, as you progress up the chain you become more visible to a wider group of people with the bank because you deal constantly across national and product boundaries all the time.. you get noticed and when people start looking for positions to be filled you first look internally to see if there are any candidates that you know of that are suitable for the job, you discuss it with some of your peers and then you decide to make an approach to that one individual or group of individuals. In other words, a lot of it is by one's own knowledge of the people that we have. There isn't really a formal system of job advertisement. That's more for the general clerical positions or slightly junior positions where the universe of people who could apply for that is quite large, where as if you're looking for a specific thing, you need to be specific and will only get a short list of people. You have to approach their bosses as well (H: Why?) because I think we owe it to the organisation not to disrupt the existing present responsibilities. I think you also want to know what the existing manager thinks of the person as well, because very often sitting outside the individual's direct area of activity you sometimes get a very distant view of the individual and you can't always make sure that based on your few encounters with the individual that is what you want. You might want to talk to someone who knows the individual better before you actually go and raise his hopes. I would be very surprised if any one went and talked to any individual without having first talked to his manager. Not from the point of view of getting permission as it were, but more on the point of view of what is this individual like. What is his strengths, how do you think he will fit into his job that I have in mind, will he be good in that, would it be good for him; those sorts of things...".

Interview, 11-11-93

Informal channels were used not only for gathering information about individual candidates for promotions, but also for hearing signals about the change in behaviour. This is what Tom's boss (who was the most senior figure I have met in the Washington Bank) said about the subject:

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"I won't be looking for his behaviour change. I'm interested to see how the people he manages respond or will they respond in a different way. I will probably hear from the grapevine, things like 'Jenny says that since Tom got back from his course, he's really this or that', and also our Human Resource Officer (every unit has it's own Human Resource Officer) is very good at picking up stuff in terms of do the people really notice the difference in Tom. So it will be a lot of subtle signals".

<div align="right">Interview, 10-11-93</div>

Organisations are political systems and the departmentalization and specialization of different departments and sections, with each department or section competing for scarce resources, forced not only the learners but sometimes the learners' bosses to 'politicize' these events. The learning events were sometimes used by some bosses as channels to spread information (e.g. the results of their delegates in these learning events) which were to be used in future negotiations for scarce resources and to maintain the reputations of their departments within the organisation.

In the discussions with the learners and with their bosses the distinction between 'them' and 'us' was evident. When talking with the learners 'they' could have meant the instructors, the bosses, the bosses' bosses, or the human resource people. When talking with the bosses 'they' could have meant the instructors, the learners, the bosses' bosses, or again the human resource people. One learner explained that he was intentionally delayed training for six

months by his boss so that he would learn as much as possible before going to the learning event where he was expected to star (perform brilliantly) as all other staff from his department had done before him. Under these conditions, it was very unlikely that the learning milieu was going to be the neutral, safe, and non-threatening environment needed for the learners to experiment with learning. These training programmes became politicized events used by all parties involved to score points to be used in future power negotiations with their authority figures (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1994).

4.2.4 Secrecy in Evaluation:

Being secretive about evaluation and reporting did not help in building trust between the instructors and the learners on the one hand or between the learners and the organisation on the other. After attending the Washington Bank case study II it became evident that the bank was secretive about reporting and evaluation, maybe not intentionally, but that nevertheless was the situation. It was confusing in that only some learners knew that a report about them was going to be sent to their bosses. Some bosses expected such a report and some assured me that it was not the policy of the bank to send reports. When I discussed this discrepancy with the learning event coordinator and with the main

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instructor, the former told me that a verbal report would go from the instructors to the chief trainer who would then pass it on. The latter told me that she did not feel it was her job to tell the learners of the evaluation and that it was their bosses' job to tell them.

Some of the learners like Sam who had been in the bank long enough to know what to expect did not express any surprise when Carl (a Human Resource vice-president) walked into the classroom half an hour after the presentations started on the last day of the learning event. I did not know Carl was going to attend the presentations and neither did any one I spoke to during the break afterwards. Sam actually felt relieved that it was Carl and not his own boss. Sam had heard rumours that his boss was going to attend his presentation.

Smith, from the Washington II, did not think that an evaluation was going to take place because he was not told about it. He actually said when I asked him on the pre-course interview if he thought he was going to be evaluated: "I'd like to know now if there is going to be an evaluation". It might be worth mentioning that Smith only joined the bank one month before attending the learning event and that the event was the first in his training programme. During the event

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it became evident that Smith was not concerned about impressing the instructors, as the following excerpt illustrates:

"Smith does present the careless learner picture. When he presented his group's introduction section to the class he finished by saying 'two minutes, that's it. Next!' calling on his next group member to come forward. The class laughed and Hilary said 'For a whole two weeks work Smith, that's very good (cynically)'. He just said 'yeh'".
<div align="right">Field notes, 14-2-94</div>

This is the way Smith typically worked in his group which included in the following excerpt Fernando, Abdul, and Salma:

"Everybody was working on their transparency except for Smith who got up to get himself some coffee for the third time this morning (it is only 10:20). He also asked Fernando if he was finished and Fernando replied he was working on his arguments. Smith came back munching on his biscuit and started looking around at the others who were still working (He was only doing the introduction and so only had a small part). May be he was the organiser and maybe he did a lot of work to get the group going but for some one who doesn't know the group he certainly looks like the lazy person".
<div align="right">· Field notes, 14-2-94</div>

When learners do not perform for the benefit of the instructor, as in the case of Smith above, the instructors could get the wrong idea about him, as in the following excerpt:

"Smith is the thinker of his group but he comes into the syndicate room without a calculator or even a binder to refer to like everybody else. Anne (one of the instructors) came into the room and obviously saw him without papers or a calculator like the rest and so asked him 'Smith, what do you do in this group?'. He said laughingly 'I organise things. You know how every group needs an organiser'. She said she agreed but added 'I just see everybody punching numbers while you just sit there'. He just laughed. After she left the group continued in its work. Smith explained something to Salma which she did not understand but then suddenly he said to us 'She comes in here

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(referring to Anne), obviously she thinks I'm very
lazy'. Abdul said smilingly 'You are lazy' and they
all laughed".

The fact that Smith thought Anne perceived him as the
lazy group member (this is the third day of the
learning event) made him perform the next time she
came in when he was in the middle of a discussion with
Abdul who did not understand something and Smith was
explaining it to him. Abdul did not understand it the
first time and so Smith got out a pen and a paper to
explain it again. Anne sat down at the table and said
'I'll listen to what you have to say'. It was the
correct explanation and it seemed to have convinced
Anne that Smith was not the lazy person she thought
him to be. Smith, however, was still conscious of the
possibility that others might think he was lazy
because later on when I walked back to class with him
after this exercise he said to me "I would like to see
your thesis saying 'this lazy person'". I just smiled.

I am not sure why Smith was not concerned about
performing for the benefit of the instructors because
he certainly was the only exception in all the five
cases. Learners usually worked very hard at that and
even Smith realized this as the learning event got
under way as in the following excerpt from the field
notes when his group was working on their group

project which they were to present to the class:

"Smith is the creative person in his group. He told the group members 'I've got a wonderful idea', looked over the share prices in the Financial Times and then continued 'There is this company that our company should buy. I will run down to the fourth floor library and get the annual report and see'. Salma asked 'How did you come up with this company? You have to justify that to Anne and Hilary'. He answered 'It's under valued, it's going through some bad time but it's good and it's expensive to buy pharmaceutical because you are buying the R&D (Research and Development) as well'. When Abdul said 'Listen, this could be a waste of time', Smith replied 'Listen, if we get this right, it will impress them so much we will get the bottle of champagne'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 17-2-94</div>

Out of four learners I spoke to after the Washington II learning event (because the rest were based overseas) no one had a debrief session and the briefing that three of them spoke about was basically "this is the course you are going on, hope you enjoy it". The situation was the same as before in that neither the learners nor their bosses knew if there was going to be any reporting. This is what Ronald's boss said, for example, when I asked him if he had heard anything about Ronald's performance in the learning event:

"'Boss: I haven't had any feed back. I presume there will be.
Researcher: Will you have to approach Human Resources for a report or will they approach you?
Boss: Normally they will send me something where they will say how Ronald performed. That's what I've had before.
Researcher: In this course?
Boss: Yes, someone else. I think he (Ronald) has to fill in a form or had filled in a form assessing the course from his perspective and then I expect there will be some feedback partly based on what he said. The last person who attended the course had some negative comments about the course itself and

obviously that brought some comments from personnel back'".

The fact that this boss seemed to think that he would get feedback based on learners' negative evaluations of the course is interesting in itself. It seems a negative comment reflects on the person making it (which will be elaborated on later). In another case Smith and Patricia (who had the same boss) both said they did not have a de-briefing session while their boss said that he "had a rather long chat about the whole thing with both of them". This mix up fostered mistrust and uncertainty and in these situations it was no surprise that the learners performed for a 'hidden audience'. Because the learners did not know who this audience was (who was observing) or when they were observing they had to perform all the time to all perceived audiences.

4.2.5 Hidden Messages:

Learning and performing, do not mix well together, Reynolds (1980) argued that the success of cultural transmission through management education does not materialize just by designing the content of a learning event that expresses that desire. Rather:

"it is at least as much communicated to the student or trainee through the processes involved. The methods used, the trainer-student relationship, and the decision making structures are all based on principles, social and political. The methods applied transmit these principles even when they contradict the points of the content which it is intended they should convey". (Reynolds, 1980, p. 21-22).

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The contradiction between verbal and non-verbal messages is very important in training programmes and is easily spotted by the learners. Time and again when observing briefing sessions or during lectures I heard both bosses and instructors encouraging the learners to ask questions and participate in discussions but the learners still worried about asking. This, in my opinion was part of learners' strategy of performing to impress.

Binsted and Stuart (1979) argued that learners' experiences of learning events were related to past and present work experiences and that they come to decisions or form opinions after comparing their work experiences to their experiences of learning events. The learners avoidance of asking questions in the Washington Bank II learning event seemed to be a logical consequence of their experiences in that event. The learners were denied the opportunity of involvement, with their questions brushed aside with comments like "I think we are being trivial here" and "this is very interesting but more suitable for a conversation over lunch" when the instructor decided it was time to move on (more will be said about this in the power and control chapter). This actually led to a seemingly embarrassed learner asking a question later saying "I'm sorry, I'm not trying to be trivial here, but...". If this is the approach to management

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learning that is adopted then, as Hodgson and Reynolds (1981) explained, the learners would come to experience these events (rightly or wrongly) as indoctrinating rather than developing (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1994).

These manager-learners learn all the time in all types of milieux whether structured (e.g. training courses) or unstructured (e.g. experiences on the job). If what they learn in the organisation contradicts what is being introduced to them on structured learning events then the problem will not be that the learners do not want to learn. Their desire for learning might still exist, but they will develop 'second-order' desires which will be sustained by their dispositions and expectations, a situation that could lead them to change course and follow those desires. The second order desires are nurtured by what these learners have learned about the organisation. As Salaman and Butler (1990) explain:

"the problem thus is not that managers won't learn or they resist learning, but they have learned too much and too well, they have 'learnt the ropes' and these lessons about how their organisation works may obstruct their openness to further learning". (Salaman and Butler, 1990, p. 187).

This is also in agreement with Salaman and Butlers' (1990) argument that learners in management learning events learn strategically. They only learn if they expect what they are learning to help them in reaching

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the rewards they seek.

Now that I have covered the salient features of the learning culture the five learning events were embedded in, I think the stage is set for me to move to how and why the manager-learners pursued the goal of making an impression through performing. The learners did this through several practices that seemed accepted by every one around them. They chased after qualifications, avoided criticisms whether of the organisation or of their actions, learned about the instructors and how they thought, and looked for clues to help them reach instructors' right answers. They also balanced their effort relative to the class average and attempted to reach instructors' right answers in whatever manner that seemed appropriate for their goal, even if that meant fudging an answer when they did not have one or playing up the exercise for the benefit of the instructor. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to discussing each of these practices in more detail.

4.3 Tactics through which the performing-to-impress strategy was implemented

4.3.1 The Chase after Qualifications:

One feature of the 'corporate ethos' that was common in the three banks studied was the different statuses for different learning events and the chase after

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qualifications associated with superior courses. Learners always explained that the behavioural courses were not considered to be essential or turning points in their managerial career. This is what Foster of the Eastern Bank II case study said when I met him:

"I wouldn't say that this learning event would make a dramatic difference. Some courses I see as key courses in your development. This is not one of them. This one is going to be one which has significant potential to help me do a more effective job, it's not one that is vital for me to go to the next stage in my career. It's going to help in this role. It's not a technical course".

Interview, 22-9-93

In the Cross Pacific Bank most of the learners seemed to value that event because of a consensus that they needed to attend it if they wanted to remain in lending. One of the learners (Allen) actually classified that event as the most important learning event he was attending that year because "to continue to be involved in lending one has to have attended it". According to him, a person could have postponed that course but could not have cancelled it. Sara, from the same learning event, explained that choice was not part of her decision to attend the course; she had to attend. This led to some of the more experienced lenders in the course, like Vanessa, to look at the learning event as a 'test of endurance' or 'satisfying a requirement' rather than an opportunity to learn something new.

The supremacy of technical skills over behavioural

skills was sometimes communicated to the learners through the culture, as is evident from the following excerpt from an interview with Alex of the Washington Bank Case study II who said:

"Management skills are things that you pick up as you go along but that's not to say that's the right way to do it. As for technical skills, every time you start a new project and there is a technical reason for going on a course, no body questions it, while when you get to be a manager or a team leader they don't seem to automatically say you must be given good training in those areas, those skills that are required for managing people and all the other things that come with it".

Interview 12-11-93

Learners learned before coming to these training programmes that they did not have to give a lot of importance to management courses as Alex from the Washington Bank Case Study I continues:

"I don't believe as I explained earlier that management training is something that management tends to concentrate on here (in the bank). I think decisions on my career will be based more on my overall experience and what opportunities come up rather than on whether I have received the right training yet or not, so, I don't feel I will be held back if I don't attend this course. I feel that from a personal point of view, it will benefit me and may be, therefore, indirectly make me a better manager. Hopefully, that will benefit my career in the long run, but I don't see it in terms of make or break the next promotion".

Interview 12-11-93

The supremacy of technical courses was also sometimes communicated to the manager-learners through their bosses before they started the learning event. In the Eastern Bank I, I observed the briefing sessions between the bosses and their employees before starting the training programme. During these briefing sessions the bosses stressed the importance of certain courses,

as in the following example:

"This is Sara's briefing session. Her boss said 'people with credit strength are held with high regard in the bank. I had to do it. For any senior job you need that..You need to do this course if you aspire to management duties'".
<div align="right">Field notes 15-4-93</div>

Another evidence of how chasing after qualifications was an accepted reality in these banks was how one of the learners in the Washington Bank Case Study II explained why he was getting a degree. The learner (John) did not have an O level but was still a Vice-President at the bank. He argued that certificates and/or qualifications were what he called 'splitting factors' and explained that he was planning to get a degree not because he was going to acquire new knowledge but because it would secure his job. In the following excerpt, he explains the importance of qualifications:

"The industry is going through the roof at the moment, but basically I've done every job. I'm experienced but there is always the factor that the day may come where there is a management rationalization so you may be the guy shown the door. I don't think I'll have too much difficulty getting another job hopefully, but the day may come where you just cannot split people at all; same experience, both work for financial institutions, same sort of business knowledge, so there has to be a factor to split them, and I think that at my sort of level it's very rare to have people without a degree.. almost unheard of to have people who haven't got A levels or equivalent".
<div align="right">Interview 12-11-93</div>

Dore (1976) distinguished between schooling that is 'education' and schooling that is 'qualification earning' and stressed that the effect of

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training/learning on learners depended on the learners' orientations to learning. Why are learners in training courses? So far most learners in the events explained they were in these courses because their authority figures wanted them to attend them, or because they had to if they wanted to stay in their areas, or because...etc. It seemed learners were attending these events to get another credential that would enhance their promotability or security. No one mentioned learning or development. What these learners seemed most concerned with was 'impression management' of the self and the appearance of learning.

In the Washington Bank II the learners told me both before and after the training course that they were in the learning event to learn 'the language' of the Washington Bank. I met at least two learners in that course to whom the content of the course was not new because one of them (Smith) had his Associate Corporate Treasurer (ACT) qualification and the other (Sam) had completed an MBA-level course on Corporate Finance. They explained that they were in the training programme to learn the language of the Washington Bank, and although this was not a formal objective of the course it was what took place in the event. This was with the knowledge of both instructors and bosses because one of the instructors called it 'brainwashing', adding that during the two week course

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there would be no time for discussion which would be left for the longer credit courses. A boss also explained to me that he was sending two of his employees to the course (one with an ACT) to learn the way of the Washington Bank so that both he and they speak the same language, especially with the British/American difference in accounting terminology. If this is so, learners have no reason to take full value of attending these events.

Eiser (1978) explained how when a person receives rewards for an action, that person would not need to make the attribution that the action was interesting or enjoyable because the external rewards would provide enough justification regardless of any intrinsic rewards of the action. The same was argued by Macintyre (1985) who distinguished between external and internal goods of a practice (an example of a practice would be attending a learning event and an example of an external good of attending a learning event would be having it on one's C.V. while an internal good will be the real learning the learners achieve).

Ostensibly these organisations sponsored the development of their managers by means of expensive training programmes through which they demonstrated their commitment to their employees and their skills.

However, these organisations at the same time set the boundaries of what was acceptable for the employee to do, the breadth and depth of the acceptable skill,..etc. and in so doing they stifled initiative and denied discretion in behaviour. Even after attending what was perceived as the most important course in ones' career, learners moved back to the organisations where the division of labour, accountability and responsibility, rewards, and systems and procedures (characteristics of the modern organisation) dictated their jobs.

Many of the learners told me when I spoke to them six weeks after the Eastern Bank I learning event, that even though they may have been given the opportunity to use what they learned, their responsibility still lay with the operational work they used to and continued to do after coming back from the training programme. So, they not only had to fulfil their original job responsibilities, but also had to find the time to make the effort to incorporate the "new stuff", as Colin explains in the following excerpt:

"I feel sorry for people who have gone on the course and are not using it when they have the opportunity and I think it is a fault of the system and that the boss should see that the learning event was an opportunity for the participant to progress and therefore should be given the opportunity to write applications and to use what they have learned so you move forward, you are in the same job but your responsibilities can be changed to bring you to a standard that you can take the next position with relative ease. *I think the system itself where people have set*

*responsibilities is very rigid. You look after returns, you look after
administration, you look after that. The next people up will prepare the
application, the next one up, the senior sees it, signs it, off to credit 'do that',
and that's the bank, 'people in places do certain jobs' and the cross
diversification of responsibilities is not there"* (emphasis added).

Interview, 24-6-93

I think Colin has hit it right on the spot. We live in
a world governed by the rules of the organisation and
not only do we come to see ourselves in terms of
organisational values but we also accept the
organisational sense-making of employees in a way that
seeks to balance the negative effects of
individualism. Macintyre (1985) discussed how
organisations with their bureaucratic structures
define the working tasks of the working individual and
how this was necessary because of the struggle for
scarce resources (whether human or material) to reach
predetermined goals. He argued that managers have the
responsibility to direct scarce resources to reach
organisational ends in the most efficient and
economical means. Organisations are characteristically
concerned with external goods. They have to be
structured in this way in order to survive.

4.3.2 Avoiding criticism:

Learners performed to impress because this performance
seemed to be part of the hidden requirements not just
in formal training programmes but within the
organisations observed as a whole. An aspect of
performing to impress was avoiding public criticism.

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When learners avoided criticizing the organisation they worked for or its policies because it was not good for their future they were simply carrying out the demands of the hidden requirements.

I sat through a lunch with Ahmed, Doug, and Chris on the second day of the Washington Bank Case Study I where Ahmed and Chris mostly advised Doug not to criticize a new initiative of the bank in class. Ahmed said to Doug: "You'd better be very careful about talking about the new initiative negatively". This was a casual conversation over lunch, and through this and other casual conversations the reality of working in organisations was confirmed. That was: "those who question (the organisation) must drop out of the establishment. The price of maintaining membership in the establishment was an unquestioning acceptance of authority" (Postman and Weingartner, 1969, p. 35).

Avoiding criticism as an ethos was a rarely talked about subject. However, I was able to discuss it with the more senior experienced members of the organisations attending these learning events where the distrust of those who set demands became evident. These discussions were also almost always semi-private.

Learners were also careful about criticizing people in

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the organisation too openly as the following excerpt

illustrates:

"During a class discussion about the importance of the
employee knowing his boss's objectives, Tom said he
remembered once when his boss asked him 'Actually,
what do you do?'. There was laughter around the class
and Tom continued 'and my boss didn't know what his
boss did', and there was another laughter around the
room. He kept quiet for a while and Pamela (the
instructor) continued with her discussion but after
few seconds Tom interrupted 'That example wasn't from
the Washington Bank, by the way'. It was as if he had
thought about it and realized it wasn't good to be
perceived to be criticizing the organisation too
openly in public".
<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

Another way of avoiding public criticism was through

affecting the audience which I will discuss now.

4.3.3 Affecting the audience:

According to Goffman (1959) individuals can claim the

status associated with a role by presenting the 'face'

expected of that role. He argued that individuals get

embarrassed when their presented self is not congruent

with their claimed self. Learners in behavioural

courses, especially, got embarrassed by fellow group

members' reviews of their role plays. This is how Bill

(the most senior learner in the Eastern Bank II)

behaved when his group reviewed his role play (Matthew

played the subordinate role) and he knew he did not

succeed in being the Q4 (cooperative) manager he was

supposed to be:

"As soon as the role play was over Bill put his head
on the table and then walked out without a word, he
got himself a drink of water, and then came back...

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Bill didn't say a word, he kept on looking at his notes even when Sophie was directing a comment to him saying 'Maybe it's because of the tone of your voice which wasn't right for this type of person...Bill definitely does not look comfortable and I think the group knew it. Sarah looked at him just for one second and then turned away as did Matthew and Sophie at some point. He did not watch the video at all except to glance at it for a second or two but would then turn back to his analysis sheet he was staring at. Even when Matthew started laughing at a comment from the video and looked at him, he still didn't look up, just shook his head... At some point he stopped writing but started playing with his pen and eraser. Matthew looked at him trying to catch his attention but Bill refrained from looking back and continued to look sideways at the bottles on the table on the side of the room".

Field notes, 6-10-93

In this last incident Bill's embarrassment at not performing according to the organisational recommendations is obvious. Sometimes the learners watched the role play video replay until they reached a part they knew was embarrassing (because they did not perform as they should have) and then they would look sideways, down at their notes, or even just stare in the air. It was as if the learners were 'unallocated selves' which were seeking identity in terms offered by the learning event. As a result, as part of their impression management the learners tried to hide their mistakes from others (the term mistakes is used loosely here to mean performing not as expected) as in the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank II when Margaret (the instructor) came in while the group was reviewing Brian and Marys' role play. Mary was a sales and service manager and conducted herself as the senior manager she knew she was (she

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gave advices to others around her and mothered them quite frequently). It was interesting to see that the only two people who objected (politely) to the instructor's watching their videoed role play were the ones who played it:

"The group couldn't remember if Mary had used summary statements with Brian and if these statements were effective in keeping him in line. Frances couldn't think of an example when Margaret asked her for one and so she (Frances) asked if they could play the video again. Brian started to say that it was too long a section and Mary jumped in and added 'I can always watch it on my own later if I want to'. It was as if they did not want Margaret to watch it. Mary was also the first one out of the room".
                              Field notes, 6-10-93

The interesting thing was that by acting this way the embarrassed learners were able to avoid criticism from members of their groups. Learners knew about their ability to affect their audience and some of them avoided <u>difficult</u> questions by hiding what they knew so that they would get relatively easier questions (in the technical courses' presentations) than would otherwise be the case as in the following examples from the Eastern Bank case study I:

"We walked back to class after the break and I sat in my seat. Alan came up to me and said the same thing that Cathy had said to me earlier.i.e. that the afternoon panel was much tougher than the morning panel. Up to this stage only Bob and Roger had presented to the afternoon panel. Alan added, however, that he thought that the panel had asked Bob too deep questions because the panel felt that he knew a lot about the company. I think for someone like Alan who is probably not concerned with impressing and is more concerned about not losing face and to basically get on with it (he was probably the weakest in the group), this was an easy strategy to follow. It seems that he believes if he shows he doesn't know a lot, the panel will not embarrass him by asking him too difficult questions and so it is a face-saving technique".

In another example I have noticed how Mary (who was the most vulnerable member in the Eastern Bank I learning event) got relatively easier questions from her panel. This was the same difficult panel which had asked Bob the 'too detailed questions'. When presenting Mary's voice was very low. I could hardly hear her from where I was sitting and it was obvious that the panel was straining to hear her too. I was not present during the afternoon briefing session (where the two instructors briefed members of the panel about the different presenters and what the aim of the exercise was), so it was not possible for me to see if the instructors have discussed Mary's vulnerability with the panel through this 'staff-panellist' conference. It was, nevertheless, obvious to all that Mary's presentation was not an enjoyable experience for her. So, by acting vulnerable, a learner could get more consideration in questioning which could make her experience less difficult than would otherwise be the case. This affecting the audience was observed in both technical and behavioural courses and the following one from the Eastern Bank II explains the effect:

"When Bill was not receptive to the critique, the group softened its critique a bit. At the beginning there was some criticism about the way he put his questions to his subordinate. Sarah was not even looking at him. She was directing her comments to the group. After that she started complementing him on his good use of some open questions with comments like 'good open questions, good summary,..etc.'. Bill was

still looking down".

Sarah summarized how her feedback was affected by such behaviours from the receiving party the next day during a group discussion. I was not sitting with the group but it was easy for me to follow the discussion since I was seated right behind them. This is the excerpt from the field notes:

"I heard Sarah say she was not as candid as she could have been because she feels candour could be destructive 'and when you feel you are being destructive with the other person you start mixing it with positive comments and so you start de-emphasizing what you wanted to emphasize in the first place'".

It is possible, however, that this strategy of avoiding criticism only worked if there were no intervening factors that were more important from the perspective of the learners giving the critique. The instructor's presence, for example, had the effect of making the learners want to impress the instructor and wanting to impress the instructor for one reason or another out-weighed the learners' concern for the parties being criticized, as is evident from the following excerpt:

"When Margaret came in while they were reviewing Mary's role play and the group started telling Margaret how Mary ran out of time, and how the social part took over and she could not control Brian, Mary did not look at anyone of the group, she just played with the pen she had in her hand while she continued looking at her notes".

I pointed out earlier how some of the learners avoided instructors' questioning by acting vulnerable and the

following incident is evidence of a similar practice for affecting audiences through distracting them from pursuing their line of questioning. The excerpt also raises the important issue of learners learning some of these strategies in the learning events attended as part of these events' hidden curriculum, as is evident from the following excerpt from the Washington Bank II:

"I was with Abdul, Smith, Salma, and Javier where they were working on their practice case on the morning of the sixth day of the learning event. The practice presentations were to start in the afternoon. Abdul asked about the reason for the dip in the sales figures and Smith said that was not important. Abdul then argued 'Look, Hilary (the instructor) is going to sit with this sheet in her hand. We have to find an answer'. Smith then said 'well, you can always say "well, I will come back to you at the end of the presentation but I can't answer it now in this context"'. Abdul laughed and said 'you know you can't do that', but Smith continued 'Of course you can. It's a perfectly good answer, one that would side-track her but an answer nevertheless'. ...(about an hour later) Salma was presenting her part of the group presentation and Hilary interrupted with a question about the generic product which Salma had as an opportunity for the company. Salma said 'Let me finish the SWOT first because all your questions will be answered then'. Smith burst out in laughter and raised his thumbs up for Salma as if telling her 'good work'".

Field notes, 14-2-94

The more the learners seemed to evaluate themselves in terms of how they measured to what the organisation expected them to be, the more their impression of themselves became what they thought was the organisation's impression of them.

As time passed I got used to observing learners'

feelings of guilt when they let a group down or sometimes embarrassment from the slower learners when it became evident they were the slowest in the group, as in the following excerpt:

"Barbara (the instructor) noticed Doug was checking his figures with Pete and she stood at their desk watching them. Doug looked embarrassed and he looked at her and said 'It's O.K. I found it'. She asked 'Is it the short-term debt?' because he had problems allocating that in the previous exercise but he said no. She then noticed the unfilled items in his sheet and tried helping him. His face turned red and he sort of dismissed her and said 'It's O.K. I know that'. I think he was embarrassed to be caught in the act especially since every body was waiting for him to finish".

<div align="right">Field notes 23-4-93</div>

One could argue that as learners objectified parts of their selves into roles, and as they continued to play these roles they routinized them. In this way the subjective distance between the 'surface' self and the 'real' self was narrowed down gradually until it disappeared totally, and the learner identified himself within the socially accepted role. McLaren (1993), however, quoted Rappaport (1978) who distinguished between acceptance and belief in an act.

According to Rappaport (1978) 'Belief' is "an inward state knowable subjectively if at all", where as 'acceptance' is a "*public act* visible to both witnesses and the performer himself" (Quoted in McLaren, 1993, p. 133, Emphasis in original). Acceptance does not even imply belief.

When learners conformed to their authority figures'
expectations of them, this did not imply the belief in
the learning content, organisational policies, or even
societal norms (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995a). It
simply meant that because one had committed oneself to
institutional membership they had to accept the rules
of the institution they were members of regardless of
their approval of them. Each manager-learner tried to
figure out what was actually expected as opposed to
what was formally required.

When the instructors assured the learners that there
was not going to be any evaluation report going back
about them to their bosses and that the courses in
general were not evaluative the instructors I believe
meant and believed what they were saying but when they
put emphasis on impressing panellists or others within
the learning event it took the learners little time to
make sense of these conflicting messages.

4.3.4 Learning about the instructors/Speakers:

Becker et al (1968) discussed how university students
devoted much effort to discovering the 'terms of the
contract' between them and their academic lecturers so
that they could keep their end of it through their
academic performance; the situation was not much
different in the five learning events studied. A lot
of energy was spent in these learning events not on

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the learning content but on collecting information about instructors, speakers, or panellists before they came to the learning event. This enabled the learners to know what to expect and how to conduct themselves with these instructors. The following excerpt from the Cross Pacific learning event will explain my point:

"While working on their projects the group started discussing the instructors. Vanessa said 'You still have not met John Fox (the instructor for the last module of the learning event). I don't even know how he got fellowship with this Business School'. She then asked me if I knew what it took to get fellowship with a business school and I said I did not. She continued 'He's an arrogant person. I've done a course with him and the whole group did not know anything about car dealership which one needed to for a certain exercise. He walked in and told us that our work was all wrong and then just left us. He came back after a while and said 'well, haven't you heard, you've got it all wrong'. He's another person who was nothing and became something' (referring to an earlier discussion about another instructor who she had mentioned had started at a clerical position and was not smart but had moved until his present position)".

Field notes, 5-10-92

More will be discussed in Chapter Five but suffice it to say here that learners tried to infer the terms of the contract in one of three ways: from the instructors' general statements of what to expect; from the instructors' general actions and clues that they gave through praising some actions and punishing others, and through interrogating learners who had previous experience with the instructor/panellist in question.

4.3.5 Thinking like the instructors:

Because the learners perceived the learning

environment to be highly competitive and important for their futures, they took 'short cuts' to learning. One way of doing this was by the learners' undertaking to think like the instructors in order to get to the answers the instructors wanted, a strategy noted in pupils' behaviour in schools (Woods, 1980b). MacLure and French (1980) also discussed how it was necessary for children to comply with their teachers' definition of the situation in order for them to produce acceptable answers to their teachers' questions.

To get to the instructors' right answers learners analyzed not only the instructors' comments but also their intentions. I am not talking about the learners questioning the instructors about what types of questions they were likely to get in tests, or the length of presentations (as much as this provides an evidence of the dependent learning the learners got involved in). I am talking about the learners pushing the instructors into doing the thinking for them and leading them to their (the instructors') right answers. This will be elaborated on in Chapter Seven.

Also, soon after the learners started working in groups on presentations, and in an attempt to make their work more manageable, they started to approach it from the perspective of the instructors, to get to the instructors' right answer. They started asking

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questions like "What is the instructors' objective here?" and "What do they want us to learn?".

One example was observed during a group syndicate exercise where the learners were working on an accounting problem. This is the excerpt from the field notes:

"I was with Smith, Salma, Abdul, and Fernando working on their company. The group was working out the number crunching when Abdul said that the more complicated the numbers looked the more convincing they would be. Smith interrupted 'I think the purpose of the exercise is not to get too technical and hung up in technicalities, it is to come up with a view point'. Every time Abdul made a suggestion to get into the cash flow in more detail Smith would say 'no, the objective of the exercise is to make it simple, see if the cash flow can hold the facility structure we're thinking about, and to incorporate the covenants there too. We can make this exercise as complicated as we want but that is not the objective'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 17-2-94</div>

Because learners were obsessed with right answers, they became lenient with understanding the path they would have to take to get to the right answer. They followed rules blindly in what Holt (1964) called 'answer-getting recipe' which meant remembering these rules and following them would almost always get the answer right as is clear from the following incidents from the Eastern Bank I:

"After the instructor left, Bob questioned how she had said they have to take depreciation off the balance sheet and then take it off again in the profit and loss account, and he said the movement in the balance sheet is supposed to be the profit and loss 'so I don't understand'. Doug added that this had confused him too and that it didn't make any sense. Bob said 'she actually almost said this was double counting but she still said you have to do it here and there..I don't understand'. Steve then joined in and said 'If

it balances the cash flow I'm willing to go with that'
and they all laughed. They completed the exercise the
way she told them to, balanced, and then broke off for
coffee".

One thing is clear from the above excerpt. The

learners did not care about understanding the path to

the solution. They went about it blindly (although I

must admit I sometimes wondered if this was because of

the short time they had to really sit down and do some

thinking of why they do this or that and not just how

to do it). The learners were definitely good at the

mechanical part but not at the explanation part as is

evident here:

"This group discussed whether to put intergroup
figures (borrowing) which is part of inter company
operations as part of financing or as a separate
figure. They asked the instructor when she came in and
she said 'it's really up to you as long as you give me
the reasoning behind it'. Roger laughed and said
'that's the difficult part'".

4.3.6 Looking for Clues:

The learners disbursed their energies into reading

signals from the instructors in an attempt to get some

control over the kind of questions they were asked,

the kind of reaction the instructors made to their

actions, and the kind of reactions they got from their

fellow learners.

There were many incidents during the learning events

where I had the impression that the learners were

testing the waters with regards to where the decisions

they were making stood. They tested their decisions

with other groups, they looked (stared) at the instructors' faces for clues, they let someone else start an answer and then watched for the instructors' reactions to pick the discussion up when they felt comfortable (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995a). Learners also used instructors' comments and actions as clues telling them where they stood with regards to something or another. An example of this was a group in Eastern Bank I who took being chosen to present last by the instructor as a clue that they were on the right track and that their group solution was actually the best. They thought that the instructor was saving the best till last as the following excerpt illustrates:

"After Barbara (the instructor) left Bob said to the group 'Actually, on that basis I think we are more on the right track than the others. She probably wants the class to warm up until we get it at the end'..The group then started analyzing what happened when Barbara was in the syndicate room discussing the group solution. Bob said 'I must have said something and she picked on that but I can't remember what it is that I said'. Sara agreed 'Yes, because I went to saying about it being a private company but she just ignored it and went back to what you were saying'".
Field notes 22-4-93

Also, learners always presented to instructors and never did I see one presenting to the class,

"Sam was presenting his group's results but it does not seem he's presenting to the class because he's only looking at Anne (the instructor). Half way across the presentation he moved to the other side of the OHP and then started looking at Hilary".
Field notes, 9-2-94

"Javier got up to present the SWOT of his group. He was solely looking at Hilary with very few exceptional periods. At some point he said that there were low switching costs in the company. Hilary asked why he

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says that and he replied 'we discussed this a bit in our group and we thought...Abdul (who is not a member of Javier's group) was looking all the time between Hilary and Javier as if waiting for a clue of how Javier stood with his argument. It was as if he's seen something encouraging in Hilary's expression and then he decided to interrupt asking 'but why is that?'".
<div align="right">Field notes, 11-2-94</div>

While in the last excerpt Abdul was watching for an expression on the instructor's face to encourage him to interrupt, a sign that it was safe for him to dispense with the current definition of the situation without letting his defences down, others like Sam, in the following excerpt, might watch for a comforting sign that his group's results presented by Lisa were fine:

"While Lisa was presenting Sam was looking at Hilary. Actually, his seat was turned sideways so that he doesn't only look at the board but also at Hilary. Salma (not from the same group) was also looking at Hilary every now and then. She crossed her eye brows at one moment and looked at Hilary as if she expected Hilary to disagree but when Hilary didn't she didn't either".
<div align="right">Field notes, 11-2-94</div>

There is plenty of evidence in the field notes that the learners did not present to the class as a group. Instead, their attention centred on the instructors. Whether the learners were presenters or audience they all watched the instructors for approving or disproving signs. Even when answering questions directed at them by other learners presenters always looked at the instructors and not at the learner who asked the question.

Further, in order for the learners to reach the

instructors' right answers and to think as the
instructors do they learned to listen to what the
instructors said and this enabled them to use the
instructors' arguments later when working in their
groups on exercises or group projects, as in the
following excerpt:

"The instructor keeps on bringing examples from the
cases that the learners are working on. Elaine (an
instructor) particularly mentioned X company several
times this morning and every time the name gets
mentioned Patricia looks at Hasan. They are seated at
different groups in class but are in the X company
group for their group project'.
                                        Field notes, 16-2-94

The design of these learning events, where learners
had to present (whether individually or in groups) to
a panel, was supposed to give the learners the
opportunity to go through the complete processing
stages of preparing and presenting a credit
application. But as Bob from the Eastern Bank II told
me, learners only learned what was related to their
companies. This will be elaborated on in Chapter
Seven. This is how Bob explained the learners'
approach to learning:

"At times I felt that although that (the pressure of
the presentation) was necessary for people to learn,
all that people were doing was learn the elements of
their application or company and relate this to their
position and take it as an overall view. In other
words, if your exercise was you had to provide a
special kind of line and people started to talk about
that line, all of a sudden you woke up, if they start
to talk about another type of line, you thought well,
I'm not interested in that, Bom! That's the way people
seemed to have approached it and that's wrong. When
you're in the real world and you're actually doing the
real stuff, you have all the lines, and so you must

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take a much rounded view. Unfortunately, by telling people upfront that this is what you're doing and this is your company, then people will blink at it with their approach".

The task of picking up clues became easier when the learning event was conducted by team instruction because the learners then picked up clues from one instructor and used them to defend their answers in another's session as in the following excerpt:

"After the second group presented their case the instructor told them that they had said that when supply decreases the power of the buyer increases and that she didn't agree with that. They kept silent for few seconds and then Bob said 'Actually it was Robert (the other instructor) who said that' and Pete said 'yes'. Bob looked at Robert and asked 'Isn't that what you told us?', and Robert said defensively 'wait a minute'. The class laughed and Barbara (the lecturer) slipped lower into her seat next to Robert and said 'Sorry Robert' and started joking about it. Colin who is not a member of this group, then volunteered and said 'I agree with what Robert had said' and gave his reasoning while Robert remained silent. Bob interrupted 'You mean Robert's answer' and the class laughed again".

Although Barbara (above) tried to save the situation by steering the discussion away so that Robert's judgement was not questioned, it was still obvious for everyone to see.

This, of course, does not mean that the learners did not use clues picked up from an instructor against the same instructor as in the following excerpt:

"When we got back to class and put the three groups' results of the balance sheet recognition exercise on the flip chart Anne (an instructor) asked group two to explain why they made a certain choice and Sam said 'because you said that'. The class roared with laughter and Anne said 'No matter what I tell you in

group discussion you're not supposed to say that in class'".

I had this notion in my notes about the learners always trying to move towards a <u>comfort zone</u>, and that only when they reached it did they take the risk of guessing, otherwise they would not make fools of themselves in front of others.

One way of testing the waters was through learners going around the groups collecting data about what every group was doing, what tools they were using, and what decisions they were arriving at, and they used this information in planning what to do, what tools to use...etc., as is evident from the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank I:

"Pete came in the syndicate room of the group I was observing and they first asked him how to spell the word naive which he told them and added 'That's interesting, we (his group) have got that word too'. He sat down at the table and said 'I walked out of my group. I can't convince them'. Roger asked him what question his group was covering and Pete said it was question three. Roger then continued 'So, what would you have done if you were Mr X' (which was question three). They continued to discuss the case for some time until Cathy said something about the financials and Pete said 'yes, that's a good one. We haven't thought about that in my group. I'd better go back'".

The learners became experts at smelling out questions that they were likely to get from the panel, in a test,.. etc. and they concentrated only on these and ignored every thing else. But they also spent some time trying to figure out what appealed to the

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instructor. In the Eastern Bank I, for example, a group I was observing was supposed to analyze the financial statements of a company. All of a sudden Bob asked if they should calculate the Du pont ratio. They then started to make a joke about the need to calculate that ratio simply because it was French originated. The instructor was French. Funnily enough, that was one of the questions the instructor asked in class during the presentation of that exercise. Pete exchanged glances with Bob and they smiled to each other. They certainly predicted well this time.

Holt's (1964) argument is very relevant here although his discussion was about children:

"When a child gets right answers by illegitimate means, and gets credit for what he doesn't know, and knows he doesn't know, it does double harm. First, he doesn't learn, his confusions are not cleared up; secondly, he comes to believe that a combination of bluffing, guessing, mind reading, snatching at clues, and getting answers from other people is what he is supposed to do at school; that this is what school is all about; that nothing else is possible". (Holt, 1964,p. 146).

4.3.7 Affecting Effort:

Groups can affect each others' effort by either controlling, directing, or stifling it. Controlling effort was sometimes done through passing funny comments or joking about learners who appeared to be working too hard or too fast, as in the following excerpt from the Cross Pacific case study:

"The learners reassembled in class after the syndicate

meetings. Group four was there five minutes before the others. When the other groups came back Allen looked at group four and said 'coming back half an hour earlier, trying to show off here, we stopped hearing Richard trying to get the notes down (Richard had a habit of asking for answers to be repeated for his benefit in syndicate exercises because he wanted to get every thing written down in case he gets called on in class)".

<div align="right">Field notes, 30-9-92</div>

The learners came to expect these comments and were very careful not to encourage them, as in the following excerpt:

"I was with Sara, Michael, Howard, and William. When they finished doing the exercise and were ready to go in William said 'no, let's wait, it's too early, if we go in we're going to get all sorts of comments'".

Learners were eager to impress others but not when it was at the risk of being labelled. It seemed as if the learners were walking a tight rope between their loyalty to their groups and to their personal interests. If the learners read signals from fellow learners that they might be perceived as hard workers or the 'know it all' person in the learning event, they started showing other learners they were not so and that some of their answers were simply guess-work.

Becker et al (1968) discussed how learners 'restrict' production by putting pressure on others not to work too hard and to keep the average effort low so that they do not put others in the group in a difficult position. In one incident in the Cross Pacific Bank the learners spent all dinner time one evening trying to convince Richard to join them in a social outing,

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which he did not want to do. The learners used arguments like "but it's the weekend" and "you can't work on a Friday evening".

The following is another excerpt from the field notes of a syndicate meeting where Richard (during the simulation game played in the learning event) was disturbing William's group, who were next door, by breaking their concentration and banging on the door connecting the two syndicate rooms:

"Richard kept on banging on the door separating the two syndicate rooms. He looked at me and I said 'I am not writing' (every time he looks at me and finds me writing he tells me not to write). He replied 'That's alright, I'm only trying to break their concentration, and break my hand'. After few minutes when he knocked at their wall again he got a reaction and he said 'That's good, when I get a reaction, then they stopped thinking about this (pointing to the work)".
Field notes, 5-10-92

Because impressing each other was important, sometimes that was used by other learners to control the efforts of the group by showing them that their work was not impressive and that they were better off not wasting their time on working along the same lines, or even that some one else had beat them to it.

The following excerpt is from a syndicate meeting for project preparation which included Vanessa, William, Charles, and Matthew from the Cross Pacific Bank. The group's company was a certain soft drink company and so they bought a can of the drink to taste it because it was not a very popular soft drink that every body

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had tasted before,

"Richard walked into the room and asked 'Oh, you bought this stuff?' referring to the soft drink glass on the table. Vanessa said 'I've tasted it too, you can have a taste if you like'. He declined and said 'I bet if I come back next week, it will still be here'. He then turned to William and asked 'what's with the computer?' (William had brought his own note book computer and was using it to make a regression analysis for the company). William replied 'I've done some modelling and projected balance sheets'. When Richard replied 'I think you'll have to lose some weight before you do some modelling', Vanessa looked at Richard and said 'O.K. You've insulted two of us, now get out'. He said laughingly 'I haven't said any thing about these two yet', pointing to the other two members of the group. He then looked at the flip chart and said 'It's about time you've picked that up' referring to the notes on the chart. He explained his group was through with their work and so William said 'Well, you started and worked all through sunday'. Richard replied 'Well, we put in the time we thought it deserved' and then looked at the chart again and laughed and said 'Oh, you've picked this too, that's good'. At this point William said 'O.K. Out' and Richard looked at me and said 'Oh, I feel a sense of tension here, I think I'll leave'. William replied 'Well, you brought it'. After Richard left, William looked at me and said 'Look at this, you're not supposed to take this competitively, but he does. Coming in here bragging about how well he's covered it'".

· Field notes, 5-10-92

Actually, the word got around that William was using a computer for his group's financial analysis early on in the course, and even Vanessa who was a member of William's group joked about it. I was with both Vanessa and George when George mentioned it, and Vanessa replied:

"'This was not the intention, the intention was to show how you knew your ratios'. George added 'This is probably because William wants his presentation to be different from the others'".

Field notes, 1-10-92

William did want to stand out from the crowd. He was a part-time instructor in a banks' training centre (a

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point he mentioned to everybody in the learning event). He also used a state-of-the-art laser pointer in his presentations, something none of the instructors in this learning event had, which led to smiles passing around class whenever he used it.

Coming back to how groups affected effort, the groups in these events tried to establish what everybody was doing with the work and then tried to put in similar effort, as is clear from the following quote from the field notes:

"During lunch they asked each other if they were planning to work during the weekend, and if so what days, on what,..etc".
Field notes, 22-4-93

It was through these actions that groups were able to direct effort. Each group (through its members as in Pete's example discussed earlier) tried to see how the other groups were doing so that they made sure they as a group did not deviate from the flow. The groups tried to keep within the comfort zone I have talked about earlier. This was not done for genuine learning's sake. It was simply a face-saving strategy, as is clear from the following excerpt:

"Pete returned to his group (he had gone out to get some flip charts). He was laughing as he came in and said that he had spoken to Colin's group. He said that they had asked him how his group was doing and that when he answered that the case was a Porter case (Porter was an analytical model used for analyzing competitors and industries that was covered in lectures) Colin went crazy saying 'Oh, xxxx, we haven't even looked at that' and got their Porter

hand-out out ".

The struggle for directing effort could also be between members in the same group. Weaker members, for example, were dictated to; they simply were not strong enough to choose the things they wanted to work on. The stronger learners simply 'dumped' work that no one wanted to do on the weaker ones who were forced to accept it, as in the following excerpt:

"Pam looked at Alan and said 'You'll do the financials'. Alan asked 'well I?'. She continued 'Yes, I'll do the first part' (the other two members have already presented in a previous session). They then realized they were running out of time and Bob gave the sheet he had to Pete and said 'Why don't you two (Pete and Alan) do the financials while I help Pam write on the flip chart because we're running out of time'. Alan moved beside Pete and started writing the notes while Pete was practically dictating them to him. At one point after writing a three line paragraph Pete realized it didn't make any sense and they just crossed it out. Alan was only writing and asking Pete to repeat things when he didn't hear what was dictated to him. I am sure he didn't understand many of the points he was writing but he still didn't ask".

Groups also stifled effort. Because of the dependency relationship between learners and the stars in their groups, learners sometimes ended up following the 'star' learners who led them through group exercises and presentations. They ended up doing what the stars wanted them to do. This can be thought of as directing effort, but it can also be stifling effort from the perspective of the learner who would have rather spent his time doing something else.

4.3.8 Fudging it as long as people will buy it:

Because the learners were obsessed with right answers
and not losing face, impressing others became an end
in itself. Any strategy that delivered that end was
acceptable even if it was defeating the learning
experience, as is clear from the following quotes:

"At some point in the group discussion Pam suggested
a term explaining the company's position and they
agreed to it but after few seconds she said 'Is there
any such term or did I just invent this?'. Bob replied
'Who cares? it sounds good', and Pete added 'People
will buy it'.
                              Field notes, 28-4-93

"Before I left class Colin , Cathy, Pam, Pete, and
Richard were discussing how they were going to
structure their presentations. Cathy said 'well, you
know more about the company than the panel so if they
ask you something you don't know, just make it up.
Colin added 'As long as it's a strategic thing'".
                              Field notes, 29-4-93

4.3.9 Playing up the exercise for the benefit of the instructor:

Even when the learners did not find an exercise to be
demanding, they still acted as if it required a lot of
effort from them as in the following incident where
the instructor gave the three groups in the Eastern
Bank I the same case. The case had three questions and
every group was required to answer all of them,
although they were told that they were going to get
called on in class to present their discussion points
on one question only. The groups were not told which
questions they would have to present until near the
end of the discussion time. The instructor went around

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the groups telling them which question they were responsible for. This is what happened:

"Before the instructor left she asked the group which question they wanted to present in class. The group kept silent for few seconds but Colin was looking at the instructor very closely and when she asked 'Number two?', Colin looked at the other group members and said 'what do you think? Number two?'. Doug smiled and Cathy asked 'Number two? I reckon that'll be the most difficult one' (Before this the group was discussing how they would like to get question two to present because they had a lot of points for it). Colin added 'If you don't want this we can always change it', and then Cathy said 'That's O.K., we can do number two'. When the instructor left, Doug looked at me and smiled and Colin looked at Cathy and said with a smile 'we've got more points on number two than on any other question'.
Field notes, 26-4-93

Another example is the following incident:

"When the instructor was at the door she said five to eleven and Sara said 'that early?'. The instructor then replied 'that early? This means you've got an hour till lunch'. Bob winked at me (his back was to the door so Barbara could not see) and he said 'we were thinking of skipping lunch', and Barbara replied 'No, I don't want you to skip lunch. If you need more time let me know'".
Field notes, 22-4-93

This playing up the exercise was part of the learners' performing strategy. In order for these learners to learn they should have been able to face up to the fact that they did not know every thing and that they were incompetent in some things. This, of course, could threaten their reconciled self concept and so was difficult for the learners to admit. Rogers (1969) explained how learners resist experiences inconsistent with their self concept unless they are in a threat-free environment, and Glover (1988) discussed how

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identifying with a desire (e.g. learning) reflected the belief that acting on that desire would reflect what the actor (i.e. learner) most cared about, that of fitting the image she wanted others to have of her. When learners did not speak out when they did not understand, it was not, according to Glover (1988), that they did not want to learn but because their desire to speak out did not prevail because it conflicted with what they most cared about at that time i.e. 'making a good impression'.

In the end these learners resolved to give the instructors what they (the learners) thought the instructors wanted, as is evident from the following excerpt from the Cross Pacific Bank learning event:

"I sat with Eddie, Richard, Sara, and Charles for a case discussion. Richard said 'I'm not sure what he (the instructor) is trying to say in this question. What does he mean by strategic profile. There are certain buzz words that the teacher is looking for'. Sara said 'I don't think he's only looking for concepts. He's looking for understanding of the concepts too'. Richard replied 'I went through too much school. The learning process is try to give them what they want'".

Field notes, 28-9-92

Richard's use of the term teacher as opposed to facilitator, tutor instructor, trainer,..etc is interesting in itself because learners typically called them 'instructors' or 'tutors' as opposed to 'teachers'. This could be because this conversation took place during the first module of the learning event which covered marketing and business risk and

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during which the instructor mostly lectured and the learners took notes. Even during class discussions of syndicate group work the instructor seemed to be looking for buzz-words when he called on someone to answer. As soon a the learner said the buzz-word the instructor completed the answer and did not give the learner the chance to continue, as Vanessa and Eddie explain in the following excerpt:

"During the break I talked to Eddie and Vanessa. Vanessa explained that the discussions in class were not really like the case method where the learners are expected to make full presentations of the case. Eddie added that the instructor just expected the learners to give him the 'buzz word' and then he fills in the blanks. He also said 'He (the instructor) covers it more like a lecture method'".
<div align="right">Field notes, 29-9-93</div>

This last excerpt is a clear example of how the learners accepted the learning content without necessarily believing in it. They performed the public act of acceptance without the internal belief in it. This is why the learners needed ways to figure out what was important from all that was being lectured to them. They developed different strategies for doing that. For example, whenever the instructor wrote on the flip chart, they started to copy. Actually one of the problems of that learning event for some learners was figuring out what was important, as can be seen from the following excerpt from the field notes:

"I had lunch with Michael, Colin, Howard, John, and Roger.... In reply to a question about what was the single most important problem they had to deal with until now. Colin replied it was trying to figure out what to write from what the lecturer was talking about in class".

Another example of this short-termism of learning was the short-cut activities that the learners got involved in.

In the following example from the Cross Pacific Bank a dilemma faced the learners in the company project exercise of whether to do a full company analysis depending only on information provided by the instructors or whether to seek the help of colleagues in the office who had access to real-life information about the same company. This is how the situation was resolved:

"When we went to the classroom I asked George if his group worked late last night and he said they worked individually but that they had worked a way of doing this. He said he was going to call someone at the bank to get a report faxed to him here. This report would provide information about the liquidity of the company relative to its industry. He also told me that Colin from the other group was going to do the same for his group. There was a bit of a discussion about what Vanessa called 'losing out on the learning process'. In the end they decided against doing that. Stuart asked Colin if he has called yet. When he said no he advised him not to since it would be considered some form of 'cheating'".
                                        Field notes, 1-10-92

It was refreshing to see, at least in this incident, the learners were able to make the learning choice. But the fact that George advised Colin not to get the real-life report from his office is also interesting because it points to the controlling effort I discussed earlier. The incident also points to what

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Watson (1994) has called the 'frailty and insecurity in the lives of managers'. Managers are human beings, they have their values and beliefs and they use these in both building strategies and forming identities. When performing a role becomes living the role those who surrender to their roles act according to the image they would like others to have of them. The performer is guided by expectation of others rather than the demands of the situation, and although this lessens the ambiguity of what to do and how to act in different situations when actors pretend to be what they are not and especially if doing so in learning situations then learning becomes a game.

Through the cultures of these three organisations learning was turned into a dramaturgical game. These cultures were human products and the learners caught in them were reproducing them in the process of enacting their roles.

4.4 Conclusion:

The struggle between the two roles, that of the learner and of the expert manager who had to impress her authority figures, was observed in all five learning events. The claims made on these learners were of quite different types. During the learning event they had to learn, but they also had to impress others, and because of the presence of the hidden audience the learners had to learn

to live under the conditions of imminent exposure during their attendance of the learning events. To them the learning event was an important step in their socialization into the organisation, a step that tells something important about how they fitted into their organisation and if they had a chance of climbing the career ladder they so much wanted to. Having one's mistakes and progress under constant surveillance pushed for the adoption of strategies that could be less than morally accepted especially in a learning environment.

It is quite possible that some of the learners realized how learning destructive their actions were, but that did not change the situation because their performance of these roles still promised the delivery of the social interests they aspired for. With these contradictory claims on the managers-learners' efforts, these learners chose those actions that produced the most positive return. As Jackall (1983) argues:

"In a world where appearances -in the broadest sense- mean every thing, the wise and ambitious person learns to cultivate assiduously the proper, prescribed modes of appearing. He dispassionately takes a stock of himself, treating himself as an object. He analyzes his strength and weaknesses, and decides what he needs to change in order to survive and flourish in his organisation. And then he systematically undertakes a programme to reconstruct his image..one acquires not moral virtues, but a masterful ability to manipulate personae" (Jackall, 1983, p. 123-4. Emphasis added).

The ability to detach part of the self and distance oneself from role-specific behaviours is part of growing into

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adulthood. A child can, for example, hide his real self more easily from his teacher than he would from his mother. But if the value of learning is limited to the immediate goal of performing the role expected of learners (in the sense of hiding the real learner behaviours and only exhibiting role related behaviours) when that served their interests, then relations in learning events will become essentially manipulative. The learning context in which these learning events were embedded made it easier for the learners to manipulate their goals and show their superiors what they wished them to see. The learners tried to find the rules of the game, what their duties and responsibilities were, what others' expectations were, and what actions promised the delivery of their goals in reaching those expectations. In other words they tried to win the game. Jackall (1983) cynically discussed how playing the game was essential for success in climbing the organisational ladder. "What's the game?", he asked, and then continued by answering "it's saying one thing and meaning another" (Jackall, 1983, p. 128).

Chapter Five

Comparison and Evaluation

5.1 Introduction:

Whenever individuals come into the company of strangers they try to obtain as much information about them as possible and to bring into play any information that they or others already possess about them. This was especially noticed in the case of instructors whom some learners had met and others had not. Information about instructors helped learners define the situation so that they were in a better position to know what to expect of instructors and what instructors would expect of them. In this chapter I will discuss how the learners evaluated instructors and speakers and how they compared them to one another. I will also discuss how the learners evaluated each other and compared their performance to that of other learners in the course, and how that sometimes affected the roles they accepted for themselves. Lastly, I will cover how the learners evaluated organisational policies, the learning event itself, and its design.

5.2 Evaluating the Instructors and/or Speakers:

Learners and instructors in training programmes come to these learning events with different expectations and interests. Especially at the beginning of a learning event learners spent a great deal of time discussing instructors, panellists, or speakers. This was not idle gossip but an essential part of the learners' endeavour to establish a perception of these individuals. Learners tried to find out as much as possible about their new instructors so that

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they were in a better position to know where they (the learners) stood with respect to matters of their interest, such as which definitions of the situation to accept and which to resist or attempt to modify. In the five learning events observed learners were always interested to learn as much as possible about new speakers before they came into class and were especially interested to know about panellists, as in the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank case study II:

"This is the last day of the learning event and half the class has presented their individual projects in the morning session while the other half is to present after lunch. I had lunch with the six members who are yet to present; with Bob, Roger, Mary, Doug, Pete, and Richard. Bob spoke about how the first two of the morning presentations were more·difficult than the rest. The group also agreed that Cathy (the first presentation) got the hardest questioning and that Brian (a panellist) started really hard.. Bob also said that as he expected, Justin (another panellist) had most of the detailed questioning. Mary added 'Bloody hell, did you see his paper, it was red all over and he was flipping his pages as if saying "see me"' (Justin had used a red pen to write his remarks on the applications. This was easy for every one to see because he had red notes all over his papers). Bob added 'Well, I've seen Justin in credit committees, and he's always like that. Some people would come not having read the application, some would have lost it and would ask for extra copies, but he would always come prepared with notes and stuff'. They tried to guess how their panel would be like and Bob said that the morning panel were all Relation Managers (a job title for managers who are responsible for relationships with individual credit customers with every manager being responsible for certain customers with whose accounts he would be up to date) while in the afternoon they were all corporate managers (managers in the corporate area of credit). Mary then said that Gary (an afternoon panellist) had just finished the credit course for the senior credit managers which was next in level to the credit course they were attending. Bob jumped 'Aha, and so he remembers it all and I reckon he will be the one in our panel'. They also discussed how the panel didn't seem to listen to the presentations and Bob said 'Yes, they'd be writing in their own papers and reading and preparing their own questions'".

<div align="right">Field notes 30-4-93</div>

In the above excerpt we see how the panellists were being discussed either before they came into the scene or after they played their parts in it so long as they did something that was interesting (e.g. the red notes all over Justin's papers, not listening to presentations as panels were expected to). Learners in the excerpt are comparing their interpretations of events so that they establish a common meaning for them as a group. Evaluative comments were made only once, however because once said they lost their novelty and did not need repeating. The first discussions and analysis of instructors/panellists' actions were sometimes lengthy, but as time passed, and as the group came to have its common understanding, these characterizations came to be taken for granted and so did not need repeating.

The more the learners knew about instructors the more they got involved in analyzing their (the instructors') activities, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, or just discussing their backgrounds. John Fox, the outside consultant who covered the last three days behavioural module of the Cross Pacific Bank, worked for the bank for some time before turning to consultancy and that seemed to be one of the reasons why some of the learners resented him, as is evident from the following excerpt:

"John Fox came into the syndicate room to ask if there were any questions. He answered a couple of questions and then he turned to Jeff and asked 'Are you alright Jeff?'. Without even looking at him Jeff just replied 'Yeh' making a face at the other group members (Fox was standing behind him so he could not see). When John Fox asked Matthew he

followed suit and said 'Yes, O.K. O.K'. I expressed my surprise at Jeff's response to Eddie and he told me that Jeff knew John very well. When I asked Jeff, he said 'Yes, I worked with him, he was at the same level as me. It was only when he went to training that he jumped three grades up and got a company car'. The tone of resentment was obvious in his voice".

<div align="right">Field notes, 7-10-92</div>

Also, the more information the learners had about an instructor, the less likely they were prepared, it seemed, to change their ideas about him in a radical way as a result of new interactions. Some of the learners had either worked or attended previous courses with John Fox and the fact that they resented him made it easier for them as a group to relax their fronts and to openly express their resentment to him. This resentment turned into a refusal of the content of the learning presented by the instructor which soon became a two way street where both instructor and audience resented each other. The following excerpt is from a questionnaire where the respondents were required to specify the biggest single problem in the whole two-week learning event. The following respondent said:

"The last three days of the course were, in my opinion the biggest problem. It was obvious there was an air of hostility towards the instructor during the discussion of quadrant behaviour. I think that by the end of the three days people recognised the importance of identifying quadrant behaviours and that no personal attack was meant but by that time the instructor to some extent had grown fed up with us and was longing for the week to end. I think some members found the subject matter too personal and did not want to be pigeon holed into quadrants. Perhaps, in particular, less confident members who felt that to be identified with Q2 indicated a failure. Feelings of this nature should have been identified by the instructor at an early stage and defused".

<div align="right">Questionnaire</div>

I will return to this excerpt in Chapter Nine but two things are clear. The first is how some learners in the incident were refusing the values imposed on them by the organisation via the learning content. The other is how the learners' behaviour influenced the instructor's behaviour in the way discussed by Klein (1971). Not only did the instructor affect his audience, his audience affected him too.

Learners also compared different instructors to one another. In the Cross Pacific Bank the course started with a three-day marketing module which was conducted by a very articulate former lecturer at a well-known American business-school. This instructor seemed to be very powerful, confident, and assertive in the way he conducted his module. His strength of personality showed through in the way he spoke and moved around the classroom. When this module was followed by another with the new instructor being very different from the first in his physique, his lecturing style, and the attention he paid to his clothes, the learners started to comment. The following is an example of how the learners compared the two instructors:

"I had lunch with George, Tony, Vanessa, Matthew, and Jeff. They started comparing Andrew Frost (the former business school instructor) with Peter Brown (the instructor from the second module). George said 'I don't know if the mind-set of the class is affected by the body frame, whereas Frost is big, well-dressed, Brown is small and not so well-dressed. The comparison is more vivid when Frost sits on the chair and spreads his arms on the table'... Funnily Sara brought the subject up later when we were both in the lift returning to class after lunch. She said 'There is a great difference between the last three days and this, don't you agree?'. I told her we had been discussing this

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over lunch and her reply was 'I told you before I thought Frost was intimidating. Good but intimidating'".

This information about instructors and/or speakers helped define the situation for the learners. They knew what to expect of him and what he would expect of them, what they could or could not do, what would be tolerated and what would not (Goffman, 1959). When both parties agreed to this tacit working consensus any deviations were not acceptable and even if they were they caused trouble (e.g. tacit punishment which will be discussed in Chapter Eight).

The learners in these learning events did not tire of trying to change the definition of the situation depending on the characterization of the instructor and reactions from fellow learners. Learners tried to impress other learners, for example, by scoring points off the instructor if they expected favourable reactions from fellow learners, as the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank I case study illustrates:

"There seems to be something between Colin and Richard. Barbara discussed the credit-given ratio which was Trade (debtors/Sales)*365 but Colin interrupted saying 'You can have credit sales instead of sales too'. Barbara agreed adding 'if you know that' and wrote the new ratio on the board. As she turned towards the board Colin while still chewing on his bottle of water looked at Richard. Richard smiled raising his eyebrows as if saying 'well done'".

The fact that they expected Barbara to be open to new suggestions encouraged learners contributions, which was a different situation to the one in the Cross Pacific Bank learning event where Frost was good but intimidating. Frost

was also the same instructor who Richard said was looking for buzz words and who did not cover the course in the proper case method which I discussed in the previous chapter. This affected not only the learners ability to contribute but even to think of intelligent questions as will be discussed later.

5.3 Evaluating Each Other:

Lakin and Costanzo (1975) discussed how evaluation is normal in group processes. This evaluation of one another can be both overt or covert but becomes increasingly explicit as groups develop. This, Lakin and Costanzo (1975) explained, was due to one of two reasons or both: 1. an almost irresistible tendency to compare oneself to others, 2. a tendency to evaluate each member's effect on other members. The learners in the five learning events studied evaluated fellow learners and assessed each others' character and abilities. This was especially so at the beginning of a learning event. After this period of evaluation, the learners formed an opinion about each other and based on that opinion they came to prefer to work with some and avoid others, as in the following excerpt from the Washington Bank Case Study I where everybody avoided working with Fernando because of his weak English:

"It was interesting to see that it was Fernando who was left without a partner on the first day. Every learner was to team up with another for the next exercise and Fernando was left out since Paulina (the other Italian member) was late coming back from lunch. Fernando's English was weak, I can hardly understand him and I think that's why he was shelved until Paulina came back".

<div style="text-align: right">Field notes, 22-11-93</div>

In three out of the five learning events, the learners included some expatriates from overseas branches of the banks. These did not speak English as a first language and came from different cultures. Although some mixed well with other learners like Roger from India, Abdul from Oman, and Ahmed from Bahrain, the majority experienced many difficulties mixing in with the rest of the group. In the following case Jeff (from the Cross Pacific Bank) is reporting an ethnography done by Vanessa who described the substantive features of a setting she had been party to (e.g. who was there, what happened,..etc.) which he then reported to me. This is the excerpt from the field notes:

"I talked to Jeff during the break and he said he thinks that the expatriates had found it difficult to mix with the group. I said I thought Roger mixed well and he said yes but not Matthew. He also added that Vanessa had commented that in her group (which included Matthew), they would be discussing something and Matthew would make a comment that would not be related to their discussion"

<div align="right">Field notes, 3-10-92</div>

Anne, the new instructor in the Washington Bank II, also made a comment about one of the overseas learners who kept quiet most of the time. She said she did not know if the foreign learners in general were quiet because of language problems or because they did not understand. It was normal for the foreign learners to stick together in social groups although some attempts at mixing them with others were made by the instructors through working groups. Lakin and Costanzo (1975) discussed how group members can gravitate towards accustomed roles (e.g. joker, leader, follower,.. etc.) which, they argued, provides an element of constancy. But, at the same time, this grativation to accustomed roles

serves to stabilize stereotypic roles when members get stuck in them. Even Roger, who was not shy to contribute regularly to discussions whether in groups or in class, got this comment from George and Vanessa from the Cross Pacific Bank when I was having lunch with them:

"...the talk moved to how some instructors made it easier to ask questions while others did not and George said 'I do not usually speak up for the sake of speaking, but if I find something I do not understand or do not agree with, then I will ask, not like Roger, don't you think he asks just for the sake of asking?'. Vanessa then replied 'I don't know about Roger, if it is a cultural thing with people from his country'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 1-10-92</div>

It might be worth mentioning that the other two foreign learners whom I have mentioned mixed well with the groups (i.e. Abdul and Ahmed) spoke English fluently; one with a British accent and the other with an American accent. Abdul was actually stationed in New York and not in Oman. Both were educated in America too and maybe that had something with their acceptability as members of the group since they were accustomed to these cultures.

Foreign learners were not the only ones whose characterization meant they were left out, however; others like William in the Cross Pacific bank and Eddy in the Washington Bank I were too. In the following excerpt the group avoided a role play because Eddy (who became well known for his aggressive personality) was to play the subordinate role. When it came to choosing the person who was to play the manager's role it was obvious no one wanted to because no one felt comfortable playing the manager's

role with Eddy. This is how the group decided who was to play:

"They didn't know who should play the manager. Eddy has already agreed to play the subordinate's role. John then said 'I don't want to be the manager' and looked at Tom and continued 'Do you want to be the manager?'. Tom said no, adding 'any other volunteers?'. John then said 'O.K., I think we should draw straws' and after a period of silence Tom said 'I'll do it if no one else wants to do it'. John added 'That sounds like a begrudging acceptance to me' and Tom said without looking at John 'there is no point in forcing it on people who don't particularly want to do it'. His tone of dissatisfaction was obvious".
<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

This role play was going to be played in front of everyone in class and Eddy proved to be the difficult subordinate his group expected him to be, as the following field notes illustrate:

"Eddy was very hard and uncooperative in his role play when he played it later in class. I even wrote in my notes 'I wonder how Tom feels'. The group's characterisation of Eddy as the difficult person to play the role plays with was confirmed. After lunch I walked back to class with Robert, John, and Al. I said I wanted to see who was playing with Eddy next time and John replied 'Oh, no, I'm already regretting that'. Robert said laughingly 'read the script' (implying that Eddy doesn't read the script and I must admit I didn't think he did because according to his script in the previous role play he was to argue at the beginning but in a realistic and cooperative way). Also, while everybody was reading the script in his group (which I was observing), he, Paul, and Mike were talking".
<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

This was not the last time John experienced these difficulties when doing a role play exercise with Eddy. The next day John got chosen again to play a fish bowl demonstration for the class (i.e. a demonstration role play for the whole class to observe). The instructors then asked for volunteers to play the subordinate role. This is how the incident continued:

"John said pointing at Eddy 'I don't want him' and there

was laughter around the class. Eddy glanced at the script and then got up and came to the front of the room where John was already sitting on a chair facing the subordinate's chair with a table separating the two of them. Eddy started moving the table, but John said 'leave it, I want this to be confrontational'. Eddy replied 'If that's how you want it', and started rolling his sleeves up. John laughed nervously and started rolling his sleeves up too saying to the group 'You can tell I'm stalling this for as long as possible'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 25-11-93</div>

In the Cross Pacific bank William became known for trying to disrupt every group he worked in. During a discussion with Vanessa she told me that William knew about group theories which he tried to test on people and then say 'you're doing exactly what I expected you to do'. When word got around that William was using his lap-top computer for his group's financial analysis the class took this as a joke. The following excerpt took place after the project presentations. The class got divided into four groups so that each two groups ended up doing the same case. The two groups doing different cases presented to one of two instructors, either Steve Allen or Peter Brown and so not everybody listened to everybody else's presentation. In the following excerpt Eddie, who was in a group that did not include William, came to ask how William's presentation went:

"I was sitting with Jeff during the break. Eddie came in and asked Jeff if William got all scientific. Jeff said laughingly 'no, he used a computer to make projections. I thought he would come in with all sorts of printouts but he did not, he did not have a printer I guess'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 5-10-92</div>

William also got characterized as an autocratic leader who did not give chance to others in his group to participate in decision making while Richard got characterized as the

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argumentative one as evident from the following excerpt:

"William asked Bill (the lecturer) if from his experience
it was better to put people in familiar roles or unfamiliar
ones for the learning experience, Bill said he did not know
but that one of the most successful teams he had seen had
an autocratic leader who dictated who did what. Jeff looked
at me and said 'Then I'm glad I'm not in team four (William
was in team four). Bill continued saying how groups can be
different   adding   'you   can   get   members   that   are
argumentative'. William looked at Richard and Richard asked
'Who are you looking at?', and Jeff looked at me again and
said 'It takes one to know one' (in this learning event I
was not sitting separately at the back of the class. I was
sitting with the learners as part of the horse shoe seating
arrangement, and Jeff was sitting next to me).
                                        Field notes, 5-10-92

Richard was also characterized as hostile, unfriendly, and

lacking sense of humour as evident from the following

excerpt:

"When John Fox explained that according to the personality
evaluation tests the learners have filled-out, one of the
learners presented a 'hostile personality'. The class
laughed and many of them looked at Richard. It was revealed
later that it was Matthew and not Richard".
                                        Field notes, 7-10-92

This characterization was part of every learning event. In

the Eastern Bank II, for example, Bill got characterized as

the difficult character to play role plays with as the

following excerpt illustrates:

"Margaret explained that for the first practice of the role
play the subordinate should be a Q1 and then listed the
barriers to communication with this type of character which
included anger, argumentative, flat asserting, hostile,..
etc. Matthew covered his red face and looked at Bill
laughing all the while. Margaret didn't notice that (or
pretended she didn't) but she asked Matthew later 'Are you
doing the first role paly?', and he said yes. She asked him
who his subordinate was going to be in the role play. He
laughed and so did his group members. She smiled and said
half expectingly 'Bill?'. The group laughed again and
Margaret continued 'No, he won't become abusive'.
                                        Field notes, 5-10-93

Sarah, of the Eastern Bank II, was also characterized as

the trouble maker who was always suspicious about things

and who always questioned the value of every thing in the course. She continued doing that all through the course. Even the instructor found it difficult to hide her feelings towards Sarah, especially on the last day of the learning event after Sarah told the class she still had not overcome her reservations about the value of being videoed, as is evidenced from the following excerpt:

"Margaret was at the side of the room when she asked group I (the group Sarah was in) if they had anything to add to what group II had said about overcoming the reservations they expressed on the first day of the course and Sarah said she still has not overcome her reservations about the value of being videoed. Margaret asked her why but something in the way she said it expressed her frustration. She brought the subject up again after the learners left. She said 'I was just fed up with her, I mean this is the last day and look at the way she is acting. I am sorry. I do not know if it was noticeable but I just got all I could take from her'".

Field notes, 8-10-93

5.4 Leading and Following in Learning:

This characterization and evaluation led to leading/following roles between members of the same group because once an evaluation or characterization of a person was reached it was not kept to one's self; rather it was communicated to other learners. Characterizations were also communicated to the persons concerned even if only in a joking manner. In this following excerpt it was Sarah and Sophie's role play, but when Sarah used Bill's real name for an argumentative customer, Bill got the message:

"Sarah started her role play with Sophie by asking Sophie 'Do you remember a call from Mr Moore, Mr Bill Moore? (which was Bill's name). At this point Bill smiled and so did Sophie but no one said anything. After they finished the role play and started watching the video re-play, Sarah laughed when they reached the point at which she mentioned Bill's name and so did Sophie. They both looked at Bill who only smiled. After a while Bill said 'I'm concerned about

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this aggressive customer called Bill Moore, does he reflect on me? Is there a hidden message here?'. Sarah said 'It was the first name that came to my mind', and Bill continued 'Is that supposed to tell me something?'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 6-10-93</div>

Another evidence of the characterization of individuals and the publicizing of it is the following excerpt from the Washington Bank I Case Study:

"I joined Doug, Phil II, Peter, Robert, and Margaret for the next exercise which was to prepare a manager's plan for a certain scenario outlined in the manual. When Doug entered the syndicate room he said 'I'm going to shut up now and not say anything', and then sat at the back of the room facing me. The group started but then discovered they didn't have a flip chart board to write on which they needed in order for them to present the results to the group in class. So, Doug went out to get them one. When he got back he started writing on the flip chart and discussing the tactics. Peter commented laughingly 'I thought you said you were going to be quiet today'. It was as if implying Doug could not stop talking even if he wanted to. Doug replied 'If you continue on doing this I'll go out of this course with a complex'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 25-11-93</div>

The fact that messages got through to the characterized individuals led to some of them accepting these characterizations and/or labels. Labelling theory has been explored in pupils' schooling by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), and Ball (1981). They all agreed that pupils can adopt and become committed to stereotypes which others (e.g. teachers or other pupils) hold of them. These authors argued that stereotyped pupils can come to act in ways that confirm these stereotypes. The effect of this was well summarized by Mann (1975, p. 235):

"The group starts out with a presumption of equality and before long it has become.. an elimination match. This fellow over here seems to have become the one who awards

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more or less points to each comment. These nice people over here look like they may never venture forth again. The person who has now left his/her chair (as it were) and is extensively pacing back and forth in the centre of the room looks suddenly unstoppable-the early winner... The early losers emerge, creating or having created for them the appropriate images of timidity, naivete, or chronic and discouragement about their fate in groups" (Mann, 1975, p. 235).

Learners in low positions within groups can give up hopes

of learning and approach their work in the way others

expect them rather than in the way they want to themselves.

In the following excerpt Fernando, Tom, and Doug were

practising different kinds of role plays but, as will be

evident, Fernando got set aside with the discussion

centring between Doug and Tom which Fernando had to accept,

"Fernando is not writing anything although he is supposed to be the observer in this round of role playing. He had told me during lunch about his difficulties in understanding everything that is said to him and in following the class discussions. Time keeping is one of his tasks as an observer but he hasn't looked at his watch even once and he let Doug and Tom continue beyond the scheduled time. When they finished Doug asked him 'So, how did that go Fernando, alright?', and Fernando replied 'Yes, alright, you covered all the aspects'. He then added 'and, it's difficult for me to understand everything you say in detail'. The discussion then centred between Doug and Tom; Fernando remained silent while the three of them watched the playback although Fernando (the observer) was supposed to be the major feedback provider. It was then Tom and Fernando's turn to role play with Tom playing the subordinate and Fernando the manager. Fernando takes a minute to say a sentence that would otherwise take seconds. Tom asked what type of coaching discussion they were supposed to be role playing (according to their manual instructions). He directed his question to Doug and not Fernando. Tom, the subordinate, was also chewing gum all through the role play. He sat cross-legged in a relaxed manner while Fernando kept on turning uncomfortably in his seat".

Field notes, 24-11-93

Characterization can also lead to following the leader even

when wrong. This is especially when leaders make it public

that they have done similar courses before (as in the case of Sam and Smith) or that they know about group theories (like William). These leaders were presumed to be right until proven wrong while it was the other way around for others as in the following excerpt:

"I was with Sam, Patricia, Hasan, and Fernando who were trying to work out the debt capacity for the company they were working on. Sam was leading the group in doing the number crunching. He interrupted 'just wait a minute. God, I'm getting confused here. He checked his notes and then asked Hasan what he got. Hasan gave him a different figure. I think Hasan assumed he was wrong because he said his figure in a hesitant way. It was not until Patricia got the same figure as Hasan that Sam questioned the correctness of his solution. Actually the whole group assumed Sam was right and Hasan was wrong until Patricia got Hasan's figures. Hasan on his own was not strong enough to question Sam's solution'.

Field notes, 16-2-94

This commitment to others' characterization of oneself was accepted by the learners as part of the learning event as Ronald of the Washington II explains in the following excerpt:

"I don't know if it would have been better to switch groups more quickly because people did tend to fall into their roles when you got accustomed to who was going to be in charge even if subconsciously.. It was just a mechanical exercise and knowing who was going to present in the group so if you had an off day because you knew only one person was going to present the results any way so you sometimes miss on the learning because you knew other people were going to do it... You know who is presenting and it's not you and one of the Ss (Sam and Smith) is taking control of it anyway, it's very easy to sit back and say 'I'm not going to present any way so I do not need to make an effort to learn'. That happens every once in a while".

Interview, 29-3-94

As the learning event got under way this evaluation, comparison, and characterization processes gradually stabilized. Different group members saw others within their groups who had more of one thing or another and others who

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had less of that thing that was of value to them and thus feelings towards others began to form (e.g. respect, resentment,..etc) and while at the beginning of the learning event there was a discovery stage of each member's strengths and weaknesses, towards the end there were 'winners' and 'losers' (Mann, 1975).

Learners, however, wanted to keep working relationships with everybody including those whom they had characterized as autocratic, argumentative, or even trouble makers, as is evident from the following excerpt from the field notes of the Cross Pacific Bank:

"I sat with Richard, Sara, Michael, and Matthew. Richard asked me about my notes again saying 'I'm just wondering how much of this is from this morning session' and I said a lot. He then continued 'How much between two people?' and when I asked 'Who?', he laughed and replied 'Come on, you know, we all heard it' (He is referring to an argument between Vanessa and William in their syndicate group). Eddie interrupted the conversation when he walked into the room and said 'I just came to tell you who was next door: William. In case you were saying something you should not'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 5-10-92</div>

The important point here is that Eddy, who was a member of William's group, still thought it was important to keep the relations going between the two groups and for the learning event to continue with no clashes between different learners.

As this evaluation and characterization continued the learners built stocks of knowledge about other learners and instructors in terms of anecdotes, quotes, stories, personal experience,..etc. which were used to support their

struggles to establish meanings for the here-and-now-settings, as in the case of William which follows:

"I was with Vanessa, Colin, George, and Roger. George read out the groups' prices for the last quarter as announced by the instructor in the simulation game. Vanessa asked when George finished reading team's four prices 'Is that William's team?', and George answered 'Yes, and he was taking down the prices of the teams in there (in class when the instructor announced them) so I think he is thinking of a takeover'".

<div align="center">5-10-92</div>

The group here interpreted William's taking prices down as takeover danger although obviously George himself took the prices down too. It was through this methodographic expertise (Zimmerman and Pollner, 1971) that learners were able to collect and put together all the previous knowledge to bring an understanding of the here-and-now-experience.

It was not only the learners who followed the 'stars' in their groups, instructors seemed to have done that too. The seating arrangements were always set by the banks concerned. If not, then by the instructors who attempted to learn as much as possible about the learners before they got to the learning event. The instructors would then review the situation as the learning event got under way and would change the seating to put those of different experience-levels and backgrounds together.

In the Washington Bank II case study instructors seemed to rely on the star learners to carry the groups through and otherwise followed a laissez-faire approach with the groups unless approached for help by the stars. This is an excerpt

from the field work:

"I was observing Fernando, Lisa, Sam, and Javier... I
turned my head up to see Fernando telling Lisa that he
agreed with her in two of her figures but not with a third
and asked her how she got that figure. She told him she
wasn't sure about the other two figures. He then said 'No,
I agree with the other two figures'. She did not make any
comments and continued working on her figures individually.
Fernando then started copying her figures".
<div align="right">Field notes, 10-2-94</div>

Leaders did not seem interested to help weaker learners if

that meant delaying their work, but instructors depended on

them (the leaders) to get the followers within the group

going (this is one of the arguments for using the group

discussion method). In the above excerpt Elaine (the

instructor) heard Fernando asking Lisa about her figures

(she was sitting at the back of the class). She turned and

looked at them but did not go to help either of them which

was a different situation from when a star got in trouble.

The instructor helped then as in the following excerpt:

"After a while Sam swore again and said to the group 'I'm
out by two figures'. Elaine asked him from where she was
seated what he got and he told her. She came to the front,
looked at his figures and said 'I checked on you until you
got this figure. What did you get afterwards?'. He showed
her and she told him where his mistake was".
<div align="right">Field notes, 10-2-94</div>

It was obvious that Sam (unlike most of the others in the

learning event) had had some previous training in analyzing

financial statements. Sam did not make that a secret so the

instructors knew, but they still expected his group to get

to his position with his help, as evident from the

following excerpt:

"Javier seems to be lost in his work and always looking at
Lisa's work. I was reviewing my notes while the group was
working (they were working in class) and Elaine was working
at the side of the room. Sam swore and both Elaine and I

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looked up from what we were doing. She came towards the group and first looked at Lisa's work and then turned her attention to Sam and said 'You've done this before, haven't you?' obviously because he was way ahead of every one else and he said 'Yes, but not the Washington Bank one. I did a course, a slightly different one at the London Business School...'..(After Sam had finished the exercise) Elaine came back to the group and sat next to Sam and started discussing a new case with him while the others continued to work on their numbers. Elaine and Sam continued their discussion for about ten minutes until Lisa interrupted them 'Excuse me, can I have a look at your figures?' to Sam. Sam gave her his figures and when she returned them, Elaine who was still discussing the new case with Sam asked her how she did and Lisa told her she missed on two figures, the sundry assets and another one. Elaine said 'The sundry assets is easy so start with it' and then continued her discussion with Sam. After about two minutes she got up and collected her papers and went to Lisa and walked her through the exercise while Sam helped Fernando".

<div align="right">Field notes, 10-2-24</div>

From Lisa's experience, one could safely assume that she held a senior position in the HongKong branch. She had eight years of experience in the Washington Bank, five of which were spent in New York. When she interrupted Sam and Elaine there was a note of irritation in her voice which Elaine, I thought, could not have missed, and although the request was made from Sam the note was clearly taken by Elaine. It seemed as if the instructors followed a laissez-faire approach with group syndicate sessions and left them to the stars. The stars, on their part, enjoyed the opportunity to perform to impress as in the following excerpt:

"Elaine was sitting at the back of the classroom and there was one group working in class. Elaine could listen to every thing that was being said in the group but she was not making any comments. I think she was working on the next lecture; she also kept on checking the files which she kept on filing cabinets at the side of the room. Sam was directing the group, he worked out the required figures and then looked at the other group members and asked 'Do you understand the reasoning?' and David said yes. Sam then added 'But you're not happy with it'. David said 'I might

be totally wrong but I think we should do this'. When he finished explaining his suggestion Sam said 'But you can't do that. These are contractual agreements'. Elaine was passing by the group while she was getting her file and Sam and David were still arguing about the matter. She crossed her eye brows at Sam who was watching her and they both exchanged a smile. Sam's smile was more like a chuckle as if saying 'what a silly thing to say, David'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 16-2-94</div>

In this learning event Sam and Smith became known as the two Ss and they were both stars within their different groups. Both Hilary and Elaine seemed to depend on Sam to get his group through as in the following excerpt:

"I was with Sam, Lisa, Fernando, and Javier. Hilary came in and asked 'Finished?'. Sam said yes and so she said 'great'. David then interrupted 'Not every one is finished'. Hilary's only comment was 'Right, O.K.' but did not ask if he needed help. Sam then said 'I think every one is close enough' so she gave them the solution and said 'You can spend fifteen minutes discussing how you want to work during the weekend on your projects'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 7-2-94</div>

This pattern continued through the learning event:

"Here I am with Fernando, Hasan, Patricia, David, and Sam. It was Sam who was always giving them things to work on and asking questions like 'What's the interest rate they've given us?' Someone replied. Patricia and Hasan are catching up but Fernando is lost. He just watches Sam working. He didn't even know where they got the interest rates from and asked Sam who told him it was from the assumptions given to them by the instructor. David looks lost too but I'm not sure. He keeps on looking at Sam's sheet.. Sam was calculating Inventory Days on Hand and the other members of the group were just looking between their sheets and Sams' and waiting for his directions'.

<div align="right">Field notes, 16-2-94</div>

It got to a point where the learners thought that going into syndicate groups meant the instructors got time off, as expressed in the following discussion when one day the instructors sent off the groups to work in their syndicates first thing in the morning:

"Ronald said 'Oh, what a thing to do on friday morning. They (the instructors) want to get an hour off so they send

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us off for an hour'. I asked 'Do you honestly think that?'.
The group laughed and then Sam said 'What's a better way of
getting an hour off?'".

Patricia also thought the instructors enjoyed having stars

in groups:

"I think in groups there is always basically some sort of
leader and I think they (the instructors) did rely on them
especially in the two Ss (Sam and Smith) groups. From what
was said it seemed they just pushed the whole thing and the
instructors enjoyed that, it makes their job easier if
there is some one else to do it".

It was not the working on projects in syndicate groups that

led to these comments. It was the leaving of groups to the

stars with little interference from the instructors. Some

might argue that if instructors kept a close eye on the

teams the learners would learn to depend on the

instructors, but as it was the learners learned to depend

on the stars in their groups who were not always interested

in helping others. The way the stars saw it was that they

would get their groups going when the end of course

evaluation was a group evaluation, but they got frustrated

with having to help others all the time, as Sam explains in

the following excerpt:

"I had a talk with Sam during the break. I told him I felt
he was the organiser in his group and that at some points
I even felt he was lecturing to them. He said 'I don't
know, do you really want me to be honest with you?'. I said
'Of course I do'. He said 'I think Lisa is a good
organiser. She is the only one I get any thing out of; as
to the rest I don't, but I don't care. I'll do the work any
way, I want that bottle of champaign. I think I stand a
good chance too'. I agreed. He also added 'But that might
mean I'm going to have to do my work and a bit of their
work too. I tell them what I notice in the financials and
that's fine by me but I'd much rather get people to my
level to get the discussion going of course'. Sam also told
me that he did not think the groups knew about the bottle
of champaign yet. I don't think he was planning to tell any

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one about it and has kept to himself so far".

Smith was also a leader in his group and he steered them where he thought appropriate. He was an asset to his group in that he was the one who provided them with all the creative ideas. It was his ideas which made of their project not just another analyzed financial statement; it was the only project with a creative takeover bid. He also became the centre for questions in the group because he had a photographic memory that helped during projects as the following excerpt illustrates:

"While they were working Salma said 'Let's mention something about the health reforms in the U. S.'. Abdul said 'well, something closer to home as Germany, it's in one of the articles they've given us. Where is it?'. Smith said 'Press cuttings' and when Abdul started to flip through the pages of the press cuttings and got to the right page Smith said 'second paragraph on the left' and Abdul got to it. Smith was right. Abdul looked at Smith and swore while Smith blew on his nails and brushed them against his chest".

Nevertheless, Smith was a difficult person to work with, he dictated things and did not give a chance to any one to dispute ideas he thought were appropriate for the group to pursue and this gradually became public knowledge to the big group as evident from the following excerpt:

"For the Rosaline co. cash flow projection exercise the learners were reorganised in three new groups because Elaine (the instructor) said she wanted every body to work with different people. As soon as Abdul saw the new divisions which were written on a flip chart with him and Smith sharing the same group again, he shouted 'Oh, no'. Smith laughed from where he was sitting in the classroom (in a different group at the front while Abdul was sitting with his group at the back). Abdul raised his hand and said 'Excuse me Elaine!', and when she looked at him he asked for another copy of the spread sheets (he lost his). Ronald said 'I thought for a second you were going to complain about your associates in the group' and Abdul replied

'well, yes, I am going to complain about him' pointing his finger at Smith".

Smith told me, however, that had there been someone else to organize and lead in his group or had the group been able to organize itself he would not have had to do it. To him the work was 'disjointed' and it made him feel as some people would when they see a 'cockeyed picture'. He explained he had to correct the situation because he could not stand seeing cockeyed pictures. Smith, however, was more like an autocratic leader who dictated things the group had to follow and did not pay any attention to others' suggestions. He did not like being interrupted and was sometimes rude when he was. All the others could do was to fall in their dictated roles of following him as much as some members disliked it. The following is one example of how Smith ran his group:

"Smith was working on projecting the figures on his own without consulting other group members and so Salma interrupted 'John?'. He just said 'Shhh'. She then repeated 'John..John', the second time a bit too loud and then continued 'you're going ahead too far' and he said 'Shhhhh, I'm just trying to work this, shhhhhh'. She did not give up and continued 'John, John. We're a group. Maybe I've got an idea too'. He did not say anything and continued with his calculation. Her face turned red and she did not move for a minute but then got up and left the room. She came back after three minutes with a biscuit in her hand and sat quietly in her seat munching on her biscuit and drinking her diet Coke without saying anything to anyone. After Smith finished Abdul looked at her and asked 'What do you have?'. She said 'Nothing'. Smith then said 'No, it's O.K. I just wanted to finish calculating the 1995 figures'. She then burst out obviously still very upset 'You can't do that. I do not even know your assumptions'".

Salma had experienced very difficult times during this learning event. The following excerpt is an example of how

Salma was treated in her group (which also included Smith, Abdul, Javier):

"Smith handed Salma the presentation format sheet which he was looking at and she said jokingly 'yes, I'll hold it for you'. He then took it and said 'I've got a better idea, a better spot, your face' sticking it at her face. She said without looking at him 'God, you're so funny, I've never met any one as funny as you are' in a voice that was obviously very upset...(later) Salma was not happy with what was assigned to her. She said to the group 'I have a better suggestion, how about if I do this SWOT and someone else does the Boston Matrix?'. Smith and Abdul started laughing for some reason while she continued 'no, but listen, seriously..' as if struggling for attention. Smith then said 'we know, that's why we're laughing'. She said 'I'm serious'. Her face had turned red. I don't think Smith noticed, but Abdul seemed to have because he said 'Salma, give me the planning sheet, we'll reorganize'. Salma continued when Smith said she's changing her whole presentation 'no, I'm not, I'm only cutting one sentence, the credit worthiness'. Then she backed down and said 'I don't mind doing that (laughter) if you guys want me to'.......... (Later) Salma had gone out of the syndicate room and so after about four minutes Smith asked 'where has "Hello" (which was the nickname they called her) gone?'. Abdul laughed and said in a funny voice 'she's gone to get a cup of coffee'. Smith repeated the same sentence in another funny voice adding 'listen boys, listen!' as if mimicking Salma".

<div align="right">Field notes, 14-2-94</div>

The result was not different from school education research which investigated the results of differentiation in schools. The follower learners or those placed in low positions within their groups experienced "status frustration". To cope with this they inverted the learning values and pursued those inverted values, values in terms of which they could succeed compared to other learners. The fact that at the end of that learning event Salma asked for my advice about her behaviour and if I thought she could have done any thing differently could be seen as evidence of her experiencing this status frustration.

Another evidence of the follower learners coping with status frustration through inverted values was the way Ronald (again from the Washington II) approached his work. Ronald had the most to learn because he had never studied accounting before (He was a history graduate). He, however, as evidenced from some of the above excerpts was always ready to contribute to making fun in class or in syndicate groups, and at the end of the learning event still expressed satisfaction with what he had learnt. He explained he was not in the learning event to learn the details of financial analysis. He just wanted to get an overall idea and that was what he had done.

One's self identity is "the story one tells one's self of who one is" (Laing, 1969, p. 93), and I think it was possible that some of the learners said they learned what they wanted to learn even if they did not. This, Glover (1988) explained, was a process of "abridgment and editing of the inner story" which serves more like wishful thinking, fantasy, and self-deception function where bits of the film the learners do not like get lost in the editing room.

Coming back to Salma's characterization; it was soon accepted for the learners to joke about her and make fun of her, and what started in her syndicate group soon became the norm of how she was treated by the whole class. Soon every one was making fun of her as in the following

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excerpts:

"Hasan asked where Salma was (the learners were starting to gather up in class but Salma was nowhere to be seen). Abdul said 'Probably arguing with herself or maybe caught someone in the corridor and started arguing with him. Sam said mimicking Salma 'Hay you'. Just then Salma walked in and they all started laughing, she asked 'What happened now? Hello?'.

<div align="right">Field notes, 15-2-94</div>

Although Salma struggled with trying to be heard in her group, others in the same or other learning events did not. They resolved to accept a follower role within their groups. As such these learning events developed a political character through creating 'selves' that learners had to accept and through reproducing hierarchical relations of inequality within them. Mann (1975) summarized the position of the followers in groups:

"They become 'silent members' or they drop from sight for brief or extended periods. Why?... They retreat to try and figure out what went wrong. They retreat in a mood of somewhat forced indifference, rejecting those who seem about to reject them. They retreat in some sense simply because they don't have the energy to plunge into the maelstrom one more time" (Mann, 1975, p. 243).

Characterization of individuals within training programmes also extended to groups comprised of the characterized individuals. For example in the Washington Bank II learners divided themselves into a 'fun' group and a 'serious' group. Learners in the serious group became known as the 'Deep Thinkers' and the members of each of these groups shared and perpetuated common values.

The fun group was always laughing or joking about something. It was normal to hear laughter ringing out

through the walls of their syndicate room mixed with their shouting at each other "hello? Hello?". The fun group told me that they had spent a whole morning doing nothing and that when they had to decide in the last fifteen minutes of the session which of them was to present the group's findings to the rest of the class, no-one wanted to. This was mainly, of course, because of lack of preparation. In the end Smith was pushed into it. He gave a plausible presentation although he kept looking (and swearing) at his fellow group members all through his presentation (when attention was focused on the instructor or someone else). The members of the fun group joked all through the afternoon after that presentation about how they had been able to 'get away with it' although, according to them, they (xxxxxx) their way through.

The important thing is that the presentation got forced on Smith who could not get away from it although other members could and did which again points to the stars' responsibility of getting their groups through. Smith did not seem to want to do it, but had to. In this sense he was dictated to by other members of his group. Stars, in other words, were not always leaders. They could be pushed into doing work that others did not want or were not able to do. In this case Smith had to work through the others' presentations to organise his while his other group members enjoyed listening to the presentations and making fun of his nervousness as evident from the following excerpt:

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"Elaine, the instructor, asked who wanted to present second, and when no one volunteered she asked Patricia to present her group's results. Ronald burst out laughing and told Abdul to look at Smith who was punching numbers into his calculator....(Later) Smith got up to present and was definitely not happy because he kept on looking at his group members and laughing. He also said before starting 'I think we had a bit of faith fever in this group' and both Abdul and Ronald (his group members) burst out laughing. The laughter continued on and off during Smith's presentation and he continued to look at Abdul sideways every now and then and shaking his head. When he finished and returned to his seat he still continued looking between Abdul and Ronald who raised their thumbs up for him.. Smith swore. Abdul then looked at me (I was sitting behind him) and said 'we just spent two hours (xxxxxx) and joking and then Elaine came in and said five minutes, and so we just sat there and scribbled just anything'. I asked 'how did Smith accept presenting?', and he replied 'he didn't, that's what we're laughing about'. I then said 'very good presentation for a five minute preparation', and he replied 'we just (xxxxxx) our way through'...(later) During the break most of the discussion was about the fun group who did not keep it a secret that they only spent five minutes preparing for the last presentation. Ronald said 'Every body ripped their papers off so they could not get pushed into doing the presentation, but Smith being the leader of the group had to do it'. Abdul added laughingly 'People were saying things like "Are you going to do it? No way. Yes way (laughter)"'. Ronald then looked at me and said 'You should have been observing our group'. They sobered up after a while and Abdul said 'Actually we spent a lot of time and we weren't very far off'. He looked at me and made a face. I just said laughingly 'I trust you Abdul, whatever you say'".

Field notes, 16-2-94

The serious group, on the other hand, was always the last to finish its preparation and it was common for its members to take shorter breaks to enable them to finish their work. Hilary (one of the instructors) told me she thought they were taking their work too seriously! In one of Elaine's sessions the group told her that they were contemplating skipping lunch to continue working on an exercise during the break. Elaine told them to go for lunch and she would give them extra time later. She checked on them repeatedly to see that they had gone for their lunch-break.

The 'Deep Thinkers' were labelled by the members of the fun group as the 'too serious group', and because of the two groups' differing views of the reality of the learning event, there was subtle hostility between them as this group encounter demonstrates:

"Abdul, Smith, Javier, and Ronald (the fun group) came in and started joking around. The group working in class (Fernando, Hasan, Patricia, David, and Sam) stopped working and listened to what they were saying. Ronald said 'this looks too serious' and Abdul added 'these are the deep thinkers'. Sam then looked at Ronald as if to defend himself against the accusation and replied 'You'll have to show us your black tie later Ron, so we can all laugh and say (covering his mouth) "here comes the penguin"'. Ronald was going to a black-tie dinner that evening".

<div align="right">Field notes, 16-2-94</div>

5.5 Comparing their Performance to that of Others:

A group needs to maintain its identity and one of the best ways of doing that is by comparing itself to other groups (Schein, 1985). Johnson and Johnson (1993) have examined the criteria for success in learning groups and they cited 'positive interdependence' as one criterion. In their efforts to reach their 'comfort zones' learners not only became dependent on the instructors, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also started checking their solutions and decisions with regards to their presentations with other learners or groups.

In every learning event I observed, I saw the learners compare their performance, whether as individuals in individual exercises or as groups in group projects, not necessarily so as to outperform others but to make sure

that they were within the average performance band and so in a 'safe' zone.

In the following excerpt I was with Fernando, Steve, Margaret, Phil I, Phil II, and John doing an exercise. The group was supposed to discuss one of the open communication skills and to decide how members as a group wanted to present their discussion points to the class afterwards, whether as a skit or a lecture method:

"The group took about ten minutes to review their active listening notes. Paul said at some point 'the question is where to start'. Another period of silence passed and then John said 'silence, silence. I guess we can do a skit'. After some time Steve suggested a seating arrangement with two chairs situated in a friendly manner (with no table between them). In the opposite side of the room the other group had organised its seating arrangement differently placing a table between the two chairs. This group is basically silent apart from John, Steve, and sometimes Paul. Colin (the instructor) walked in and John said 'Yes, it sounds like a morgue in here'. John then asked 'What are the other groups doing? Are they doing a presentation or a skit?'. Colin replied 'One is definitely doing a skit but that doesn't mean you have to'.

<div align="right">Field notes, 22-11-93</div>

In an attempt to reach their comfort zones groups sometimes tried to copy other groups or listen on other groups' discussions, and even if this was done in a joking manner the learners still used the information gathered in their solutions as in the following excerpt from the Washington Bank I:

"The two groups at the back of the room were sitting a little too close to each other which made it easy for members of one group to hear the discussion in the other. Each of the groups was supposed to be discussing a question (e.g. what is in performance management for the customer? What is in it for the employee? What is in it for the bank?..etc.). One of the group members was reading out the results of the group discussion of the question of what is in it for the customer which included 'more business from

the customer' and all of a sudden Phil II from the other group cried out to his group 'more business'. Robert and Eddy and the rest of the group started laughing. Robert actually then turned to read the other group's notes on the flip chart. Colin (the instructor) who was passing by looked at me and smiled".

<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

In this way the groups were able to affect effort in the way discussed in chapter four (by controlling, directing, or stifling it).

5.6 Evaluating the Organisational Policies:

Learners in the training programmes studied were attending what might be called 'institutional learning events'. The learners came from and returned to workplaces within the same organisations sponsoring these events. These learners also suspected their performance to be reported back either officially through instructors or unofficially through the grapevine. As a result, these learners not only behaved in a reserved manner but also became interested in discussions about their organisations' policies, prospects, openings..etc. The majority of learners in the Cross Pacific bank learning event agreed that 'networking' was the most important benefit of that event. To meet other managers from around the bank was perceived to be good in that they learned what problems were faced by other managers in other areas of the bank, whether these were similar to the problems they faced, and the way the problems were solved.

In the Cross Pacific Bank, topics of discussion included

politics within the bank, name lending, the new bank MBA programme, and rumours of lay-offs. In the Washington Bank I, the course provided an opportunity for the members to air their reservations about an initiative the bank was undertaking and to criticize some of the bank's policies. However, this evaluation and scepticism were not expressed in the front stage, but mostly done during back-stage socializing activities as in the following excerpts from the field notes of the Washington Bank Case Study I. The first excerpt is from the lunch with Chris, Doug and Ahmed which was discussed previously:

"There seemed to be a lot of speculation about the vision during lunch. Ahmed said 'I wish I Knew some of the organisations which are already implementing this because I hate to be a guinea pig'".

Field notes, 23-11-93

On the last day of the learning event:

"Colin (the instructor) played a video (It was a section of a speech made by the bank's president on the launch of a new bank initiative. The video was played to employees in branches of the bank all over the world), Tom said later during the break 'There is so much going on, so many initiatives that I believe we're in danger of not achieving anything'".

Field notes, 25-11-93

In his speech the president had spoken of the need for change to move the bank into the twenty first century. The learners took this as evidence that all was and still continued to be not well with the organisation. There was a discussion one day about how managers were by-passed by their bosses in decisions about their subordinates' salary increases and the instructor pointed out that this was not the policy of the bank and that managers should be the ones deciding their employees' increases. He, however, added

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that "there is a difference between policy and implementation". This discussion continued until John interrupted laughingly "look guys, the big man (referring to the president's speech) just stood there and said we were not playing this right and look at us sitting in this room, it sure looks a mess from what I hear".

The learners in the Washington Bank I were very untrusting of their organisation. They questioned its initiatives, its policies, and even the research results it presented as in the following excerpt:

"Colin (the instructor) presented the learners with the results of a survey the bank had carried out about staff and managerial views. Alex jumped and said 'I don't believe it (the results). I didn't, and I still don't. The thing we forget is that when people fill out these questionnaires they are saying what they think they should say rather than what they think'. I don't think Colin liked that because he said 'That's one perception, but let's open this to the others. There must be some other perceptions'. Eddy, Al, and Peter, however, agreed with Alex".

<div align="right">Field notes, 25-11-93</div>

One of the priorities of the new Washington bank initiative was to become the employer of choice but that seemed difficult according to Doug because of the contradiction between policy and implementation. Doug said:

"If you're thinking about a job change and you get caught looking at the job advertisement board, there is this stigma about it. You're then labelled. Phil I said 'If you don't get the job, you're then gone'. Colin then raised the question to the group saying 'We're all managers. Do we think like that if some one in our departments wants to move?'. Alex said 'Yes, and there is this other stigma that if you help someone to move in other departments you're shooting yourself in the foot because you have to fill that hole. I say yes, I feel that, it's human nature. What if the best thing for the individual is outside of the organisation? If there is a good opportunity for him but only outside of the organisation. What am I supposed to do? Do you think I will be rewarded for that'. There was

laughter around the room at what looked like confusion on Colin's face who just said 'Do we need to answer that?'".
<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

On the face of it plenty of criticisms were expressed in the front stage too. These criticisms were, however, mostly about human nature or individuals within the organisation, not about organisational policies. Organisational policies criticisms were mostly kept to the back stage and if one brought them up in the front stage the other learners advised him not to as discussed earlier.

5.7 Evaluating the Learning event:

Learners also evaluated both the instructors, the tests, and the learning designs as in the following incidents from the Eastern Bank I:

"I walked to the train station with Pam, Colin, and Mary. They were discussing how difficult the last session had been (which had dealt with the legal documentation of credit facilities). The members had looked bored during the session and the speaker had not made it easier when he just sat down all through the lecture after he had distributed hand-outs to the learners. I later met Pete in the train and we discussed the learning event in general. He said the speakers were 'useless' and that the learners could have done without them. He said 'they are not really relevant to the credit application which is the centre piece of the course and that that's why people don't pay that much attention to them'".
<div align="right">Field notes 28-4-93</div>

Richard had also called it something similar the day before. The learners seemed to have established that they were in the learning event to learn how to complete credit applications, so speakers' sessions which were supposed to teach them about the bank's other products were out of the general flow of the learning event and so were perceived to

be unimportant.

The learners also evaluated the learning material during the course of the learning events. They changed some of the exercises as they thought appropriate. The following excerpt is from a discussion in the Washington Bank I where the group members modified the design of the exercise by asking the person playing the subordinate in the role play to leave the room while the other group members planned the strategy for the superior of how to approach the coaching discussion in the role play:

"I was with Tom, John, Eddy, Paul, Mike, and Phil II who were preparing for the fish bowl demonstration. Eddy said to Tom 'I know what you're going to say but you don't know what I'm going to say'. Tom pointed 'You shouldn't be Eddy from Hell. You're not to be objectional for the sake of being objectional' and Eddy responded 'No, but I don't want to be too easy. If I know what you're going to say it's going to be unfair'. John then added 'Maybe it's worthwhile for Eddy to go out while we plan it'. Eddy agreed and went out. John laughed and looked at me saying 'we're changing the course now'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

How Tom expected Eddy to be the Eddy from Hell who is objectional all the time is evident. This last excerpt is also related to the characterization of each other and the evaluation of each others' character covered earlier because although Tom expected Eddy to be Eddy from Hell and to be objectional at every opportunity, and although he had warned him about that, Eddy still did exactly that as covered earlier.

Richard of the Cross Pacific learning event also expressed doubts about the design of this course on the first day of

the learning event (this learning event started on Sunday evening rather than on the Monday morning) and as can be seen from the following excerpt the learners were sceptical about the amount of material they had to cover:

"Richard also expressed how he doubts one can learn anything in thirteen hours every day and how he just tunes out. He said there is just a lot of material and then he asked me how I prepared. When I said I just skimmed he replied "that is the only way to prepare for this course, really, skim'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 27-9-92</div>

Group designs (the basis on which learners were assigned to groups) were also criticized by some learners, as in the following discussion during the Cross Pacific Bank event. Vanessa was very experienced in lending,

"We talked about how there did not seem that a lot of thought had been given to the selection of syndicate groups. I asked Vanessa: 'This was one of your concerns before coming to the learning event, wasn't it?', and she replied: 'Yes, I mean look at the way they have assigned us to groups; just people sitting next to each other. I think they could've sent people to this course based on the experience they've spent on lending".

<div align="right">Field notes, 5-10-92</div>

5.8 Conclusion:

In this chapter I discussed how the learners in the five training programmes got involved in evaluating instructors and comparing them to one another. They also evaluated organisational policies, as well as the learning event as a whole. Moreover, the learners compared their performances to that of others whether as individuals or groups. This comparison and evaluation led to experiences in these events that affected their learning.

The weaker learners resolved to accept follower roles

although some experienced status frustration and resorted to inverting learning goals into ones they thought they had better chance of succeeding in.

In the next chapter I will move to another strategy that has mostly been ignored by organisational researchers. That is the use of humour as a powerful tool in corporate training programmes.

Chapter Six

Having Fun in Learning Events:

Humour, the under-utilized resource

6.1 Introduction:

The analysis of humour in organisational settings has not been fully explored by researchers in the field (Vinton, 1989; Barsoux, 1993; Malone, 1980) although its importance has been recognised (Davies, 1988; Kahn, 1989; Hatch and Ehrlich, 1993; Linstead, 1985; Watson, 1994). This chapter is not a result of a planned framework for the study of humour in learning events in organisational training programmes. Rather, it was a result of the frequency with which the learners in the five learning events were observed to resort to humour. It was only after going through my field notes later that I noted the importance of humour in dealing with the learning context. I then began to research the subject and collect its literature in attempt to understand the humorous incidents observed.

Many humour researchers have refrained from defining the term (Hatch and Ehrlich, 1993; Kahn, 1989) and have left it to common sense understanding. Those who have, have defined a situation as being humorous "by the laughing response it elicits"(Coser, 1959, p. 172).

Mulkay (1988) distinguished between two interpretive modes of sense making, one serious and the other humorous. He included under the humorous mode two types: pure humour (which is produced for its own sake) and applied humour (produced for a hidden purpose). This distinction has also been made by Barsoux (1993).

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Some writers have recognized the importance of humour and its potentiality within organisations. Malone (1980) advocated the use of humour as a management tool and Kahn (1989) argued that it could be used as a diagnostic tool. He argued that because organisational members use humour both consciously and unconsciously to make statements about themselves, their organisations, their groups...etc. which they may find difficult to express in a serious mode researchers could take these statements and try to understand them within the contexts in which they were expressed. In doing so they "tap into a rich source of information for understanding and interpreting the dynamics of individual and group life in organisations" (Kahn, 1989, p. 46).

Humorous activities are in a way a breach of the classroom drama. As Mulkay (1988) argued, situational formality is related to the forms of humour that can be legitimately displayed. Informal situations, such as parties, are characterized by the display of 'pure' humour while highly formal situations, such as prize-giving ceremonies, are characterized by the use of 'applied' humour. Because applied humour is mainly utilized to reach serious ends it is thus deployed strategically as may be seen most clearly in the use of humour by school teachers in their attempts to maintain classroom control (Stebbins, 1980).

Compared to Fox's ethnographic work of a business school

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class (Fox, 1990), the learning events studied in this thesis fell somewhere between situations of high formality and informality in what can be considered as semi-structured hierarchical situations (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995b). Also, similar to Fox's mature business school manager-learners who experienced status incongruity as course members the learners in these training programmes also experienced these psychological worries. Unlike Fox's learners, however, the learners in these five learning events could be argued to be more dependent on their organisations. This is because while the business school students could consider themselves as 'paying customers' who, as such, were in a stronger position to demand that their expectations are met, the learners in the learning events observed were employees tied to their organisations for their well-being (both psychological and financial).

As such, these learners did not only share the anxieties of adult learners, that they might make fools of themselves (Rogers, 1989), but also shouldered the worry that their deficiencies during a training programme could get reported back to their employers. This situation not only had its effects on the types of interaction in these events but also on the types of humorous interaction that took place in these programmes. These conditions were conducive to the use of 'applied' humour; that is humour that "serves to make serious points or to sustain the social order and hierarchy of the formal setting" (Fox, 1990, p. 434).

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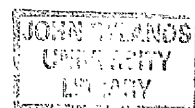
In this chapter I will discuss the role humour played in the five training programmes. I will talk about how the learners used applied humour interaction to control their definition of the situation and resist authority, to relieve boredom, and to relieve anxiety. In covering these different functions of humour I will examine how the learners created the humorous situations and how subjects of laughter came to be caught up in a no-win situation in these incidents. I will also discuss the jokers and how the instructors dealt with them.

6.2 The Functions of Humour:

Stebbins (1980) distinguished between intentional and unintentional forms of classroom humour. Unintentional humour includes bloopers, stumbles, accidents, and private jokes. Intentional humour, on the other hand, includes witticisms, antics, funning, practical jokes, narrative jokes, and sporting put-ons. Because of the variety of ways in which humour could be expressed, adopting a functional framework promised to focus upon the effects humour has on the functioning of individuals and the social groups to which they belong. After all, "people use humour for various reasons-that is humour serves different, often multiple functions for people and their systems" (Kahn, 1989, p.48).

6.2.1 Humour as a relief against boredom:

Roy (1960) described how the workers in his study

joked to cope with the boredom of their jobs and Stebbins (1980) described the humour that relieves boredom as 'social comic relief'. The learners in these learning events were not different; they relieved their boredom by 'making fun' of something or someone within the course.

I observed one way of 'having fun' during the Washington Bank I learning event. In this learning event an acronym was introduced by the instructor as a memory-aid for the stages of reaction to critical feedback, SARAH - **S**hock, **A**nger, **R**ejection, **A**cceptance, and **H**ypothesis (this was covered at the very beginning of the learning event). Soon after, one of the learners (Doug) invented a comparable acronym, DORIS to refer to the main points to remember when "describing", a skill covered as part of the open communication skills studied in the course. Doug was presenting his group's discussion points on the open communication skills to the class, he abbreviated the points to remember in effective "describing" to DORIS for **D**escribing: accept **O**wnership, **R**emain objective, describe the **I**mpact of the behaviour, be **S**pecific; a character was created.

Subsequently, Doug became known as 'DORIS' and this character became the focus of fun throughout the event. The learners reacted with great enthusiasm to

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Doug's presentations and tried to prolong them as long as possible, a situation which was tolerated by the instructors at first as the following excerpt will illustrate. In this incident the class was divided into three groups, each discussing one of three managerial situations: over monitoring, under monitoring, or appropriate monitoring. Each group was to draw a picture representing their specific situation highlighting its associated consequences. This is what happened:

"The three different groups are presenting their drawings of presentation pictures of the three different monitoring situations. Steve stood to present his group's drawing saying 'This is Doug's drawing of DORIS' and the room roared with laughter. He discussed the picture which represented "appropriate monitoring" as being there when needed. His comment about the manager who was drawn reading was 'he's reading training and career planning manuals'. There was loud laughter around the room and Pamela called from the back of the room 'back crawlers' while still laughing".
                    Field notes, 24-11-93

The DORIS character continued to be the subject of laughter all through the Washington I learning event with or without Doug's presence. In the following group, the members (Ahmed, Margaret, John, Tom, Alex, and Fernando) were working on the monitoring exercise mentioned above and although Doug was not present his Doris character was,

"John asked if any one could draw and Alex said 'No, I know I can't but I can't say for anyone else'. John started drawing the picture of the employee who was over-loaded with work with the manager looking over his shoulder at what the employee was doing. The managers thought was expressed as that of untrust, while the employee's thought was that of being pushed over the cliff with a gun pointed at his head. Alex

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said at some point during the drawing 'we should colour it', and John replied while carrying the action 'yes, orange hair'. Ahmed then pointed out 'Is this another DORIS?', and John replied 'if it were, we would all be behind her pushing'. Alex then said 'she never looked this slim' (Doug/DORIS was slightly over weight while John was drawing skeletons of people). It seems DORIS continues to be at the centre of having fun".

<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

The Doris character presented the learners with an easy avenue to take whenever they wanted to relieve boredom. It was an easy excuse to change from the serious mode to the more 'fun' mode.

6.2.2   Humour as a tool to control reality and resist authority:

Humour can be a means through which frustration and conflicts are expressed in a way that would reduce a felt hostility between two parties but at the same time maintain a satisfactory relationship between them (Collinson, 1988; Bradney, 1957). Coser (1959) has seen humour as a 'safety valve' that "provides... outlets for hostilities and for discontent ordinarily suppressed by the group" (1959, p. 180). Humour can be used to play with different interpretations of the situation but at a lower risk than if done in a serious mode (Kahn, 1989). Because of humour's ambiguity it is up to the recipient to interpret it either way and the sender can always rely on this ambiguity to undermine the recipient's response to hostility. "It was only a joke!" is always a valid excuse (Kahn, 1989; Hatch and Ehrlich, 1993) which

would render the humorous message 'safe' (Long and Graesser, 1988).

Denscombe (1980b) pointed to how the use of humour as a social control mechanism in schools was well-known to teachers. Teachers use humour as punishment for deviant pupils through embarrassing them and bringing them into line. In contrast to evening-class teachers studied by Salisbury and Murcott (1992), the instructors in the five learning events appeared to make few attempts to initiate humour. Only in one incident did I observe instructors use humour as a punishment tool (This will be discussed later). By and large, instructors were not observed to initiate any humorous interaction in the classroom although they participated in some of the humorous interaction when it occurred. It may therefore be safe to conclude that instructors in these corporate training programmes acted as catalysts of the humour more than they did as initiators of it (in that it was up to them to decide when and how to control humour).

Following Fox's (1990) argument of how instructors who do not share the same reality as learners could try to restore the situation from a humorous to a serious mode by shouting, the learners in the Washington Bank I event who enjoyed DORIS's (Doug's) presentations tried to extend them as long as possible. This became

a source of irritation to the instructors towards the end of the learning event. Doug became a 'clown' (Khan, 1989) who was able to challenge the instructors' definition of the situation by representing an alternative source of authority within the event. For one, by creating an acronym of his own which was accepted and owned by the whole group, Doug manifested that official realities could be contested by the learners' own inventions. The message that was communicated, in a non-threatening way, was that 'two can play the game'. Doug as clown served as an intermediary between the learners' group and the instructor, buffering the imposed reality of the official event with a humorous alternative (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995b).

As a clown Doug served to open up possible reframing of the dominant assumptions of the event. An incident which would serve as an example is one in which Doug was giving a presentation. During the presentation he started giving a very long-winded presentation window-dressing his remarks intentionally to impress the instructors although the instructors had told the learners earlier that if the answer was structured properly it should take no more than three minutes. When one of the other learners reminded every one of what the instructor had said, Doug replied jokingly that if the class would stop playing games he would

shorten his answer to use three minutes only. This exchange was followed by loud laughter in the room as was usual whenever Doug did or said any thing at which point Pamela (one of the instructors) said in an annoyed voice "the purpose of the exercise is to do something beneficial and not to humour us as trainers". The incident continued:

"Doug didn't look at the instructor (Pamela) and continued 'O.K. Let's scrap out a couple of two and we would still get the end result'. Pamela said a bit too loudly 'So, why didn't you do that from the beginning?'. The second instructor (Colin) then invited the third group to present their results. Pamela was definitely very upset because her face was flaming red. Colin came to the back of the room, knelt down beside her, and then whispered some thing to her. She was scribbling nervously on her writing pad obviously still upset. Colin then left and stood in the middle of the room following the new presentation".

Field notes, 25-11-93

This last incident shows how joking and making fun by the learners produced the social reality of the situation. Obviously the other learners who shared Doug's reality enjoyed the session and tried to prolong it. The fact that the learners responded with laughter is evidence of their shared 'psychical conformity' (Freud, 1991) and as Zijderveld (1968) argued it was "the definition of the situation by the people living in it [which] creates the joke as a joke" (1968, p. 294). But that was not the same for the instructor who might have seen it as a threat to her control or as a game she did not want to play.

The incident also points to the gap between

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instructors' and learners' conceptions of the realities of the training programmes and to the double-edged quality of humour (Malone, 1980). In these events impressing the instructors by window-dressing and beefing-up answers was part of the everyday reality of the learners. If this reality was to be openly acknowledged and taken seriously, however, then the reality of the learning event as we know it would have to be questioned with the results possibly requiring a reframing of these programmes. Through the clown learners were able to point to the existence of a disjuncture between the two realities but when the humour, used in the process, went 'too far' it threatened to redefine the reality of the event in a way that was potentially threatening to the instructors (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995b). And so, because instructors did not share the same reality, the learners thought it was funny whereas the instructor thought it was a waste of time. Because the 'play frame' is less acceptable in learning events, when learners breach the accepted norm, these breaches "have to be repaired by applied humour or even by more 'serious' interactional work such as shouting or insisting on due procedure" (Fox, 1990, p. 442).

Humour in semi-structured or highly structured situations can change the whole balance of power and hierarchy which characterizes these situations. The

initial definition of the situation was controlled by the instructors but once the joking and the making fun starts the "joker" controls the crowd. Here the instructor related more to the hostility than to the joke itself and as Kahn (1989) argued in situations where the disconnection between the two realities is evident, the use of humour will acknowledge these disconnections which for the purpose of maintaining a working relationship are better left unacknowledged.

Joking can be conceived of more like a sword hanging over the instructors' heads threatening to cut through their actions when they are not acceptable to the jokers. Through jokes jokers can communicate potentially threatening information in an indirect and inoffensive way. They can criticize and give judgement on the established definition of the situation in a subtle way. As Freud argues:

"A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly..."(1991, p. 147).

The fact that Doug has chosen to ignore his fellow learner's comment (that if the exercise was done properly it should take no more than three minutes), the comment was not even addressed to Doug but Doug has chosen to put his reply in a logical argument: "If we would stop playing games..". He is disregarding the comment put forward and diverting his reply to another thing. Joking in this way can represent resistance to

authority and when a clown emerges he or she comes to act as a group leader. Through joking a joker issues an invitation to the other learners in the course to join him in his resistance against authority. Other learners laugh because they share the same definition of the situation and count resistance against authority as a worthy cause for support (i.e. laughter). Through this process a personal experience is transformed into a collective one and group solidarity is reinforced. In Coser (1959) words:

"it brings about consensus and strengthens group identification among persons whose relationships are only transitory" (Coser, 1959, p. 179).

Humour in class can, however, fragment the existing social reality too. The next excerpt is from a fish bowl demonstration which was about coaching for success. In this excerpt Doug and Robert were playing the role play and as will be seen although Doug seems to have got annoyed with this DORIS characterization he still could not resist making last minute additions to his script to make people laugh. This confused his partner in the role play and caused the other learners to laugh more at his confusions:

"Phil I presented Doug and Robert to the class as his group's actors who were to act the role play for coaching for success. The role play was about a coaching session between a manager and a subordinate with the intention of them both being the success of both parties and so the organisation. Phil I said that they were playing the roles of Chip and Dale (names from the manual), but as soon as they came to the front of the class John from the other group called out laughingly 'it's DORIS!' as if surprised and Doug

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replied 'It's Dale, Dale'. He was smiling but a bit annoyed, I think. In the role they were playing, Robert was telling Doug to go and meet a difficult customer (his first time for meeting that customer because the previous sales person to whom this customer was assigned had just moved jobs within the organisation). Doug asked 'Should I tell Frances (customer) that Fiona (previous sales person) had moved on because of the drug addiction?'. There was laughter around the room especially from Peter and Al. It seems the addiction problem was a last minute addition to the role play by Doug and it did make Robert a bit confused. I heard Peter say to Al 'I'm sure that's not part of the script'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 24-11-93</div>

One of the basic assumptions of the humorous mode is the existence of the multiple social reality (Mulkay, 1988). Fox (1990) argued that humour works by upsetting our 'unitary presumption' of this accepted social reality. In the above excerpt only learners from the same group as Doug and Robert knew that the argument used by Doug in the role play was a last minute addition by him which was not practised in the role play practice session. This actually created a confusion that affected the existing accepted social reality. Learners, while laughing, were checking if what they were laughing at was part of the script or not. Instead of the learners sharing the same singular world, they now had different interpretations of the situation. This difference had to be resolved through checking their interpretations with those of the others in order to restore back the unitary definition of reality. In other words, humour in this case did not present the existing multiple realities. It actually blurred and confused the learners who shared

a back stage interpretation of role plays as being played according to a practised script.

The fun group (discussed in Chapter Five) was another way which manifested how joking and making fun was used to create an alternative world outside the dominant reality conceived by the instructors. Time (breaks) and space (the syndicate rooms) were used by the learners in ways that reversed the expected order in learning events. When the fun group spent an entire afternoon 'goofing off' its members were exerting control over what they did with their time. In the back-stage (Goffman, 1959) learners affirmed their own contrary definition of reality. They used humour to define the boundary of their culture in such a way so as to distance themselves from the event world. It has to be pointed, however, that it was mostly Abdul, Smith, and Ronald who were making fun in that group. Javier was mostly a follower who did not understand half the jokes that were passed by him.

6.2.3 **Humour as a relief against anxiety:**

Tension and anxiety are important and well recognised stimulants of laughter (Freud, 1991; Davis, 1979; Kahn, 1989). The learners in the five training programmes observed experienced anxiety which was related not only to the learning process but also to

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the power structure in which the learning events were embedded. I discussed earlier how, as employees of the training organisations, the learners in these events felt vulnerable because they could not be sure that their performances were not going to be reported to their bosses.

Becker et al (1961) discussed how the underlying tension experienced by medical students as they underwent their training often revealed itself in jokes. Similarly, in these training programmes, the learners coped with their anxieties in part by joking about them. Joking provided a means for the learners to distance themselves from 'anxiety producing situations' (Kahn, 1989; Davis, 1979; Barsoux, 1993). Humour made the potentially terrifying "funny instead of frightening" (Davis, 1979, p. 108). Whenever the learners felt anxious about not knowing the answer to one of the learning duties, they joked about it as in the following excerpt:

"The question was to identify the key factors for success in the soft-drink industry. Richard laughed and replied: 'Be like Coca-Cola and put Caffeine in it !'. The class laughed while the instructor passed the question to someone else".
                                        Field notes, 28-9-92

In another example from the Eastern Bank II case study:

"When the time approached for the practice of the first role-play, the group started laughing and joking about what could happen. I think it's a sign of anxiety.. a lot of laughter in this session. Matthew, unable to control his laughter asked for a break

saying: 'I need to go to the toilet, I'm so upset'. I
think he meant it. On his return he looked at me and
said: 'I think you're going to enjoy this'..".

In the latter excerpt Matthew is modifying reality by
denying the objective justification of the fears
common to all in the classroom, namely that they are
going to make fools of themselves. By laughing about
it he implied that such worries were not grounded in
reality. That even if he does make a fool of himself
it is something to laugh about. Through laughing
Matthew was distancing himself from the source of
danger he feared. Actually, the whole group was
worried about the same thing - preserving their self-
image. As a way of calming their anxieties, they
agreed to treat role-plays in a humorous manner, 'to
have a bit of fun' during the learning event. Laughing
at one's actions or playing a joke on other learners
was their way of relieving their anxieties.

Learners were also careful to keep their 'humour work'
in good order when it seemed in need of 'repair' (Al-
Maskati and Thomas, 1995b). Jokes could get over-used
and so lose their efficacy. Learners, therefore,
watched the effects of their joking on their subjects
of laughter (especially when instructors) in order to
see when a joke had become over-used and was losing
its effect. The realization that the repetition of
teasing an instructor (Margaret) about her spelling in
the Eastern Bank II case study always evoked laughter

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and enjoyment but at the same time it was wearing the joke itself thin through over-use. This urged the learners to change the joke and so in the following excerpt they started searching for an alternative using information the instructor had provided about her private life:

"At one point the group got stuck trying to spell a word. Sarah asked how it was spelled, and Bill replied with laughter 'Let's ask Margaret. I'm sure she will know'. Sarah then said: 'I wonder if she is getting tired of the joke about her spelling? I wonder if we should look for another one? Bill, you ask her if she is going to cook beans on toast tonight'. Bill asked 'why is that?' and Sarah replied 'because she said last night that she was a bad cook and that her husband does all the cooking'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 8-10-93</div>

6.3 **Jokers:**

All the jokers that I observed were male although the subjects of laughter were both male and female. Jokers, like Doug, were 'stars' in their groups and as such they were a powerful challenge to the instructors. Jokers were popular members in these events, they were approached more often by other learners, and were always the centres of attraction in conversations during coffee and lunch breaks. Jokers' power was mostly derived from their ability to bridge the gap between the dominant order of the classroom and the inversion of that order and from their ability to threaten the instructors' reality which they tried so hard to maintain - order in the classroom.

In order for jokers to produce laughter in their audience not only did they have to share the same reality but their

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jokes had to catch the audience by surprise. The joke had to have an unexpected punch line which propelled people to laugh (e.g. the fragmenting of the existing accepted reality as discussed above). According to Freud (1991) jokers can not laugh at their own jokes, they laugh 'on the rebound' through their audience. He said:

"..and one can in fact observe that a person who has begun by telling a joke with a serious face afterwards joins in the other person's laughter with a moderate laugh" (Freud, 1991, p. 209).

Kahn (1989) argued that groups often assign the role of joker or 'clown' to those who are willing and able to enact it. Jokers must have what Handelman and Kapferer (1972) called a 'license to joke'. I did not observe how this license to joke came to be negotiated and granted may be because as Handerman and Kapferer (1972) suggested the issuing of this license could take place in an encounter between jokers and their audience previous to the one being observed. In any case, these jokers served the purpose of getting the group members to step back and to question both substance and process of the groups' work. Through humorous interaction jokers defused emotionally difficult situations and encouraged other learners to stand back from the dominant reality and acknowledge the possibility of reframing it (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995b). What distinguished the jokers' attempts to change the power in classroom was that their attempts at resistance were done in an amusing way. They opened the accepted norm to oppositional views but in a subtle way that could normally

be ignored by instructors although instructors could not entirely ignore joking behaviour.

One day during the Washington I learning event a learner (John), who was about to make a presentation, started by commenting that he hated to follow DORIS (Doug) (possibly because Doug's presentations were always entertaining as well as informative). Pamela looked at Doug and said "You know there is a way for changing a name in personnel files if you want your name changed". The instructor seemed to be insinuating that because Doug was becoming attached to his Doris character he might have some difficulties disassociating himself from this identity when he moves back into the bank at the end of the event. In this case, it was the instructor who was communicating potentially threatening information in a humorous mode. It was in a way a tacit punishment from the instructor. She was issuing him with a threat without offending him. It might be important to mention that this was the only function of humour that instructors were observed to use. Instructors were not observed to initiate humorous interaction in these training programmes except in the case of the Cross Pacific Bank with the instructor who mixed funny anecdotes about his family with his teaching sessions. He, however, did not seem to seek the role of the joker of the learning event in the way Salisbury and Murcott (1992) discussed.

In another incident with Doug he,

"was presenting his group's discussion results of 'what is in the performance management for the employee?' to the class and he read out 'developing the vision!'. He then said:'this is why we have an exclamation mark at the end of it', as if he did not really believe in it, and there was laughter around the room. Pamela who was standing at the front of the room shook her head at Colin who was sitting at the back, and he shook his head too as if saying 'there is no hope for this man'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

It was in this way that the instructors were able to classify Doug outside of the 'normal' person category most of the time. Denscombe (1980b) defined the indulgence strategy as a "teacher strategy in which pupils are allowed to go beyond normally accepted bounds of behaviour and where teachers decline to enforce general classroom rules"(Denscombe, 1980b, p. 65). In this case Doug was regarded as a 'special case' deserving 'special treatment'. Subjects of laughter (whether instructors or other learners) laughed with jokers at themselves and their actions. In a way they could not do otherwise of fear they would push the power struggle further with the joker extending his joking and encouraging others to join him after which the instructors would lose the classroom control. It is when this happens (i.e. when the instructors feel the threat of the joker as being dangerous) that the situation would have to be restored through a serious mode.

6.4 Subjects of Laughter:

Although subjects of laughter were usually instructors and their actions or some created character like DORIS, fellow learners also suffered sometimes (e.g. Salma from the Washington Bank II). Salma bore the brunt of being the

centre of laughter in that course. The following excerpts

are examples of how Salma was received when presenting to

her class or when contributing to her group discussion in

syndicate exercises:

"Salma was characterized as the social person in the group.
She got up to present her group's summary on the capital
structure section of the company case. It is the first time
she presents a major presentation although she spoke
regularly in groups and during class discussions. She was
covering her transparency and revealed the points she
discussed one by one. Ronald asked jokingly from the back
'Wow, what is this?'. She could have encouraged this
because the first thing she said when she first got up to
present was that she was going to keep them in suspense.
Ronald then continued 'Oh, a strip show, is it?', and she
replied 'yes, step by step, not all at the same time'.
There was loud laughter in the class while Salma continued
'getting ready for tonight' (when the whole group was going
for drinks after class). Smith then said 'and this is
before having any drinks'. There was another loud laughter
especially from Smith, David, Hasan, and Ronald... The last
thing Salma said before revealing the whole transparency
was that the company was a good candidate for takeover and
then Anne (one of the instructors) continued 'yes, and the
last piece to go before the big strip is?'".
                                        Field notes, 9-2-94

In another incident two days later, the same thing

continued as in the following excerpt:

"Salma got up to present her group's results for the Sales
and Profitability section and as usual she covered her
notes and revealed them as she presented. Ronald said from
the back 'Oh, no, not another strip job'. I do not think
she understood because she said 'this is going to be a
quick one'. Both Patricia and Ronald burst out laughing".
                                        Field notes, 11-2-94

In this way Salma was drawn into enacting the stereotypic

notions other learners perceived her to be. Salma was a

fashionable, good looking young woman. She was not the

empty headed they made her out to be but it was through

this stereotypic humour that other learners dismissed her

contribution to discussions and/or her attempts at

leadership. Vinton (1989) discussed how humour can be used

as a socialization tool that eases new employees entry into organisations but in Salma's case the situation was almost the opposite. It was as if her presence was perceived as a threat to an all-male group and so the group used humour whether consciously or unconsciously to put her 'in her place'.. outside the group. By doing that the learners as a group were able to maintain their powerful positions and maintain the status quo. Humour in this case was an act of 'aggression' (Kahn, 1989). Long and Graesser (1988) also quoted Zillmann and Cantor (1976) who argued that amusement in this type of humour (that is also an act of aggression) increases when it is targeted at a disliked figure and decreases if the subject of laughter is a liked figure. They contended that this humour functions to solidify a group against a disliked figure.

McLaren (1993), in contrast, classified this laughter as 'laughter of resistance' which he explained as being:

"..more than wanton cruelty on the part of the students. It is not some form of jocular blood lust. It is in its essence a form of redefining the power structure in class. It is a way for the students to reclaim their sense of collective identity" (McLaren, 1993, p. 165).

He said of the victims of laughter (although his discussion was related to teachers):

"Victims of laughter of resistance are placed in a no-win situation. If a teacher reacts against it, or tries to deny it, then the students can prolong its effect. If the teacher acknowledges it, then he or she only confirm or reinforces the collective power behind it... The laughter of resistance.. can only be deflected when the teacher 'goes' with it" (Ibid, p. 165-6).

Subjects of laughter of resistance like Margaret in the

Eastern Bank II (whom the learners joked about her spelling) or Salma in the Washington II had to laugh with the crowd even if it was about themselves. Salma only prolonged her agony when she tried to stop the laughter by asking questions like "what have I done now?" or "Hello?" when people failed to react to her questioning. Any action or comment from her only brought more laughter.

In more serious situations (e.g. when receiving group feedback after role plays) subjects of criticism reduced their agony by laughing at their actions with the group with 'humorous self ridicule' (Vinton, 1989). By starting laughter themselves they chose to become subject of laughter as in the following excerpt:

"Mary did look at the video with the others. She also laughed at some parts of the video where she went wrong. She looked comfortable. Actually, whenever Brian went into a Q3 behaviour (which was troublesome for her during the role play) there would be even more laughter from her. I wonder if this laughter is another sign of anxiety. When Brian went on talking on the video (playing the talkative Q3) about one thing she said while watching 'shut up'. Brian didn't say anything, he didn't even look at her".
Field notes, 6-10-93

Collinson (1988) discussed how this type of laughter at oneself was a form of 'social survival of the fittest'. To survive in this environment one must not only be able to joke about others and laugh at them, she must also be able to take jokes about herself and laugh at them. Collinson (1988) quoted one of the subjects of laughter in his study who explained why one preempts the laughter of others at oneself:

"It's a form of survival, you insult [yourself] first

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before they get one back. The more you get embarrassed, the more they do it, so you have to fight back. It can hurt deep down, although you don't show it" (Collinson, 1988, p. 188).

But the hurt did show sometimes because this joining in the laughter was to a certain limit after which it was obvious that the subjects of laughter were starting to feel uncomfortable as the laughter continues in Mary's case in the following excerpt:

"When replaying the video and the timer went off (in the video) there was laughter around because Mary didn't handle Brian very well and so she lost a lot of time. Mary was looking at her notes and continued to do so for a few moments before she looked up again".

Field notes, 6-10-93

6.5 Conclusion:

The extensive use of applied humour by the learners emanated from the nature of the five programmes as semi-structured hierarchical situations in which mature employees, mostly without prior acquaintance, were required to interact with each other in 'situated activity systems' (Goffman, 1961a). These systems were, however, also characterized by conditions of status incongruity and ego-anxiety (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995b) which were conducive to the functioning of humour in each of the ways discussed. Humour relieved boredom, controlled reality, and relieved anxiety. Through these functions humour served to integrate the group and helped create a more pleasant learning milieu. As such humour in these learning events served to maintain them as viable social systems in the face of potential disintegration.

Organisational membership can be very stressful, not only do organisations call for efficiency, effectiveness, rationality, responsibilities...etc., but they also demand conformity of their members to their organisational role demands. When organisational members are put in a struggle between wanting to be part of and separate from their organisations, to be good learners as well as good employees humour can be of most benefit. It enables individuals to move towards and pull away from the roles they take. It helps them to maintain their identities both as adults and as competent employees in the faces of highly threatening and anxiety-provoking situations.

Humour in these training programmes is a 'safe' reaction to the abstract and demanding bureaucratic organisational setting the learning events were embedded in. Humour in these settings had a dual purpose, it both expressed and contained resistance. It is this ambiguity that enables humorous interaction to be a "symbolic expression to the tension that characterizes organisational life" (Barsoux, 1993, p. 83). It leaves it to the recipients to either take the jokes seriously and read the messages embedded in them or to pass them as pure humour. As Freud (1991) argued, it is only jokes-with-a-purpose that run the risk of facing people not wanting to listen to them.

Barsoux (1993) argued that there was a close relationship between the 'haha and aha'. That humour can pave the way to

creativity and innovation. He stated:

"Both processes are based on introducing discontinuity and so require the group to accept a deviation from the orderly sequence of thoughts. They also demand a certain indulgence from those listening: a readiness to pursue impulses without immediately imposing critical thought on them and to discard momentarily the constraints of logic and likelihood" (Barsoux, 1993, p. 48).

Although I have not observed instructor initiated humour other than to control learners, Stebbins (1980) discussed how humour can convey a sense of equality between teachers and pupils. In these learning events, however, instructors used humour more to call attention to their authority in the situated activity system of the classroom. They erected status differences rather than abolished them.

On the one hand, humour can act as a 'safety valve' (Zijderveld, 1968) that naturalizes pressure in these training programmes. It represents time out from the strait-jacket of organisational roles. It gives learners a measure of the control that organisational membership has taken away from them (Barsoux, 1993) and allows them to criticize without harming the existing relationship between the joker and the subjects of laughter. On the other hand, humour may 'get out of hand' or 'go too far'. It may provide an alternative world into which members retreat defensively and which seals them off from learning experiences. It can inhibit change and the confrontation of problems by passing serious concerns as jokes. It may express resistance to definitions of reality whilst in

doing so helping to maintain these definitions especially if the subjects of laughter do not become aware of the reasons or intentions of this laughter about and at them. Humour in this case can act as a 'sociological defense mechanism' (Hatch and Ehrlich, 1993) that enables less than perfect situations to be maintained in spite of their being criticised in subtle ways.

Finally, as Linstead (1985) concluded:

"..the power of humour to stimulate change should not be underestimated. Humour can have great impact in the world by having its content transposed and defined as serious, but also by transposing real world content into the humorous frame, and defining it as humorous in an indelible and irreversible way. Its impact may be more effectively destructive in this way than through the more tortuous channels of negotiation and construction " (Linstead, 1985, p. 763).

Instructors' Strategies

I have already pointed out that this study did not originate with the intention of studying the instructors' strategies and that some of the instructors were reluctant about cooperation which did not make matters of interpretation easier. The results presented here are my attempts at understanding what I observed instructors do and how they behaved. The analysis incorporates some help in interpretation from some instructors but not all. The presentation of strategies used by both learners and instructors was thought to be important in that this thesis could then present a study of the interplay of instructors and learners strategies and of their reciprocal effect on one another. As A. Hargreaves (1980) states:

"Only by looking at both sides of the equation simultaneously will we come to forge the necessary connections between what appears to be specifically institutional questions about the interplay of teacher and pupil strategies, and those wider, more inaccessible questions to do with the organisation and reproduction of social class relations" (Hargreaves, 1980, p. 188).

Hammersley (1980b) also called for the study of how the strategies of one group in a setting relate to those of other groups in the same setting. In the next two chapters I will discuss two strategies. The first is how the instructors were concerned about impression management and how they resorted to performing to impress their audience and the second is about the use of power in these training programmes.

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Chapter Seven

Performing to Impress

7.1 Introduction:

According to A. Hargreaves (1988) all teaching occurs within a context of both opportunity and constraint and teaching strategies are the teachers' attempt to achieve their goals by building on opportunities and coping with constraints. He suggested that when coping, strategies get routinized and habitualized and thus they begin to be identified as part of teaching strategies and not coping ones. He also pointed out, however, that it was not coping in the right sense of the word that was teaching threatening; it was Wood's survival coping (where coping activities take over learning experiences) that was most threatening to teaching.

Denscombe (1980a) quoted Leacock (1969) who discussed institutional influences on teachers' aims. He argued:

"Teachers cannot simply interact with the children in their classrooms according to their desires and personal style. Instead their behaviour often takes characteristics beyond their immediate aims or intents. They must adapt their styles, not only to the children but to the institution, to the principal's requirements, to the other teachers' attitudes and to the standards according to which they will be evaluated"(Denscombe, 1980a, p.61).

In a recent paper, Salaman and Butler (1990) have discussed the barriers to learning in modern organisations where, they suggest, learning "is systematically influenced by the fact of organisation itself, with its in-built tendency to develop or encourage sectionalism, careerism, and defensiveness" (1990, p. 184). They go on to propose that much management learning is:

".. tied to a conception of management consultants and trainers which places responsibility for the success of a course session on the trainer/performer as much, if not more than on the material itself. It defines the trainers as performers, absolutely central to the delivery and success of the material, and rewards them appropriately. Form maybe as important as content in a milieu where success - and re-employment - depends on audience appraisal and a high need for certainty and technique" (1990, p. 185).

Individuals adjust to different situations through a process of 'situational adjustment' (Becker, 1964). Both the inner context (e.g. the organisational context) and the outer context (e.g. social structure) affect the participants (whether learners or instructors) dispositions and expectations. Hargreaves (1988) discussed teachers' autonomy and isolation which some teachers guard jealously. He argued that this autonomy serves to undermine teachers' confidence about their success and leads some to rely on crude indicators of success (e.g. noise levels as in Denscombe, 1980a). In contrast, when classrooms cease to be the instructors' private territories, as is the case when a course coordinator or a panel of bank managers are present, then as Goffman (1961b) suggested the presence of a third party complicates the interaction and makes it a 'public social fact'.

7.2 The Audience:

It was evident that Barbara never sat in on any of the guest speakers' sessions. She only introduced them and left, and then returned towards the end of the lectures to thank the speakers. If the lecture had not finished when

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she returned, she would sit at the back of the class until it did before thanking the speakers, saying things like: "I'm sure we've learnt a lot from this session". She respected the classroom as the "private territory" of the speakers, and so it was only natural for her to feel vulnerable when someone like the panellists came into her "private territory" to question her "trainees". A 'private territory' ceases to be private with the presence of an audience and the performance of both the learners and the instructor become public knowledge within the bank. These panellists in a way became witnesses to the ability of both the learners and the instructors as learners and trainers respectively; a situation which could lead to the objective of learning/teaching getting displaced by that of performing or impressing others.

Du Gay and Salaman (1992) have noted how the term 'customer' has increasingly come to displace other terms used to describe those served by organisations. The instructors in the learning events observed seemed to view the learners as customers or clients whom they had to impress if they (the instructors) wanted to continue with their profitable relationship with the sponsoring banks (when they were outside consultants), or to move on from their transitory position in training to more prosperous positions within the bank (when they were bank employees).

Instructors are forced to redefine their relationship with

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the learners in terms of the customer model with the emphasis this model puts on satisfying the customer. There could also be a conflict between satisfying the customer (the organisation) and satisfying the intermediary customers (the learners). Not only did the instructors have to prove their worth to the sponsoring organisations but also to the learners who functioned in the role of management when they filled out their end-of-course evaluation of the instructors. Through this, learners exerted power over instructors, and their (the learners) satisfaction became crucial for the instructors' securing future business from the management and for retaining their organisation as a customer. Learners served as part of the management surveillance systems for controlling instructors' behaviour.

I expected learners to get nervous on the first day of a training course, but it was not only the learners who were nervous in these training programmes. So were the instructors, and some of the speakers too. Barbara from the Eastern Bank I, with whom I developed what I thought was a close relationship over the two-week credit course, expressed several times that she did feel nervous. For example, on the first day when I first met her and the time passed with introductions and discussion of what I intended to do, she all of a sudden looked at her watch and said it was time to go to class adding "I did not even have time to get nervous". She also mentioned this to me during the

coffee break that same day,

"Barbara came to me during the break and we discussed how the group seemed to be quiet the first day. We also talked about how the learners seemed to be very worried about the presentations (this is the first day of the course). I told her I thought it was normal and that I myself was an instructor but still feel nervous during presentations. She then said that she was nervous this morning, that her fingers were shaking, and that that's always the case on the first day of a training programme".
Field notes 19-4-93

This anxiety on the part of the instructor was because she realized it was not her definition of the situation that was going to hold but the working consensus worked out between her and the learners. Keeping silent did not mean that the learners were not actively thinking and picking clues as to where they stood with the new instructor.

Barbara was also nervous on the last day of the learning event when the learners were presenting their credit application projects to a panel of credit officers from the bank. Although I think her explanation of her anxiety, that she wanted the learners to do well, was partly true, a more important reason was, I think, because she knew that the learners' performance would reflect on her's, especially with the presence of the panellists. This is the excerpt from the field notes:

"I had lunch with Barbara.. She said that she's going to be nervous tomorrow when the group presents, and when I asked why she said: 'well, I've spent two weeks with them and I like them and I want them all to do well'. I asked if she felt the way they will perform tomorrow would reflect on her own performance and she said yes. I also asked if she felt any pressure on her to impress the learners and she said yes again. She added: 'First, I have to get their attention and make them feel I am saying something valuable. I am going back into the bank soon. Training is only temporary for me and I did it by choice because I felt

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it would benefit me. But if they (the learners) go back and say this Barbara did not know what she was talking about, then I've ruined my reputation, because when I go back I will have to apply for jobs just like every one else, and if I develop the wrong reputation then I'm ruined'. Barbara also told me that the panellists were either two or three grades her senior. She didn't say but I think the reason she mentioned that was because she felt the need to use the opportunity to impress her seniors at the bank".

29-4-93

As already discussed in two out of the three banks the promotion system was such that to get promoted employees were to apply for jobs as they come, and so there was pressure on the learners to impress not only the instructors but also the panellists (if there were any) because these panellists came from different departments within the bank and were mostly more senior than the instructors. There was also pressure on the instructor to impress not only the learners but also her seniors who acted as audience in these training programmes. By attending these events the panellists were there to see what the instructor achieved with the learners after being entrusted to her for two weeks and this made her nervous as evident from the following excerpt from the field notes:

"The panel asked Cathy a question and she seemed to be struggling for an answer. Both Barbara and Robert who were sitting at the back of the class (in front of me) were listening attentively until she said something. Barbara then sat back in her seat, looked at Robert, and smiled as if relieved Cathy got it at the end".

30-4-93

Both learners and instructors had an interest in impressing their audience. It almost seemed as if they were colluding to present a successful picture of their learning events. Laing (1969) discussed collusion as a 'game',

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"Collusion has resonances of playing at and of deception. It is a 'game' played by two or more people whereby they deceive themselves. The game *is* the game of mutual self-deception... Collusion is necessarily a two-or-more-person game. Each plays the other's game, though he may not necessarily be fully aware of doing so. An essential feature of this game is not admitting that it is a game" (Laing, 1969, p. 108).

So, while the learners were trying to impress the instructors, the instructors were also engaged in a 'game' with their authority figures. The instructors generally wanted to impress the 'hidden audience' present at learning events through colluding with the learners. They did so using the following strategies:

7.3 Building credibility through introductions:

One way through which the instructors built credibility with learners was through the ritual of their introduction at the beginning of a learning event. In two out of the five learning events observed the instructors were introduced by a learning event coordinator who stressed their long experience, reputation, and expertise. The number of learners in past programmes and the extent of their satisfaction with the learning events were other points stressed in this short first introduction. Expectations were also set in one of the learning events by the reputation of the host business-school whose academic staff were teaching on it.

In the Washington bank II the instructors made it public knowledge that they were part of a consulting company that

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was designing and conducting courses not only in the U. K. but also in Continental Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. The instructors substantiated this by bringing examples about Dutch and Pakistani bankers gathered from learning events conducted for these groups. By pointing to these experiences the instructors established a reputation of being experts who covered at least three continents, and that definitely added credit to them.

This rosy picture set the stage for the climate of the learning event and, as argued by Easterby-Smith & Tanton (1985), it sends the message to the learners that if someone makes a negative comment on the way the event is conducted or on the instructors, then this will more likely reflect on the learner making it than on the instructors, the design, or even the organisation. The coordinators in these instances implicitly passed on the message that any feedback should be positive feedback. I have also discussed in Chapter Five how Ronald's boss expected a feedback on his performance based on Ronald's end-of-course evaluation.

Salaman and Butler (1990) argued that the way trainers 'perform' their jobs is central to the audiences' conception of what a trainer's job should be. They also expressed concern about the effect of linking instructors' appraisals and reviews to their re-employment or promotions in the future. Grey and Mitev (1995) also dismissed the suitability of the 'customer model' (Du Gay and Salaman,

1992) for learning situations because knowledge, they argued, is not a commodity that can be sold. Paying tuition fees for a training course does not entitle the learner to knowledge. Only the fulfilment of certain obligations would entitle him to it. They also cautioned that the acceptance of the consumer model would legitimate giving learners - especially those who thrive after problem solving techniques- what they wanted. i.e. training that is not necessarily educational (Thomas and Anthony, 1995).

7.4 **Taking care of seniors:**

It was noticeable that instructors sometimes differentiated between learners depending on their (the learners) positions within the organisation. They (instructors) seemed to take a little extra care with the more senior learners. In the Eastern Bank I, for example, Bob was the most senior learner in the course and this is what Barbara said about him in a conversation that took place during lunch one day before the learning event ended:

"She spoke about Bob who is the most senior learner, title-wise, in this learning event and so I took the opportunity to ask her about how she felt about him. She said he knew he was senior and that he stares at her sometimes as if he did not understand and at other times as if she was saying a lot of rubbish, but added that she has done this long enough not to give attention to this".
29-4-93

Margaret, of the Eastern Bank II, also behaved differently with Bill who was the most senior person in that course. Not only did she always refer to him in examples but whenever he received messages during the course (which he frequently did) she always inquired if everything was

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alright after he returned back from making a phone call to the office.

Mary was another senior learner in the Eastern Bank II who was one level below Bill. This excerpt is a continuance of the incident discussed in chapter four where Mary walked out of the room quickly because she did not want to watch her role-play video in front of the instructor. This is how the incident continued:

"We decided at the end to go back to the classroom and not to watch Mary's role play video again. In class Margaret initiated the discussion with a question about what the learners thought of the last role play they played. One of the comments came from Brian who played the last role play with Mary and he explained that he had wandered off but that Mary brought him back and that he knew when to talk and when to shut-up. There was laughter in the room and Matthew from the other group said 'You do know that with Mary'. Another laughter but Margaret did not laugh. I noticed she looked at Mary just for a split of a second and then moved on. I think Mary has potential in the bank and Margaret did not want to lose points with her".

Field notes, 6-10-93

After that discussion the groups were sent in pairs to work on planning their real life case studies and Margaret came up to me and we started to discuss my observations. The following is an excerpt from the field notes:

"I told her how I thought the learners did not like to watch their videos, how Bill, Mary, and Sarah had reacted. She was surprised at Bill but agreed that Mary had walked out of the syndicate room so fast and that it was obvious she did not want to watch her video although that was her last chance since they tape on the same video (although Mary had said that if she wanted to watch the video again she would do that later). Margaret also added that she had spoken to Bill before the course and that after that conversation she thought that he was going to give her the most trouble because when she had asked him if he had been to the pre-requisite course he replied 'no, it's too junior for me'. She also added that she knew he was the most senior in the group and that she had thought to herself 'I'd better watch for him'".

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This taking care of senior learners could be another way for the instructors to impress others. I asked Margaret if it was possible for an instructor to have a learner in one of her courses who was more senior than her, but she avoided answering and I did not pursue the question further. So I have no way of knowing if there was someone within the group who was more senior than the instructor or not. All I know is that she had spent more years with the bank than anyone else in the group. She also told me that she wanted to remain in training and did not want to go back into the bank. But, as will be evident from the following excerpt, she still wanted to impress whoever got me access to the bank:

"Margaret asked me if I was submitting a report to Mr X and I said I did not know who he was. I then explained that I got access to the training centre through the holding company. I also added that I would have liked to thank a lot of people in the Eastern Bank because they have been good to me. She then said that if I could mention something about the course to whoever got me access because 'it would certainly help'".

I have mentioned that apart from Barbara of the Eastern Bank I and Margaret of the Eastern Bank II, I was excluded from the instructors' territories for the three other learning events. It was obvious that Frost of the Cross Pacific Bank disliked me. He kept on joking about Arabs and looking at me, which some learners commented to me later was racist. I chose to ignore him - maybe out of weakness, shyness, or the need to maintain access to the course. Hilary (one of the instructors in the Washington bank II)

also made an effort to ignore me and to encourage Anne (the other instructor in the same learning event) to ignore me too (I discuss one incident when she came in and found Anne and I talking and she was almost rude in interrupting the discussion). All this could be part of performing for the learners too. It could serve to discourage the learners from forming close contact relations with me in the first case and between me and another instructor in the second. The second case would have been worst from the director of the instructing team's point of view. To her this relation would have threatened the exposure of the instructing team's inside story to an outsider.

7.5 Rehearsing the learners:

I have discussed how both instructors and learners seemed to have colluded to present a successful picture of their learning events to the hidden audience. One way of doing that was through the instructors rehearsing the learners and preparing them with answers for possible questions. In the Eastern Bank I the instructors gave the learners clues about what to expect during panel presentations with comments like:

"If you put some peer group analysis to the panel, they will certainly be <u>impressed</u>".
Field notes, 20-4-93

"most panels will ask you about Net Trade Cycles (a Financial Ratio) and some of the sophisticated ones will ask you about the Net Trade Investment (another ratio). You have to <u>show</u> the panel you know your stuff".
Field notes, 20-4-93

"Barbara told them again how to answer if asked by the

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panel. She said 'If they ask you where the money is going and you say subsidiary and then they ask you where the assets are, you have to tell them that the subsidiary's assets don't belong in the consolidated accounts'... She's preparing them for presentations, no wonder they are preoccupied with it. From what it seems it's the single biggest problem in this learning event. Being ready for it".

<div align="right">Field notes 19-4-93</div>

The goal was not to see if the learning applied to the learners' jobs, how it applied to their jobs, or how they could use it in their jobs. It was to impress others and by doing that instructors may, without realizing it, have worked to emphasize the short termism of learning. If learners learn because of the need to impress others, then the minute that ceased to be a motivator for learning they would cease to remember what they had supposedly learnt.

In their attempts to lessen anxiety for both themselves and the learners, the Eastern Bank I instructors scheduled meetings with the learners over the last two days of the event to give them feedback about their written application projects (which have already been sent to the panellists). During these sessions the learners were warned about possible questions that could be asked by the panel. These briefings did make a difference as the following excerpt illustrates:

"After the first two presentations we had a break. Robert (an instructor) walked up to Colin who had just finished his presentation and said 'I couldn't believe it when their first question was about the degrading', and Colin replied 'Yes, I'm glad you warned me about that'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 30-4-93</div>

This was common to the three technical courses where the learners presented individual or group projects. In the

Washington Bank II, the instructors continued to give the learners clues of what to watch for in their companies all through that course. The learners were always attentive to these hints and they used them in their projects.

7.6 **Guessing Games**:

Another means through which instructors prepared learners for presentations was through the guessing games which were common in these events. The instructors might have seen them as discussion periods, but they still led the learners to the answers they wanted them to reach. Proper discussion periods would have entailed that the learners discover things for themselves which was a different situation from what I observed in these periods where the learners were expected to provide instructors with the answers the instructors were looking for. Although ostensibly it seemed the instructors were encouraging the learners to participate in discussions and ask questions, at the same time the instructors were giving the learners hints of what they wanted the learners to do: to guess the right answer. There is plenty of evidence to indicate that when learners start to give an answer contrary to what the instructor wanted to hear, the learner gets cut off and coerced into the instructor's point of view. If the learner persisted with her original argument, she was sometimes given the message that the point she was making was "trivial" and that she was wasting the class's time.

Every time instructors came into syndicate rooms they gave the learners clues of what to pursue. One reason for this could be that they (the instructors) did not want the learners to be delayed from schedule, but through this the learners learned that by keeping silent someone else would do the thinking for them, as the following excerpt from the Washington Bank II suggests:

"Hilary and Anne (the instructors) walked into the syndicate room where Patricia, Jack, Hasan, and Javier were working. This is the way Hilary started the discussion:
'Hilary: Does the cash flow meet what you would expect?
No answer.
Hilary: When you see Net Plant Expenditure, is it high growth, medium growth, or low growth. Compare this line with this line in the Cash Flow statement. Is this what you would expect?
No answer.
Hilary: Where are they in terms of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) matrix?
No answer.
Hilary: Their investments in the earlier years may be high but now they're not a star, they're moving towards a cash cow (answering her own question).
Field notes, 11-2-94

This, doing the thinking for the learners, was evident and it only taught the learners that by keeping silent the instructor would reveal more and more information so that they would not have to work hard to get to that stage. The following is another example from the same case study:

"Hilary came in and asked them how they were getting on. She started leading them to the right answer by a chain of questioning. This is the conversation that followed:
'Hilary: Supply is not what you would expect, is it?
No comment.
Hilary: What about their inventory? What do you think about inventory per day? Remember this is January. What does that mean?
Smith: That's after the sales, so they're holding obsolete stock.
Hilary: What period is this?
Smith: 1984.
Hilary: Yes, boom time. So what does that tell you?
Smith: They're producing the wrong stock?

Hilary: Exactly. This is boom time so it's production not selling. I don't know this for a fact but what is the thing that is missing from the annual report that most retailers talk about?
Smith (after a while): Information Technology? (in a surprised tone).
Hilary: Exactly.
Smith: IT for Rosaline Co?
Hilary: Yes, why not?'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 7-2-94</div>

In the above excerpt it was Hilary asking the questions and leading Smith into the answers she was looking for, but because the line of argument was not his he was not convinced with the conclusions he reached although they were his conclusions. The following is another example from the Eastern Bank I:

"Barbara came into the syndicate room and questioned the group I was observing about the company they were working on. She asked:
'What about leverage?
No reply.
Barbara (after a minute of silence): What happened to it?
Someone: It went down.
Barbara: Why is that?
Silence.
Barbara: How was it funded?'.
Silence.
She pointed them to the components of the equation for calculating leverage and showed them that leverage was reduced because it was funded mostly by retained earnings".

<div align="right">Field notes, 22-4-93</div>

Again, by keeping silent when asked a question the learners enticed the instructor to give them more clues and to eventually show them the whole solution to the problem.

Some of the instructors knew they asked leading questions and might have thought that that was the way they were supposed to handle discussion periods. Hilary of the Washington Bank II, for example, often said during lecturing "here is a bit of a leading question for you" and

when they answered it right she would say "I'm glad there are some of us who are still awake". Another reason for these guessing games could also be the instructors' concern with time keeping, which influenced how free the instructors were with discussion periods. If the learners miss out the important stage of learning (i.e. questioning and discussion) they will not internalize it.

Hirschhorn (1988) explained how adult learners' relationship with the teacher is central to the learners' experiences. He argued for the use of teaching techniques rather than oneself as a "transitional object" in teaching. He used the example of a child's teddy bear which can help a child separate from his mother by enabling him to project onto the teddy bear the feelings he has for his mother and to then re-introject those feelings and contain them into his mind thereby ending the need for the teddy bear. Hirschhorn argued that by using teaching techniques as a transitional object the instructor can help the learner make the transition from dependency to independence just like a teddy bear helps a child make this same transition. Teaching techniques, he cautioned, could function as symbols of the trainers' power and experience where the learners become part of an audience watching the instructor performing on stage. If this is the case, the learners will idealize the instructor because he seems competent and powerful so that they can feel small, weak, and dependent.

William of the Cross Pacific Bank described Frost (the instructor of the first module in that learning event) as a 'good actor'. Frost was a much accredited instructor in this learning event. He was always dressed in what looked like very expensive suits and as Cialdini (1984) stated "Finely styled and expensive clothes carry an aura of status and position" (Cialdini, 1984, p. 222). Frost also mixed his sessions with entertainment, telling jokes and anecdotes about his mother, his brother's business, and his experiences of different cultures. I must admit I had difficulty understanding the purpose of his jokes. The learners themselves expressed, both in individual and group discussions, how they found Frost to be intimidating. The jokes he used did not seem to be employed to bring the learners closer to him. If anything, these jokes were to tell the learners of his family's good fortune with his old mother still involved in the family business and of his experience of world-wide lecturing but in a more subtle way.

Sara made the point on the first day they met him that she had heard most of the jokes he had made in class from past learners who had attended his training courses. She added: "He must have a pad of jokes which he updates regularly but I do not mind that because it is so professional these days". On the same day Vanessa commented that she would have liked to have raised more questions in class but that Frost was so fast that "you don't have the time to

formulate your questions". This was brought up again on the third day of the learning event when the work of a syndicate group got side tracked to discussing the instructor again. William said:

"'Did you notice how fast he was going, like a rocket and no hard copies too. I had a feeling we were given a lolly to get a taste so we go back to Human Resources (Department) and say we want a three day marketing workshop. He is doing a three day workshop in one afternoon'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 30-9-92</div>

This comment came from William who was himself a part time instructor and who seemed to know a lot about group process theories which he tested on learners and instructors alike. At times it seemed, just as Salisbury and Murcott (1992) observed in their two-adult learning classes, that the performing and the survival strategies were more prevalent than the learning strategies. Whether the instructors adopted the "entertainer" role, as in the Cross Pacific Bank, or the "worrier" role as in the Eastern Bank discussed above, building a dependent relationship was not the answer.

Woods (1990) pointed that much survival teaching takes the form of entertainment. By displacing the reality with humour, with fraternization and identification with learners, the teachers neutralized potential conflict and while this might have some pedagogical values, it still had important survival repercussions. The alliance between instructors and learners that Hirschhorn (1988) spoke about involved empathizing with the learners. He stressed that it

was important to keep the alliance as that because unless instructors stand to the side of the learners' experiences, the relationship can not succeed.

This was not the case in the learning events observed. The Cross Pacific learning event, for example, was designed to help the managers develop their technical and behavioural skills. But at the same time it made them feel incompetent and dependent. In the first module the instructor lectured and they took notes, and for the first three-day module it was mostly that. The situation made the learners dependent. The learners knew (the instructor and the learning event coordinator told them during the introduction) that the instructor was very experienced and that he lectured both in America and in just about every other part of the world. He certainly did not make it a secret that he was an ex-lecturer of a very well-known business school in America. The interesting thing was that although one of the learners (Sara) told me that she felt the instructor was intimidating, or as she put it "good but intimidating", the rest of her colleagues thought that module was the best in that learning event. This is what Sara said when the group started the second module:

"I sat at lunch with Sara, Jeff, Tony, Eddie, Allen, Vanessa, and Michael. Sara said she feels that they had been spoiled during the first three days and Vanessa added that it seems that the real work was just starting now referring to the project work they have to finish and present the next monday".

<div align="right">field notes, 2-10-92</div>

In that same learning event the fifth and last module which

was planned for the last three days was a behavioural module. The module involved the learners enacting role plays, videoing them, and then reviewing and discussing them. This module was taught by another outside consultant but to learn or even attempt to learn in this module the learners had to feel comfortable to take the initiative and experiment with taking the role play one way or another. This was a total change for the learners. The group had been together for one and a half weeks but still did not feel comfortable to experiment in front of each other which led to resentment of the instructor, refusal of the learning content, and near collapse of the whole learning event.

7.7 Conclusion:

Instructors' performances served to support the banks' cultures where not only were the learners dependent on the instructors' evaluation but the instructors were also dependent on others like the learners' bosses, the panellists, and the learners themselves. This dependency culture robbed both the learners and the instructors of authenticity and authority and pushed them into colluding to present a false picture. As Laing (1969) explains:

"Collusion is always clinched when self finds in other that other who will 'confirm' self in the false self that is trying to make real, and vice versa. The ground is then set for prolonged mutual evasion of truth and true fulfilment. Each has found an other to endorse his own false notion of himself and to give this appearance a semblance of reality" (Laing, 1969, p. 111).

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The learners were expected to learn after attending a learning event as if this learning was something that is done to learners in line with the patient view of man that Burgoyne (1973a) argued against. One of Rogers (1969) ten principles of learning is that of the learning of the process of learning, but it seemed that in the management learning events, learning was pursued in a context that encouraged the development of a dependency relationship between instructors and learners or between learners and stars in their learning groups. In all these instances the overt behaviour of encouraging the sharing of the learning responsibility seemed to be contradicted by the subtle deeper messages sent by the instructors actions, that of getting the right answer or impressing others.

The influence of the customer (learner, management..etc) on the instructors' behaviour was supposed to exert just enough control on the instructors, but it seemed it was threatening to destroy the very behaviour that was required in learning events (i.e. encouraging the freedom to learn). When learners and their bosses or others from the sponsoring organisation are perceived as 'customers' they are empowered with the ability to question instructors' activities in their endeavour to maximize the benefits of their choices. This is especially in the market world in which we exist today where different goods (i.e. training courses) are widely available on the market (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992).

Chapter Eight

Power and Control

8.1 **Introduction:**

There is a differential in power between instructors and learners in learning events in general, but that is not to say that learners are powerless. Delamont (1983) attested that classroom interaction helps forge a struggle for power between teachers and pupils. She actually likened the classroom to a battlefield. Classroom interaction, however, would not even exist without some level of cooperation between learners and instructors. The social order of the classroom is rather more like a 'negotiated order' (Denscombe, 1980b). This negotiated order accepts the power differential between instructors and learners in terms of knowledge, authority, experience...etc. which come to be accommodated in the agreed working consensus.

In this chapter I discuss the ways the instructors in the five training programmes observed attempted to establish their definitions of the situation and get the learners to reach a working consensus agreeable to them. I discuss how shocking the learners at the beginning of a learning event was a means for the instructors to set the learners 'straight' for the task ahead of them. I will also discuss how technicizing behaviour in management development programmes can be seen as one of the ways in which organisational values come to dominate individual ones. Another feature of the learning events observed was the difference in power between instructors in the same learning event, and I will discuss how that affected the

strategies the learners used to cope with the task of learning or managing the appearance of learning.

I conclude the chapter by discussing the learners' power relative to the instructors' and organisations' powers.

8.2 Instructors' Power:

Instructors have to be in control as part of the image expected of them. Gaining and keeping respect as well as establishing their credibility with the learners can either lead the course to pass on smoothly or in a troublesome manner. In the learning events observed classroom autonomy seemed to be strongly guarded, and instructors tended to want to keep their classrooms as their private territories where they set the agenda of what to do and when to do it. Margaret, the Eastern Bank II instructor, explained that after she had one bad experience she never let anyone in her class without telling them that she was in control and that they were not to speak without her permission. She was talking about observers during a class discussion and so I had no way of establishing if the point was made for me or if it was a coincidental example for the class.

Margaret did not like anyone to disturb her plans for the class either (plans she did not tell anyone about). So when she walked in, at the end of a group syndicate meeting, and heard me ask the group I was observing if they were going to use their manuals in planning their future coaching

meetings, she looked at me and said "we're actually going to discuss this now in class". Something in the tone of her voice made me feel she did not like me interfering with her agenda. Barbara (the instructor in the Eastern Bank I) also respected the privacy of the invited speakers' sessions as discussed in Chapter Seven. She only came at the end of their sessions to thank and express gratitude to them. Barbara controlled her class in the privacy she maintained and she let others maintain theirs in privacy too. In the following sections I will discuss the strategies used by instructors to maintain their control over their classes.

8.2.1 Tacit Punishment:

Instructors like Margaret (of the Eastern Bank II), let the class have a few laughs during the course even if she was the subject of laughter. But she was very careful not to let this laughter extend to the point where she lost control over her class. Laughter was allowed only to a certain extent beyond which every body knew they had to return to the terms of the agreed consensus, as in the following excerpt:

"Sophie is a trainer and she acts like one. At the start of today's session Sophie, Bill, Mary, and Sarah started teasing Margaret about her spelling (the joking started yesterday). Margaret laughed with them for a second and then started to write the next word (they were listing the Q2 characteristics that serve as barriers in communication). When Margaret got the next word right Sophie went 'Tarrrra!', the group laughed again but I do not think Margaret liked that because she ignored the laughter and went back to writing after looking at Sophie for just a split of a second which I think Sophie understood because she suddenly went quiet".

<div align="right">Field notes, 6-10-93</div>

The situation was the same in all the training programmes.

Tacit punishment (from the learners' perspective) was sometimes used to control the learners, as is evident from the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank I:

"Barbara turned around to find Pete had left the classroom. She did not say anything but it was obvious from the way she looked at his empty seat that she didn't like it. After few seconds she asked Richard who sat next to Pete about where he left to, making a joke about 'if you went to the pub for lunch, I do not think I should ask'. Richard told her he went to the bathroom. Pete came back after few minutes and he barely had time to sit down before she asked him the next question 'How do you calculate X ratio?'. I think he was lucky to know the answer. Colin called from his seat jokingly 'and just in time for the question, aren't you?'".

<div align="right">Field notes 28-4-93</div>

The examples are numerous. In the Washington Bank II one of the instructors (Elaine) was near losing her temper with Salma who kept interfering with the instructor's agenda for the day by going around the groups noting down the names of the learners who wanted to go see a play. And the example from the Washington Bank I learning event, where the instructor lost her temper when Doug admitted that if the class would stop playing 'games' his answer would look different, has already been discussed. These examples are not to say that the instructors were wrong in dealing with the learners in the ways they did. They, however, indicate that when in a classroom, the game is mainly played by the instructor's rules.

These rules are not always concocted because of the instructors' pedagogical assumptions about the perfect learning milieu. Denscombe (1980a) has discussed how 'keeping'em quiet' could be a strategy that derived not only from these pedagogical assumptions but also as a strategy for protecting the teachers from the connotations that accompany noise in the classroom and maintaining their self image. The instructors concern with this self image engenders the use of these tactics.

8.2.2 Keeping Secrets:

Keeping in control also sometimes meant keeping some information from the learners. As I discussed in Chapter Three, the Eastern Bank II event was a new course. It was only the second time Margaret was teaching the course because she only sat as an observant the first time it was offered. She, however, did not tell the learners because, as she said, "then they might have less confidence in me". She also told me that she was still learning the content of the course and that there were some parts of the course that she was not convinced with (some of the behavioural elements that she was advising the learners to follow). Margret kept this information from the learners which she felt might be 'destructive' (Goffman, 1959) of the situation she was trying to define for them. This information was

incompatible with the image she was attempting to establish in front of her audience. Another point was how although Margaret had her private agenda to cover each day, she did not provide the learners with any agenda or plan for the course. The timetable was her 'strategic secret' (Goffman, 1959) which prevented the audience from adapting to the situation she was introducing.

On the last day of the learning event, Margaret and I discussed the course and she and I reviewed some of the evaluation sheets the learners had filled-out earlier on that day. One of the learners (Frances) had made a comment in her end-of-course evaluation-sheet about the unavailability of a timetable during the course and how that might have helped the learners plan their time better. The instructor said loudly after reading Frances's comments: "Frances, I do have a timetable, I just don't give it to you".

8.2.3 Controlling the talk:

Instructors' power derives from their positional authority, their expertise in the subject matter, and from their ability to control and dominate class discussions. Although we are discussing adult bankers here, talk was mostly controlled by the instructors. Through talk, instructors controlled who was to speak, when, how long, and even how often. In the following

incident from the Washington Bank II, Sam (one of the stars of the event) disagreed with one of the instructor's points which then led to a lengthy discussion between Sam and the instructor. The discussion continued although it was clear that they were losing the others' interests because it was an advanced technical point which was beyond the level of most of the learners,

"Elaine was covering the calculation of Beta (a measure of systematic risk which is part of the calculation of the cost of capital for a company) and she said that the calculation of Betas should be long term and that people in the field were calculating them on a monthly basis. She also added that this was where the CAPM (Capital Asset Pricing Model) fell apart. Sam interrupted her and said 'I disagree because even though they are calculated every month they take a long term view. I think Elaine got confused; she put off the OHP and walked to the cupboards on the side of the room, took a sip of her diet Coke drink and then returned to the centre of the front of the classroom and said 'not in the continent'. She then turned to David (who was German) and said 'David?' as if asking him 'am I not right?'. David said different companies have different Betas and she continued to look at him although he wasn't giving her an answer, he was simply stating a fact. Sam tried to interrupt but she didn't acknowledge him and so he couldn't get into the discussion. She continued looking at David and not at Sam who originated the discussion in the first place. When Sam succeeded to take over the discussion again Abdul raised his hand and said 'Are we losing on the discussion here?'. Elaine smiled and then said 'well, actually this might be a better discussion for lunch' but then added 'No, we're making a valid argument here'. Although Sam stood by his point which was that Betas measure the undiversified risk and that investors react to information and so Betas change Elaine stood by her point too that most of the investors were widows and orphans who did not react as quickly as other investors and did not spend their time reading the Financial Times adding 'Do you think the shareholders of Rosaline co. read the FT?'. To backtrack, when Abdul asked if the class was losing on the discussion Smith answered him back from where he was sitting at the front 'I think we're being side-tracked here'. Elaine concluded the discussion by

saying 'a very interesting discussion but one for a whole another course too. I could talk about this all day'. The discussion was not finished and her way of ending it when her only response to what Sam said was 'Yeh, yeh' was obvious. She also stood by her point that the industry uses quick brash tools rather than scientific ones. Elaine said that the cost of equity was 1/PE and that she felt that this was more used than the Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) because most investment bankers did not know about Betas. Sam then responded by saying that that was not very scientific. Her only reply was 'May be but I've got a feeling that this is the way they do it'".

Field notes, 16-2-92

Elaine above can have the last word while Sam has to make sure his talk passes the functional constraints of what constituted an eligible contribution. This is because only contributions that met the approval of the higher authority (the instructor) were allowed to continue (Edwards, 1980). Although Sam argued his point it was the instructor who decided when to acknowledge his inputs so that he can continue and when to terminate the discussion and move to the next point.

It was the instructors who were the more active actors in the learning events observed. They made plans and prepared agendas, they took decisions, and held initiative. Instructors had the power choose themselves as the next speakers rather than allow a learner to speak. They could interrupt contributions to correct, modify, summarize, or to reallocate the turn to someone else. They decided who was to work with whom and where, and had the power to call on learners and ask them to contribute to the discussion

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going on at the time. Moreover, instructors sometimes

used this power to threaten the learners to

participate or face tacit punishment (e.g.

questioning) as in the following excerpt:

"After lunch Hilary is lecturing on the standard
adjustments on the solvency ratios that the Washington
Bank follows. The learners look half asleep with only
one way communication taking place. She asked a
question which no one responded to and so she
continued 'Don't shout all at once, it's only after
lunch'. Although she said that laughingly she started
looking around the room and added 'if I don't hear an
answer I'm going to be calling on people'".
                                        Field notes, 8-2-94

Even in the experiential parts of the programmes

instructors still had more power symbolized by their

authority to prepare and organise material, to

administer and control the class as a whole, and even

through their proximity to the OHP, board, ..etc.

(Jacques, 1983).

All these 'performative acts' (McLaren, 1993) allowed

the instructors to perform the rules governing

instructor-learner interactions to their audiences

without necessarily having to state them. This allowed

conventions "to be established through the creation of

criteria from which states of affairs were judged.."

as appropriate or inappropriate (McLaren, 1993, p.

130). The messages communicated to the learners

through the structures of the learning events were:

the role of the instructor, the role of the learners,

the rules regarding classroom talk, and the actions

that were to be praised or punished. Instructors did

not state these rules verbally, they just performed them or to use Postman and Weingartners' (1969) phrase 'the medium was the message'.

Another important point in the excerpt of the discussion between Sam and Hilary is that Sam did not seem to have received any support from his fellow learners. Perhaps this was because the material was above their heads and they thought they were losing track of the discussion or were being side-tracked from the main point of the course. But the reason could also be that no one wanted to be at the receiving end of the instructor's tacit punishment. This enabled the instructor to move the discussion to a closing point with an ease that would not have been possible had the discussion received the support of other learners in the group. Although Sam was considered to be a star in this learning event, he on his own did not have the power to out-do the instructor on the basis of his expertise. He needed the support of fellow learners to do that.

This situation was in contrast to another in the Cross Pacific Bank learning event where Tony, who was a very quiet person and who did not like being pigeon-holed in a box (during the last three day behavioural module), expressed his refusal of the content of the behavioural classification section.

Tony posed a threat to the instructor because of the support he generated from the group. He was able to influence the behaviour of the instructor and this incident, in fact, set the tone for the whole three day module. Tony experienced a 'status frustration' phase as a result of his stereotyping. He was stereotyped as the quiet person who did not like to contribute. As Hammersley (1985) explained, for the status-frustrated or negative-stereotyped to generate a counter culture, the pupils experiencing these situations must be able to coordinate their actions with one another. The easier this is the more the likelihood that an anti-school sub-culture will develop. Learners have been observed in these learning events to support each other through eye contact, join-in laughter, or even through a raised eyebrow while in the above Washington Bank excerpt the class withheld its support by avoiding eye contact, keeping impassive faces, and by making comments to the effect the class was being side-tracked into an irrelevant discussion.

I have discussed in Chapter Seven how instructors controlled the answers learners provided through giving clues, such that at times it seemed once a learner started providing an instructor's right answer the instructor quickly picked it up from there and completed it. The reason for this could be that when

instructors ask questions they usually know the right answers which they become tuned to hear and so once they have the satisfaction of hearing what could be a right answer they grab at it and perfect it in their own way. This, however, led one learner to comment in the Cross Pacific Bank that all the learners needed to do was to provide the 'buzz word' the instructor was looking for which he would then pick up and 'fill in the blanks'. This same learner said that although the course was supposed to be covered by case study method he (the instructor) was not covering it that way.

The institutionalization of management learning encouraged the development of a "dependency" relationship between instructors and learners. Although I would suspect that some instructors would say their sessions were participative ones, with the floor open to questioning and discussions from the learners, the instructors kept a very close eye on time-keeping and quickly closed any discussion when they felt the urgency to move on. This naturally served as a reminder not only of the instructors' authority on the subject but also on the agenda and setting. This was more so because when learners produced work it was recognized and evaluated in terms of the degree to which it replicated instructors' knowledge. This in itself constituted a domination of instructors' reality over that of the learners.

8.2.4 Shocking the Learners:

Because of the dependency relationship that seemed to be part of the banks' cultures, and because of the learners' pre-occupation with performing for their 'hidden audience', the instructors were able to affect learning by exerting pressure on the learners. Stewart and Stewart (1978) have discussed how trainers could affect the learners' feelings by setting hard tasks at the beginning of a learning event and then relaxing things as the event nears its end.

In the learning events observed, the intensity of schedule, especially during the first few days, seemed to be designed to shock the learners and to get them ready for the hard work to come. But although learners' expectations and anxieties were set high in the programmes, when the learners were told by everyone around them that the learning events would be very demanding, as time passed the intensity diminished rather than built up. It may be worth mentioning that learners in the Cross Pacific, the Eastern Bank I, and the Washington II received letters from these events' coordinators prior to their start advising them not to plan anything for evenings or weekends because they would have homework to do.

I soon got used to hearing comments during and after these courses to the effect that it was "not as bad as

expected" or that "the second week was a lot easier than the first week". The interesting thing was that when Lisa (a learner) pointed this out to the instructors in the Washington Bank II, they were quick to deny it as in the following excerpt:

"I did not go out during the break, I listened to the discussion around me. Lisa said to the two instructors (Hilary and Anne) 'It seems in the last couple of days the schedule was very tight, very intensive, we never had this long a break for tea'. Anne was looking at Hilary as were the other learners Abdul, Patricia, and Hasan. Hilary looked shocked at first and then said 'No, this day is a bit laid back because it's group work but you're not supposed to be that laid back'. She then went out to get the others to start class again and Abdul said to Lisa 'Oh, no. Look what you've done. She went to get the others (Laughter). Lisa said 'I'm sorry I didn't mean that'. Hilary came back with the rest of the group and said 'Now that I've got the others I'm going to work you so hard contrary to what someone suggested'. Lisa covered her face again and said 'I'm sorry, I'm not saying you're being easy, just that it appears that way'".
                         Field notes, 11-2-94

Building anxiety and shocking the learners were both part of an intentional strategy deployed by the instructors. This is what Barbara (the instructor of the Eastern Bank I) said on the first day of that event:

"She said she puts a lot of stress on hard work on the first days because some of the learners, especially the trainee graduates (newly employed university graduates who get put on a special executive programme for the first two years with assignments in different departments of the bank. The plan was for these graduates to get their first managerial appointment at the completion of this programme) come to this programme thinking it's a holiday and so 'we try to shake them up during the first few days but we'll relax later. I, for example, still haven't told them that they won't have to stand up front for their presentations, I will tell them later but not yet'. I said 'Is this a "let them stew strategy"?'. She just laughed".
                         Field notes, 19-4-93

If all else fails in trying to get the learners to show more effort, then the instructors resort to using their common weak spot, namely that of their fear of losing face, as in the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank I case study:

"After finishing the break-even analysis Barbara told the learners that it would be nice if they did that analysis for their company presentations. The learners tried to dismiss that on the basis that it wasn't going to tell them anything. Robert (who gave them the lecture on break-even-analysis) then told them they'd better know it for Monday (the day of the second test). He added that for their presentations they should calculate the ratio for three years and then decide if they want to use it or not. He also said 'or you can ask others who have not prepared for it how they felt after they presented their company projects".

Field notes, 23-4-93

Instructors might have thought that building anxiety in learners encouraged them to work harder for better presentations. But as it happened, when learners were worried about presentations they stopped learning, and if they did, it was only short-term learning. Learners were anxious about presentations from day one, but, as these presentations got closer and closer, I could tell that the learners' immediate concern was not to listen to other learners' presentations and maybe learn from them. According to Pam, Cathy, Steve, and Bob from the Eastern Bank I, as their presentations got closer and closer, with the peak just before the presentation, their immediate concern was to make sure that they had answers for all possible questions they could get asked. The following is another example from the field notes of the Washington II:

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"Now that it is group three presenting (Patricia, Hasan, Jack, and Javier) it is Abdul (whose group has already finished its presentation) who is asking all the questions. It seems the learners stay worried about the presentations until they present and that's when they really start listening to presentations and asking questions".

<div align="right">Field notes, 14-2-94</div>

Immediately after their presentation the learners would not be listening to others' presentations because they would be reflecting on how well they did or how they should have answered different questions. This reflection on action (Schon, 1983) consisted of dialogue with the self, criticism of actions, and maybe some restructuring for the future. The reflection on action would add to the learners' repertoire of strategies to be built for future handling of questions or presentations, and only after this period of reflection on action would the learners feel relaxed enough to start listening to others' presentations.

It was not the presentations in themselves that worried the learners. It was the evaluation that came with presentations. Even Sam, who was the star of his group (if not the star of the whole learning event), was nervous on the last day of the course although he himself was surprised at his nervousness as he explains here:

"Sam came back into the syndicate room and spent the last five minutes pacing the floor while the others prepared the transparencies (this is for the big presentation with the bottle of champaign trophy. Sam had also told me that he had heard that his boss might

attend his presentation). He walked around reading bits and pieces of everyone's transparencies and nodding his head and then walking away. He had a smoke outside and then returned back and started pacing the floor again. This is the first time I see Sam like this, usually he is full of confidence. He looked at me and said 'I'll go and have another smoke again. I can't believe I'm so nervous'. I asked 'are you, really ?', and when he said yes I asked again 'but why?' and his reply was 'I don't know'. I think it is because the instructors told them they were going to be evaluated on this presentation although they were not evaluated on the practice presentation that they did earlier on this week. Sam left to have his smoke.. David who was preparing his transparencies on his own and not in the syndicate room like the others came in and started acting like a scary ghost (definitely nervous too)".

<div align="right">Field notes, 18-2-94</div>

8.3 Technicizing Behaviour:

The possession of expertise is one of the instructors' power bases and the manager-learners attend learning events to gain some of this expertise in the form of new skills deemed necessary for their managerial work. The dominance of technical rationality (which "depicts management as an applied science where knowledge consists of scientifically established propositions about how people and organisations work" (Thomas, 1993, p.21)) was evident both in technical courses (i.e. credit analysis) where technical rationality was expected (but becoming increasingly questionable e.g. Humphrey et al, 1995), and behavioural courses where its application was more questionable (Macintyre, 1985). In technical courses an answer can be either right or wrong and to reach right answers one can follow 'recipe-given' solutions. The behavioural courses observed also offered structured methods of planning and carrying out behavioural

activities in line with technical rationality. I must admit I had the feeling that there was too much structuring of human behaviour during these courses and that Hopfl's (1995) comment that management development in general teaches managers to act a role in the name of professionalising their behaviour did strike a chord.

In the Eastern Bank II each of the learners had a manual of 214 pages in addition to a 68 page pre-work booklet which they had to refer to during the learning event. Each time the learners did an exercise they had to fill-out sheets: the five step coaching and counselling planning charts, the five step coaching and counselling analysis charts...etc. which were to be used in each role play exercise. In an attempt to convince the learners of the value of following the steps outlined in the manual, the instructor told the learners on the first day of the learning event "what we're saying is that you can miss on things if you don't do it in this order". She also discussed this again on the second day of the learning event and Sophie (who was another trainer whose courses covered the same material as that covered in this course but at a lower level) again mentioned control as the main advantage of the imposed structure on behaviour that they were learning. Sophie said "control, you cover all the points you want to cover".

Control was one of the main promises made by these management courses. The manager-learners were seeking

practical knowledge to help them control their performance in the hope that that would aid them in carrying out their managerial jobs more effectively. But as Anthony (1986) argued it seems the technical orientation in management learning is "perpetuated and defended in the name of the practical" (1986, p. 137). Being practical seemed to be equated with the application of techniques that would render others predictable. Grey and Mitev (1995) also discussed how management training programmes seem to be based on a 'functional relationship' with management, with the objective of training being the improvement of "organisational effectiveness and the performance of individual managers". Improving managerial competencies was mostly pursued for control purposes.

In any case, in an attempt to programme these techniques in the learners they (the techniques) were written on flip charts and hung on the classrooms' walls of the behavioural courses. The instructor of the Eastern Bank II had actually called these charts the "A-Z guides".

Another disturbing (at least for me) aspect of the technicizing of behaviour that was pursued in these learning events was the time limit that was set on certain behaviours. Learners were, for example, told that pauses during conversations should not last more than 8-10 seconds! Exercises were also practised in timed sessions. Each group had a timer which the group members had to set

according to the instructions' manual. This is an example:

"The two groups had twenty minutes for the best and worst cases of a coaching and counselling activity. They had five minutes allocated to write the best coaching and counselling activity on the coaching and counselling experience activity sheet provided in their manuals, and five minutes for the worst. These sheets covered information about who the parties were, the subject of briefing, why it was either the best or the worst case. The groups also had ten minutes for discussing these two experiences within their groups. One of the technicalities of the exercise was that the groups had to designate a time keeper and a recorder and to set the timers provided for each part of the exercise. At the designated time the timers sounded: "beep, beep" all around the room and there was laughter. The learners then started on the worst case. I had a funny feeling listening to beeps from around the room.. The beepers went off at the end of the worst counselling experience and Margaret asked how much more time they needed. When Bill said five more minutes and the other group agreed, Margaret (the instructor) asked them to put their timers again and then added 'and then we'll call it off'".

Field notes, 4-10-93

By structuring the behaviour of the manager-learners, codifying their actions, normalizing these behaviours and transferring them into repeatable actions, and then presenting this procedure as the acceptable way one should conduct oneself, these training programmes were establishing 'authoritative means of judgement' (Rose and Miller, 1992) of not only actions but also of selves (Townley, 1994). When learners, for example, were 'measured' by sets of questionnaires to determine areas of development and then categorized according to a set model, they were supposed to accept their place within the model as being the truth. This, as discussed earlier, led not only to 'status-frustration' experiences with some learners but also to a refusal of the content of learning in one course.

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The last excerpt is also evidence that the learners and the instructors encountered different realities and had different 'interests-at-hand'. Instructors, for example, were more interested in keeping the learners working according to their set agendas, which in the Eastern Bank II was kept to the instructor only. Learners, at least in the Eastern Bank II, were more interested in finishing the exercises even if that meant they were going to run later than expected. The fact that they did not know how many activities they were covering on a certain day did not help. The instructor only told the learners of her estimate finishing-for-the-day time at the start of each day emphasizing 'if things work to plan'. A plan they did not know about.

This lack of time during the learning event made it very difficult to work according to the exact details set out in the manual. The time limit made the learners aware of the structured boundaries they were trying to put on the exercises, as Sarah explains in the following excerpt. She and Sophie played a real-life case study with Sarah playing herself (the manager) and Sophie playing Sarah's subordinate. Sophie ended being on the dominant/hostile quadrant of the classifying behaviour matrix. The following is the discussion that went on between the two after the role play:

"Sarah: You threw me off at times.
Sophie: Was I out of character?
Sarah: Yes, a bit. He wouldn't be so Q1, he would be more Q4. I was lost at one moment (at the beginning of the role

play Sarah stopped for a moment and said she was lost). I think I was more aware at that moment of an apparatus watching me (the role play was videoed). Actually, I don't think. I know I did".

Sophie had played the role of the Q1 subordinate so well that she threw Sarah off. By the end of the scheduled fifteen minutes they had only started to tackle the problem. Sophie told me earlier that she was a qualified drama teacher, and maybe that was one reason for her ability to stick to the role plays she chose.

It also seemed that the learners faced more difficulties in playing a role different from their natural character. In the following excerpt the superiors were supposed to maintain a Q4 behaviour (Dominant/Warm) while the subordinates were to take turns in playing different characters in different role plays. This was a Q4-behaviour practice session for the superior to learn how to control a Q1, Q2, or Q3 subordinate. The subordinates, however, soon forgot about the behaviours they were supposed to play and moved to their natural quadrants, as is evident from the following excerpts:

"After the role play was completed, among other comments Mary said to Foster 'I don't think you were a Q1. I know we're not looking at you (the observers were supposed to analyze the superior behaviour only and not the subordinate), but I didn't think you were. Foster replied 'It's hard to be, isn't it? I'm not like that".

Foster, above, was supposed to role play in a Q1 behaviour but he did not. He moved around all the four quadrants of behaviour. During the role play whenever he passed into a

Q2 or Q3 behaviour the other group members would smile to each other.

Because of the lack of time and the inability of the learners to control the way role-plays went, the learners developed a strategy of timing exercises. Learners would start a role play and continue with it until the time keeper would call "five minutes". Then all of a sudden the approach would change, and even the subordinate who was, for example, playing a talkative Q3 would suddenly move to close the role play and become more Q4, as is evident from the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank II where Sarah was playing the manager's role and Sophie a Q2 hostile-submissive subordinate role. The role play was concerning a subordinate who gave a customer some wrong information about his account and got the customer angry when he discovered the mistake. The subordinate knew she did not know the answer but still did not ask some one who knew and just guessed an answer and gave it to the customer. This is how the role play continued:

"Bill (the time keeper) called 'Five minutes' and the two players quickly changed attitude. Sophie who was until now carrying on in a Q2 behaviour and was stubborn all along suddenly said 'I should have gone and asked someone'. She acted as if she was cooperating to close the deal moving from Q2 to Q4. I think this was because it was a timed role play . By timing it the learners divided the fifteen minutes allocated for the whole role play into sections: opening, problem, and closing-the-discussion. The sign they used to start closing was the call for the last five minutes".

Field notes, 6-10-93

In the next excerpt, Mary and Brian were role playing. Brian was a talkative sociable Q3 and Mary was supposed to

be a Q4 manager. Here is how it went:

"They played the role play until Foster called-out announcing the last five minutes. At that moment Mary said while still in her role play 'Oh, God, five minutes', and then jumped into saying 'Is there anything else you would like to add?', and quickly moved into closing saying 'Finally, how do you think we can resolve that?' (her subordinate's problem of not respecting time). In reviewing the role play afterwards Mary said 'When the timer went off I started to panic'. Foster added 'You jumped into summarizing without asking Brian for his reaction to the suggestions, but it was time as much as anything'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 6-10-93</div>

All these examples demonstrate how the learners accepted the need to play the game in these learning events by the rules introduced by the more powerful parties in the events. They (the learners) were only able to modify the rules and introduce their strategies to cope with these situations.

8.4 Leading and Following in Instruction:

Power differential between instructors and learners is expected, but there was also another power differential that was observed between instructors of the same learning event. Team-instruction was utilized in four of the five learning events. In the Washington Bank II it was easy to spot who the lead instructor was, and what was only a suspicion at the beginning of the learning event got confirmed as time passed. It was easy (at least for me) to see that Anne was a new instructor for this course. Hilary was always advising her what to do and what not to do as the following excerpt illustrates:

"The instructors (Hilary and Anne) sat not too far from

where I was sitting and I could hear what they were talking about. Hilary was saying to Anne 'The important thing to remember is when they (the learners) ask you a question to repeat what they ask so that everybody can hear that'. I could not hear every word they were saying but I got the general idea. Anne was telling Hilary that when lecturing she forgets a lot of the things she planned to discuss. Hilary then advised her to put the points she wants to cover on a flip chart in light pencil before the lecture so that when she starts the lecture she sees it but the learners don't and to get them to say the things that she wants them to say".

<div align="right">Field notes, 7-2-94</div>

Anne's concern for giving an impression of professional expertise is clear. She, however, was faced with the realities of the classroom which threatened the impression she wanted to give others of herself. So she coped by following the advice of her senior colleague who introduced her to strategies that had stood the test of time. Woods (1980a) states:

"Thus teacher culture can enable the new recruit to get by, by pointing him to strategies that have stood the test of time. But it can also inhibit him if he allows his own initiatives to be subsumed under it"(Woods, 1980a, p. 22).

The next day I arrived early and saw Anne applying Hilary's advice:

"Anne is writing something in pencil on a flip chart.. Elaine took the first session. When Elaine finished and it was Anne's turn again, she had to look through all the flip charts for the sheet she had written on earlier in the morning. From the back of the class it looked strange because it seemed she was flipping through all these white flip charts but of course I knew what she was looking for and so did Elaine who said apologetically 'Sorry Anne, I've mixed the sheets up'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 8-2-94</div>

This incident raises an important point. Regard for impression management does not seem to be an individualistic concern; rather, it was accepted by the instructors as a group. The advice that was being passed on

from the more experienced instructor to the new one was to get the learners to say what she wanted them to say and not what they wanted to say and to manipulate the discussion so that they did so. This was in an attempt not only to control the class, but to do that at the instructing team level and not at the individual instructors level. This was especially so because the course was conducted by a team of instructors from the same consulting company. These instructors not only worked for the consulting company but owned it too.

Anne sat in on most of the lectures, especially those of Hilary, and during these lectures she sat at the back with her own binder writing notes from the lectures just like any other learner. She followed the lectures with the learners, turning the pages Hilary told them to. She wrote down the questions raised by the learners and the way Hilary responded to them. When I told her on the second day of the learning event that I could not help noticing she was taking notes during Hilary's lectures, she said that it was usually Hilary, Elaine, and a third instructor who did this course and that she was just coming into it. 'I'm writing because I'm going to cover this lecture the next time this course is going to be offered. The other one is because when we go back to the office we see how this course went and what we want to change', she said.

It was easy to spot who the director of this team was.

During the above discussion Hilary approached both Anne and I while we were still talking; she did not look at anyone and just said 'sorry for interrupting' and then asked Anne if they had copies of a certain sheet for the learners. Anne replied 'Oh, no, you're going to kill me'. Hilary then took the single sheet that Anne got out and walked out of the classroom without another word. I asked Anne if they have photocopy facilities in the bank and she said yes, adding 'she (Hilary) must've gone to make photocopies, she's probably never going to give me my sheet back. I mean you see us running here and there for sheets of paper and hand-outs and that's why I'm trying to organise my own master file so the next time I'm lecturing in this, I've got everything in one place'.

Anne was not only following Hilary. It was also obvious that she was following Elaine too. I think this was one reason why it was easier for the learners to face Anne in 'front stage' questioning than to do the same for either Hilary or Elaine when the first said that demand for chocolate did not change in differing economic conditions or when the second went on and on about her first Barbie doll which had nothing to do with the case the class was discussing. Although it was clear the learners were getting bored and wanted her to finish, they still could not interrupt or say anything. It certainly seemed easier for them to do that when they disagreed with Anne, as in the following:

"Anne was covering the Boston Consulting Group matrix of the classification of a portfolio of products. She was lecturing and Hilary was adding points and examples from where she was seated at the back of the classroom. Anne was saying things like "A dog is a woof product in a woof industry. What's a woof industry you can think of? Maybe stodgy food at the back shelves of a supermarket". Hilary interrupted by saying "But you have to be careful. They could be very profitable if you manage your products right"... Also, when Anne presented the BCG matrix with the axes, one starting from low to high and the other one the other way around she said that the products move from being question marks to stars to cows to dogs and Hilary added from the back that's why one of the axis should be from high to low. Many of the learners (Salma, Patricia, Sam, Abdul, and David) said that they have learned it the other way around (me too). Anne then said that they have done this course for a long time and that no one ever said that. She acted surprised. She then looked at Hilary and said 'that's blown us off this time, hasn't it Hilary?'. Hilary just said yes and looked at her notes again. I also noticed that Hilary who was surprisingly sitting beside me this time was writing notes and examples that would complement Anne's lecture. These notes I think are for Anne to read and probably add to her lecture the next time she gives it. Hilary wrote things like 'I thought P/E (Price/Earning ratio) moves with the sales of the company', and 'Always come back to growth vs market share'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 11-2-94</div>

The fact that Anne seemed to have accepted the following role for herself (at least in this learning event) was not surprising. Tanton (1994), whose Ph.D. thesis was an autoethnography of a tutor's experience, interpreted her actions as a new tutor in a new programme. She said:

".. in a new learning situation we (tutors) may take cues from wherever seems the most appropriate place. As a new tutor I looked at my more experienced colleagues for clues" (Tanton, 1994, p. 181).

The learners on their part, did not seem to have had any difficulties learning who was the instructor who carried most of the weight within the instructing team. The learners did that very quickly, and as early as the first

day of the learning event. The following excerpt is the only evidence found in the field notes as to the ability of the learners to spot the lead instructors and then start treating them differently. Maybe learners did but they did not show it as publicly as Sam does in the following excerpt:

"Sam was arguing that clothing retail shops were high costs (the group before him have just said the opposite and he disagreed with them). Hilary was lecturing while Anne was sitting in the middle of the classroom next to Salma. Anne jumped in and said 'Let's put this in perspective. If I wanted to open a clothes shop in High Street Kensington or a mine company, which is going to be higher in costs?'. Sam laughed and said 'I see' but then immediately turned his attention to Hilary again and continued his discussion with her. Anne's face turned red, she pushed her sleeves up and sat back in her chair as if a bit embarrassed at being dismissed in this way although I don't think any one else has noticed".

Field notes, 7-2-94

Easterby-Smith and Olve (1984) have discussed how status differences within the same teaching team can affect the relationship between the instructors as a group and learners, and how the situation could be exploited by learners wishing to challenge the authority of the instructors. For junior instructors like Anne, they not only have to impress the learners but they also have to be concerned about the show they are putting for their fellow instructors and especially for the team director. Junior instructors in instruction teams have to work on their individual performance as well as the teams' collective performance for its audience.

It also seemed that in team instructing time keeping by one instructor was of significant importance because if one

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instructor went over the scheduled time period the other instructor suffered. In the Washington Bank I when Pamela went over her time limit she ended cutting the lecture short by saying "and Colin is sitting at the back waiting for me to finish" and Colin started his session by saying "we're short of time so we won't have time to practice this". In another incident in the field notes I wrote:

"I think we are running late again. Pamela is lecturing at the front and Colin who is sitting at the back (but not at the same table as me). He made a hand gesture to her (maybe not realizing that he was still in my line of vision. I was writing some field notes and not looking up at the class). I think he was telling her to speed things up".

<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

These leading and following roles can be interchanged within the same learning event, however. At the beginning of the Washington Bank I learning event I had the impression that Pamela was not as experienced as Colin and that he was leading her through the learning event. It seemed that every time Pamela got into trouble explaining to the class what they were doing Colin would jump to her rescue. This did not seem strange since she held another job at the Human Resource department while he was a full-time instructor. Towards the end of the learning event when the learners questions centred around the practical issues of the course, their positions changed. Pamela had expert knowledge about the bank practices or who should do what in the bank and it was obvious Colin relied on her support. The learners picked that very quickly and started pointing their questions to Pamela rather than Colin. When Colin was asked questions he did not know the answers to, he referred

them to Pamela saying 'I don't know', or 'Do you have anything to add to that Pamela?'.

I tried to find how senior Pamela was in the Human Resource department but both Pamela and Colin avoided the question and I did not insist. Pamela had told me, however, that she only did two to three courses a year and that she had a team of nine people who dealt with Human Resource including training and personnel issues. She also added that the learners knew of her dual position of being part-time instructor only and that that was why they tried to pull her in. She said she was only responsible for Human resource in her area (which included more than half the U.K. employees of the Bank).

8.5 Learners' Power:

As discussed in Chapter Five, when learners and instructors agree on a working consensus, however tacit this working consensus is, any deviations would not be acceptable (Pollard, 1980). Even if they were they would cause trouble and misunderstanding between the two parties, as in the following excerpt from the Eastern Bank I case study:

"Pete and Doug exchanged a comment during Steve's presentation. Steve actually stopped at one point during his presentation and looked at them as if annoyed. It seems they are comfortable because they are going to present last. Barbara and Robert (the two instructors) exchanged a comment. I think it is about talking to them about what Barbara had already told the whole class several times. i.e. to treat every bodys' presentation as they wanted to be treated. She also asked them, if they were late or if they arrived in the middle of some one else's presentation, not to walk right in, but to wait until the presentation was over. Pete had already walked into Cathy's presentation

this morning while Sara who arrived late too waited until Cathy finished and then Barbara called her in".

Woods (1980a) referred to this as 'indulgence strategy' which, he explained, was followed by some teachers who would let their pupils go far in certain behaviours with the teacher treating the cases as special so as to avoid confrontation. Barbara used this strategy quite often with Pete. She let him walk into Cathy's presentation, do as he liked in other cases, but did tell him off when he disturbed Steve's presentation. The next incident is another example of how Barbara used indulgence strategy with two other learners in the same learning event, Pam and Colin:

"Richard started doing the second part of his group presentation (Roger did the first part). Colin and Pam who sat next to each other could not stop laughing. I think this is because the presentation involved some discussion of underwear designs and brand names. They both kept on looking at Barbara but she kept a grim face and did not react to them. As Richard continued through the presentation, they quieted down".

These actions were all tacit resistance to the instructors' authority. The joking and laughter during instructors' talk, the whining of learners who felt they were being treated unfairly, and even the collective resistance of the Cross Pacific Bank where the learners refused to accept the learning content; all these were assaults on the established order. When instructors avoided confrontation through 'indulgence strategy' they were in a way operating a safety valve effect, allowing frustration to be steamed off before it grew into a bigger problem for them to deal

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with. It was in these ways that the learners exercised their power in the learning events.

Delamont (1983) has argued, however, that while teachers' power is accepted and legitimated, that of the pupil (although her argument was related to children) is not 'socially sanctioned but illegitimate' (1983, p. 77). Learners were regularly observed to use their power to change the definitions instructors tried to impose. Depending on the power differential between the learners and the instructors, a definition of the situation prevailed.

The following excerpt is an example of the negotiation process that took place before reaching a consensus on what definition of the situation would prevail. In it the learners tried to extract as much information as possible, which the instructor did not seem to want to provide at the beginning but had to at the end because of the insistence of one of the learners:

"The learners asked if the observer in the next role play should talk and Colin (the instructor) said no. Alex said 'So, there are two listeners' and Colin said 'Yes, but there is one active listener'. Ahmed then asked 'How long should that take?' and Colin replied 'We'll cut you off'. Ahmed still insisted 'but can you tell us how long that's going to be?' and again Colin evaded the question but Ahmed insisted and only then did Colin reply 'about five minutes'. It seems Colin had to give in here to Ahmed's insistence".

Field notes, 22-11-93

Ahmed, in the above excerpt, is trying to get information (i.e. time limit on the exercise) which would help the

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learners design their strategy of how to approach their learning task. The learners measured time periods in terms of the number of exercises they were able to complete and not in terms of how much they had learnt. It was the output rather than the process that was more important in proving that they had learnt what they were supposed to learn as is evident from the following excerpt:

"I can see the other syndicate group has already finished and were returning to class while this group (Patricia, Jack, Hasan, and Javier) is still working on their cash flow. Patricia said laughingly 'I will assume no change in "other"'. Jack started flipping through the pages of the cash flow forecast saying 'minority interest' as if asking what they were going to do with it. Patricia then said 'Let's assume there is no change in others'. Jack agreed and copied last year's figure (this was their easiest option and they were making these decisions very quickly. If they make any other assumption they will have to calculate the new figure and they did not have the time). Jack then added all the figures to get to the total figure and when finished, he called out 'done' and started packing his stuff".

<div align="right">Field notes, 15-2-94</div>

By knowing how long the exercise was supposed to last the learners had more information to establish what could be logically expected in this time limit and to build their decisions on the basis of that information. It reminded me of the Eastern Bank case study II where the learners timed the length of their exercise and depending on that they approached it in three steps: introduction, discussion, and closure.

The instructors realized that the learners had some power that enabled them to negotiate their position. This was one reason why instructors were nervous at the beginning of a learning event. Also, as discussed earlier, the learners

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held the power of their evaluating the instructors at the end of the training programme which had its effects on how the instructors conducted themselves.

John in the following excerpt is asserting his power although he does it through banter as was discussed in Chapter Six. In this excerpt the groups were doing an exercise in their syndicate rooms but were told that one group would play the "fish bowl demonstration" (a demonstration for the whole class). This is what happened:

"The groups came back to class and Colin (the instructor) asked who were the three volunteers to play the manager's role from the three different groups. They came forward and were John, Robert, and Peter. Colin said 'Let's conference', had a word·with Pamela and then chose John to present to the class. John laughed and didn't look very happy. He said 'Do we get our instructor assessment at the end?'. Pamela said yes, and he continued 'O. K. Good'. Pamela then defended 'We choose according to a plan' but he replied laughingly 'Rubbish'".

<div align="right">Field notes, 25-11-93</div>

In this excerpt the fact that John did not have any choice in accepting or refusing to play the role in front of the class must have had its effects on his sense of identity in class. This stripping of self identity was returned through his assertion on his power of evaluating the instructor towards the end of the course. He, however, did it in a 'teasing way'. Barsoux (1993) explains that teasing is "a discrete way of sanctioning deviant behaviour. It requires the 'guilty party' to laugh at the tease, there by acknowledging the deviant action but it also allows him or her to rejoin the group without losing face" (Barsoux, 1993, p. 52).

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I have also discussed how instructors allowed Doug (DORIS) in the Washington Bank II, and Pete in the Eastern Bank I to indulge in certain behaviours that would normally have not been acceptable from other learners. The fact that both Doug and Pete were not only stars but were also liked by other learners meant that they had some power over and above other learners. Except for the one incident discussed (where Pamela lost her patience and temper) the instructors avoided confrontation with Doug, although he seemed at times to push it to the limit. Denscombe (1980b) argued that this was because any confrontation would expose the power relations in the classroom and shatter the 'facade' of friendliness that allows negotiation and working consensus to operate in a more manageable manner.

I will now move on to the organisational power over the learners and how that affected their approach to learning.

8.6 Organisational power:

Most training in the three banks studied was in-house training. It was geared at making the employees 'fit in'. The learners had limited choice of courses to attend and in that sense the organisation had the power to provide only what it saw appropriate for its managers as Alex explained:

"This is what I think as a manager is missing in training. I would like to go on a certain course even if it is only available externally, but there isn't really much in the way of opportunity to do that, so, it's a case of looking through the courses available and seeing which are more suitable which you haven't done rather than think from principle 'these are the things that I need to do'...I think there is always two dangers in this (internal

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courses). One is that people (learners) would say certain things on the course, they have to because that is what the Washington Bank tells them to say, rather than that's the right approach. They only cover the Washington Bank's approach. The content will be orientated towards the way the Washington Bank wants you to do things rather than necessarily discussing all the possibilities of how things might be done".

<div align="right">Interview, 12-11-93</div>

Whitley (1989) has discussed how managerial tasks are dynamic and developing and how, because of that, learning becomes more and more specific to organisations. Larson (1979) also discussed how this could lead to 'organisational professionalism'. Through organisation-specific training programmes these organisations were teaching their managers managerial recipes which both enabled and constrained expression,

"On the one hand, such routines release managerial services for other tasks such as scanning the environment for expansionary opportunities and, on the other hand, they become institutionalized as relatively idiosyncratic ways of organizing the resources which constrain and direct future possibilities... Successful managerial learning thus enables and restricts entrepreneurial opportunities so that how every day organisational problems are resolved and understood affects the feasibility of particular organisational changes" (Whitley, 1989, p. 214).

Through their ability to determine socialization processes these organisations had the power to produce reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). D. Hargreaves (1972) discussed how in most interactions people can and do walk out if they find these interactions unsatisfactory, which was unlike the situation in schools where pupils were compelled to attend until a certain age. It can be argued, however, that the situation was not much different in these institutional

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training programmes. In the Cross Pacific Bank case study, where the learners found the last three days unrewarding and there were serious discussions where they contemplated walking out before the end of the two weeks, the thing that convinced them to stay was not their faith in the value of the learning event. Rather it was the enormous problems they would have to face if they did not stay. The power differential between the organisation and the learners was evident in that incident. Learners seemed to agree that they did not have a choice of whether to attend a training programme or not. The same point was made by Eddy when I interviewed him before the Washington I learning event. He said:

"If I was an employer and kept on suggesting to someone to go on this course or that course and they kept on refusing, well then, it would seem to me that they are not decided, not ambitious, and I'm not sure that's the sort of people you want in key positions".

<div align="right">Interview 11-11-93</div>

Wanous (1980) has also discussed socialization processes for new entrants to organisations. He argued that these socialization processes involved a seduction process through which individuals were induced to make 'tempting choices' and that the 'appearance of choice' was crucial to the process. The individuals were always 'theoretically free' but because of 'post decisional justification' processes individuals change their beliefs to follow their behaviours. So, through these training programmes learners were attracted into accepting organisational values which were slowly converted into beliefs as the manager-learners

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behaved according to them.

I argued in a previous chapter that learners behaved in
certain ways not only because they thought that was the way
others expected them to but also because they came to value
themselves in terms of the organisations' values and how
they measured against them. Ahmed substantiates this point
in the following excerpt from the Washington Bank I during
lunch with Ahmed, Doug, and Chris:

"Ahmed said 'Do you feel we're losing prospect. I mean work
is only a means but I feel I'm putting more work in my job
than even in my marriage. I don't work that hard on my
marriage. He then looked at me and continued 'and coming
back to your comment about being in a learning event
(referring to the surprise I expressed when I asked them
why they were in this learning event and they all said
because their managers had sent them) one should never lose
sight of why they're in a learning event, it's being
employed and so you have to do what the employer wants from
you' ".

<div align="right">Field notes, 23-11-93</div>

The importance learners put on playing the role of the good
employee, a belief they bring with them into training
programmes which affects their presentations of the self,
is evident.

Becker et al (1968) have argued that, at least in the
academic area, the relation between the student and the
university is that of subjection. In management training,
and in a culture of enterprise (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992;
Thomas, 1989) with its emphasis on utilitarian values and
self-improvement, the relationship did not seem much
different. Learning events can be viewed as institutional
structures through which the programming of managers-

learners with the values of the organisation is facilitated. The participation of the different managers in these learning events helped integrate them into the values of the organisation. The priority of organisational values over those of the individual was maintained through these learning events, and the tacit sanctions/punishment of those who did not measure to organisational values and who did not move towards them ensured compliance.

Thomas (1983) discussed how career was an important criterion of valuing the self which had become a controlling mechanism for the organisation through which it secures commitment and compliance. These learning events were used to disseminate organisational norms which managers-learners used as measures of the rightness or wrongness of their actions without having to think about the actions for themselves. When learners in learning events learn what the organisation wants, they might think they are learning a new skill, developing themselves, and reaching towards their dream of self actualization. But ultimately what they are doing is using these programmes "as a natural laboratory for the development of political managerial skills" (Cooper and Burgoyne, 1984).

To summarize my argument so far, organisational and/or institutional values are legitimated by the individuals working in the organisations concerned. When these individuals come to see themselves in terms of

organisational values, not only do they legitimate these values but also reproduce them and by reproducing them they legitimize them for the next generation of managers.

In other words, training/learning/development in the culture of the enterprise can be understood as part of the controlling mechanisms used by the organisation to control its managers' values and to keep them in line with its own. In Rose and Miller's (1992) terms these training programmes offer 'inscription devices' through which reality is created and stabilized. They provide means for individual managers to know where they are and where they should be and the mechanisms and behaviours they should use to get to an acceptable categorization of themselves in terms of the values accepted by their organisations. Any one who deviates from this accepted 'reality' will share a negative status in the organisational life.

Expert knowledge was presented to the learners in the form of courses manuals (which in the case of behavioural courses were all designed by leading consulting companies in the U.S.). The techniques presented in these courses offered the learners techniques which were to help them manage themselves better.

I am not arguing against the teaching of technique but as Burgoyne (1995) argued, if:
"a supposed technique is (as I believe many are, particularly in human resource management) a series of

micro-moves with a political function to exclude, manipulate, disadvantage, and exploit legitimate interests, then it needs to be critically examined and exposed as such" (Burgoyne, 1995, p. 94).

8.7 Conclusion:

In designing learning events we have to acknowledge the latent functions they serve - "that activities and social institutions serve important purposes other than those which are the normal publicly stated purposes" (Cooper and Burgoyne, 1984, p. 291). When employees participate in these programmes they get an exposure of the political nature of management development. Both instructors and learners in learning events are embedded in a structure where they have to present and maintain an image or their competencies as trainers and employees who are able to learn and develop will be questioned. This leads to the use of strategies that are more 'self' rather than learning orientated. Instructors will put down noisy learners like Salma when her non-learning activities interfere with the image of a controlled classroom that the instructors work to present, but will keep the fun group in their non-learning activities as long as these activities are both kept out of the classroom and do not present a disturbance for other learners.

Much of the organisation of classroom talk revolved around the instructor-knowledge and pupil-ignorance model. Despite the instructors' intentions of holding participative-

discussion-based classes, organisational pressures forced them to retain control over talk. The most important structural feature of talk was the presupposition of the existence of accredited knowledge that had to be passed on.

When learners are expected to place themselves at the disposal of the current needs of the organisation and when they have no choice in accepting or not accepting what they should do, how they should be, and why they should be like that, this clearly assumes that the ultimate sanction to be external, that authority lies from without and not from within the person.

We, however, should not overlook that when an institution officially offers external incentives (Macintyre, 1985) then the participants who accept this are tacitly accepting a view of what motivates them and hence a view of their identity as Goffman states:

"Organisations can therefore be viewed as a place for generating assumptions about identity. In crossing the threshold of the establishment, the individual takes on the obligation to be alive to the situation, to be properly oriented and aligned in it. In participating in an activity in the establishment, he takes on the obligation to involve himself at the moment in the activity. Through this orientation and engagement of attention and effort, he visibly establishes his attitude to the establishment and to its implied conceptions of himself. To engage in a particular activity in the prescribed spirit is to accept being a particular kind of person who dwells in a particular kind of world" (Goffman, 1961b, p. 170).

Part III

Introduction to Part III:

The Conclusion

The substantive chapters have been concerned with presenting how participants (i.e. instructors and learners) coped with the task of learning and teaching (instructing, facilitating, tutoring,..etc) and how that was affected by the institutional settings their learning events were embedded in. But the picture presented thus is not a complete one.

Interactionists have been criticized for neglecting the wider factors and concentrating on detail instead (Woods, 1980a; Becker and McCall, 1990). Hammersley (1980b) argued that interactionists do not typically recognize how situations are produced by features of the larger system in which they are embedded. He called for a move away from the currently practised interactionist ethnography with what he called 'empiricist tendencies' and to investigate the ways in which "different social phenomena are systematically related to one another and to the role of institutionalisation and unrelated consequences"(Hammersley, 1980b, p. 200).

A. Hargreaves (1978) also argued that the full potential of the strategy model would not be grasped until these strategies are studied not only at the classroom level but by tracing the causes and connecting the constraints to the wider society.

Lastly, Salaman (1978) called for sociological analysis of

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institutions not only to describe organisational forms but also to discuss the interests and purposes that lie behind them and link them with the values in wider society.

Organisations are made of humans and it is these groups of humans that shape the way their organisations are. Working in organisations by its very nature is an exchange relationship between the individual employees and their organisations as institutions. These exchange relationships do not happen randomly; they are related to interests, purposes, as well as the needs and wants of the parties involved and as such these exchanges are 'strategically shaped' (Watson, 1994). Hirschhorn (1988) and Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992) have also argued that although traditional boundaries (e.g. hierarchy, function,..etc.) are disappearing new ones are erupting. These, they explained, were more psychological in nature. They do not exist on companies' organisational charts but in the minds of employees, and this, they explained was more so because the roles these employees play in their organisations were becoming more blurred.

Apart from the inherent worth of understanding how learners and instructors cope with learning/teaching in institutional learning events, the question that arises from this thesis is: Why are these individuals using these strategies? In answering this question I could argue that the reason lay in the nature of the individuals, the

structure of the learning events, the training of the instructors (or more often lack of it), the cultures of the organisation, or society at large. Society is a human product but at the same time man is a social product (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) and as such exchange relationships between organisations and individuals are defined and shaped by the organisational as well as the societal contexts.

There seemed to be an oscillation between two types of strategies which the two participants (i.e. learners and instructors) got involved in. On the one hand there were the 'win-lose' strategies (which were mainly in use when there were no outside audiences or panellists present). Here, most of the learners' energies were spent trying to score points against each other in an attempt to impress the instructors. On the other hand there were the 'win-win' strategies when the two participants colluded to present a successful picture of the learning event (to either a present or a hidden audience). Both these sets of strategies (the win-lose and the win-win) are self-serving rather than learning-serving but as Dore (1976) suggests,

"There is no such thing as original man capable of being virtuous or sinful. Actual men in actual societies are shaped by the culture of their society, a culture which is bound in large measure to snuggle up to the institutional structure which makes that particular society work" (Dore, 1976, p. 191).

I will start this chapter by presenting a summary of the strategies discussed in the previous five chapters. I will

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then connect the issues raised in the micro situation of the learners' and instructors' experiences to the macro structural elements of the organisations in which the learning events were embedded and which were themselves embedded in a wider society.

I will also discuss the institutionalization of learning and its effect on the experiences of the participants (both learners and instructors). I will talk about how institutionalisation led to the participants' pursuing the events observed with a certain perspective; that of winning a game. Moreover, these events served certain latent functions (Cooper and Burgoyne, 1984) for both the individual, the organisation, and the society at large which will also be discussed. I conclude the chapter by outlining the limitations of this research and making recommendations for future work.

Chapter Nine

Managing the Learning-Learning to Manage: Institutionalisation and the Latent Functions of Training

9.1 Introduction:

This thesis is an ethnographic study of learning in action. It is an interpretation and explanation of the experiences of participants in five management training programmes. The results of this thesis are presented in terms of the structural features of the training programmes - the organisational context and the societal context in which the programmes were embedded. The strategies that the participants were observed to use can be summarized by the following:

9.1.1   Learners' strategies:

1. Performing to impress as a strategy was influenced by elements of the banks' cultures (e.g. promotional culture, grapevine, secrecy in evaluation,.. etc.). This resulted in the learners' chasing after qualifications, avoiding public criticism, affecting the audience, learning about the instructors and/or speakers, thinking like the instructors, looking for clues, affecting effort, fudging it as long as people will buy it, and playing up the exercise for the benefit of the instructors.

2. Comparison and evaluation as a strategy was implemented by the learners in an attempt to establish a definition of the situation which was to help them form an opinion of how they stood relative to others in the learning events and/or how much more they

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needed to do in order to impress the audiences they sought to impress. Included under this strategy are evaluating the instructors and/or speakers, evaluating each other, comparing their performance to that of others, evaluating organisational policies, and evaluating the learning event.

3. Having fun was a strategy where humour served to relieve learners not only of boredom and anxiety but also to control reality and resist authority.

9.1.2   Instructors' strategies:

1. Instructors' performing to impress was similar to the learners' strategy in that both participants had an interest of 'maintaining a good image'. The instructors achieved this goal via building credibility through introductions, taking care of seniors, rehearsing the learners, and guessing games.

2. Power and control was a strategy through which the instructors sought to maintain an image of keeping in control. In their endeavour to achieve this image the instructors used tacit punishment, keeping secrets, and controlling the talk. They also affected learners' effort by shocking the learners and maintained an overall image of the instructing teams through leading and following in instruction.

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I will now move to explain how these micro situation strategies could be connected to the macro structural elements of the organisation.

Organisations by their very nature exert some control over people working in them. They set pre-defined standards of conduct for their employees which in some cases get extended to the learning milieux (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) as in the five training programmes observed. These five learning events were not only grounds on which meanings were created and knowledge legitimated; the participants believed that their futures were enhanced or overturned based on how they conformed to the set standards. As I have argued in Chapter Eight, it was through these standards of conduct and the external incentives that usually accompanied them that these organisations came to be places for generating assumptions about identities.

Coser (1966) argued that the segmentation of roles and the differentiation of time and place where the roles have to be enacted make it easier for individuals to deal with conflicting demands. These roles help us, to use Watson's (1994) words, 'to feel our ways in the dark' and to use norms, values, and culture stories to 'shape and justify actions which promote or defend our interests' (1994, p. 21). But when these roles become confused then role actors have to make decisions, as Reed and Anthony (1992, p. 598)

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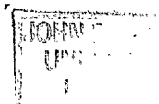
state:

"A high degree of organisational dependence for employment, remuneration, status and authority exposes managers to rationalization processes which drastically limit and reduce the degree of self-managed autonomy and discretion usually associated with established professions".

These are humans we are talking about and they all have different perceptions of their selves which they try to project and sometimes change at the same time. It is acknowledged that although emphasis on the person as a meaning-maker is widespread in educational theory, it is still often neglected in practice (Pope, 1983). At the heart of interactionism is the social construction of the self. To the interactionist the self is a process and not a solid entity, it has a temporal dimension. Ball (1972) distinguished between situated and substantial identities with the first being more dependent on time, place, and situation, and the latter being more stable. In this sense both learners and instructors seem to have acquired situated selves which were affected by their circumstances and their interpretations of realities.

9.2 Institutionalization of Learning:

When learning becomes subsumed under organisational/institutional control, it becomes 'institutionalized' and this institutionalization of learning limits the flexibility of human action and the ability to separate the roles of learner and the expert manager. This is especially since these learners were learning with members of their organisation, a content

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sponsored by their organisation, under a roof paid for by their organisation. All the strategies discussed demonstrate the struggle these participants (whether learners or instructors) experienced in trying to reconcile their contradictory roles. This is because as Astley and Van de Ven (1983, p. 252) argued "individual action is always, in some measure, curbed to avoid total disintegration of the system". At the same time, "the system is never totally integrated into a perfectly cohesive body either". The struggle and internal antagonism between the different roles the participants had to play were evident. The strategies were the participants' attempts at balancing and managing the internal tensions they experienced. Moreover, the need to use these strategies points to the success of the managerial ideology which, Anthony (1977) argued, advocates the:

"..integration and the subordination of the individual's goals to those of the organisation that employs him.. the end result is achieved when the application of authority and power is no longer necessary to assist in the achievement of the organisation's goals because the goals have been internalized by those who are to pursue them" (Quoted by Reed, 1989, p.73).

The situation in the studied programmes was almost like a game. The game had rules and it was up to the individuals to decide if they wanted to play or not. Part of the game was that there were rules but it was up to the players to discover them and to play by them. To win this game members had to discount any commitment except that which promised to get them what they wanted (Snyder, 1971) because the

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collective association could not have continued without them (the rules), and as Astley and Van de Ven stated:

".. the rules can be broken, but only to a limited extent. The player remains free, but if he wants to win he must adopt a strategy in reasonable conformance with the rules, since a complete abandonment of the game cannot serve his interests" (Astley and Van de Ven, 1983, p. 252).

And so the result was that both instructors and learners shared the common interest of 'maintaining a good image' in the eyes of their organisations. This situation was in contrast to both school pupils who were chiefly concerned with 'pleasing the teacher', and adult learning classes' teachers who were mostly concerned with 'pleasing the students' (Salisbury and Murcott, 1992). Participants in the bank learning events seemed to be concerned with 'pleasing the organisation'. In effect they colluded, via the use of the strategies discussed in attempts to generate and maintain a definition of the learning programmes as 'successful learning events' (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995a).

In their attempts to 'maintain a good image', instructors had to balance two related concerns. The first was to ensure that the learners performed impressively in front of both audiences of organisational representatives who served as panellists during the events and the 'hidden audience' whom they did not see but who were sure to report their performance one way or another. The second concern was related to their maintaining their image as 'competent

instructors' in front of the learners, since the possibility of achieving the former depended partly on achieving the latter. Unless instructors convince the learners that they are 'worth listening to', their chances of being able to manage the learners' performances were jeopardized. Also, since it is the instructors who are formally responsible for 'facilitating' the learners' learning, when things 'go wrong' it is mostly they, not the learners, who stand more to suffer in terms of organisational sanctions (Al-Maskati and Thomas, 1995a).

9.2.1 Why play the game?

One could argue that learners and instructors behaved in the way they did because of their internal characteristics, but any understanding of an action is only complete when it is placed within its context. as Eiser (1978) has argued:

"If a person's behaviour can be seen as merely a response to constraints of the situation, the cause of behaviour should not be attributed to internal characteristics of the person, but to external characteristics of the situation" (Eiser, 1978, p. 246).

I am not saying that individuals did not have a choice of where they wanted to go. How one approached learning events could have depended on the hierarchy one had of the various 'goods' (Macintyre, 1985) that could be attained from the learning event and on one's ability to choose between these goods as ones' goals. But, as Astley and Van de Ven (1983) discussed, there is always a tension between the self and the

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collective frames of references.

Astley and Van de Ven distinguished two types of individuals: the reasonable and the rational. They explained that these two different types of men follow a very different logical processes from each other,

"In law, the reasonable man must meet some uniform, collective standard of conduct. This standard is determined with reference to a community valuation and must be the same for all persons.. Reasonable behaviour, however, does not deny rational behaviour, it provides an institutional framework within which it can work. Clearly, individuals do pursue their own goals and do attempt to maximize their self-interests as best they can under given conditions. Consequently, conflict and disruption are as ever-present and important as consensus and order,.. While partisan actors pursue their own interests, however, they do so within limits and must negotiate with others to find compromises that are acceptable from a collective point of view. This is the function served by the working rules of collective action: they embody an institutional order that defines limits within which individuals may exercise their own wills" (Astley and Van de Ven, 1983, p. 262).

The need to play learning events as games could also have its roots in what individuals were conditioned to believe about their roles within their working organisations and the society they lived in. If children are taught that rewards will only be secured through conforming to the ways things are done within the family or within the school, there is a good chance that they will project this value onto their working organisations and onto society at large. Culbert (1975) discussed the problem as arising from the fact that individuals start their relationship

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with these systems from a position of low personal power and so they feel the need to establish themselves by securing the approval of those who have power, by conforming to what they think is expected of them, and by setting goals for themselves that they think those in power value. In the process they submit to the process of being socialized into the system. The task of the manager-learner becomes not only to learn and apply the patterns of behaviour which are institutionally sanctioned within the work environment but to continue doing that within the institutionalized learning event's context.

9.3   Latent Functions of Training Programmes:

9.3.1 Socialization of managers:

Light (1980) distinguished between training and socialization. Training, he argued, was learning certain skills (i.e. knowledge) while socialization was the internalization of values and attitudes. From what I observed in these learning events I would argue that although these training programmes might have been originally intended for learning certain skills (whether technical or behavioural), other outcomes were also associated with the processes that took place in them. One outcome was the socialization of managers, and another was the legitimization of organisational existence and the functions they carry out.

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Although learning events were created for the learning they were expected to produce which is the rational reason for their existence, (The behavioural courses, for example, were introduced to help the managers develop 'soft' competencies (Jacob, 1989)), these courses, however, attempted to teach managers to behave in a calculative, planned manner. In so doing they (the managers) were given detailed codes of instructions about what to do and how to do it. All the courses (whether technical or behavioural) were based on the technical approach of learning (Thomas, 1993). Learners were supposed to learn about different functional areas (accounting, behavioural) in these formal training programmes and then to translate this knowledge into practice at a later stage.

The learners were lectured to about detailed body language issues and signals that I myself never gave a thought to before. They were encouraged to learn the complex process of 'social engineering' (Heydebrand, 1989). This is the process that "structures work situations by means of intensive training, planning, continuous learning, and the use of various human resource management techniques". In an attempt to programme all these behaviours they were rehearsed in role plays to bring the sought results.

I had a feeling many times during these learning

events that they were teaching the learners the skills of playing the 'game'. Rules were introduced in terms of sanctioned expectations. Bankers, for example, were expected to dress in a certain manner (which was maintained in three out of the five courses), to speak in a certain manner, and certainly conduct themselves in a certain manner and through these learning events the organisations concerned reinforced their 'professional cultures' (Ott, 1989). Some learners were sceptical about the authenticity of the learning content as evident from the following excerpt from the Washington Bank I field notes:

"The question Ahmed had asked (during a class discussion) was that if someone was using questioning (as a communication skill) to get information from a subordinate, for example, then unless the other party was very simple in their approach then they would know what the other person was trying to achieve and they might not play the game".

<div align="right">Field notes, 22-11-93</div>

This question came from an insightful learner; the majority of other learners, however, came to measure themselves in terms of the values of their organisations and had a 'hunger for technique' (Schon, 1983) that promised to move them closer to these organisational values and as a result there were feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, and guilt if they (the learners) did not measure to expectations.

By denying the existence of an incongruity between the demands of the roles they have to play in institutional learning events and beyond that in the

organisation or even in the larger society individuals who conform to organisational expectations may well have an easy passage in their career advancement. But the main drawback of 'institutionalized' learning is its inherent tendency towards inertia. One starts doing things not because they work but because they are right in terms of organisational values. This led to a concern about the ethics of the hidden curriculum which is acknowledged as being part of management development programmes (Hodgson and Reynolds, 1981; Snell, 1986) and although some might argue that these strategies are temporary, they still become part of the individuals repertoires which provide a resource for meeting future contingencies in other learning events. They become ritualized and teachers can become addicted to them as Woods (1990) argues:

"Once instituted, they (rituals and routines) are extremely difficult to get rid of. Rituals become associated with 'tradition' and to change them means discontinuity and disjuncture... Routine is a narcotic, taken to soothe the nerves and mellow the situation. Once established, to do without it would involve the teacher in severe withdrawal symptoms" (Woods, 1990, p. 113).

The organisations themselves seemed to be caught up in this circle of societal game. Again I will use one of Astley and Van de Vens' (1983) arguments in their debate about organisational theory. They argued that organisational parties are:

".. both independent actors and involved members of a larger collectivity. On the one hand, they act autonomously so as to maximize their chances of

obtaining whatever goals they seek individually, apart from those of the collectivity. On the other hand, they adhere to unifying patterns of cultural and social order as they take on responsibilities as part of a larger social entity. In other words, the manager acts both as gamesman and statesman"(Astley and Van de Ven, 1983, p. 264).

These learning events were in a way mechanisms for controlling the supply of 'bank managers', of lenders, of negotiators,.. etc. but within this same process they legitimized the existence of training programmes as mechanisms to help develop managers and they symbolized the organisational commitment to this development. The learning events satisfied the two properties Meyer and Rowan (1992a) discussed in their argument about institutionalized structures. They were both rationalized and institutionalized and so were beyond the control of any individual or even organisation.

These rationalized events required learners to subscribe to them. The learning events were considered to be proper, rational, and as such it became necessary for other organisations to incorporate training in their structures to avoid illegitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1992a). As these learning events continued their rationalized existence they gradually became parts of the assumptions and beliefs justifying the behaviour of organisations. All parties (internal and external) come gradually to trust organisational

procedures in lending, negotiation, selling, and performance appraisal (subjects covered in learning events). By subscribing to societal sanctioned expectations these organisations became less vulnerable to claims that they were negligent in future operations (e.g. lending).

9.3.2 The legitimization of organisational existence, of training as a function, and of the competencies taught:

All banks have training programmes because to have training programmes is rational and through this rationalization process institutionalization takes place. Meyer and Rowan (1992a) argued that institutionalization:

"involves the processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule like status in social thought and action" (Meyer and Rowan, 1992a, p. 22).

Scott (1987) also argued that institutionalization was a means of instilling values on structures that only have instrumental utility and that it is through this institutionalization that these structures come to persist and stabilize over time. Individual banks have to conform to institutional rules of what a bank should be. Some of these rules will be taken from societal beliefs (definition of bank roles, lending, investment, ..etc), some will be requirements enforced by occupational associations, and some by the regulatory authorities. Banks have to conform to these rules because as Meyer et al (1992, p. 55) discussed

(although their argument was in the context of schools) "their survival and resources depend upon their conformity with institutional requirements". The situation is the same within banking. If a bank does not satisfy regulatory authorities requirements and that becomes public knowledge, it runs the risk of losing its biggest working base; its deposits.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) also discussed how the general type of company culture is determined by two factors one of which was the degree of risk of its market. Lending, which is the core business of banking, is very risky and these courses served as legitimating mechanisms for the banks' lending operations. If a banks' business, for example, gets into trouble (as many of the big name banks did in the mid 1980s) it could always be argued that this was not due to shortcomings in the training of the evaluators of these credit exposures but to other uncontrollable reasons. These banks maintained their:

"coherence and legitimacy by conforming to an agreed-on set of institutional rules, by maintaining high levels of interpretation with the environment, and by cultivating high levels of participant satisfaction" (Meyer et al, 1992, p. 58).

This led Meyer and Rowan (1992b) to conclude that there was some evidence to suggest that educational organisations were losing control over the content and methods of their main activity (i.e. instruction) and that although there is a lack of close coordination

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between different training organisations because teaching mainly takes place in isolated classrooms there is still some loose coordination that is achieved through "societally agreed-on rites defined in societal myths (organisational rules) of education" (Meyer and Rowan, 1992b, p. 76).

As part of a long argument in the management field about what competencies are, Woodruffe (1993) argued that although he accepts that there are generic competencies applicable to all managerial jobs across organisations, there are also 'organisation-specific competencies' which should not be over-looked. Whitley (1989) also argued that because managers have to cope with changing environments and problems they have to be equipped with different kinds of knowledge. He stated:

"Unlike engineering and medical elites, managers exert little collective control over the constitution and certification of managerial skills and have not, as a group, succeeded in establishing a clear causal connection between the acquisition of particular bodies of formal knowledge and superior performances in dealing with managerial problems. Since these problems and tasks are relatively unstandardized across organisations and industrial sectors, and are controlled more by semi-autonomous management teams than by practitioner elites, the establishment of standardized skills based on esoteric, formal knowledge as prerequisites for entry to elite managerial labour markets is clearly less likely than in such fields as law and medicine where practitioners have been able to exert considerable control over problem definition and evaluation" (Whitley, 1989, p. 218).

But, it seems the organisations I have observed think that competencies (including soft competencies) were

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applicable to managerial positions across different organisations because the content of their courses was noticeably very similar. The power of these courses was that when learners attended them they were assumed to have gained the competencies introduced in the course. These courses became part of that person's credentials which were rarely examined if he (as a job applicant) really possessed these competencies. At the same time these learning events legitimated these competencies, skills,..etc. and allocated the learners in a certain category that was legitimated and accepted by the society in which these organisations were embedded and through this process these learning events came to possess an 'overwhelming ceremonial significance' (Meyer, 1977).

9.3.3 Control:

Another noticeable feature of the behavioural courses was the promise of an enhanced understanding of the 'self'. This is all part of what Willmott (1993) called 'corporate culturism' whose aim he explained was:

"to win the 'hearts and minds' of employees: to define their purposes by managing what they think and feel, and not just how they behave" (Ibid, p. 516).

The organisations sponsoring the training programmes secured control by managing the impression of helping their employees develop and understand themselves. The

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three behavioural courses all started with a series of self-diagnostic questionnaires designed to verify individuals' developmental needs. Self reports were also utilized by two of these courses where the learners described critical incidents at work which they found difficult to deal with. The basic merit of these tools was for the manager-learners to analyze themselves and to reach a better understanding of the 'self'. Brewis (1995) argued, however, that through these tools selves were 'created' and not 'unveiled' and that the comforting sensation that comes with this greater understanding was a delusion. She quoted Townley (1994) who argued that the intention of these diagnostic tools was to 'instil' in the manager the need to develop. The fact that these managers have produced these data about themselves and in some cases these reports were contrasted with the way others see them (e.g. boss, peer groups,...etc) promised a more self knowledge, more 'self-directed' learning about the self in preparation for its improvement in the way congruent with the corporate values of the what and how the self should be.

The courses were presented to the learners as part of their self-development. Self-development is defined as:

"Personal development, with the person taking responsibility for her or his own learning and for choosing the means to achieve this" (Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell, 1994, p. 5).

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These learning events seemed to both affirm and negate the self control in learning and although they helped reduce the anxiety that employees have to deal with when faced with excess autonomy (whether in learning or in their jobs afterwards) they also circumscribed it. Instead of producing managers who have learned how to learn and who can cope with changeability of the required types of knowledge and competencies (Drucker, 1992; Thomas, 1993; Whitley, 1989; Woodruffe, 1993) these learning events reinforced the mechanistic demands of organisations which forced their employees to comply with them (the demands) without internalizing their values. Instead of internalizing learning there was a selective calculative compliance with the corporate ethos of what one needs to do to get where he wants to be. In each case there was enough latitude for learners to appear to be internalizing the learning without actually doing so and only in so far as it was judged that a material return was to be gained from managing the appearance of learning.

The 'learning company' has become the 1990's 'buzz word' (Kanter, 1989), but Pedler, Burgoyne, and Boydell (1991) stress that this learning company will not become a reality by simply training individuals. Rather, they explain, the organisation has to be one:
"that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself" (Pedler, Burgoyne, and

Boydell, 1991, p. 1).

The distinction between training and education is noted but that does not mean that training should not be educational (Thomas and Anthony, 1995). This is especially so with the growth in in-company training programmes which are favoured by employers for their so-called practicality (Thomas, 1989). The point is that as these individuals have already been socialized into society (through primary socialization they went through during childhood) they have already accepted that working would be part of their lives and socializing them into their organisations does not become very difficult because it is only repeating the same structure that they have already gone through before.

9.3.4 Management Training Programmes: from Legitimating Actions to Defense Mechanisms:

<u>a: For the individual:</u>

Hirschhorn (1988, p. 67) discussed how 'organisational rituals' were "the most durable and most externalized form of defense against work-related anxiety". He used the term 'ritual' to "express the idea of a procedure or practice that takes on a life of its own and is seemingly unconnected to a rational understanding of experience" (Ibid, p. 67). According to Meyer and Rowan (1992a) rational myths can become institutionalized and if so the organisation can then

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incorporate elements which are legitimate externally but not internally. It seems it is not only management education which is ultimately a matter of faith but the same can be said for the more practical management training. When learners chase after certification not for learning purposes but simply to get qualified they are doing so in defense against the anxieties that they face in the managerial labour market. Ambitious managers are increasingly drawn into conformity with the expectations of their authority figures. In the hope of future individuality and independence they conform to what they perceive are the requirements of these powerful others.

Training has power. It allocates individuals to positions. It creates categories of knowledge as well as individuals who presumably have that knowledge. This categorization serves as guide for collective exclusion and provides institutional and ideological foundations of occupational expertise and power. Training has power in that it redefines individuals legitimately in the eyes of everyone around them and as such this training takes on a ceremonial significance. Is training a myth? was a question asked by Meyer (1977) although his argument was related to education in general. McLaren (1993) also discussed schooling as a ritual system. The arguments these two authors put forward are still valid here because

training in the three organisations studied was not legitimate because individual learners believed in its value, but because they knew every one else did. As Meyer (1977) argued:

"For all practical purposes the myths are true...we carry out our parts in a drama in which education is authority" (Meyer, 1977, p. 75).

The myth generated by these learning events is diffused through the belief that learning events are rationally effective which legitimates the organisational existence through the legitimization of its product (e.g. lending). When learners spoke about learning organisational language, procedures, or policies and when bosses spoke about sending their employees to learn this language so that both parties understand each other, this argument legitimated the training function and indicated the organisational commitment to its employees.

Moreover, it was through those legitimating rituals that habits were established. Through habitualization choices are narrowed and anxieties are lessened in making decisions (Hirschhorn, 1988) especially with the nature of managerial problems that managers usually learn about (mostly interpersonal e.g. evaluating subordinates, confronting peers,.. etc). When manager-learners confess that they have not learned everything they were supposed to, they still

expressed satisfaction at attending the learning event because they have gained 'an overall idea' of the subject. This 'overall idea' helped them in being more prepared to cope with similar situations in the future. Through habitualization and technicization of human conduct anxieties were reduced. These learning events attempted to make human action predictable thus relieving their managers of the tension associated with new situations. With enough practice, to use Berger and Luckmann (1966) words,

"The 'there we go again' now becomes 'this is how these things are done'". (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 77).

For these managers, who are at the early stage of their socialization into organisational life, these practised behaviours become part of their existing reality. Although the managers are participating in reproducing this reality they can experience it as something other than a human product. This is because although they, as new members of the organisation, act within the limits of the system, they do not share the common-sense knowledge among members who have been in the organisation for longer periods (Manning, 1971).

b. Training as both an 'organisational' and 'Social' order maintaining mechanism:

These strategies reflect the life and behaviour inside three bank organisations but they also reflect the

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culture and style of mainstream wider society in this century. All organisations exist within societies that define and shape their social reality (Scott, 1987). Organisations are part of the wider society and social norms that individuals experience in their out of work socializations are often reproduced and even amplified in their work places (Sims et al, 1993). When learning is turned into a ritual, these rituals do not only transmit organisational ideologies but also societal/cultural ideologies. Organisational ideologies or what Willmott (1993) called 'corporate ethos' cannot survive without being nurtured by the wider society and its dominant culture (McLaren, 1993). Hunter (1980) argued that schooling reproduces society in that it is an investment for producing the technocratic skills needed. Corporate training in the learning events observed were not much different. In the name of development these events were inculcating the values needed for the organisational and the social order. Training in this sense is in Hunter's words 'an investment in social control'. Looked at in this sense the aim of organisational training is more limited to socialisation rather than the development of the whole person.

Society has been described by Zijderveld (1968) as one that:

"is becoming increasingly abstract and increasingly demanding. We are urged to play the role of

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functionaries in an immense system of a pluralistic nature-some sort of supermarket in which we are buyer and seller at once. As buyer we get lost in the supply and the possibilities of choice, as seller we wonder what our place exactly is and what precisely our share in the continuance or improvement of the system is supposed to be... In this pluralist society we are required to function, to accomplish"(Zijderveld, 1968, p. 308-9).

Willmott (1994) argued that this duality of position is experienced by both managers and their subordinates. It is part of all forms of employment and as a result managers are both subjects and objects of the structures they operate in. Reed and Anthony (1992) also discussed how managers are both agents and victims of a process of formal rationalization, and Alvarez (1991) explained how organisational actors play an important role as diffusors of ideas. He argued that they needed two important resources to succeed. The first was 'cultural legitimation' which makes the ideas that agents are trying to transmit acceptable to local cultures. The second resource was organisations as stable social arrangements of collective action competent to make the ideas they spread stable and permanent, that is, capable of being reproduced (Alvarez, 1991). Society needs organisations to stabilize social order and/or norms. Social order only exists as a product of human activity.

The culture of professionalization and credentials is

part of wider societies acceptance of being 'governed at a distance'(Rose, 1989; Rose and Miller, 1992). It is a way of assembling people into different categories with supposedly different skills. John of the Washington Bank, who was already a Vice-president and who admitted he wanted to get qualified to protect his job, is forced to do that in a society that is seen more and more to operate a tacit contractual agreement between itself and its citizens. Those who do not work according to this contractual agreement will be categorized as 'deviant' or 'anti-social'. What one sees is not a straight government intervention, rather it is governing and control through social bodies that are created to help individuals fit into society. As Rose and Miller assert:

"Political forces have sought to utilise, instrumentalise and mobilize techniques and agents other than those of 'the State' in order to govern 'at a distance'" (Rose and Miller, 1992).

When individuals come to construe their behaviours, selves, and even their lives in terms instilled in them by society in general their behaviours, selves,..etc. will become 'subsumed under social control' (i.e.institutionalized). In this way individuals can be controlled from a distance more easily.

The examples of the institutionalization of individuals into society are numerous. Registering

births and deaths, reporting income, and even dressing differently for different occasions are all example of the way individuals come to conform blindly to society's requirements. Paradoxically, it is through such mechanisms that individuals in a society are controlled without intruding on their freedom and independence and by convincing individuals who come to comply with required behaviour blindly that they have done so by choice.

By offering expert advice to individuals in organisations on how to reach their goals these experts have entered into double alliance with both the governing bodies and the individuals within society. The organisations translate the governing bodies' political concerns into the language of management, medicine, psychology...etc. and offer self regulatory techniques that align individuals choices with those of the governing bodies (Rose and Miller, 1992). Organisations come to serve an intermediary role in this relationship in that they themselves have to listen to the experts' advice on what competencies their managers need to conduct their jobs effectively, what and how to instill the right culture in their organisation,...etc. The term 'experts' here does not necessarily mean academics, they could be, but they could also be training consultants, culture experts, psychologists, image consultants, speech

consultants,..etc. The governing of individuals needs

to be stabilized before it succeeds and this will only

happen when political problems have been

operationalized in institutions that do not

necessarily come under their direct control.

Rose (1989) argued that through analyzing the 'psyche'

individuals problematize parts of themselves and then

through self reformation using techniques provided by

'the experts of the soul' they try to reach what they

think they can or ought to become to conform to the

roles they chose for themselves. He goes on to say:

" 'The self' does not pre-exist the forms of its social
recognition; it is a heterogeneous and shifting
resultant of the social expectations targeted upon it,
the social duties accorded it, the norms according to
which it is judged, the pleasures and pains that
entice and coerce it, the forms of self-inspection
inculcated in it, the languages according to which it
is spoken about and about which it learns to account
for itself in thought and speech" (Rose, 1989, p.
218).

It is through these institutional and technical

practices that the selves in our modern society are

governed but as Reed and Anthony (1992) state:

"The real need for a reformed management education
rests on the requirement for managers to be helped to
an awareness of their own significance and
responsibility by encouraging in them a consciousness
of the difficulties with which they are engaged. They
must be encouraged to think about the unprogrammable
complexities which face them without the distracting
and specious assistance of codes, competencies, catch
phrases and mission statements. Managers must begin to
reflect upon the real world which they know they
inhabit. Paradoxically, when management education
begins to give them serious academic attention it may
at last have some prospect of entering the real world
itself" (Reed and Anthony, 1992, p. 609).

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9.5 Recommendations:

I do not intend to provide detailed recommendations of the cook book recipe type. To do so would reinforce the same thing this thesis has argued against. The following are guidelines for the designers as well as the researchers of management development programmes who should come up with specific solutions to their individual courses.

One suggestion is the need for more inter-displinary collaboration in the study of management training classes. McLaren (1993) argued:

"It is difficult to make a *priori* predictions of student behaviour in terms of how students will react to particular symbols or in what fashion they will enact or embody ritual meanings. However that does not prevent our making suggestive or educated guesses. The best an educational investigator can do is develop a pedagogical night vision in the hope that he or she will somehow be able to penetrate and eventually illuminate the dark side of the schooling process otherwise known as the hidden curriculum" (McLaren, 1993, p. 235).

Another suggestion would be the move away from the empty bucket (Thorp, 1990; McLaren, 1993) or the patient (Burgoyne, 1973a) images of the learner to that of the learner as an agent responsible for his own learning. McLaren (1993) called for the move to the pilgrim image of learners. He quoted Holmes (1973) who described the stance of the pilgrim as that of:

"active, waiting, hopeful expectation, power in innocence and weakness, and acceptance of strangeness of others as a possible source of transcendence" (Quoted in McLaren, 1993, p. 241).

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This pilgrim image will only ensue when learners are freed from the 'credential disease' that Dore (1976) spoke about. If learning is limited to that gained through sponsoring organisations, there will be less flexibility, creativity, and imagination and the individuals tied to different organisations will not have freedom of choice in learning the different kind of things that they need to be able to do their jobs effectively (Thomas, 1993). When learning events change from a means to an end and become the end itself then people running organisations have to start asking questions. Why are these learning events run? Is it because people responsible for them want to help the learners? Is it because it is convenient for the organisation to run these learning events at a cost effective range? Or is it because other organisations are doing it? Management developers need to apply to themselves the same principles they instruct their trainees to use in training courses and to put into practice the main proposition of management learning; that of reflection and questioning (Burgoyne, 1994).

Instead of socializing managers into existing norms, practices, and values, organisations which want to become learning ones must encourage learning at all levels and in all cultures they are operating in. Their training programmes must become educational. They must move away from the ritualized taken for granted where the learners role is limited to consuming rather than producing

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knowledge or they will lose the motivation of their building blocks; their workers. Organisations must break away from the 'established mould' (Willmott, 1994). They must develop new ways of stimulating and facilitating continuous learning organisations through continuous learning individuals (Salaman and Butler, 1990). They must help learners develop the skill of how to think rather what to think.

The strategies that the participants developed in the training programmes were realistic reactions to the logistics of their learning/teaching. To offer training programmes as remedies to systems that by their very nature make it difficult for participants to pursue free learning/teaching not only wastes resources but also blames and reduces the trainers and training to something they were not responsible for. It is accepted that these strategies were not all bad. They were, rather, double edge sword activities. They could be both enabling and repressive, dangerous or beneficent. If, as Woods (1990) argued, survival strategies were a result of the accommodation process (which is a product of the confrontation between the self and the system) then these strategies would relieve the survival problem. If, however, these strategies displace learning and the facilitating of learning then they could turn into a problem and new learners and instructors would be initiated into them as 'cultural solutions' (Schon, 1985) where the system will

perpetuate and reproduce itself.

Action learning could be part of the solution. All the five courses studied relied on traditional learning methods where learning was clearly conceived (even in the experiential courses) as something that is done to people rather than by them. Control for what was to be learned, when, and how was still planned and retained by the instructors who (as discussed earlier) guarded their agendas against interference. In action learning learners must take responsibility for their own development. Self development assumes that these learners are able to identify their own learning needs (Pedler, 1988). Learners have to decide what, when, and how to learn as well as how to evaluate what they learn. Through action learning philosophies managers can come to know not only themselves but also their organisations much better. As Mclaughlin and Thorpe (1993) argued:

"Perhaps a more reflective learner who is more economical with action might be able to recognize the critical interventions that can be made that will improve an organisation's performance" (Mclaughlin and Thorpe, 1993, p. 25-6).

In advocating action learning I am not dismissing the need for traditional teaching methods. The importance of learning core knowledge in maximizing the benefit of action learning is well recognized (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993). I am simply arguing for providing more 'tools of thinking' (McLaughlin and Thorpe, 1993) that would equip managers with not only the many different things but the many

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different *kinds* of things they need in their jobs (Thomas, 1993). And since one can not know what knowledge will be needed in the future, this knowledge can not be taught in advance. "Instead we should try to turn out people who love learning so much and learn so well that they will be able to learn whatever needs to be learned" (Holt, 1969, p. 173).

I hope this thesis will give training programme designers, human resource managers, trainers, learners..etc a greater realization of the power they exert on the choices available to the participants in training programmes. These people must recognize learners and instructors and understand how the organisations cut into their life careers. An ignorance of the effect of the choices available to learners and instructors in learning events is what turns training programmes into uneducational experiences. The working conditions for these participants (during the training programmes) were almost alien to self-reflection but by realizing the learning events' 'built-in schizophrenia' (Woods, 1990) resulting from the number of different contradicting roles learners and teachers have to fulfil one hopes that through awareness one is on the first steps to a solution.

It is important to continue to examine how training programmes in organisations represent and reproduce the larger systems of mediation like that in the organisations

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sponsoring them and society at large. These strategies do not exist in vacuum. They represent their context of organisation culture and social relations. They carry culturally and politically coded meanings that need to be examined. Also, as this thesis had limited access to instructors understanding it is important to pursue this aim in future investigations.

Humorous stories are usually grouped into subject based categories (Mulkay, 1988) and Hatch and Ehrlich (1993) argued that humour in organisations could be organised in the same fashion. Collinson (1985) has found how jokes about masculinity to be of great importance in understanding shop-floor social relations. If this argument is extended to training programmes then it would be worth developing lists of humorous subjects in learning events and examining their implications.

9.6 **Limitations**:

As I discussed in the methodology chapter gaining access for this research proved to be (and with hindsight understandably) a very difficult stage. The reason could be attributed to the fact that most doctoral theses are critical of what they investigate. Although I think I succeeded in building trust with the learners I cannot say the same about the instructors. Instructors' cooperation differed from one course to another although I found the Eastern Bank instructors generally more accepting and

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cooperative than others. Instructors' reluctance to be observed is not new. Ball (1980), who investigated interaction processes between teachers and pupils in their initial encounters, discussed this in his study.

The instructors in this study, I think, were caught up in a dilemma; if they accepted to be observed, then they opened themselves to criticism. If they, on the other hand, refused to have me in their courses, this could have signalled to the management an admittance of their incompetence. When the instructors accepted my presence, however, they held some power over my research. They could very possibly (as I suspect some of them would) dismiss my interpretations and in so doing affect my work's credibility but as I argued in Chapter Three I do not feel that adverse reactions should lead to rejections of explanations since, as Yin (1981) argued, it is not unusual for people to react adversely when presented with individualized data.

I had major advantages in conducting this research. I was a banker with an MBA in Finance who in the past had attended similar courses in Bahrain, U.K., and America. This as discussed before, enabled me to cut through the professional jargon and vocabularies used by the participants and to concentrate on interaction rather than on content. The weakness of this is that learners knew of my career background and they sometimes looked to me as the

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expert who could help them in their projects when instructors were not around although I still wonder if that was partly because it was easier to ask me than to ask the instructors.

My career background helped me to 'pass' as one of the learners, a banker who understood their language and who easily got immersed in their culture. I, however, was not accepted by most instructors although I had a lot in common with them too being an instructor myself. Now that I think about it, I find it inevitable that I was going to be accepted by one group and rejected by the other especially since I spent most of my breaks with the learners who were the original focus of my study. I wonder if the situation would have been different if the instructors had accepted me? I have doubts that the learners would have accepted me then. Maybe being accepted by one group meant the automatic exclusion from the other one.

Despite this acceptance and cultural immersion there still remained a major difference between me and the learners. I came from a different cultural background and although some people might say I represented what might be called a 'culturally hybrid person', since I generally felt comfortable in both western and eastern cultures, I was still an Arab woman investigating in a western man's world. Many authors have stressed the importance of the researcher's personal biography and personal experience on

the research role (Wolcott, 1975; Herzfeld, 1983; and Burgess, 1984) and so whether I choose to admit it or not I have surely had an effect on this research. Another difference between me and the learners was that they knew I was in these training programmes not to learn the content and produce a project but to learn about them for the purpose of gaining a different qualification from the one they were after. So, although I was still under some kind of pressure in these learning events, it was a different kind of pressure than the one they were experiencing.

The strategies discussed earlier are part of the accepted training culture in the three organisations, and as Schon (1985) pointed out, when a researcher reveals this culture to the insider it can be perceived as an 'invasion of privacy' that might not be welcome. I understand that there is an argument that hidden meanings can be found in any gesture if one wants to and that 'overprojection' is a risk (Schon, 1985). This is where a researcher exaggerates the importance of an attribute of a setting that does not reflect the participants' intent, but the fact that I was both familiar and stranger to the setting helped, I think, in balancing this risk.

Another point that has to be made clear is that I did not always rely on the learners' report to me (which would have given their experiences more totally) for two reasons. One was discussed by Becker et al (1968) who argued that it was

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usual for learners to talk about their difficulty with a situation without necessarily describing it. The other is that learners did not always act according to their espoused theory. They said one thing and acted in a different way not in accordance with their stated theories.

The strategies presented here are, by no means, the whole picture but are hoped to be a contribution towards it. By using an interactionist perspective I hope to have gained a deeper understanding of what happens in institutionalized management training programmes and to have at least made a plausible effort at theorizing why participants choose to make the choices they do in these contexts. In doing this I realize that there is a problem that this thesis can create the illusion of being critical while at the same time contribute the maintenance of the status quo when it argues that participants have to play the game if they want to succeed in gaining the rewards instilled in them by society through organisations.

Another point that I want to make is that although I started this research calling these training programmes 'learning events', and although this entitlement continued throughout the research, the more I looked at my data the more I questioned the use of the term. This is especially since, as I argue in the thesis, much of what went on in these events was 'uneducational'. I tried to use the terms 'training programmes', 'events' more often but I still

could not exclude the term 'learning event', maybe because these events were partly legitimated by the learning they were supposed to produce and maybe partly because I got caught up in the terminology.

I also realize that I have theorized 'beyond my data' (Mintzberg, 1979) but as he argues:

"Every theory requires that creative leap, however small, that breaking away from the expected to describe something new. There is no one-to-one correspondence between data and theory. The data do not generate the theory - only researchers do that - any more than the theory can be *proved* true in terms of the data. All theories are false, because all abstract from data and simplify the world they purport to describe. Our choice, then, is not between true and false theories so much as between more or less useful theories. And usefulness, to repeat, stems from detective work well done, followed by creative leaps in relevant directions" (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 584).

According to Tripp (1985), qualitative generalization is:

"a matter of applying the facts of one case to another case instead of attempting to sum them.. The process of generalization is performed by the person making the comparison, it is in the realm of personal experience, not in some formal technical realm where universal statements may be produced in the sense that they lie outside individual experience" (Tripp, 1985, p. 34).

I have attempted in this thesis to move from the particular to the general. From substantive descriptive data of the separate cases (learning in a management training programme) to learning in management training programmes in general, to learning in institutions which I hope is a way forward. I accept that I did not present much data about the business environment (which with societal culture and

founder values determine organisational culture (Ott, 1989)) in which the banks studied were embedded. Ideally, I would have liked to have spent a period of three to four months in each bank after observing in the learning events concerned to learn more about the sponsoring banks' cultures but banks are very conservative organisations. Although these banks accepted me I still had to explain in detail (at the beginning of contacts and before getting final approval) to the gatekeepers the exact nature of the study. I succeeded in being evasive about what I was going to observe in the learning events (maybe because I did not know myself), but I still had to set some boundaries on the access I needed to the gatekeepers I negotiated with. I am convinced that had I requested more access into the banks at least one bank would have definitely refused me access altogether. Instead I had to rely on the contextual experience I had since I had some bank training as part of my training as a bank inspector.

These are five different training programmes in three different banks and it could be argued that these five learning groups and three organisations were similar to each other but different from others at large. But Tripp (1985) brings the example of law judgements:

"The facts of the case and the argument are thoroughly documented. Later when a case with quite different people occurring at a different time and a different place arises, lawyers refer to the facts and argument of the earlier case, claiming that, because the two are different examples of similar situations..., so the judgement of the first case should (or should not) also be applied to the second... The cases are cumulated to form an archive which

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constitutes precedential law" (Tripp, 1985, p. 34-5).

The generalizability of this study is in terms of its being one of the few ethnographic studies of management learning and possibly the first in bank training. As such it will contribute to the building stock of the 'archive' that is so much needed there.

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