

***Exploring Criticality in Management Education:
To be Critical or not to be Critical that is the question***

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how criticality is perceived, experienced and translated into the everyday practices of critical management educators. Fifteen semi-structured interviews and two observations of practice of key scholars in the field were conducted to answer the following research questions 1) What factors have contributed to the adoption of this management philosophy by critical management educators? 2) How is criticality perceived by critical management educators? 3) How does this alternative management philosophy translate into the professional practice of critical management educators? When we question what and how we teach it has the potential to open up new questions to be explored and insights to be revealed. This research has exposed a side of management education that is ever present in the philosophy and practice of critical educators. The research found that there was a common theme about criticality relating to questioning taken for granted assumptions about management and its practices. However, distinctions were made between those whose interests were more theoretically, politically or practically oriented. From the findings two critical educator types emerged. These were the critical experientialists and the critical traditionalists. The results of the study revealed that a) critical educators are oriented towards either the content or process of their practice b) the educators who focused more on the process of their practice used action learning as a teaching methodology c) some of the challenges of teaching in this way are to be expected and part of the learning process d) the role of the tutor is paramount in creating the environment both conceptually and physically where critical learning can evolve. This research has provided an understanding of the critical classroom with different educators' backgrounds, conditions of practice and perceptions. In the context of current debates in the field of business such an exploration is both timely and relevant for today's educators, students, managers and ultimately society.

DEDICATION

To my parents Patrick and Elizabeth Breen.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation had its origins with an exploration into the field of management education as part of my doctoral studies. As a practitioner in the field I became interested in the debates about management education. Issues relating to the 'real world' and a lack of relevancy in business schools have caused much of this debate. As a result, this has raised questions about the content and process of management education. For example, how applicable are the alternative views of management education? It was whilst researching the field that I first came across the terms critical management studies (CMS) and critical management education (CME). Up until then I had never heard of these terms inside nor outside academia. For example, I did not encounter such concepts of management during my Master in Business Administration (MBA) studies. I completed this in 1998 and it would have been six years since the phrase was used in Alvesson and Willmott's (1992) critical text. Also this concept of management education had never been mentioned among my peers in the Business School. It is also not surprising therefore that I never came across the phrases CMS or CME during my time working in industry. However, it is nearly 20 yrs since this book was written and I was initially interested to find out more about this alternative model of management education. The concept also became of particular interest to me in light of current issues in the business world at the time. I had also begun reflecting on my own practice in relation to the content and process of what I do. The research enabled me to reflect critically on my own practice in a way that I had never done before. Ultimately, I got the opportunity to explore the critical classroom through my research.

Research Context and Objectives

Traditional, managerialist and American models have been used to describe management education in more recent times. A managerialist management education is described as 'treating management as a morally and politically neutral technical activity' (Grey and Mitev, 1995, p.74). These models have been criticised and alternative ones put forward. A critical approach to management education has been called for from various sources. In recent times Mintzberg (2004) in his book 'Mangers not MBAs' questions how effective educational institutions are at educating managers. He calls for a more engaging approach to managing and a more reflective approach to management education. He asserts further that conventional MBAs overemphasise the science of management. This he believes is evident in education programs that train students in analysis and technique, leaving a distorted impression of practice. The tensions between theory and practice in business education are not a recent phenomenon. In historic terms, business schools in the 1960's in the US changed from a 'trade school' orientation towards a research and discipline-led focus, emphasising rigorous academic research over practically relevant research (Thomas, 2007). Similarly, policy changes were at work in the UK, which led to the elite business schools such as the London Business School and the Manchester Business School in the 1960's. According to Thomas (2007) this discipline-led focus has led to a gap between academically rigorous research and the production of relevant research directed towards the understanding of the issues and problems faced by managers and the management community. However, US business schools have become leaders in a global education industry and have become the benchmark for European schools (Engwall, 2007).

Bennis & O'Toole (2005) also argue that the actual cause of these tensions can be traced to a dramatic shift in the culture of business schools. A culture of academic excellence, which they believe, has been inappropriately adopted. In this culture, instead of measuring themselves in terms of the competence of their graduates, or by how well their faculties understand important drivers of business performance, they measure themselves almost solely by the rigor of their scientific research. As a result, recent critics of business schools have been accused of performing

theoretically grounded but irrelevant research; of doing an inadequate job of preparing students for the business school world; of pursuing curricular fads at the expense of sound educational principles; of being too analytical and not process oriented; of failing to provide sufficient ethical and professional guidance to potential managers; and of responding to the demands of the market by pandering to the business school rankings (Thomas, 2007). It is not surprising therefore that some writers have gone as far as to say that management education is in crisis. Podolny (2009) argues that the problems afflicting management education are so deep and widespread that people have come to believe that business schools are harmful to society, fostering self-interested, unethical and even illegal behaviour by their graduates. He suggests further that management education has contributed to the systematic failure of leadership that led to the current financial crisis. The fact that Business schools are not developing skills in critical thinking and moral reasoning has been put forward as a reason for these problems (Podolny, 2009). Ultimately, Podolny argues that a focus on value-based leadership and ethics has not been central to management education. He advocates that business schools need to re-invent themselves and promote behaviour that is consistent with society's values.

In response to these debates CMS and CME have been put forward as alternative approaches. Critical Management has been described as having 'an agenda for research, teaching and organisational practice that understands management as a political, cultural and ideological phenomenon, and addresses managers not only as managers but as people, and is attentive to other social groups (subordinates, customers, clients, men and women, citizens in other capacities) whose lives are more or less directly affected by the activities and ideologies of management (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003, p.15). However, it is seen as a marginal activity within business schools as most schools are assumed to adopt the more traditional or US model of business education. The field of (CMS) is still relatively new and it has been suggested that 'more knowledge about the way the everyday life in academia is accounted for by ordinary business-school students and teachers would perhaps make us wiser when it comes to suggesting changes or defending the conditions for 'good work' in academia (Korpiaho et al, 2007, p. 58). However, it must be acknowledged that research to date is shortcoming with

regards to local contexts and experiences in the field. As a result, I believe that this is a fertile area of research to investigate. Therefore, exploring criticality in management education was my research objective. Also as a practitioner in management education my objective was to reflect critically on my own practice. As I wanted the research to inform my everyday work I decided to investigate CME from an educator perspective. Consequently, the aim of the research was to explore how criticality is perceived, experienced and translated into the everyday practices of critical management educators. The research was guided by three main questions:

- What factors have contributed to the adoption of this management philosophy by critical management educators?
- How is criticality perceived by critical management educators?
- How does this alternative management philosophy translate into the professional practice of critical educators?

Through the following chapters the research questions and objectives will be explored. Chapter II examines the literature in the field. Chapter III discusses the research methodology chosen and its rationale. Chapter IV discusses the findings from the interviews conducted. The objective of which is to reveal the factors contributing to the educators adopting their management philosophy and their perceptions of criticality. The analysis of the interviews also reveals how they translate their management philosophy into practice. Chapter V portrays the critical educators in action through observation of their practice. Chapter VI discusses the findings in light of the research questions. Chapter VII discusses the conclusions of the research. The significance of this study means that it contributes further to our knowledge and understanding of both the philosophy and practice of critical educators. The research also has the potential to inform the management educator with regard to a critical content and pedagogy. It informs educators about both the benefits and challenges of engaging in the approach from the educator and student perspective. It encourages those who are new to the field to think critically about their practice and how they might translate that into their classrooms and beyond. Finally, it is a topic worth addressing, as the research will contribute to a still relatively new and marginal sector in management education

research. Therefore, it is vital that management education is open to such critical interrogation just like the field of management. It is in this environment that management education and society will develop critical beings in the classroom where tomorrow's managers will emerge.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study was to explore criticality in management education. In doing so it has raised many questions, in particular what is CMS, what are its origins? what are its objectives and who is it for? In order to answer those questions the review will firstly include an overview of critical management studies. It is important to appreciate CMS in its historic, social and institutional context. In doing so it is also important to reflect on CME and examine its relationship to CMS.

CMS –A Reflection

The first use of the phrase critical management studies was in the title of the edited collection of the same name that appeared in 1992 (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). This is generally held to mark the start of the CMS project in the UK. However, CMS also has its proponents outside of the UK and Europe, in particular in America. The emergence of CMS in the US started as a pre-conference workshop at the 1998 meeting of the Academy of Management (AOM). In the UK the context to its emergence at this time was the influence of New Right and New Labour politics and the managerialisation of the public sector (Fournier and Grey, 2000). CMS has been described as an academic project that challenges the idea that management is a disinterested technical process by applying analytical perspectives from critical and postmodern theorists to management as social and economic practice (Perriton, 2007, p.66). The fact that very little consideration has been given to the rationality of contemporary management theory and practice with regards to fundamental values and goals has also been highlighted (Perriton, 2007). Alvesson and Willmott (1996) identify a narrow instrumental conception of reason, which has eclipsed a broader critical appreciation of the emancipatory power of reason as being a basic problem with current theory and practice. The consequences of which they believe have produced even bigger social and ecological problems. In conjunction with this they highlight the vast majority of textbooks and guru handbooks on management

that pay little or no attention to the relevance of critical reason to understanding and diagnosing the theory and practice of management. Instead there is a preoccupation with the acquisition of techniques and ideologies of problem solving. A critical issue as stressed by Alvesson and Willmott (1996) is what kind of management there will be in the future and most crucially whether the theory of management and practice will continue to normalize and exploit social divisions and be driven by policies of elites, or whether it will be more democratically accountable to a majority of citizens, producers and consumers. Is this then the heart of the critical project? To answer that question it is important to examine what CMS means to its proponents from their various perspectives and contexts.

As a result of its historic, social and institutional context it is not surprising to find that there are many views and positions taken as to what constitutes CMS. Therefore, it is important to establish where the areas of commonality lie and also where differences exist. Firstly, however, a number of foci for critical studies of management have been identified by Alvesson and Willmott (1996). These include recognising that management is a social practice. Its content is derived from the historical and cultural relations of power that enable/impede its emergence and development. They also believe that mainstream management theory is seen to represent its practices as objective/impartial/scientific. As a result, they are in favour of resisting technistic and objectivistic views. Tensions are also seen to exist between the lived reality of management as a politically charged process and its official representation as a set of impartial, scientific techniques, for directing and co-ordinating human and material resources. However, they assert that critical studies of management recognise and examine the tensions. Instead of seeking to control these tensions, they anticipate the possibility of resolving them through a transformation of power relations. Therefore emancipatory transformation occurs as people seek to change, personally or collectively, habits and institutions that impede the development of autonomy and responsibility. Finally they also suggest paying careful attention to the centrality of language and communication. As a result, these themes are seen to be reflected in Critical Theory (CT) and such theory is seen to be a relevant resource for the development of critical management studies (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996). The following themes in Critical Theory according to Alvesson

and Willmott (1996) are seen to be relevant to CMS. Firstly, to expose and critique contradictions in managerialist claims that its (ideological) theories are objective and that its (oppressive and destructive) practices are efficient and effective. The objective here is to disclose the limits of existing practices and make way for more rational less contradictory pathways of social and economic development. Another relevant theme of (CT) is the one-dimensionality and consumerism of advanced capitalist societies. Here proponents of (CT) challenge the assumption that mass production satisfies human needs. Consumers are seen to be passive participants who are incapable of imagining other forms of life that differ from the present. The critique of technocracy is another relevant theme. When decisions are dominated by a technical interest, fundamental questions about politics and ethics are marginalised as ends are taken as given and the refinement of means becomes an end in itself. Lastly, the concept of communicative action challenges the conventional understanding that instrumental or strategic rationality is the only, or purest expression of human reasoning. It is through communicative action that dialogue and argumentation through which rational consensus can be reached (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996).

However, there are other theoretical perspectives which constitute the broad church of CMS. Parker (2005) notes that much debate about CMS has been conducted as a scholastic dispute between critical realists and neo-marxists on the one hand and post-structuralists and postmodernists on the other. He argues that theory has become the battleground for defining the heart of the critical project. For example, tensions exist between what kind of Marxism, neo-Marxism or post-Marxism CMS should be based upon. According to Parker (2005) for labor process theorists, CMS academics are accused of a distraction from the critical project. According to Grey and Willmott (2005) CMS as a movement can to some extent be thought of as having developed out of the Labour Process Analysis (LPA) movement from the 1970's onwards. Here the initial concern was about Marxist sociology and political economy. The assumption here is that the labour process in capitalist societies is exploitative and that managers have a key role in this exploitation (Braverman, 1974). However, there was a gradual interest in post-structuralism and issues of subjectivity (Grey and Willmott, 2005). CMS took over this part of the debate which had previously been conducted within the

umbrella of LPA. According to French and Grey (1996) a major development in the critical approach to management has come from the impact of post-structuralist work, and more particularly work in the Foucauldian tradition. This tradition draws attention to the constitution of management as a discourse and a practice and to the construction of subjectivity within organisational contexts. However, it is argued that this resulted in the sponsoring of a largely irrelevant form of social or organisational theory that both denies the specificity of the employment relationship and appears to have little relation to Marxism (Parker, 2005).

Hassard et al (2001) believe that instead of adhering to Marx's or Braverman's historical visions, critical management scholars have increasingly turned to Foucault or critical theorists such as Adorno and Marcuse, who provide the basis for a deconstruction of Marxian eschatology. However, this intellectual progression in CMS is seen as a manifestation of the 'defeat of the Left and the need to temper our radicalism in the context of neo-liberal hegemony' (Hassard et al, 2001, p.339). Ultimately, this defeat is seen as having undermined more overtly leftist labour process theory. According to Hancock (2008) it is this group that has been most vocal in their criticisms of CMS and in particular its inability to mount any meaningful engagement with the political struggles of the workplace. These complex debates according to Parker (2005) are a side show to the main event. In response to these differences Fournier and Grey (2000) stress the importance of creating alliances between Marxists and post-structuralists than to argue about difference.

As a consequence, they are sympathetic to a pluralistic understanding of CMS which can encompass many positions. This encompasses a broad range of positions including neo-Marxism, (labour process theory, Frankfurt school of Critical Theory, Gramscian 'hegemony theory'), post-structuralism, deconstructuralism, literary criticism, feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies and environmentalism. However, as a result of this theoretical pluralism and no unitary 'critical' position how do we differentiate the critical from the non 'critical'? Fournier and Grey suggest that the boundaries are drawn and recognised by the authors in the kind of work that they do. These boundaries are

drawn around issues related to 'performativity, denaturalization and reflexivity' (Fournier and Grey, 2000, p.17). For example, they assert that non-critical management study is governed by the principle of performativity which subordinates knowledge and truth to the production of efficiency. Critical work is not performative in this meaning. According to Fournier and Grey (2000) CMS is also engaged in the project of deconstructing reality of organisational life and organisational knowledge by revealing alternatives. Reflexivity refers to how CMS might also be distinguished with regards to its philosophical and methodological reflexivity. They argue that it is not that mainstream management is positivistic and CMS is not but that the positivism of the mainstream is rarely explicitly argued for or defended. Another contentious characteristic of CMS is emancipation. This emancipation relates to a commitment to free individual subjects from the power relations within which they are inscribed. However, Fournier and Grey (2000) argue that it is the way that these power relations are to be conceived, unravelled and overthrown that have been the subject of much contention within CMS. However, they refer to these contentions as mirroring the fragmentation of the social sciences in general.

The history and location of management education has also posed challenges and tensions for the development of CMS. For example, the engagement with CMS have been more strongly felt in the UK than in the US (Fournier and Grey, 2000; Perriton, 2007). This a notable point as many of the conditions of neo-liberalism were present in both countries (Fournier and Grey, 2000). Also there is relatively little in the way of a radical intellectual tradition based on Marxism by contrast to the UK and European social science (Fournier and Grey, 2000). In the UK management schools are seen to have more of a critical tradition than the US. In American business schools since the Second World War, there has been a concerted effort to re-create these schools as rigorous scientific undertakings and to raise management research to a higher level. In contrast, UK business schools were often configured as part of social science faculties and as a result, drawing on those traditions (Fournier and Grey, 2000). As a result, the educational history of a country appears to have an effect on the way that criticality in management can be expressed.

Perriton (2007) stresses these historical differences:

The history of liberal education in the UK allows CMS work to be considered (mostly) as a valid and non-threatening contribution to management research, even when the CMS 'label' is a statement of political orientation. However, in the US, the positivistic epistemology and methodological orientation of the business school tradition weighs heavily on the attempt to produce politically and challenging research (Perriton 2007, p.80).

Another contradiction with CMS is the fact that it relies for its existence upon the business schools which it critiques (Grey and Willmott, 2005). As a result of this paradox, Zald (2002) quotes Charles Perrow in describing CMS as an oxymoron. As a result, there has been a pre-occupation with how CMS fits into the business school. For example, is CMS fated to be a marginal activity or can it take a central role? Zald (2002) explores both possibilities. He acknowledges that no matter which scenario becomes a reality CMS and management schools must find a way of getting their message across even if they themselves don't become the centre of the enterprise. However, it must be acknowledged that in the US the Academy of Management (AOM) has been seen to be concerned with the political aims of CMS:

Moreover, their declared aim is not limited to unlocking Nature's secrets, but to generating change that will result in a societal system that better accords with their values. That is, their agenda is as much, if not more, politically driven than scientifically motivated. (Eden 2003, p.390)

As a consequence CMS academics are being asked to stop acting politically and produce more publications in the tradition of the US business school. In contrast, in the UK academics were criticised for writing articles rather than being politically engaged (Hassard et al, 2001). In more recent times Smith (2008) describes the different strategies of engagement and disengagement that are found within the broad church of CMS. These strategies are relevant to CMS's situation and participation within the business school. Such strategies he believes are open to particular accusations. For example, engagement encounters the dangers of complicity and co-option. Disengagement is challenged by marginalisation and irrelevance. As a result, individuals face moral challenges and in his opinion these internal differences serve to undermine any attempt to shape a

'strong' identity for CMS or a discipline that is not fundamentally divided. Therefore, in order to achieve critical engagement CMS academics must interrogate their own relationship with their institutional environment. Smith (2008) believes that it is not acceptable that these ideas be applied to external organisations but rather forgotten with respect to our own organisational circumstances. However, how might the CMS academic translate such principles and practices into his/her institutional and professional existence? The consequences of such accountability have not yet been debated as Smith rightly acknowledges. However, Perriton (2007) highlights how the business schools themselves have become the primary battleground for CMS. For example, in the UK, CMS academics were able to see management education as a tool with which they could transform management practice. In contrast US academics were aware that the business school was a 'fortress that would easily repel its attempts to colonise it' (Perriton, 2007, p.75).

However, there are other ways in which US and UK CMS academics differ in their approach. This is portrayed in how each group identifies itself. For example, the desire for American adherents of CMS to brand themselves 'critters' has met with distain from their UK counterparts (Hancock, 2008). Also the politics of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and various other sites of alterity have made it more difficult to gain any possibility of coherence in thought and action. However, it has been acknowledged that this diversity as described above should not be viewed as a flaw of CMS, but instead its greatest asset:

Unlike the the rigidity patrolled borders of LPT, with its frequently unforgiving attitude to those who are considered to violate the sacred tenets of its 'core theory', CMS provides an experimental and liberatory space; a template perhaps for an envisaged organisational future of undistorted communicative practices and an ethics of inclusivity and generosity. (Hancock, 2008, p. 11)

Notwithstanding the tensions and challenges above Grey and Willmott (2005) conclude that the ultimate assessment of CMS will be the extent to which it succeeds in making a critical-reflective and emancipatory-difference to understanding, studying, teaching and practicing management. They stress that it is only by 'institutionlizing CMS, not just inside business schools but within

journals, funding bodies and other forums that its shallow roots can go deeper, with an improved prospect of changing the theory and practice of management' (Grey and Willmott, 2005, p.12). The debates and tensions above highlight the fact that there does not exist any agreement on what should be studied, or why or how. This as French and Grey (1996) suggest requires the need for plurality in the content of management education programmes instead of existing mainstream approaches. In this way students would have the opportunity to appreciate the complex and disputed nature of management as knowledge and practice.

However, relevant this point may be it must be acknowledged that for this to happen there needs to be reflexive curricula as suggested by Zald (2002). However, as Fulop (2002) insightfully points out the lack of attention to this area needs to be addressed. She proposes that CMS scholars need to pay more attention to the teaching side of CMS and the teaching materials needed to support such endeavours. She believes that to teach CMS to undergraduates and post graduate students requires teaching materials, notably textbooks that can compete successfully with the mainstream offerings. She also suggests that such work be written for student and managerial audiences rather than in the language of academics:

I only wish that as a community of CMS scholars we could develop a rich array of strategies to teach CMS rather than push this issue to the back of papers and conference programmes. (Fulop, 2002, p. 434)

This raises the question as to how CMS is being translated into the business schools? This is another part of the story one which I intend to explore further in relation to critical management education (CME).

CME-A Reflection

On reflecting on CMS from an historical, social and institutional context in the previous section I identified a challenge facing CMS. The challenge facing the field is identifying what it can contribute and in what way in our business schools and beyond. This raised the question as to how CMS is being translated into business schools? Therefore, in the following section I intend to reflect upon critical management education (CME) encompassing its origins, aims and objectives. I am also interested to identify what management education has to gain from integrating perspectives from critical scholarship? Firstly, it is important to define what CME is. It has been associated with writing that challenges the politics of management education and/or experiments with pedagogy that seeks to minimise harmful power dynamics and/or seeks to raise the critical consciousness of students (Perriton, 2007). For example, a critical approach to education as advocated by Perriton and Reynolds (2004) would involve:

a commitment to questioning the assumptions and taken-for-granted embodied in both theory and professional practice, and to raising questions about management and education that are moral as well as technical in nature, and are concerned with ends as least as much as with means. (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, p.65)

However, it is important to identify what the other major tenets of CME include. For example, attention to the ends as well as the means in which management is achieved needs to be considered. Classroom discussions would focus on power and ideology, and how 'management power is subsumed within the social fabric of institutional structures' (Perriton, 2007, p.71). Also concern for community and the social rather than just the individual is another aspect of CME (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004). An emancipatory aim of justice, fairness, democracy and empowerment is also important (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004). Overall a critical pedagogy of management is not simply a new way of teaching existing management knowledge: its concern is to reflect critically on such knowledge as part of a more general development of critical management studies (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Caproni and Arias (1997) capture the essence of what critical management educators are about:

If as management educators, we regularly are challenged to consider whether we are adequately preparing students to address the individual, organisational and societal challenges they face; what individual, organisational, and societal ends are served through our teaching; and whether our teaching reflects the current state of knowledge in our field. (Caproni and Arias, 1997, p. 302)

However, in more recent times Watson (2006, p.430) argues that three things are necessary for effective management:

- the general intellectual skills produced by a good liberal higher education;
- technical knowledge about organisations and the environment in which they have to function; and
- the specific skills of managing.

He concludes that most business schools spend most of their effort doing the second of these. This leads us to engage with a model of management education that concerns itself with 'the development of the critical reflective practitioner who has a wider understanding of the social, power and ethical implications of business practice and actively challenges our existing models of management' (Starkey & Tempest, 2005, p.74). An underlying emancipatory aim based on fairness, democracy and empowerment is also seen as being important. However, it has been suggested that the aim of CME is not only emancipation. For example, some argue that recasting CME from 'a pedagogy of emancipation to one of refusal may actually be liberating for its members and specifically for feminists, poststructuralists and other theoretical traditions that have been pushed to the margins of the academic field' (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004, p.74). However, both 'CMS and CME are contemporary expressions of the same concern that the role of management education is not just to make better managers but also to make a better society' (Perriton, 2007, p.69). Arguments for CME in the 1990's were reframed from older debates in management education. For example, in the UK, CME has its origins in established debates about utilitarian versus liberal education and in radical adult education theory (Perriton, 2007, p.66). These arguments pre-date the CMS movement. As a result, it is important to examine these debates further.

Critical Pedagogy

The debates surrounding criticality and education do not have sole residency in management education. As a result, it is important to explore what it means to be critical and in particular how such criticality translates within an educational context. Critical perspectives have been informed by different schools of thought, including Marxism, feminism, postmodernism, social constructionism, critical theory and liberationist (Freirean) theology (Reynolds, 1999). There are many possible interpretations to the term 'critical' such as critical theory, critical thinking and being critical. It has been argued that one of the central aims of critical theory has been to reassess the relationship between theory and practice in the light of the criticisms of positivist and interpretive approaches to social science, which have emerged over the last century (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). However, according to Alvesson and Deetz (2000) critical social science goes beyond faultfinding and engages more in critique than criticism. Critique here relates to the examination of social institutions, ideologies and discourses. It may be useful here to view critical theory as the product of a process of critique (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). However, is being critical the same as engaging in critical thinking? Mingers (2000) provides a useful way of understanding of what it means to be critical. He suggests that there are four aspects to a critical approach. These include scepticism towards rhetoric, tradition, authority and objectivity:

-the critique of rhetoric: critical thinking: the logic of soundness of the argument and its manner of expression

-the critique of tradition: the taken-for-granted assumptions about factual matters and acceptable social practices and values

-the critique of authority: being sceptical of one dominant view, assumptions made about legitimacy and whose views should be privileged

-the critique of objectivity: being sceptical of information and knowledge: assumptions concerning the validity of knowledge and information.

(Mingers, 2000, p. 225)

This view of being critical is more holistic in its approach as it involves much more than critical thinking. Similarly, Barnett (1997) displaces the idea of critical thinking with the much broader idea of critical being. He argues that criticality can be distinguished through two axes namely its levels and scope. Its levels relate to the narrow operational skills of critical thinking to transformatory critique. Its scope consists of three domains of critical thinking. These domains are knowledge, self and the world. He stresses the need for more attention to be placed in higher education on the latter two domains of critical thinking. He believes that higher education should focus on developing critical beings that can not only reflect critically on knowledge but also develop critical self-reflection and critical action.

This definition of critical being is similar to the way McLean (2006) draws on Habermas's notion of communicative reason and action. Here communicative reason would include people's capacity to argue with others in an effort to solve social problems. Mc Lean argues that Habermas and other Critical Theorists claim that in a modern society interest in technical control of the objective world is pursued at the expense of interests in communication and emancipation. She argues further that good university pedagogy and critical pedagogy are homogenous. Drawing on Freire she provides us with a rationale for engaging with such critique. For example, the belief that education is always political and because all educational policies and practices either enable or constrain injustices means that educators should be asking such questions as what am I teaching? why am I teaching it? how am I teaching it, why this way? and in whose interests am I teaching?

From this perspective Freire argues that educational and political action, which is not critically aware of individual situations, runs the risk of banking or preaching in the desert (Freire, 1996). He also believed that the important thing from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking and that education should start with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically (Freire, 1996). However, in reality do first-world students need liberating? Some teachers question if the dialogical method can or should be applied to classrooms

in developed countries (Shor and Freire, 1987). For example, can dialogical education work in cultures that are so different to Latin America? Do notions of liberation fit with affluent student realities of today? Freire believed that the opaque conditions of daily life in an affluent culture could cause confusions making critical illumination harder and more necessary (Shor and Freire, 1987). Also it is argued that the dialogical method contradicts the logic of domination and challenges the social relations of learning, which inhibit democracy and critical thought (Shor and Freire, 1987).

However, elements of this dialogical method of education have been challenged. For example, Freedman (2007) examines the extent to which critical pedagogy can be considered a democratic form of education. He argues that although critical pedagogy is an appealing vision of democratic social change, it has not achieved its full potential because of some significant shortcomings of Freirean theory. He argues that critical pedagogy can be accused of indoctrination. He describes classroom instruction that encourages students to adopt political ideologies that they did not freely choose is typically referred to as “indoctrination”. Freedman regards this as being undemocratic:

However, if the teacher determines the method in advance and then utilizes the institutional powers enshrined in the teaching role—for instance, to ask questions, to lecture, to bring in certain outside material—in order to sway students towards this preselected method, then critical pedagogy cannot be said to uphold a democratic process of instruction. (Freedman, 2007, p.445)

Freedman argues further that the Freirean curriculum is inherently politically biased. He also asserts that Freire’s idea of democratizing classroom instruction with dialogue among political equals can never fully occur. The removal of teachers’ institutional powers would severely limit their ability to achieve Freire’s goal of democratizing the world outside the classroom (Freedman, 2007). This raises the question as to how can you teach for social justice without engaging in indoctrination? Freedman proposes that it is the development of the curriculum and not its implementation that should follow a democratic process. Teachers are encouraged to present multiple positions on salient public issues and train students in a method of analyzing these positions. Ultimately, he believes that such

revisions to Freirean pedagogy would make it a more viable means of teaching for social justice democratically.

It is also important to acknowledge that the literature on criticality also emphasises particular examples in other disciplines. For example, in recent times the need for criticality has been argued for in nursing education. Concerns relating to nurses abilities to keep pace with diverse rapidly changing developments and desired outcomes in healthcare has resulted in calls for the concentration upon developing practitioners' thinking skills (Daly, 1998). As a result, there is a paradigm shift in nursing away from reasoning strategies that are positivistic, curative, task oriented, objective, detached and rule driven. Daly (1998) highlights a move to attach greater value to thinking skills at the expense of practical skills in nursing. Notwithstanding the various viewpoints and perspectives on criticality as discussed above, it is important to explore its role further in management education.

Towards A Critical Management Pedagogy

What are the connections between management education and the radical and adult educational theories in particular critical pedagogy? Brookfield (2006) identifies the insights from adult education that are fairly easily transferred to management education. These concern the emotional rhythm of adult learning, adult learning styles and best practices in the fields. He also identifies five interconnected elements between adult education and management education. These are self-directed learning, reflective practice, transformative learning, democratic education and critical theory. However, another insight between management education and the field of education in general is highlighted by Giroux (1981). Here he makes a distinction between two schools of theory and practice that can also be applied to management learning. These are 'content focused radicals' and 'strategy focused radicals'. The former position emphasises changing content and the latter changing educational methodology. While each position attempts to provide a critical alternative to educational principles, neither does so completely (Reynolds, 1997). For example, the content radicals use

traditional methods of teaching and the strategy-based radicals use a traditional content. However, Reynolds (1997) stresses the need to focus on both content and process in management education. Therefore a critical pedagogy is referred to as using both radical content and process. As a result, he builds on Hindmarsh (1993) and Kemmis (1985) who have used Habermas's ideas in relation to educational practice. Here three types of reflection have been adapted to provide the basis of a critical perspective for theory and practice in management learning. These include instrumental reflection, which is concerned with practical questions about what courses of action that can lead to the achievement of goals. Consensual reflection which raises questions about ends as well as means but within the context of what has been prescribed as 'good practice'. Also critical reflection which involves engaging with individual, organisational or social problems with the aim of changing the conditions which gave rise to them, as well as providing the basis for personal change.

However, the core characteristics of a critical pedagogy would include both content and context (Reynolds, 1997). Firstly, in the curriculum an application of critical theory to particular topics would be a feature. To teach a critical management course with a conventional pedagogy is seen as a contradiction in terms. In contrast a critical pedagogy would encourage student participation rather than learning by 'rote' (Grey, Knights and Willmott, 1996). The analytical and conceptual skills that this approach could yield may be seen of value over technical and vocational skills (French and Grey, 1996). To produce this critical setting for management education, 'Barnett, Giroux and Reynolds concur that both radical content and radical process are required in order to truly complicate student understanding' (Dehler et al, 2001, p.499). However, they believe that at least three aspects must undergo change: the roles and responsibilities of faculty and students, curricular content and pedagogical methods. They suggest further that teaching should be positioned as part of the research process, not an outcome of it. As a result, the question facing management educators as suggested by French & Grey (1996) is not whether management education should be rethought, but how.

Holman (2000) provides us with an insight into how this could be done within the field of management education. He identified the experiential/ critical school as one contemporary model of management education. The aim of this model is to emancipate managers and other employees in the organisation from oppression and alienation. Such an approach focuses on building a body of knowledge and skills that would enable the manager to be a critical practitioner. The 'specific aims of the experiential /critical school are to develop a body of critical knowledge and skills which enable people to be reflexive about their own knowing and doing, and to take non-instrumental actions that facilitate emancipation' (Holman, 2000, p. 208). What distinguishes this model from others is that it draws on both critical and post-modern theories. Teaching methods emphasise critical action learning and critical reflection. Learners question the social, political, ecological and cultural assumptions of their knowledge base and also the power relationships implicit in it. In contrast to the other models the learner explores the means and ends of the practices and discourses that they and others use, and whether these reproduce oppressive and alienating structures (Holman, 2000). This model advocates the use of experiential pedagogies as opposed to the other traditional approaches.

In contrast, academic liberalism is deemed to be problematic due to the fact that it is lacking when it comes to developing managers. The defining characteristic of academic liberalism as described by Holman is that management education is concerned with the pursuit of objective knowledge about management; that is the generic principles and theories of management. Such an education focuses on a 'technicist' approach to management emphasising skills and techniques. Teaching methods include 'the transmission of knowledge (e.g. lectures), the ability to critique such knowledge (e.g. seminars and case studies) and the ability to apply scientific forms of analysis and action' (Holman, 2000, p.205). As a result, Holman (2000) stresses the potential of the critical school in developing managers. However, if alternative models such as the experimental critical school are to be advocated, then they will need to be developed and critiqued, and the impact of the current context of higher education on them considered (Holman, 2000). However, despite critical theory's potential to increase managerial and organisational effectiveness, it remains an untapped resource for students,

managers, and management educators (Caproni and Arias, 1997). As a result, it is important to explore such criticality in practice as experienced by educators and students to date.

Criticality in Practice

The paucity of recorded practice on the implementation of critical pedagogy (Reynolds, 1999) highlights the key role of future research in critical management education. For example, to date empirical research in studying activity or even student experience in management education is especially rare (Korpiaho et al, 2007). This is in contrast to writings on the rationale and philosophy of (CMS) (Grey and Mitev, 1995). However, there have been some exceptions. These have included studies, which have focused on the impact of critical management education on learners' attitudes and beliefs and or experiences (Collin, 1996; Choo, 2007a; Currie & Knights, 2003; Monaghan and Cervero, 2006; Rigg and Trehan, 1999). Some of the studies have examined the barriers and problems associated with introducing CMS. Such studies have examined experiences of different ethnic groups for example Chinese students (Choo, 2007a) and black women students (Rigg and Trehan, 1999). This research identified that some of the problems were attributable to cultural diversity and learning styles that were incompatible with western pedagogical assumptions. Also some student experiences in the studies were found to be positive whilst others found the experience disempowering (Rigg and Trehan, 1999).

The ethical dilemmas of using a critical pedagogy were also highlighted by Fenwick (2005). Learners' desires and identities may reflect middle-class circumstances and ideologies, conforming more to prevailing managerial traditions than aligning themselves with alternative, resistant or marginalised cultures. Collin (1996) researched the students' experiences of learning on an MBA programme and whether it had challenged assumptions about management both in theory and practice. She explored former student experiences. From this she explored the stance of MBA tutors, student awareness of multiple discourses and assumptions. Her research emphasised the need for a more critical approach to management education. Ultimately, she identified how management teachers could more effectively develop their students' critical awareness. She argues

further that we need to introduce our students to a wide range of discourses. This might include drawing on the diversity of culture, race, gender and social class present in an MBA class. She also challenges educators to embed a critical perspective throughout an MBA programme rather than marginalising it in a subject like business ethics.

Educator insights have also stressed the importance of managing issues regarding the power of participants, program structures and resources (Sinclair, 2000). The management classroom can also reveal the emotional and political 'dynamics' of the group and how these create structures for action and inaction (Vince, 2010, p.33). Through experiential exercises Vince (2010) explores ways to address anxiety and politics as an integral part of learning about management. He stresses however that 'Business Schools do not encourage reflection on the emotions and politics generated within the practice of management teaching and learning, or more generally within management practice' (Vince, 2010, p.28). A common feature of all these studies is that they have focused predominately on postgraduate courses and experiences. Undergraduate student experiences with (CMS) have received much less attention. Notable exceptions include Watson (2007) regarding the use of narrative as a way of engaging students in a critical way. Other undergraduate experiences include Vince and Reynolds (2007) who describe using an experiential exercise with large student numbers. In contrast, the MBA programme has been at the centre of a lot of this research to date. Also a key feature of all of these studies is that they have been conducted in the UK, US and Australia (Perriton, 2007). Therefore, not only is the concept and approach under researched generally in management education but it is also more specifically under researched outside of these regions. Therefore it is important to identify the experiences and challenges of embracing a critical pedagogy in management education.

Challenges of Critical Pedagogy

Having identified the rationale and benefits of critical pedagogy it is important to explore the challenges of undertaking such an approach. Firstly, this type of pedagogy can be seen to be threatening to both the student and educator. Grey et al, (1996) describe their experience of teaching in this way as being similar to removing 'a comfort blanket' of routines and requiring a higher level of commitment and effort. Adverse psychological or social consequences have also been highlighted as problematical consequences of adopting this approach. Brookfield (1994) highlights these challenges in describing adult educator experiences. His study filled a gap in the research as most studies on critical reflection until then focused on how it happens to others variously labelled as adults, students or learners rather than how it is experienced by educators. He stresses the importance of educators' reflections on their own struggles as critical learners. These are seen to be invaluable in helping them to work sympathetically but usefully with others in critical process. Five significant themes were identified from the study. These themes were seen to 'contradict much of the inspirational rhetoric that surrounds discourse on critical reflection' (Brookfield 1994, p. 205). For example, although there were moments of transformative breakthrough, of empowerment, of emancipation, and liberation other factors featured equally strongly. Firstly, a sense of impostership was reported by educators in that they neither possess the talent nor the right to become critically reflective. This sense of impostership was also seen to increase by what is seen by many educators as the remoteness of critical reflection as a learning process:

Too many adult educators concepts of critical hermeneutics, phenomenology, communicative action or organic intellectuals are seen, at best as 'too rarefied for the likes of us' and at worst smack of subversion, obscurantism or pretension. (Brookfield, 1994, p 208)

The presentation of ideas by critical theorists may also be seen as a problem. The language that they use can be too far removed from everyday practice. As a consequence, this could result in an area of scholarship that has important implications for professional practice to become inaccessible to all but a selective and largely academic audience (Reynolds, 1999). Cultural suicide was another

theme used to describe phenomena that often happens to educators who are seen by those around them to be reinventing themselves. It is a 'threat critical learners perceive that if they take a critical questioning of conventional assumptions, justifications, structures and actions too far they will risk being excluded from the cultures that have defined and sustained them up to that point in their lives' (Brookfield, 1994, p.208). Educators may be viewed as aspiring to the status of intellectual in contrast to their practitioner colleagues who feel that they are now perceived as less developed creatures 'grubbing around in the gritty gutters of daily practice' (Brookfield, 1994, p.208). There are parallels here with the marginalisation that individuals may experience if their critical reflections are at odds with the goals of their organisation (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992b). However, even if this is the case Lawless and McQue (2008) encourages us to be aware that in delivering a critical education that it is not our intention to make students or ourselves, unemployed or unemployable. They stress that the choice must remain with the students.

Critical reflection was also seen as a rhythm of learning with fluctuating moments of falling back, of apparent regression. For example, learners who were in the middle of these temporary regressions reported them as devastatingly final rather than inconvenient interludes. These themes were described by Brookfield (1994) p. 205 as the 'dark underbelly' of the inspirational rhetoric of critical reflection. Notwithstanding the dark side of this learning process there is also a hopeful theme. This consists of being part of an 'emotionally sustaining peer learning community- a group of colleagues who are also experiencing dissonance, reinterpreting their practice, challenging old assumptions and falling foul of conservative forces' (Brookfield, 1994, p.212). As a result, it is recommended that educators disclose to learners the qualities, risks and the likely consequences of the experience they are about to undergo. This as noted by Brookfield is a condition of authenticity in any educational encounter, but is particularly important in education for critical reflection. On a practical level the educator is advised to anticipate the kinds of rhythms, reactions and feelings learners are likely to experience as part of the critical process. This should reduce the adult educators' temptation to blame themselves when 'negative' aspects of these appear:

An appreciation of the phenomenography of learning critical reflection is one of the few hedges critical adult educators have against a morale sapping sense of professional failure when we see learners experiencing the dark side of critical struggle. (Brookfield, 1994, p.215)

Brookfield also associates adult educator's knowledge of past humiliations in adult educational life histories as a reason for their desire to wash the process of adult education clean of any stain of negativity. His study therefore raises important questions for management educators. Would the same themes of the 'dark side' be experienced by management educators as this study represented educators mostly in adult education? Would management educators resort to blaming themselves for learners' negativity? Therefore in relation to management education it is important to firstly identify the sources of resistance to such an approach. There are a number of reasons why resistance to this approach might occur. Reynolds (1999) suggests that resistance may be a response to the way ideas are presented:

The conceptual language of key writers (Foucault or Habermas for example) is notorious for its obscurity, and interpretations of critical theory educational literature, though clearer, are often characterised by a vocabulary and rhetoric sufficiently opaque to deter all but the most persistent reader. (Reynolds, 1999, p.177)

Assimilation of critical content into management literature may also be problematic. It may be limited to the influences that these processes exert on individuals' psychology rather than to any critical analysis of them. Critical reflection without 'any socio-political element weakens its capacity for analysis and redefinition while leaving a superficial impression that a more critical approach has been applied' (Reynolds, 1999, p.178). Furthermore, Reynolds and Trehan (2003) stress that it is also important for the critical educator to recognise differences between learners and not to try and manage these differences, which is commonly done in management education. They also argue:

...that to become more aware of the social and political processes associated with difference in learning environments is both a step towards

understanding differences and is a means of resisting attempts to 'manage' them. (Reynolds and Trehan, 2003, p.178)

In general though with regards to resistance Reynolds (1999) makes some very important points that need to be considered. For example, is it the case that management teachers assume that managers will be reluctant to consider social or environmental issues and instead reinforce things technical? Could it be that managers are fully aware of their wider responsibilities to the community and that they would welcome support in discharging them? However, even if this is the case Fenwick (2005) identifies other practical dilemmas of critical management education in the classroom. Ethical dilemmas such as educator positionality representing the potentially imposing position of the educator could create an oppression of learners. Similarly Ellsworth (1989) also describes her efforts in engaging with critical pedagogy, as reproducing relations of domination and that these discourses had themselves become vehicles of repression. She highlighted the difficulty of using the classroom to overcome these injustices. She believes that the injustices of these relations and in the way in which these injustices distort communication cannot be overcome in the classroom:

Dialogue in its conventional sense is impossible in the culture at large because at this historical moment, power relations between raced, classed and gendered students and teachers are unjust. (Ellsworth, 1989, p.316)

In the context of higher education in general another limitation found of critical pedagogy is that the ideal conditions for this approach would be for class sizes of about ten to twelve students (Grey et al, 1996). Numbers greater than this could limit its effectiveness. Grey et al (1996) highlight that the approach requires a lot of emotional labour, which added to the increasing workload in higher education, can make implementation more difficult. Such concerns echo Mc Lean (2006) where she identifies the constraints of implementing a critical pedagogy. Such constraints can include managerialism and the audit culture in higher education. A colonisation of the lifeworld (culture, society and personality) of university teachers by economic imperatives and government interference is seen as a contradiction to the central role of a university (Mc Lean, 2006). The central role she believes is a reproduction of the lifeworld. This raises the question as to what

is the role of a university. Does the university today create an environment that is conducive to critical university pedagogy? How does this environment affect the potential of critical management pedagogy? These questions are very pertinent in the context of higher education.

There are however, other pedagogic challenges facing Business and Management lecturers working in UK higher education as highlighted by Ottewill & Macfarlane (2003). These relate to motivation, and expectations of students. For some students there can be an 'expectation gap'. This relates to students both undergraduate and postgraduate expecting to be told exactly what to do in order to secure a good mark or grade and many are not prepared to go beyond this with a view to pursuing their own lines of enquiry. They also expect more in the way of handouts and other support materials. According to Ottewill (2003) a symptom of instrumentality could include a high degree of dependence on tutors. It was found that lecturers on the whole, are resistant to students translating their service expectations to a higher education environment (Ottewill and Macfarlane 2003). The attitude of some students could be described as instrumental or strategic. This related to business students being motivated more extrinsically rather than intrinsically (Ottewill and Macfarlane 2003). However, notwithstanding such challenges Fenwick (2005) stresses the need to focus on educators respecting learners, and remaining clear-sightedly honest about their own fallibility. Also developing critical reflection is seen as shared responsibility. Educators have a role in encouraging, facilitating and supporting critical reflection (Sambrook and Stewart, 2008). However, on a positive note it has been argued that the pitfalls and dilemmas such as these, which may confront management educators, should not be avoided. They have been described as nettles to be grasped if critical reflection is to be a significant feature of managers' education (Reynolds, 1999).

Summary

This literature review began as an exploration and reflection on CMS. Its historic, social and institutional context has resulted in both commonalities and differences in what constitutes CMS. It undoubtedly represents a broad church with various theoretical perspectives. It has resulted in complex debates between various

groups that identify themselves with a critical agenda. Therefore the challenge facing the field is identifying what it can contribute and in what way in our business schools and beyond. However, CME like CMS is also a broad church as there are many definitions of and degrees of criticality. Emancipation and social justice are key concerns for some proponents (Freire 1996; Ellsworth 1989). Whereas others see these elements as being part of a wider definition of criticality (Mingers, 2000; Barnett, 1997). However, a move from the more technical and rational view of management education is seen as a common denominator between most proponents of a critical perspective. The role of management education is therefore not just to make better managers but also to make a better society (Perriton, 2007). It has also been argued that it is impossible to conceive of any aspect of business and management, which does not have a moral dimension (Stewart, 2007). However, there are challenges that need to be acknowledged if one embraces this approach. The source of these challenges comes from both learners and educators. However, we must examine how these objectives can be supported. Mc Lean (2006) asks a pertinent question as to what the role of higher education should be. She believes that a good university pedagogy and critical pedagogy are homogenous. If this is the case how can a critical pedagogy be fostered within today's higher education environment and in particular within the context of management education?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In the following section I will elaborate further on the justification for my chosen methodology. Firstly, 'critical interpretive research when used with educational practitioners is intended to appeal to their experiences; to help them develop a rationale for practice; and to engage in wise and prudent action' (Bartlett, 1991, p. 20). This has been noted earlier as being one of my objectives in conducting the research. Critical perspectives have been described as taking a critical stance to the status quo and our understandings of it, seeking to challenge these and advance alternative positions (Tight, 2003). Again this approach fits with the purpose of the research and the current debates surrounding relevancy in management education. It is argued that some researchers on all sides of the political spectrum are interested in social issues, and a critical perspective provides a satisfying way to integrate the private and professional spheres of existence (Thomas, 1993). As such the main aim of the critical approach is seen to increase the rational autonomy of practitioners (Carr, 1995). As a result, there are pertinent reasons suggested for preferring critical to conventional thought, which is compatible with my own research objectives. These reasons include personal satisfaction, intellectual responsibility, emancipatory potential and ethical obligation (Thomas, 1993). This approach interprets 'educational practice not simply as a moral practice but also as a social practice which is historically located, culturally embedded and, hence, always vulnerable to ideological distortion' (Carr, 1995, p.50). This point is particularly relevant to management education at this time.

The researcher in this paradigm also seeks to understand and portray the participants' perceptions and understandings of the particular situation or event (Bartlett and Burton, 2007). Therefore, my intention is to apply this perspective in researching a key stakeholder in management education to understand their viewpoints and experiences of criticality and what form it takes. Adopting this approach encourages reflexive awareness of aspects of management education and the educator's role, which otherwise remains unquestioned. As a result, this

methodology has been chosen to discover the realities of the everyday experiences of management academics. According to Grey (2002) a critical management education (CME) entails a shift both in what is taught and how it is taught. This suggests a role for the educational researcher.

To address my research questions of how criticality is perceived and experienced and translated into the everyday practices of educators, I chose to conduct an empirical study. I believe this study has the potential to provide an insight into the practical realities of educators in their institutions. Also as an educator in the field I wanted to explore this perspective to inform my own practice. The research involves using qualitative research methods. The aim of adopting this interpretative methodology is to explore the subjective social reality of educators in order to be able to make sense of and understand their motives, actions and intentions in a way that is meaningful for the study (Choo, 2007a). O'Leary (2010) also emphasises how a qualitative study has the potential to delve into 'social complexities in order to truly explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences, and belief systems that are a part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups, and even the everyday' (p.114). The goal of which is to gain an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures and situations through rich engagement and even immersion into the reality being studied (O'Leary, 2010). Also qualitative data are defined as 'detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviours, direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories' (Patton, 1990, p.22). As a result, in order to answer my research questions above a qualitative study was deemed most suitable and subsequently undertaken. The research was conducted in two stages between March 2009 and March 2010. The first stage involved conducting interviews, which were conducted between March and August 2009. Interviews were chosen as a data collection method as it allows the researcher to investigate and prompt things we cannot observe (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). The second stage involved non-participant observations, which were conducted between September 2009 and March 2010. Observations as a data collection method were chosen as they allow us to study people's

behaviour and they can be a supportive or supplementary method to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means (Robson, 2002). In the following section I will explore these two data collection methods further including a discussion of their research considerations.

Stage I-Research Interviews

The sampling used was criterion sampling. The participants that were selected met the following criteria. Twenty educators were chosen on the criteria that they had written about a critical approach to management education and or engaged in critical teaching practice. A total of seventeen interviews were conducted with educators in higher education in Britain and Ireland. Fifteen interviews were included in the study, thirteen educators were based in the UK and two were based in Ireland. There were two interviews conducted in Ireland as the field is not as prominent as it is in the UK. The research sample consisted of seven female and eight male participants. I also got the opportunity to interview an additional two educators outside the main sample who have researched and practised criticality in a non-management/business related area. Both educators worked in Schools of Education, one in the UK and the other in Ireland. These interviews although not included in the study helped to enrich my understanding of critical practice.

The mediums chosen to conduct the interviews were telephone, face-to-face and e-mail. The rationale for using different methods was due to distance, opportunity and practical work considerations. As a result, for the main study eleven telephone interviews; three face-to-face interviews and one e-mail interview were conducted. A semi-structured interviewing approach was used. An interview guide was sent to all participants before the interview as a reference guide (see appendix II). The interview questions were guided by the research questions relating to the study. The interview questions were divided into four sections: 1) background information, 2) perceptions of criticality, 3) teaching methodologies, 4) future of criticality. The interviews lasted for between 1hr to 1.75 hrs. The potential respondents in the study were contacted firstly by a letter and then with a

follow up e-mail or telephone call in order to assess their interest and confirm participation and consent. It was felt that a letter would be more suitable than an e-mail for initial contact with potential respondents with whom the researcher was unknown to.

Research Considerations

The Suitability of Telephone Interviews

The majority of interviews were telephone interviews with a few face-to-face interviews. It is important to discuss why telephone interviews were used. Even though telephone interviewing is not without its challenges, it has been found to provide information quite comparable to in-person interviews (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). A significant motivating factor for using this method of data collection in the first place was geographical distance of participants. The majority of participants were outside of Ireland so telephone interviews became a practical alternative to face-to-face interviews. However, when the opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews presented itself (for example at The Critical Management Studies Conference 2009) it was availed of. All of the interviews were audio recorded with the respondent's permission. However, in using telephone interviews as a data collection method I needed to consider whether telephone interviews were a viable option to using face-to-face interviews? What practical considerations did I need to be aware of?

Miller (1995) argues that telephone interviews are not better or worse than those conducted face-to-face. She stresses the point that interviews are 'critically dependent on the relationship between the participants and on how the conversation, which forms the vehicle for the relationship, is managed' (Miller, 1995, p.29). This is something that is relevant to all interviews regardless of the medium chosen. However, the practical implications of achieving this objective may be different for both. Therefore the differences between telephone and face-to-face interviewing need to be considered. For example, a primary advantage of telephone interviewing is that visual anonymity may reduce self-consciousness or

the 'interviewer effect' that is characteristic of the face-to-face interview (Tausig and Freeman, 1988). The participants in this research study were interviewed at their convenience and sometimes they chose to be interviewed in the comfort of their own homes. They therefore could relax without visual scrutiny or observable judgment by the interviewer (Tausig and Freeman, 1988). However, this visual anonymity can also present other challenges. Miller and Canell (1982) identify some of these communication issues. Firstly, the inability to see conversational partners (their facial expressions, gestures and so forth) may lead to heightened uncertainty about the affective meaning behind their words and whether they understand what is being conveyed. Also the place of dialogue, which is often regulated by non-verbal cues in face-to-face interaction, has to be maintained by verbal utterances in telephone conversations. I found that this had implications for the speed at which to progress through the interview questions and when it was appropriate to intervene during the interview. Also in a personal interview, the pre-interview acquaintance period can allow the interviewer to naturally establish the legitimacy of the interview and the image of themselves as pleasant, understanding and safe persons with whom to interact. I had to find other means of establishing this legitimacy through establishing contact via e-mail or pre-interview telephone conversations. This raises the question as to whether the lack of visual cues is critical to data quality and whether there are any compensating features of telephone interviewing (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2007). As a result, it is imperative to have an understanding of the practical implications when using the telephone as a data collection method.

Firstly, it has been found that auditory vigilance requires extra energy by both the interviewer and interviewee to compensate for visual anonymity and to accomplish data gathering in a responsive and sensitive manner (Tausig and Freeman, 1987). Verbal cues such as hesitations, sighs for example can indicate that a follow-up question or probe is in order. Awareness of these verbal cues is seen to be important in the absence of visual cues (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). However, the limited channel capacity of the telephone has the potential to eliminate distracting or biasing cues from the interviewer (Miller and Cannell, 1982). It is also interesting to note that the distance created by the use of the telephone can be an advantage when discussing more sensitive matters (Miller

and Cannell, 1982). Another advantage of telephone interviewing is the ability to take notes without distracting the interviewer. This has the potential for the interviewer to stay more focused on the interviewee's responses (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2007). Overall it can be seen that there are advantages and disadvantages of using telephone interviews. The challenge for the researcher is to minimise the drawbacks and to maximise its potential.

Techniques used in personal interviews can also be used in telephone interviewing (Miller and Cannell, 1982). For example appropriate use of instructions and feedback can be used to minimise some of the drawbacks. It has been suggested that giving appropriate instructions regarding informational content about the research can motivate individuals to carry out the described activities (Miller and Cannell, 1982). As a result, the initial correspondence of a written letter with an information sheet and subsequent interview questions were important instruments in motivating respondents to take part in the study. Also one of the respondents in the study remarked that this was also one of the reasons why he was interested to take part. The information contained in a letter rather than in just an e-mail was a motivating factor for him to reply. Therefore, a considerable amount of preparation may be necessary for conducting telephone interviews.

Appropriate use of feedback during the interview is also important in order to overcome the drawbacks with a lack of non-verbal cues in the interview process. I found such feedback necessary even just to tell respondents that the interviewer is still on the line and listening to their answers. Otherwise long pauses, which may be a sign of active thought, can lead to conversational death in a telephone interaction (Miller, 1995). This is important as feedback to the respondent's answers can influence their behaviour in general and the accuracy and completeness of the reported information in particular (Miller and Cannell, 1982). However, it is important to exercise care with word choices and voice intonation to avoid verbal expressions of judgment or personal reaction that convey negative auditory cues to participants (Tausig and Freeman, 1987). However, notwithstanding the nuances above Stephens (2007) developed strategies to negotiate them. He recommends less frequent but more directive shaping and a more structured interviewing approach. As a result, the research interviews in the

study were semi-structured in nature. This provided both the structure and flexibility required to explore the research questions. This allowed me to make changes where necessary to question content, wording or sequence etc. This provided an opportunity for me to revise the design, to develop my research questions or rethink the sampling strategy. In summary, the telephone interview has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, careful management of the challenges has the potential for this method of data collection to be seen not just as a necessity but an opportunity also.

Interviewing Elites

My research participants are leading academics in their field. As a result, it was important for me to understand the nuances of conducting interviews with elites. Stephens (2007) demonstrates that telephone interviews with elite respondents are a valid and useful methodological tool that can provide important data for geographically dispersed samples. However, it is important to be cognisant of the practical issues of conducting elite interviews. The importance of flexibility in timetabling interviews with busy elites needs to be considered (Stephens, 2007). I learned to expect cancellations and rescheduling by participants as sometimes their busy work commitments often dictated their availability. The importance of studying participants' histories and works in preparation for the interview is also necessary (Stephens, 2007). However, knowing the extent of the preparation required can also be a challenge. Keeping up to date with the respondent's latest publications and remembering previous work presented its own challenges. However, from my own experience this preparation enhanced the interviewer confidence in their ability to discuss the issues at hand. Aldridge (1993) also suggests that an awareness of both the commonalities and divergence between the interviewer and interviewee better supports effective interviewing. For example, Odendahl and Shaw (2002) note that age difference can make it difficult for the interviewer to be taken seriously. Issues around experience and the status gap could also be seen as a barrier (Odendahl and Shaw, 2002). However, similarities regarding academic attitude and shared expectations of the research process were found to enhance the research experience in elite interviewing (Stephens, 2007). I found that by communicating my own background and research interest helped to

build rapport with the interviewee. Another advantage of elite interviewing was that respondents were found to be articulate and free speaking individuals negating the need for techniques to provoke conversation (Stephens, 2007). Overall a balanced awareness of the characteristics of the interviewer and interviewee is helpful.

As a result, researcher positionality was also needed to be considered throughout the research. The biography of the researcher, how and where they are socially positioned, the consequent perspectives they hold and the assumptions which inform the sense they make of the world, have implications for the research (Wellington et al, 2005). Consequently, my own background as a business student and educator should provide an understanding to the issues involved but could equally allow bias to develop. Reflexivity therefore should be an inherent part of the research process. Here 'the reflexive practitioner or researcher is constantly engaged in the process of questioning (self-monitoring) their own knowledge claims and those of others as he/she engages in social interaction and the micro-practices of knowledge/power' (D'Cruz et al, 2007, p.83).

Stage II-Research Observations

The second stage of the study involved observation of critical educators in action. Observation is often used in conjunction with other methods, both to contextualize and to extend the analysis being carried out (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). The observations were used in conjunction with the telephone interviews to enhance understanding of the issues raised in the interviews. O'Leary (2010) asserts that there are three good reasons for thinking about conducting an observational study. The first reason is that there are times when you need to see it for yourself as having it explained to you is just not the same. As a practitioner in the field I could relate to this. The second is that the gulf between what people say they do and what they actually do can be far and wide. The third reason is that data collected through observation generally takes place in the real world, not a constructed research world. Also you are out in the field, in the heart of the action (O'Leary, 2010, p.209). As a result, in order to answer my

research questions it was important to observe the educators in action. It is important to appreciate that interviews focus on what people say they say, write and do rather than what they do say, write and do (Pole and Morrison, 2003). As a result, the observations were used as a supportive or supplementary method to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means (Robson, 2002). Also observations can be rewarding and enlightening to pursue and can add considerably to the richness of the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). For example, the observations were used to validate the messages obtained in the interviews. I wanted to observe fully the teaching process so I chose to undertake non-participant observation. From the 15 interviews that were conducted four were selected for potential research observation. The sample chosen was based on the criteria that the educators conducted their practice in a critical way and that the educators were open to being observed. From the sample of four selected two observations in the UK were conducted. It was not possible to conduct the other two observations due to the incompatibility of schedules and work commitments of both the educators and myself. Having agreed to take part a suitable class to observe was discussed and decided upon with the educator in question. However, it is important to identify the potential challenges whilst engaged in the research process outlined above. In the following section I wish to investigate these issues in relation to conducting the observations.

Observation Considerations

In deciding to conduct observations a choice between participant and non-participant observation needed to be made. I decided that non-participant observation was most suited to the research study as it was important that I was unobtrusive and not an integral part of system that I was observing (O'Leary, 2010). I wanted to be able to focus and work through the process of receiving, reflecting and recording the observations without being part of the group being observed. Unstructured observation techniques were used as I intended to observe and record data without predetermined criteria. A major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness (Robson, 2002). Instead of asking people about their views, feelings or attitudes, you watch what they do and listen to what they

say. Also it can heighten the researcher's awareness of significant social processes. For example, the researcher can experience 'for real' the emotions of those who are being researched (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, the challenges regarding observation as a data collection method needed to be considered. There is a major issue concerning the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation (Robson, 2002). People don't always behave the same when they are being observed. As a result, managing my relationship with the other participants was also something that needed to be considered. Even though I was not acting as a participant it was important to acknowledge my presence and research intentions. Therefore, in order to satisfy the participants' curiosity about who I was and what I was doing, the tutors in both observations sites informed the participants about the research. They were given a verbal overview of the research objectives and purpose. For one of the observations I was requested to give the tutor a short biography about my background and research. This was subsequently used as a part of the written course literature received by the students before the module. I further clarified my role and research interests for individuals on the day through informal conversations during breaks. I positioned myself at the back of the classrooms so that I could observe the groups and tutors at a distance. Making sure that I attended to these issues during the observations helped satisfy the participants curiosity about what I was doing and enabled them to focus their attention on their module rather than on me. However, it was also important for me to focus my attention on what I was observing. Also non-participant observers may have to stop themselves from participating (O'Leary, 2010). This would be relevant to my own position as a lecturer in the subject area where I could be tempted to join in the discussions with the students. Being aware of how my own pre-conceived ideas and views could affect the research was necessary. The importance of being reflexive about my own position and background is relevant here. As a result, I needed to be aware of observer bias. Our interests, experience and expectations all affect what we attend to (Robson, 2002). There is also a possibility that our own perceptions may influence our interpretations of what we believe to be true. Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007) argue that every researcher has some prior concepts or frameworks through which we observe and understand the world. However, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) advocate that we cannot avoid

observer bias but we can seek to control it. Recognising and controlling for subjectivities in ways that can best ensure credibility is recommended. For example, brainstorming pre-conceived ideas/expectations in the planning process is advised (O'Leary, 2010). Also further documentary data was also collected to aid triangulation of events. These included sample student reflection papers, student e-mails and formal student evaluation form summaries from the tutors. Another consideration in observational research is deciding which method of data recording to be used is also important. In qualitative research the method of recording varies with the research topic and the observer's degree of familiarity with the available methods (Sarantakos, 2005). It is important to be aware that note taking is not always possible. For instance, the information to be collected may be too dense or there may be too many persons present for notes to be taken. Also taking notes may divert the attention of the observer causing them to miss a part of what is happening (Sarantakos, 2005). As a result, I decided to use a combination of note taking and audio recording. Also testing the equipment beforehand in a similar physical environment is important to ensure that the equipment captures what it is meant to. This is something that I did before both the observations and interviews and as a result an extra microphone was needed to ensure that the data could be captured. Therefore the considerations above highlight the importance of effective research in both preparation and design.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data for both the interviews and observations were analysed manually by myself. I decided that although computer programs are useful, my preference was to analyse the data manually. I felt that the computer program could not replace the researcher's own analysis, lateral thinking, intuition and craftsmanship (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). The data to be analysed included audio recordings, module literatures, student reflections and my own research notes. I listened to the audio recordings twice for both the interviews and observations. The first time my objective was to get an overall feel for the data and the second time was to analyse and interpret it more closely. In order to capture the essence of the data I transcribed the corresponding recordings

manually. By doing so I felt closer to the data as the voices came alive and re-enforced memories of comments, situations and events. This is what Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007) describes as 'immersing oneself in the data'. It was also necessary to do this in order to understand the variety of accents of the diverse participants particularly in the observation stage where participants on the 'Leadership in Context' course came from many different countries. However, even being from Ireland and having English as a first language it still required very focused listening at times to understand the regional differences of some of the UK accents. However challenging this may have been at times, it helped me to interpret the data and remember people and events during the data collection stage.

The analysis was conducted firstly by reviewing the observational findings and then subsequently the interview findings. This was because the analysis stage was conducted after the observation stage of the research. As a result, it was deemed more practical and relevant to analyse the observations first as they were most recent in memory. I analysed each observation separately. Dividing the data up into sections according to the research stages made the process of analysis more manageable. The analysis for both research stages involved the process of annotating, labelling, selection and summarising (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). Both sets of observation data was analysed around themes but these themes emerged from the data and were inductive in nature. In contrast the interviews were analysed by reviewing the data from each individual participant separately. As the interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions the data was summarised around these questions. For each participant interviewed I labelled sections of the data manually according to these questions. I found it useful to return to my research questions and examine the data in relation to these questions. This process of matching items of data to individual questions can gradually shed light on and illuminate those questions (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). The aim of the analysis was to identify and cluster emergent and consistent themes and categories. The findings from each participant were labelled accordingly in relation to these themes. As a result, the findings from the interview stage were deductive in nature. A critical part of the overall data analysis process was arriving at my own assessment of what the results mean and

how they relate to other relevant research in the area. However, in doing so I found that taking time out to distance oneself from the data at times proved useful in order to interpret the data and to gain a fresh perspective (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010).

Summary

The chapter has included an overview of the qualitative design of the research for the purpose of exploring criticality in management education. In order to answer the research questions the study was conducted in two stages. Both interviews and observations were chosen as the primary data collection methods. Research considerations relating to the study were also discussed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to explore criticality in management education from an educator perspective. Questions that guided the study included 1) How is criticality perceived by critical management educators? 2) How does criticality translate into the professional practice of critical management educators? This chapter will address both of these questions. It will include the findings from the fifteen management/business educators that were interviewed. The interview analysis is structured into two sections. Firstly, **INTERVIEW ANALYSIS I** relates to the first research question -how is criticality perceived by critical management educators? In order to communicate the individual stories separate pen portraits have been written about each educator in this section. The pen portraits have been structured around three key elements as follows:

- Their professional and intellectual journey
- Their intellectual influences
- How they characterise their practice

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS II is a thematic analysis and relates to the second research question how does criticality translate into the professional practice of critical management educators. This section is called '**Exploring the Critical Classroom**'. The convention used in both Interview Analysis I and II has been to report the actual quotes from participants. However, fictitious names have been used throughout to protect anonymity.

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS- I

Pen Portraits

Who Are The Critical Educators?

1. JOHN

John initially studied politics as an undergraduate student. He then completed a PhD from a Business School because the funding was not in PhD's in social science at the time. As a result, he unintentionally found himself in a management school. Having been trained in critical social science he found this to be an encounter with a very different kind of educational institution. His perceptions of criticality have changed over the years. His view now is more pluralistic. For him criticality is any form of management education which seeks to interrogate and analyse the taken for granted dominant assumptions of management theory and practice. He does not adhere to any particular theoretical position. He believes criticality comes from a variety of viewpoints and is about challenging rather than confirming conventional wisdom. He sees defining features of CMS as denaturalisation, anti performativity and reflexivity. He would like to draw the boundary quite widely.

2. JAMES

James started his career not as an academic but as a community worker. He was a community worker who was interested in the problems of society created for the individual. His perspective was sociological rather than individual. He was involved with adolescence, anti-poverty and anti-racism work. He was engaging with local authorities and getting marginalised voices heard. He completed a PhD, which was about managers understanding the complexities of learning and change. Paulo Freire's perspective on learning is a constant that has run through his work. He is also influenced by the Tavistok Institute and psychodynamic perspectives. He perceives that criticality is about learning and critique. He believes that if you look at learning always in relation to critique then you are able to keep politics and learning sustained as you engage with it. He is interested in how does criticality in the sense of this relationship between learning and critique come into everything that he does and everything that he understands. For him critical management education is an interplay between learning and critique.

3. ELIZABETH

Elizabeth's path to teaching has been a meandering one. Her first degree was in combined English Literature and Politics. She felt that her first year politics course on political philosophy was a revelation. She got asked questions, lots of questions but that was fine because in her family the way to earn respect was to be thoughtful and inquiring rather than making a lot of noise and being emotional. She worked in industry and also completed an MA and PhD¹ in Management Learning. Elizabeth perceives criticality in management studies as being a non-believer. Criticality, it seems to her, is an umbrella term for the non-believers, the ones that even if they try very hard just can't make the mental leap of faith in management systems, explanations or predictable interventions. The fascination in management, for the non-believers, is in explaining why things don't go as planned, why the models don't work and why the wheels regularly fall off the capitalist vehicle. However, the certainty of critique bothers her just as much as the absolute faith in management theory. As a result, she prefers to hold her critique lightly and her doubt firmly.

4. HELEN

Helen has a first degree in psychology. She completed a postgraduate qualification in community education. She worked in the field of adult education and community work. She became involved in the women's and trade union movements. She also became involved in management development for management education. She completed an MBA, which she describes as 'completely uncritical'. She became interested in critical pedagogy and CMS and how to apply it in her teaching. She believes that being critical is to have a critical stance, which is questioning taken for granted assumptions in her field of management. It is also about power, politics, language and discourses. She describes criticality as being something that is creative and never gives up. It also raises the question about how these ideas can be incorporated into her work with organisations.

¹ Doctorate received from University 'X' – a pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical management education in its Management School.

5. DAVID

David completed a degree in Management Science. He was one of the first undergraduates to study management in the late 1960's. It was a multi-disciplinary degree taught by social scientists without a business background. His PhD was highly sociological and the subject of his thesis was on single homeless. He then worked in a Business School. One of David's teachers opened his eyes to Social Science and the debates within sociology. He became involved in the deviancy and Labour Process conferences in the 1970's. He began thinking about other areas of management where critical work was going on. In the 1990's a small conference was organised. A book resulted from that conference in 1991 and was called Critical Management Studies. It was a few years after that he with a couple of colleagues decided to go for a bigger conference on CMS. His perceptions of criticality have changed over the years. His view now is that it is about keeping things open and problematising anything that seems to be closed or authoritative. In the past he would have veered towards a particular approach, critical theory with a capital C and capital T.

6. SARAH

Sarah's first degree was in psychology and science. She then undertook a master's degree in management. Her business background was in human resources and retailing. After that she worked in further education and then moved into higher education. She completed a doctorate¹ in education and became exposed to the critical management studies literature. It opened her eyes, as she had never read this before. Sarah's view on criticality is influenced by Michael Reynolds. She is particularly influenced by the notion of emancipation. For Sarah emancipation is the difference between capital C and little c in terms of criticality. Sarah talks about micro-emancipation and how this is important.

If somehow I give someone a different lens to look at something...helps them understand their practice better that they currently did then I have done something good. If as part of that they take action then that's wonderful.

¹ Doctorate received from University 'X' – a pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical management education in its Management School.

7. PAUL

Paul initially studied medicine but did not pursue a career in medicine. Instead he became a research assistant in a Business School and went on and completed a PhD. He then became a lecturer in Organisational Behaviour in a UK university. He was influenced as a postgraduate student on an experiential course designed by Kolb, Ruben and Mc Intyre. He immediately tried to copy this approach in his work. In particular, with other people in British Universities who worked in applied social science or community work. He felt that that they had a much more politicised perspective on the work that they were doing than he had. He went working in a UK University where the relevant content was more educational rather than management or organisational. He became much more interested in the approach and methodology in management education rather than the content. His interpretations of criticality came from the radical educationalists like Freire, Apple and Giroux. In more recent times he became influenced by the management education work that was based on critical theory.

8. CATHERINE

Catherine has a degree in sociology in professional studies and a master's in human resource management (HRM). She also completed a master's in Management Learning before completing a PhD¹. She also worked in industry for a time in a mainstream (HR) role. However, the education system made her question and challenge what she had learned. She worked on a postgraduate diploma in management studies and was fascinated by its teaching and learning philosophy. It had very little lectures but was experiential in nature. She was so enthused that she wanted to do the programme herself. Instead, she did a similar programme that was 'a leading light in experiential learning of its kind'. It challenged her perceptions and her thinking. Catherine's perception of criticality relates to three key dimensions. Firstly, the capacity to work with underlying power dynamics and not power in terms of theorising power but in the process of power. The 2nd strand of criticality is the way that we work and explore emotions, not the management of emotions but to look at the impact of their interactions. The 3rd relates to developing content and thinking through the content we deliver and how we deliver that content. For her it's about layering that with a psychodynamic perspective that helps us to work out how that impacts in terms of the community, organisation and change.

¹ Doctorate received from University 'X' – a pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical management education in its Management School.

9. BRIAN

Brian graduated from university with a sociology degree specialising in industrial sociology. He decided to work in industry first as he thought it would be important if he wanted to pursue an academic career. He is particularly interested in the relationship between theory and practice. Early on as a manager he found himself doing management education work and trying to use social science ideas in helping to develop managers. He wrote a book about Personnel Managers, which was a sociological study of personnel occupation. It was an ethnography of managers working from the inside. He completed a PhD, which was based on his research for the book. Brian defines criticality as 'a good manager who is somebody who does not take things for granted and follows orthodoxies but questions and examines them to find out if there is a better way of doing things'. In particular, he believes in looking at things in a critical common sense way and also to look at evidence and use theory. However, his criticality is not about being critical from a left wing or right wing political point of view. He does not support 'preaching what should be'.

10. NOEL

Noel has an A-level in sociology and regarded himself as being reasonably left-wing when he was younger. He decided that he wanted to be an academic as he saw 'university life as a way of politics by other means'. He started off by studying sociology. Students at the time weren't taking the subject and the government wasn't terribly enthusiastic about the subject either. As a result, he moved into a management department in the 1990's but he wasn't sure whether it was the right place to be. However, he found himself working with an interesting group of people 'doing all sorts of bizarre things about work organisation' and they had a lot of fun. He then moved to another university² and spent his time trying to make it the hub of CMS and to some extent he thinks that it has worked. Noel perceives business schools as fairly right-wing institutions and for him being critical means being left -wing. He believes that there is a series of nuances in that and it involves various kinds of anti-imperialised, anti-sexist and anti-racist kinds of struggles. He also believes that being critical is about trying to change capitalism and trying to produce a different kind of social order.

² University Y- A pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation around Critical Management Studies in its Business School.

11. LILY

Lily has a first degree in languages and worked in an administrative role in a university. She completed a master's in human resource development (HRD). The master's was related to critical pedagogy in content and process. She also completed a PhD¹ in Management Education. She believes that criticality is about posing questions about the way we work and the way we live. It is also about reflecting on the taken for granted assumptions about how the world works. It is also about reflecting about how business and management works and how it feeds into society. She sees it as being about asking 'difficult questions'. She also believes that it is also about examining how we work together, how we make decisions, who is excluded, who is not and how we form communities.

12. TRACY

Tracy began her career working in training in the health service and the gas industry. She then worked in further education in a Management school. She completed a PhD¹, which she describes as being functionalist and looking at managerial effectiveness. However, she got interested in postmodernism/poststructuralist approaches in organisation studies. As a result, her PhD took a more critical and reflective direction. She describes what she does as being about practice and not just philosophical or an intellectual debate. She is interested in reflexivity 'the way we connect with the world in critical ways'. She also includes here critical reflexivity which is thinking about organisational policies and practices from a more critical perspective, 'who do they privilege what voices are silenced'. She also believes that being critical is about focusing on the situation that we and managers encounter and making decisions within that. Ultimately, she feels that it is up to individuals to make those decisions rather than privileging one view over another.

¹ Doctorate received from University 'X' – a pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical management education in its Management School.

13. SALLY

Sally initially studied chemistry, history and the philosophy of science. She then completed a master's in social aspects of science and technology. After the master's she worked for the voluntary sector and local government on regeneration initiatives at community level. It made her think about questions such as 'in what ways do I have power or not, where does power lie and how does it work'. She learned the very subtle ways in which people are disempowered. In the 1980's she got involved in higher education on a postgraduate programme³ that was originally established in the early 1970's. It was based on the Tavistok Psychodynamic Model and Socio-Technical Systems. Its approach had action learning all the way through. She and her colleagues then developed a master's course, which included action research and critical reflection. It was unconventional and the emphasis was on the process. She also completed an MBA and then a doctorate. Her PhD was on critical management learning. She distinguishes her doctorate from her MBA in that the MBA 'legitimated but did not touch me'. Sally defined criticality as the questioning of taken for granted and orthodoxies; raising awareness; questioning where does power lie; how does it work; who is powerless and why.

14. ROBERT

Robert has a degree in sociology and a PhD from a Business School. He ended up in a business school for reasons he can't quite make sense of. He did not think carefully about being in a business school and make an intervention. He always saw himself as being in the far left in politics. He believes that critical management offers a kind of refuge in the Business School for people who are a bit uncomfortable with being there. He believes that he is one of those kinds of people. He believes that CMS also gives life to interests, which might be seen as marginal in a business school. He was also previously more involved in the labour process debate. He believes that CMS is driven by the participants and that it has not come about because of big changes in the climate in the business schools; 'it has happened because a bunch of critters have said we need a space and we have built a space'. He would prefer if CMS had a more explicitly left wing political agenda. However, he is also quite happy with CMS being more loosely defined.

³ Postgraduate Programme using action-learning methodologies in University Z – A pseudonym for a post 1992 UK University.

15. PATRICK

Patrick was initially involved in youth work and youth training. His undergraduate degree was in English and history. He also studied philosophy and theology as part of his training to be a Jesuit priest. Whilst working with groups he became influenced by the work of Lesley Button and later the work of Edgar Schein in organisational development. He completed a master's in management education and organisational change. It was experiential in nature and he described it as 'very exciting and fun stuff'. He also studied for an executive master's in the US that was more traditional with very little experiential work. Then in 1980 he began hearing about action research. He always had an interest with working with groups and 'working with people are the roots of action research, a part of it. I loved that stuff'. He describes it as a natural way of working. He began teaching for a time on an executive programme. This was a traditional action-learning programme and is still running for over 36 yrs. He favours a criticality with a small c and critical reflexivity. For him criticality is about teaching students how to question their judgements by teaching them a method. This involves teaching them to know how they know and question their assumptions. It is about learning to understand how your mind works and learn how to think.

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS II

Exploring The Critical Classroom

The second part of the interview analysis relates to the themes that emerged from the interview data. These themes will be discussed in relation to criticality in the classroom from the educator's perspective. This includes the effect criticality has on teaching practice and the methods used by educators; the effect of critical teaching has on students and educators in relation to both its benefits and challenges; the 'critical' identity as it is perceived inside and outside the classroom. These themes are deductive and relate to the interview questions that were asked. In the following sections these themes will be discussed.

EXPLORING THE CRITICAL CLASSROOM

1. The **Critical Effect** – 'The Practice of Teaching'
2. The **Critical Effect** – 'The Student'
3. The **Critical Effect**- 'The Educator Inside The Classroom'
4. The **Critical Effect**- 'The Educator Outside The Classroom'

1. The Critical Effect – ‘The Practice of Teaching’

What is Critical Teaching?

The data analysis includes an exploration with educators during the interview about criticality in their classroom. How does criticality affect their practice? What is critical teaching? In order to understand this further it is important to firstly identify where the educators’ focus their attention in the practice of their teaching i.e. the content or process. For example, some educators spoke more about their practice in terms of the content of their subject whereas others spoke more in terms of the process of their teaching. As a result, it is important to identify what processes they are engaged in when teaching in a critical way? Also what influences critical educators in their teaching? Firstly, to understand what critical teaching is, it is important to establish where the educator’s focus on criticality is. Many critical educators were interested in the engagement between action and reflection. They were also interested between the content and process – theory and practice (Reynolds, 1997). James articulated that you could not separate the two:

It’s the engagement in the process that enables you to transform the content and to re-invent it and re-apply it in different contexts and in different ways. I don’t really see that there is a clear distinction between theory and practice in that way or content and process. I think for me they are part of an engagement with the world. (James)

Although it is fair to say that all educators focus on both content and process to some extent. It became evident from the findings that some were more oriented to one or the other. From the findings 6 of the educators were more content focused and 9 more process focused. It is important to note that focusing on content in a critical way meant different things to different educators. For example, the content could be more politically left wing for some educators than others.

...I see Business Schools as fairly right wing institutions and for me being critical means being left wing. (Robert)

If I am designing criticality as left wing then it doesn’t matter how you teach it, what matters is that you teach it. (Noel)

And you have got to be critical not critical from a left wing or right wing political point of view. (Brian)

This more content focused group described their teaching as 'conventional', 'traditional', 'old-fashioned' and using the lecture method. This group very often relied on more conventional teaching methodologies i.e. lectures. Robert for example did not focus at all on the more experiential methods in the classroom. He believed that it was his duty to teach the mainstream business topics and introduce some critical content with it. He did not feel it necessary to explore the more innovative pedagogies. However, within this group four of them spoke about the importance of dialogue and engagement within the classroom. David described what this means in his classroom:

It's not just about persuading a bunch of students that what you say is gospel; I mean that's closure. So the sort of criticality that I am interested in demands dialogue. You are wanting to find out exactly where the student is, where their beliefs are and then have a conversation about that. (David)

It was interesting to note that two of these educators who described their critical teaching as more content based and using more of the lecture method referred to themselves as being good at teaching. Perhaps they focused more on the content of their teaching because they were good at the process of teaching anyway. Noel illustrates this when he describes his teaching. He believes that the lecture is not 'one thing'. He does not see himself as someone who just stands up there reading his Powerpoints. He compared himself to a stand up comedian who just runs around and chats a lot and does impressions up the aisles and tries to animate the whole thing as much as possible. The stand-up comedian is someone who has interpersonal skills that he admires in terms of making a space work particularly for big groups. He feels that if you have a lecture theatre with 150 people you need to be able to shrink it and make each of the students think you are talking to them:

You have to sing and dance a bit. I overwhelm them with energy. I go into the lecture theatre and shout a lot, show them things, make them laugh and do a bit of stand up comedy and try and interest them in what I am doing. ..Structure is not my thing for me structure and lesson planning is much less important than inspiring them to want to go to the library. I want them

to run out of my class thinking that's a really good thing he was talking about, I am going to find out about it. Do not know if my teaching is critical or not. I think I am a reasonably good teacher but I think that's largely because I am an experienced teacher and I have done it for a long time to lots of different groups. You could just as easy detach my teaching style from the content. I try to spend a lot of time listening to students, trying to get them to talk, be involved and engaged. Again I don't think that there is anything inherently critical about that. I think the criticality for me comes out of the kind of conclusions I try and encourage the students towards and the kind of arguments that I make. (Noel)

Helen also stressed the importance of how you got your message across and she believes that there is a merger between good teaching and being critical. However, Noel was unsure at first as to whether his teaching was critical or not. On reflection he saw himself as more content focused than process focused. However, when he describes his teaching methodology above the process of his teaching could be described as critical although he would describe it as good teaching. Two of this group of educators also found it difficult to relate to the notion of a critical pedagogy and believed it was more important 'what you teach' rather than 'how you teach'. Robert believed that teaching in this way was self-indulgent and compared such educators, as 'hippies playing in the sand pit while the kids want to learn the basics of business'. Critical pedagogy was also seen to be at odds as to what one educator believed to be critical:

I don't think most of the Freire critical pedagogy arguments even apply. Again when I read some of this stuff and I try not to very often, I am unconvinced that they are actually writing about what I understand to be critical. I think they are talking about some interesting teaching styles but I don't see anything necessarily critical about that. If I am designing criticality as left wing then it doesn't matter how you teach it, what matters is that you teach it. I don't stand there and lecture a lot; I try and involve them and all that kind of stuff. I guess I am sending certain kinds of messages about valuing their ideas and opinions. Overall it is much more about content than process for me. (Noel)

It is interesting to note that Elizabeth referred to criticality as hardly ever entering her teaching. She felt that she was more a critically inclined management development practitioner than a critical management educator. She describes HE as a much more constraining context in terms of regulations, conformity, Quality Assurance (QA) and class sizes and assessment regulations. However, she does try to tell students that there is no one proven way of managing Human Resources

(HR) or doing Human Resource Development (HRD) and is a fairly conventional (even old-fashioned) lecturer. She sets lots of readings and expects a high standard of critical engagement with text and theory i.e. she expects students to critique, in a scholarly way, existing practice and theories of HR. In contrast to Elizabeth the focus on criticality in practice for nine of the educators interviewed was very much based on the combination of the content and process (Reynolds, 1997). They use 'the here and now of the classroom' as a vehicle to think about organisational relations and self-reflection as a manager (Reynolds and Trehan, 2001). This critical orientation in the classroom will be discussed in the next section.

How to be Critical in the Classroom

-Action Learning

Having identified that some critical educators focus their teaching more on the process, it is important to identify what processes they engaged in when teaching in a critical way. Also what influences critical educators in the teaching process? As action based learning methodologies were used by seven practitioners it is therefore important to discuss why and how these are used in the critical classroom. Firstly, from the research findings the action based learning sets were used on postgraduate master's courses. There were similarities and differences in their function and assessment methods. The action learning sets were made up of 5/6 students coming together at regular intervals. One educator also described them as co-operative inquiry groups in conversation about real issues and action coming out of the meetings. On one of the master's programmes there were no formal lectures or syllabus. Catherine described it as being very unlike traditional programmes. It was workshop lead combined with action learning sets. The students are part of the design. They choose what they want to study and do on the workshop. For example, the students were given 5 or 6 readings and there is no compulsion to read them. They submit 5 separate pieces of work and a dissertation, which is peer assessed. The action learning sets change every time a piece of work is submitted. The students read each other's work and share feedback. They then agree a mark collectively. Catherine described her students as 'critical friends' challenging the work and paper you are reading. When it

comes to assessment she makes sure her marks go in last. The overall mark results out of a process of negotiation and discussion.

In another programme the action learning sets were used to enable the students to talk about their dissertations. The purpose of the set talk was about their research and what it means for them and their organisation. Conversations about how they can put their ideas forward in their organisation and the political insights arising from that were important:

Once you move them into those conversations the penny is struck. Once you have those conversations happening they become more open. Some of the material they have read starts to make sense because they can relate it to their experiences. That takes time to get to that. (Sarah)

The action learning sets were also used for updating progress, getting feedback and students deciding what they want to get out of the set and other emerging issues. The sessions also acted as an emotional support. The 1st half hour can be a 'bitch and moan' session as Sarah's class called it. This time was an opportunity to discuss their frustrations and get them out of the way. Anxiety in the classroom was a theme in the observation stage of the research. It was also spoken about during the interviews. As a result, facilitation and support from the educator is important. Catherine spoke about how some educators who take on such programmes don't give enough thought to the anxiety it can provoke both amongst students and reflected in the student. However, such anxiety was to be expected in the classroom (Vince, 2010).

As a result, Catherine spoke about the role of co-training before the tutor starts working on such programmes. Catherine was co-trained with another member of staff on a similar programme in a different institution for 3 yrs. Sally also worked on this programme which both educators had found to be inspiring and influential in their future careers. The make-up of the staff team was a crucial factor. It was about staff members being comfortable and being able to handle whatever issues surfaced. Catherine believed that you could not just put any staff member on the team. You need to be able to let go of control, which can be difficult, if you are

used to being in control as an academic. You also need to be able to work with what is happening in the moment:

If you are used to being in control as a member of an academic staff you have to let go of some of that and it does not come easy or comfortable. So some staff members at 'x' will put their marks in first, it's their way of controlling it. If you become anxious about it, it can become highly problematic. It's your capacity to work with it as it's happening in the moment..... So rather than giving them the theory to start with it's almost like they have the experience and they layer it with some reading that might help them to unpack what was happening in the group. (Catherine)

By co-training Catherine felt like she was a participant on the programme. She could feel the same emotions, anxieties and questions that the students had. Paul also worked on the same programme and he stressed that the design differed from many university courses. The use of action learning sets allowed for student involvement in the content. They base their assessed work on work of their own choosing. The assessment process also involves the student, as their work is self, tutor and peer assessed. This was a crucial element of criticality for him as the course assessment was less hierarchical compared to other conventional university programmes.

Three interviewees emphasised the influence of the Tavistok Institute on their work. Two of the interviewees had been influenced by its philosophy earlier in their careers on the same programme that they both worked on. Another educator had been a participant on one of its courses. This influence was evident in how they conduct their current programmes. For example, Sally spoke about how she would be explicit with the students about the philosophy of the course:

I would use terms like Tavistok terminology right from day one. This is a programme that presents 'there and then' 'here and now'. There and then-your past, the assumptions you bring, the experiences you have. Here and now; now within this room, within this programme in which we will both share some of the challenge. We will deliberate perspective take; take different perspectives to look at the there and then.... Use this as a framework to introduce the combination of experience action and challenge. (Sally)

Catherine spoke of drawing from Psychodynamic theory because it helps provide a different lens to help understand the process elements of critical theory. This was about working through the process, doing it with confidence and also with a real understanding with what is going on in the group. She describes this in relation to the collaborative assessment methods used on a course:

This is not just about a mark. They will see that mark and read that mark in all sorts of ways. You have to understand what games are being played if any in context. I hear I don't mind what mark I get so long as I get a pass. Then I watch and hear what kind of dialogue is coming and it is clearly evident that they do mind what mark they get and where in the pecking order, where people sit. Got interested in how students experience the process and what it actually means for them. Interested in the dynamics in what you talk about, process you work with, the process and content in terms of what the final marks might be. (Catherine)

It is important to acknowledge that some educators used critical methods of teaching in their undergraduate programmes also. However, they mostly spoke about their experiences with teaching postgraduates. One educator discussed using the technique of negotiated narrative. This was a critical technique used with undergraduate students. This is important as many educators raised the point about how difficult it was to teach in a critical way with undergraduate students. The negotiated narrative gave the students an opportunity to express their experience of the world however different it might be from business practitioners on postgraduate courses:

I'll bring my stories from my ethnographies and research projects. You'll bring your stories from work and we will mix it together with the magical ingredient of organisational theory. Between us from all that lot, we will discuss just how the world works. (Brian)

James also described teaching critically with undergraduates with a group of up to 250. His use of an experiential exercise highlighted how to be critical with large group numbers. Patrick spoke of getting undergraduate students to think differently by getting them to write reflection notes based on their own work experience. This could range from a supermarket job or club societies. He gets them to tell their own stories. For example, one student said in class 'management doesn't care'. Patrick would get the student to question how he had arrived at the

conclusion that management doesn't care. He also uses puzzles and Sudoku in class to help them question their thinking 'how do you know you have the right answer'.

Building and Deconstructing Learning

The environment which learning takes place is an important element of teaching in a critical way. The creation of this learning environment involves both building and deconstruction processes. Firstly, in the interviews some educators spoke about being explicit about their teaching methods and philosophies with their students. This usually involved them articulating what these are with the students either verbally in introductory classes and/or in writing through programme literatures etc. For example, James describes the process as being like a health warning i.e. 'this course can seriously enhance your ability to learn'. He is very explicit that the course is very different to what the students are expecting and wanting to learn. He also gives the students a lecture on why he is not going to lecture them. This is to reinforce the message given to the students in the pre-course written material by showing them through a lecture the limitations of lecturing in relation to leadership.

So it's about trying to build people's connection to this form of learning. You have to be careful about creating the right boundaries within which this type of learning is done. You can't jump into the classroom you know without preparing the space both conceptually and physically in a way that is important in creating the right kind of boundaries. (James)

Brian expressed how he is explicit from the start with his students about his position. He describes himself as a critical scholar and how he communicates this with his students:

...my pitch is we have got to question the taken for grantedness of everything we do. Now if you work with me in this workshop today I am going to challenge and question a lot of what you take for granted and you will be better placed to do your jobs afterwards and it works. They come back only for more. That's only in part because I have got that credibility because they know and they can see in the literature that I have been right in there and done their job. I say I am a sociologist, a researcher. I am a qualified practitioner as well and when I am critical of a lot of practices,

I'm not doing it from some arrogant political or academic point of view; I'm doing it from a solid and social science point of view. Where's the evidence, does that work, is that credible. (Brian)

Being a social scientist was also at the heart of his teaching and research. Evaluating the research about business and management and presenting it as an account of what goes on was spoken about. He used Maslow's motivation theory to explain:

I can show from my research that Maslow's motivation theory is rubbish and I teach it. You really ought to know about it....but when you look at what managers do and try this as a manager, it's totally unsuccessful. I know people who go in and teach it ...I have got to teach the mainstream stuff and are then dishonest with it. If you take the view that you are a social scientist investigating the world of management then you don't have to go along with the values of the worst mainstream management stuff but neither do you have to stand up there and speak contemptuously of managers, which I'm afraid too many CMS people do. (Brian)

On a number of occasions educators spoke about how they tell students what they should expect and but also what not to expect. For these educators their teaching was not going to be about giving students prescriptive lists etc

I tell them if they came to learn about techniques and principles then that's not what the course is about. They could just take up a book and read. The course is about thinking differently about leadership. (James)

Patrick is also explicit about his course at the beginning 'if you want to know what this course is about it is about you'. The deconstruction of existing learning experiences is seen when he speaks of 'I am sabotaging the educational system they have been part of. I am saying start with experience, write about the organisation they are in, purely reflective, write their own stories'. They are not used to this, as they are more familiar with learning what is in the textbook. He teaches them to ask their own questions. The experiences that they write are the ones that puzzle them. When they ask him should I write about this he says if you are asking me, you haven't got it yet. This highlights a dependency on the tutor, which was also seen in the observations. (See Chapter V, p. 103) However, even

though he tells them at the beginning what to expect he believes it does not mean anything at first and it is something that usually emerges during the course.

However, for some educators how explicit they were about communicating their position depended on the type of course or module they were teaching. For example, at master's level Tracy explains why she has designed the course the way it is designed. However, this doesn't happen in all her classes:

If I'm teaching mainstream OB I wouldn't do that, I might bring in questions for consideration. I wouldn't say that this is from a critical or postmodern perspective. It would be embedded as a practice in the classroom. At master's level students do need to understand the assumptions underlying particular perspectives so we would actually talk about those things. (Tracy)

Some educators were less explicit about their positions as an educator to their students. For both Helen and Lily it was sometimes gradually communicated as the module emerged through the introduction of course material. For others it was about the importance of building connections with the students learning through their teaching technique. For example, announcing a 'left wing position would turn students off'. Instead the student was influenced through the teaching technique first to engage them:

I don't announce my ideological presuppositions at the beginning but what I do is try and almost kind of explode with force of personality to tell them it's the most important course they will ever do.I don't say I am left wing and I believe in these particular thingsI allow that to emerge in the class. If I started off saying I am a left wing nutcase the students would almost certainly turn off they would not listen to me. If I start off by saying we are going to have a tremendous amount of fun talking about really important things then I much more likely to get them. That's as much salesmanship as teaching. A really good teacher is someone who sells themselves first then hopefully gets students on the rebound. (Noel)

It is also interesting to note that Noel could not say at first whether his teaching was critical or not. He spoke of the importance of content over the process. However, later in the interview he acknowledged the process was important and

that for him he thought he was half way in between. The process as he describes it seems to be very important in getting his message across:

I do think the best teachers I've seen and experienced are people who light up the space like fireworks. People who excite you with the things that they do. It doesn't mean that they need to be announcing that they are going to be left wing firebrands. It means that they have to be good at selling what they do. (Noel)

This process of building people's connection to this form of learning may also involve a deconstruction of existing learning approaches that the students are familiar with. This deconstruction of existing learning approaches was observed in the second stage of my research through observation of the educator in action. He deconstructed previous learning approaches by showing the limitations of lecturing and using experiential exercises throughout the module. This is discussed in the next chapter in relation to the observations. (See Chapter V, p.96) As a result, the creation of the learning environment, which involves building connections to critical learning, is also an essential element in the process of critical teaching.

The above sections also highlight the critical effect on teaching practice for educators. They highlight where the critical educator's orientation is towards the content or process of their practice. From the findings six of the interviewees mostly focused on the content of their practice. For them the process is perceived as being much less of a focus even though four of them discussed the importance of dialogue in the classroom. However, it was interesting to note that two of these educators described themselves as being good at what they do. Perhaps, in practice the process was just as important in getting their message across to students but they perceived the content as their main focus. It was also interesting to note that nine educators focused more on the process of their teaching. Seven of these discussed the importance of action learning in their practice. The use of action learning was at the heart of the critical process in the classroom for these educators. There were similarities and differences in their function and assessment methods. However, three educators spoke about the influence of the Tavistock Institute and psychodynamic theory in their practice. The process of building connections with the students' learning through communicating the position of the

educator or expectations was also important. Some educators did this early on with their students through verbal or written communication. Others let this emerge through the process of their teaching. From the analysis it can be seen that there are two types of critical educator emerging from the data based on their focus on the content and process of their practice. The first will be called the **CRITICAL TRADITIONALIST**. The reason being is that the characteristics of this educator is that they prefer to use a critical content in their teaching but remain loyal to the more traditional process of learning. They are less interested in and /or unfamiliar with experiential techniques. This type of educator would include six of the educators in the sample interviewed. The second educator type will be called the **CRITICAL EXPERIENTIALIST**. The characteristics of this educator are that they use both a critical content and process in their teaching. The process of teaching is just as important as the critical knowledge that they are departing. They engage with experiential learning in their practice. This type of educator includes nine of the interviewees sampled.

2. The Critical Effect – ‘The Students’

Teaching critically had various effects on the students both inside and outside the classroom. These included effects to their values, ways of learning, thinking and doing and their student identity. Educators were asked to discuss the benefits to them and their students of teaching in a critical way. Some educators struggled at first with the question. They found it difficult to articulate what the value might be. Some educators spoke about the effects that their teaching had on their students. A common theme was that a different understanding of learning is generated. The observation findings subsequently confirmed this. (See Chapter V, p. 120) James discusses this in relation to his teaching. He believes it was about people beginning to realise that learning, leadership and change are much more about processes over time, processes of ‘becoming’ than they are about specific ‘competencies or capabilities’:

So the value for me is that if people understand that they are not really learning about how to be a better leader. For example, they are learning about leadership in the context of complex organisational relationships, abilities, political problems, issues that come and go in different type of

organisational settings. If they can acknowledge that complexity and feel less pulled towards prescriptive models of leadership and learning, then I'm happy. (James)

Catherine described the benefits to her students taking the master's programme, which was inherently critical in nature. She spoke about the benefits of working on themes that are important to the student. So instead of things predetermined students bring the issues that made them want to do a course in the first place. This allows them to work on things that they are grappling with in their practice in a way that she doesn't think that traditional master's programmes would allow them to do:

This also opens up to scrutiny the student's own practice through that very critical view process through the feedback that they get. They might not have come for that but they end up leaving with understanding the impact of their own behaviour on others but also how they react to feedback from others. Particularly when they are not the tutor so they don't have the legitimacy of that role. (Catherine)

Catherine also believes that they learn about the process by getting into the theory of it by doing it and being part of it. She emphasises the depth of study that can be achieved on such a programme:

So it develops your content knowledge in ways that traditional programmes can only ever I think superficially introduce because there are so many modules to get through. You can't ever do things in-depth. You are able to study maybe not breadth but you are able to study depth. So you could actually say you are an informed practitioner in x y and z areas rather than a general manager because I know all about all these mainstream functional areas as part of that. (Catherine)

Some other critical effects included students saying how being critical made them think about things that they had not thought about before. Lily described how her undergraduate students spoke of how it was the first time 'we actually engaged with practice and the world of work, doesn't sound like textbooks'. Another benefit for the student was recognizing the difficulties in the world and looking at work not just from a business performance perspective. Robert spoke about how some students might find it enlightening, change their outlook or affect their career choices. However, Sarah believed that for some students it helped them to somehow legitimise and vindicate their thinking. For a number of students 'it's

like I always thought like this but I thought I was odd. I thought I was wrong and it is really amazing to find that there is a big body of literature that helps me articulate what I was thinking.’ There are also benefits for students who seemed to be ‘positivists dyed in the wool’ in that it can help them see that there is another way of looking at things so that they don’t dismiss it. Another positive outcome is that some students have continued to build a learning community amongst themselves. Many of Sarah’s students are using action learning in their workplaces. Action-learning networks have also been set up with ex-students as members in their regions.

Being useful to practice was also spoken of and this was also referred to during the observation stage in the research. It was expressed by Paul that he had such anecdotal evidence as to the benefits to students. In recent years he raised the question with a group of people teaching on a particular programme, which was critical in nature. They all gave examples whereby the managers that they were working with were being more questioning of their own practice. Patrick also gave examples of students saying this is the best course they have ever done but also the hardest. He even went as far to say ‘they love it’. They are very often so used to learning off what is in the textbook. However, Tracy who had experience of teaching in the US and UK distinguished between the value it made to US students. It was felt that such students would be exposed to literature and ideas that they wouldn’t be exposed to in a more functional approach that they would be used to in other classes. They would become more familiar to questioning and critiquing material rather than recalling it. A quote from a student on such a course expressed the view that ‘you were the only person who encouraged dissent’. Tracy believed that they found this useful. In terms of career prospects for students she had learned from conversations with employers that they would prefer to employ what’s known as liberal-arts graduates as opposed to business graduates. The reason being that the former had learned to think about issues whereas the business graduates had been taught about techniques. This has been a criticism of business education in its focus on tools and techniques rather than wider issues (Perriton, 2007).

Using reflective papers to assess students work often gave valuable feedback to educators about student learning. Such reflections were described 'as powerful impacts' that were written by the students. Sally describes the impact for an Asian student who reflected on his experience on a master's programme:

One example would be an Asian guy, did not have a happy experience in the master's in the beginning. He thought about his own behaviour and feelings in the initial weeks and used some of the writings on postcolonial literature to think about the internalised racism that led to him feel the way he did. We had introduced readings to help them make sense of what was going on and their own feelings. Through that process, to undo that and reverse that, obviously strengthened him and used that to work on a new set of identity. He connected that to how he operated at work. (Sally)

In her critical master's programme Sally discussed how the assessment method allowed students to be creative. For example, students were allowed to be creative in their reflective piece. It could be in written form or other formats. One student did a tapestry. The woman who did the tapestry said that she felt the programme enabled her to bring and almost reunite two parts of her and to think about how she could carve a future that does that. She was an accountant but also a hugely creative person. The programme gave her the permission to explore bringing the two together. Also in the student reflections Sally refers to her students explicitly using words like power. The educator saw this as a recognition about how their organisation or how society works. It was recognition of proactivity and a sense of empowerment:

They would say they are not waiting for their future to be defined within their organisation, thinking more proactively about what can I do. One student epitomized that in relation to his company recognising that they had been quite passive waiting for headquarters to tell them what the targets were and he definitely gained insight into actual ways in which he could be influential, powerful and proactive. For example, thinking about how he manages his managers. (Sally)

Positive feedback was also communicated to educators through informal channels. Catherine believes that her teaching makes a difference and not just because she says so. She speaks about the difference it makes to students on a personal level as evidenced by the student feedback she receives:

Because it genuinely makes a difference. Not because I say that because I can still bump into someone I taught 15 yrs ago. I can be in town and they will just say that was just brilliant and it made a difference to partly to the way they practice. Made a difference to how they view things that feels radically different to something that was just thought and conveyed. I don't think that it's one thing is better or worse. I don't make those value judgments about it. I just think it offers an alternative and given my own experience and I guess I am a bit more biased towards the latter, the doing of it rather than the regurgitation. (Catherine)

However, it was acknowledged that it could take time for students to realise the value/benefit of being critical:

When it does happen it's almost listening to the converted the born again Christians. They sit on exam boards and wax lyrical about how it's made a real difference to their learning. It takes time though. (Sarah)

Some educators said that it could take months or even years for students to see the benefits or relevancy of their learning. This could occur later in their careers:

On an ongoing basis they will keep in touch. They will tell you when something has gone really well. That one guy that I taught started off on the shop floor of 'X' and now he is a Managing Director. Michael always says if it had not been for the programme and I know he said 'I was hard against it most of the time' but it taught him so much about himself. (Catherine)

Notwithstanding the benefits above the effect of being critical was not always positive. Catherine acknowledges it isn't always a pleasant experience for students but it can indirectly lead to change:

You can get a bit evangelical about it, doesn't always work for everybody. They may be very disillusioned, made them say what am I doing here and leave the organisation. But that's a catalyst and change in itself. To a varying degree critical thought process who am I, where am I going, how is the way I operate. Do I end up perpetuating the very thing I said I don't want to do because before you know it, you have become one of them? (Catherine)

However, opening up issues within an organisation could sometimes result in students feeling powerless (Lawless, 2008). However, Sally felt that there were more risks with the traditional MBA where students are not given the tools to act:

I think there are more dangers and frustrations there in that kind of route compared to this kind of route which is all about helping people to develop the language of practice not just theoretic language. What it has often done more is help name things. Name what's frustrating or help people to recognise that the feeling that they had was of not being listened to. I think it's less risky. (Sally)

It was also acknowledged by Sally that the outcome of psychodynamic conversations where you are getting people to give feedback could be 'particularly ugly, harsh and painful'. However, she feels that the more critical MBA gives the students guidance and the opportunity to explore what to do with those feelings:

There can be tears and arguments and you would be facilitating that. You are threading a line, you are not a councillor and you can't let people leave without guidance... You have deconstructed how might the reconstruction happen. We explicitly say that if they have been giving each other feedback that's a norm they can take to their family or organisation the next day and go in and be very direct with their boss. A context that's very counter cultural. That's a danger and we talk about that. (Sally)

However, there was a sense of knowing the limits of what you could achieve and being realistic about the impact of your teaching. For example, although Noel describes himself as behaving like an evangelist preacher when he is in the classroom; he questions the impact that his teaching has on his students. For example, in an exam question he gave his students –'can teaching business ethicsmake business people more ethical? Most of them quite rightly say no it can't but they do say you made me think of it. I guess that's enough in some ways'.

Being critical in the classroom could also result in resistance from some students. Resistance could also take the form of questioning tutor competency. James however believed that what the students were actually doing was questioning their own competency. According to him students need to do this because we quite easily get stuck in habits and attachments and ways of working that are familiar and we develop patterns that restrict the way that we do the things that we do.

I never assume that the students are really entirely questioning my competence. I think in part this is a device I have in order to protect myself

from other people's unwanted emotions. It's also a realisation that actually when they are raising these things they are raising them about me because they are too afraid to raise them about themselves and that gradually those fears can change and they can begin to look at those things in themselves the analytical part of their work. Never going to do that if somebody doesn't actually try and work with the emotions and politics that are present in the management classroom and in organisations. (James)

James also acknowledged that it was easier for a professor to do this rather than a less senior lecturer who's more vulnerable to being attacked by students and institutions. However, Patrick acknowledged that credibility helped but that some of his undergraduate students don't know who he is. He used the word struggles instead of resistance. Sally felt clear about where the resistance comes from. She believes it is coming from an anxiety, a willing ignorance, an unconscious choice not to learn (Vince, 2010). Anxiety was also evident during the observation stage of the research. However, Sally never accepts that they won't engage. As part of her psychodynamic training she thinks that this is part of the learning process:

On the whole I would try a gentle challenge. It seems to me that you might be avoiding that because it's uncommon, you might want to reflect on why you're not comfortable. Especially the undergraduates, somebody will be saying oh do I have to. I'm aiming for a first everyone else will bring me down. I never give in to that. They are denying themselves learning. (Sally)

Resistance can also have its advantages. Patrick also talks about challenging such resistance all the way. He gives the example of the student who is always right, knows the answer, knows what people will say before they speak and how he challenges that. Subsequently, the same student asked to see him for coffee and a chat and he is now into his own reflectivity. This was also evident in the observations where one student was resistant during the module but as the module progressed he became more open to a critical way of learning. Patrick discussed the power of the learning dynamic in action learning where a member who is struggling will often listen to everybody else and see them responding which in turn can be influential. Also when students complained about one educator's teaching it raised the profile about CME in the school. The complaint was dealt with through a formal system in his institution dealing with what happened, why it happened and why he did what he did and what he was seeking to achieve in his

teaching. The process opened some people's eyes that were unfamiliar with this kind of teaching. He said that raising these kinds of debates within a political environment was an important thing to do.

Teaching critically was described as taking risks but also a passionate belief that those risks are worthwhile if they help people to understand the context within which their own limitations are being mobilised and reinforced:

Some people get that, some people don't, in a way it does not matter because they don't need to get it instantly. Some people come back to me a couple of years later and say I suddenly realised what you were talking about. That is not what matters. What matters is not giving up on the notion of our ability to integrate the desire for freedom into our understanding of education. (James)

However, overall the critical effect on students was perceived by educators to be a positive one. The educators perceived that a different understanding of learning was generated. One educator described it as being more about processes over time of becoming and less about specific competencies or capabilities. The effect of being critical also had an impact on student identity. For some it legitimised their thinking and empowered them in the workplace. It could even result in the establishment of action learning groups/networks outside the classroom in their respective organisations. Equally it could disempower them as a result of feeling powerless in their organisations, which could lead to frustrations or withdrawal from their organisation. However, this could also be seen as a catalyst for change. Resistance from students could also be an outcome of the critical process. However, such resistance was often to be expected by educators and part of the process. Such resistance could come from anxiety and an unwillingness to learn. However, such critical programmes were seen to give the students guidance and the opportunity to explore the feelings that emerged. The dynamics of the group could often help others with such struggles. However, it could take time for students to see the value of critical learning. Reflection papers and verbal feedback were found to be useful in understanding student experiences of the learning process. Student testimonials later on in their careers often told a different story to the student's original experience. The perceived value and relevancy of being in a critical classroom may not always be immediate.

3. The Critical Effect- 'The Educators Inside the Classroom'

The effect of teaching in a critical way could be both a positive and challenging experience for educators. Such experiences have also been described as experiences from heaven and from hell (Sinclair, 2007). Interestingly benefits are not something that some educators focus too much on. Instead for them it's more about personal values and beliefs:

If I'm honest with myself I'm not sure I've considered benefits much.You get driven by a belief...You can get very moralistic about these sort of things..... I've always had a belief somehow that trying to work in a more co-operative way is just a good thing to aim for...Can't say I have ever been driven by a sense that this will benefit people, more this seems a preferable way to work and live together. (Paul)

Similarly, Sarah believed that ethically and morally as an educator she could not go in with an alternative approach.

Here is the right answer and I've worked it out and I'm telling you. Here's my Powerpoints broken down week by week. I could not do that now anyway so my whole approach and what I think about how I should be delivering in class is changed and there is no one right answer, different arguments. (Sarah)

The conditions of practice also had implications for educators teaching in a critical way. It was evident from the interviews that many of the educators were currently working in organisations that were conducive to teaching in a critical way. They acknowledged the support for their teaching and research from management and colleagues. For example, two institutions in particular where four of the educators worked had built a reputation for its particular type of management education. However, it is notable that 12 out of 15 interviews were from leading universities in the UK. This raises the question as to whether such conditions of practice are more conducive to teaching in a critical way. However, it can be seen from the pen portraits that many of the educators had developed their critical approach whilst practicing in different institutions. Elizabeth referred to criticality, as always a judgement about the space there is to practice it and its likely reception and the consequences of introducing it. She believed that more

often than not those who advocate critical approaches are senior, male and pretty bomb –proof in terms of their institutional position. She believed it was a very different thing for a part-time, fixed term, female ethnic minority staff member to start experimenting with critical pedagogy. It was also acknowledged by one educator who admitted the difficulties a less senior educator might encounter in teaching in a critical way. In relation to the research the sample consisted of seven female and eight male participants. All the male participants were Professors in their organisation whereas the female participants had one Professor in the group. However, even though the females held less senior positions they still engaged in criticality in their workplace. It is interesting to note also that the female participants tended to be more process oriented than their male counterparts.

However, Robert believed that most critical people have an easy time of it in the business schools in the UK. He perceived that many of the critical educators are in quite privileged positions. Whereas in contrast he describes ‘the people in north London as really up against it’. He referred to critical scholars working in the elite institutions teaching interesting and alternative types of curriculum. He stressed how ‘they get very good students who respond pretty well to it’. He regards CMS as being pretty healthy and not an enormous cost to be affiliated to it. He stresses the point that we are not martyrs. He also gives the example of US academics ‘having to trawl the continent to get tenure, if ever’. As discussed previously in the literature there is a difference between critical education in the UK and US (Perriton, 2007). Tracy also discussed how being critical in practice had affected her career. She has experience of working in both the U.S. and Europe. However, Tracy acknowledges that it has been more of a disadvantage to her career in the US as opposed to in Europe:

In terms of benefits to me in my career it’s actually been a disadvantage in the US because it isn’t the mainstream. It isn’t well understood. It does not fit the norm in US business schools so it was always problematic in terms of my career and getting promotional tenure. It was one of the reasons for coming back because there is much more of a critical culture here people understand what you are doing. It’s a different set of conversations with colleagues and students. It’s easier to get promotion in Europe if you are working from a critical perspective than it is in the US. (Tracy)

It is interesting to note that seven of the educators spoke about marginalisation. One spoke about it in the context of CMS being marginalised as a result of differing factions within CMS. Two spoke about the name as giving people a home for those who are marginal. Four of them spoke about the consequences of their own or their students' critical reflections conflicting with the goals of their employing organisation (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992a). Three of them spoke about not wanting to become unemployable but at the same time being critical could be a catalyst for change. However, only one spoke about lots of battles he had early for his work to be accepted as legitimate within a Business School. This he feels is still prevalent as promotion and tenure is linked to the more traditional research engaged in business schools. He is the only one engaged in the work that he does within his School and one of two people in his country. However, this is in contrast to the observations where more of the students spoke of the impact of being critical on their own professional lives and identity. It seemed to be a different challenge 'being critical' for the students than for the educators in their workplace. The educators had found an outlet for their criticality whereas the students seemed to be more challenged in trying to do that in an organisational context.

However, regardless of the institution or position of the educator they each referred to the challenges of teaching in a critical way. These included student audience and resources. Many of the educators spoke about how it was relatively easier to teach critically with a more sophisticated audience than with undergraduates. For one educator it was not just because of their experience with the world of work but because senior managers were more used to being asked to do more challenging kinds of things. Resistance from students was found by some to differ depending on student culture, expectations and student type (Ottewill and Macfarlane, 2003). In particular, operating in an increasingly 'instrumentalised and credentialised student culture that were impatient of those kind of attempts'. However, it was argued by one educator that this instrumentality varied considerably. It was found that sometimes undergraduates believe that they don't really need to engage at all, whereas MBAs for example might question value for money 'We are not getting value for money on this course because it's not doing what I want it to do'. The undergraduates were described as not having the same

overt kind of value for money way of expressing themselves. Sarah also acknowledged that there is the danger of someone going to her school director and saying they are not getting value for money and that she was not teaching her students the way they wanted. However, the reality for her has not been the case but she is transparent with her peers about how students feel about her teaching:

I said I'm telling you now they don't all think I'm wonderful at the beginning. I'm telling you that because I challenge them. If we have the view that the students are customers and learning should be always comfortable then we are not doing our job. (Sarah)

Educators described that being instrumental could mean the student wanting the right answer, to be given a set of skills or doing the minimum to pass. As a result, there is a challenge in influencing students about adopting a critical approach. The 'biggest fight' for Sarah was in convincing her students that she was not making it hard just for the sake of it 'It's making them realize that they have just as much right to make sense of what is out there as anyone else. It's trying to give them confidence that they can do it'. James believed that such student expectations reflect how they feel about the process of learning:

When students are saying that they want to leave the classroom knowing the skills of leadership...They are not necessarily saying that they only want a set of skills. They are saying something about the process of being taught. About not wanting to open up and engage. (James)

Such expressions to this educator were regarded as being much about fears as they are about knowledge and also the interplay between emotion in the classroom and the politics of learning (Vince, 2010). The reason business students are instrumental is because as one educator said it is because business educators are instrumental. He spoke of a direct correlation between student expectations and management education:

Management educators have not yet confronted student expectations because of our own fears about doing interesting education and the risks that are involved in doing something different. (James)

Teaching international groups also posed challenges for some educators. Paul spoke about the problem of some students saying 'you are starting to criticize approaches to management and management education and we haven't learned the basics yet'. Introducing criticality was also cited as being problematic because assessment methods are geared to traditional teaching methods. However, where more critical approaches to assessment have been used Paul and his colleagues have found it challenging, as some students don't fully engage with the process. For example, when using collaborative assessment students are required to read each other's work and comment on it. Not having the luxury and time to do so was cited as a reason why it does not happen. Also the educator acknowledged that the 'programme is crammed pretty full' so it can be an uphill struggle as the students are under pressure. Also their previous educational experience can have implications for them adopting such an approach. As a result, as the programme became more international the critical approach to assessment as described above has receded. Paul acknowledges that 'sometimes we think this gradient is too steep' and he finds it alarmingly easy to fall back on being a traditional tutor. Helen also found that sometimes international students don't always want to engage in criticality. For example, she spoke about getting Chinese students to critique the development of management ideas in China. She admitted that some don't want to take it on board and that she is not always successful.

Elizabeth referred to higher education as a much more constraining context compared to when she worked in industry. This was in terms of regulations, conformity, QA, and class sizes and assessment. Resource constraints were often cited as being a challenge to educators. The practicalities of teaching in a critical way are often affected by large class sizes, which constrained some individuals to teach in this way (Choo, 2007b).

I think it is very difficult but not impossible to have large classes of pretty instrumental students and teach in a way that addresses process and a kind of critical approach. In other words there is something unfamiliar to students and quite demanding for them. I think it is really quite difficult to do that in large numbers. (David)

In the context of teaching in such large numbers David questioned his own competency of doing this kind of teaching. He feels that you need to be exceptionally skilled and confident as a teacher:

I'd probably be able to do it as a one-off or two-off lecture but to do a full course and keep the momentum going for a whole term I think is incredibly demanding. (David)

Similarly Grey et al (1996) describe their experience of teaching in this way as being similar to removing a 'comfort blanket' of routines and requiring a higher level of commitment and effort. They found that the ideal conditions for this approach would be for class sizes of about 10-12. They felt numbers above this could limit its effectiveness.

Paul articulated that it was perhaps more difficult to teach in a critical way than it was in the past.:

The modern lecture theatre with all its bells and whistles and technological advances, the paraphernalia of timetabling, room layout, it does make it harder in perhaps it used to 10 yrs ago even to work in alternative pedagogies. (Paul)

Also teaching and marking loads can be a challenge to engaging with a more critical approach:

Sometimes where it gets watered down a bit it's because we ourselves/colleagues struggling with huge teaching and marking loads. I think one of the causalities of that development is that some of the methods that we used to use that are more time consuming tend to be edged out in favour of a more traditional stuff. (Paul)

In contrast to that James has taught critically to undergraduate students of up to 250. He described the experiential exercise he conducted with the class as 'fantastic'. He looks at whatever group he has and decides how best he can engage them not only as a group of individuals but also as a group as a whole:

So the assumption that underpins this way of thinking is that when you are in a classroom you have got something that is an example of an

organisation because you have got a group of people whether its 20 or 200 and you are able to work with their individual understanding of what is happening but also their collective understanding of what is happening. (James)

Business and management textbooks were also criticised for not having a critical approach. This is something that has been identified by other academics (Fulop, 2002).

What can you do, that's why some people get pushed back to those horrible, prescriptive, naïve textbooks that give an impression to students of management that is wholly unrealistic? You know you design your organisation, you recruit people, you get them to pursue organisational goals, you get the correct person by personality test and by this and that. It's all a big lie because all those ideas are out there but it isn't exactly what happens. (Brian)

However, David made the point that book publishers were starting to look for more critical content for books in more recent times due to events in the business environment. Also many of the educators themselves had written critical texts in their respective fields.

From the findings above teaching critically posed both benefits and challenges to educators. With regards to benefits some educators used language such as values and beliefs. They referred to being driven by a value or belief rather than a benefit. Their conditions of practice also had implications on their critical practice. The majority of the interviewees came from the more elite universities and over half of these held senior academic positions. Many of them acknowledged the support for their teaching and research within their organisations. However, distinctions were made between career prospects in the UK and US where the former was seen to be more open to the critical approach. However, interviewees spoke more about support and finding a home for what they do rather than being marginalised for what they do. This is in contrast to the students in the observations who had a different challenge in 'being critical' than the educators in their workplace. (See Chapter V, p. 122) The educators had found an outlet for their criticality whereas the students seemed to be more challenged in trying to do that in an organisational context. It was interesting to note that none of the participants spoke about having to share modules with other lecturers and

how that might influence the content and process of how they work. Such conditions of practice might not be present for less senior educators in their organisations.

The challenges that educators did face included the student audience and resources. It was regarded as being relatively easier to teach postgraduates rather than undergraduates. Nevertheless, resistance from students could occur depending on student culture, expectations and student type. The instrumentalised student culture could be impatient with critical attempts in the classroom. Also student expectations of gaining skills and the 'right answer' can also affect their willingness to embrace a more critical approach. This unwillingness could also be an expression of fears, anxieties, emotions and politics in the classroom. Teaching international groups also posed challenges. Students' previous educational experience could have implications for students to engage in the process. Resource constraints were also cited as an obstacle of teaching in a critical way. Large class sizes, teaching workloads and a lack of critical textbooks were cited as constraining a more critical approach.

4. The Critical Effect-'The Educators Outside the Classroom'

In discussing criticality in their practice many educators spoke about being critical inside and outside the education environment. They spoke about this in the context of the relevance of what they do in their practice and how this is perceived not only by themselves but also the wider society. Their critical identity and its role in society was a theme throughout the interviews. In discussing identity it needs to be considered in the context of the labels used or not used by educators to identify each other. The labels that were used ranged from CMS, CME, Critter, Critical Realist and Critter-lite. Some educators were comfortable to use the label whereas others were not as discussed below. In discussing identity it is also important to note the distinctions made between how educators perceived each other in terms of their criticality.

When interviewing educators I asked the question what was your perception of criticality. Robert thought that I should say 'critter' as this was a label he used to identify himself as someone in the field 'CMS provides a nice home, a protective belt for people like me'. He likes the term critters but admits that for a lot of people it makes them cringe. Hancock (2008) also referred to such 'branding' as being met with distain in the UK. However, Robert refers to it as a loose community almost a 'cultural affiliation'. The word criticality sounded too pretentious for Robert. 'How could you take yourself seriously when you call yourself critters whereas criticality sounds like we are very serious.'

In contrast James felt that it helped him to identify himself and his work by using the label:

Try not to label myself if I can help it, but I can't help it. Every so often I would call myself a critter. I talk about critters and when I am at the Academy of Management it's kind of I'm going to the critters meeting. Obviously I am part of a group who thinks about themselves and talk about themselves in that way. Clearly in terms of academic leadership I provide some academic leadership around CME because that's a big theme of my research and writing. I do identify with a notion called CME and it helps me network, belong, articulate and to debate. (James)

However, many educators did not feel comfortable subscribing to the critter label. Catherine felt that it was too simplistic and narrowly defined:

I am always resistant to labels. In some ways you just end up privileging one position against another and I think for me in developing critical thought or criticality it's about allowing people to make choices. How do you allow people to be exposed to some of those theories and what they do with it and the labels they give that becomes theirs not ours. (Catherine)

Robert felt that some people wrongly perceive the 'critters' as being on a mission to teach critical ideas to business students. However, he believes that critical educators just happen to find themselves to be in a business school and that they have no mission. This goes back to some critical educators finding themselves teaching in a business school because there were more opportunities for their work than in other disciplines. It's as if their criticality found an outlet in the

business school but they would have preferred if it had been elsewhere in a different discipline:

There is a danger that we project our angst onto the student. It's not their fault they didn't make us work here. Don't think the critters ended up in business schools because they are on a mission to teach critical ideas to business students. Imagine a missionary who has chosen to go to a country and convert the locals. Then they have got a real problem how do we convert the locals to our religion. At least the missionary has a real mission. I don't think we are on a mission. I think we are just here and then people say we are here because we are on a mission. I don't believe them, well if they are, they are nutters. (Robert)

On the other hand Noel described the label as something that was invented and peddled in the States. The dominance of the right wing ideas and fairly conservative methodologies is so great that he feels that anyone doing interpretative work gets classified as critical. He does not think that this is helpful. However he understands how the labelling would be useful to some people in the US and elsewhere. It allows people to be recognized as distinctive in doing a particular kind of work. However it is a label that has no use for him. He sees his criticality as a version of left wing sociology, which has been around for a long time and certainly not invented by CMS. He believes that the label critter is a way of 'dumping' people in the basement 'they do that kind of critical stuff don't they'. He believes that you can kind of park it as if it weren't important or relevant:

I think that the question that CMS raises are crucial to political questions of global government. They are not just matters of interpretation or style. They should be the kind of things that are concerning everyone at the Academy of Management Conference. Not just the people gathered in the basement conference. (Noel)

He also believes that the label has become increasingly clunky and it's a way of boxing and dismissing things rather than opening them up. However, he does acknowledge that he uses the label to explain roughly who he is and what he does. However, he does not feel comfortable using the label and would rather not use it at all. It was also interesting to see how some interviewees perceived themselves in relation to other people in the field. Sarah was not happy with the way some

critical educators behaved towards other members of the critical community. This was particularly referred to in relation to the bi-annual CMS conference:

Some are big snobs and some are up their own bottoms. Oh.... institution I'm not talking to you. If you don't go to a red brick...people will talk toand not talk to me because of where I come from. Now I can't cope with people like that. Then you have a really good group of people Brilliant group of people who judge people on the output of their work. (Sarah)

Also with regard to perceptions of each other Lily spoke about 'a lot of male posturing' that goes on at the CMS conference. She referred to 'power positioning' and who is going to be the next leader in CMS. Paul also referred to the manner in which the conference was run in one particular year:

There was a big hu-ha about 4 yrs ago in Manchester...Quite a thing at one point because people were pointing out the manner in which the conference was run. Was not really reflecting the social and political principles you would associate with criticality. It was run in a very kind of top down worshipping great figures from afar. Very traditional academic conference and people were saying there is something wrong here, we are trying to espouse a set of different principles. (Paul)

Paul expressed the view that this type of questioning above is good in CMS as there have always been people from inside who have been prepared to be members of the community if it were to raise critical voices about its goings on. However, David did acknowledge that as some people know each other well it could seem like some sort of sect. Paul also described it as more of a tribal thing. However, David did say that he would like to think that people are generally accessible and that there isn't too much of the hierarchical system there. Inevitably he believes that it will have elements of that, as some people aren't going to behave radically different to the way that they behave in other conferences.

Brian said that he stopped going to the conferences and he describes his experience of attending:

I went to one or two sessions and it made me so cross because I did not admire, approve of the lack of professionalism in a number of people who were just getting up and being political rather than analytical. Analytical must take into account politics and inequalities and power. We analyse it, we talk about it, we don't then say, lets smash it. (Brian)

Brian also makes a distinction between himself and others in the critical community. He sees himself as a sociologist through and through who studies business and can talk about business because his sociology helps him understand it better. He sees his position as a Pragmatic Realist:

Some of the CMS people are postmodernists and don't agree with the notion of truth. A number of CMS are poststructuralists which is close to postmodernism which is a relativist epistemological position so I think again undermines what they are saying. They are anti-realists they don't expect that there is a reality out there, they deny it. Then they try and teach people to try and change that reality. All looks a bit contradictory. (Brian)

Something that has also made him uncomfortable is to be working along with so many people in the Business School who don't have direct business experience. He would apply this to many of his colleagues who do take on the critical management studies label. Elizabeth also had issues with some members of the critical community. The certainty of some people's critique bothers her just as much as absolute faith in management theory:

The problem with the gang who are under the 'critical' umbrella is that whilst some of them can't bring themselves to believe in conventional management theory and like to explain why things go wrong, they do believe in their explanatory theories. So you get critical folk who are non-believers in management but fervent believers in Marxism, or Labour Process Theory, Radical Feminism, Deleuze and Guattari or Foucault ... The certainty of critique bothers me just as much as absolute faith in management theory. I prefer to hold my critique lightly and my doubt firmly. (Elizabeth)

Robert also expressed his feelings about other members in the critical field. He made a clear distinction between himself and those who he describes as teaching a more critical pedagogy:

It's a bit like I have got a two year old daughter and when she goes to school I want her to learn how to read and write and if some wacky hippy

teacher says they will pick it up playing in the sand pit I don't think I will be very happy. I tend to see a lot of that CMS pedagogy as hippies playing in the sand pit while the kids want to learn the basics of business. Self indulgent hippies those who talk about challenges of teaching etc, closet elitists. (Robert)

Some educators had issues with the whole 'X's' management learning thing 'it strikes me as a kind of piety which I don't always find helpful'. Also some CMS people's political pronouncements were described as meaningless and hypocritical because they don't do at work what they say they do. For example, Catherine differentiates between those who talk about criticality and those who actually 'work with it'. She spoke of those who just theorise as opposed to those who are interested in what it means in practice. She identifies herself as someone who is interested in both the content and process because of the experience and background that she has:

I find really interesting is where the notion of critical thinking and critical theory come from. It's a brilliant starting point but I never get a sense that any of these people and I mean this warmly, that they have actually done it. They have talked about it, they may have embedded in terms of their education programmes but I don't ever get a sense that they've actually got their hands dirty, worked with it and also the dynamics of that. That's not to say everybody but a handful who I get a sense write about it but write about it as it informs practice rather than just theorise about it. (Catherine)

However, whether or not CMS is a marginal activity was questioned by some. James cited the example of the bigger attendance at the conferences compared to the British Academy of Management. He also felt that perhaps some of the things we say in the hope that it will remain marginal is that CMS is a marginal area. He also felt that it might have become more complex and perhaps as a result more meaningless.

John pondered the question as to whether the 'CMS' label has run its course. He saw the institutional value of the label for people who are in departments where there isn't this kind of work. The CMS division of the Academy of Management also has helped legitimise for people who might be isolated. He sees a paradox here in that it is a pivotal moment to get this stuff into the mainstream and it could be the moment to redefine what business schools are. In that context he wonders

'will it hold us back –because there is this thing that's different to the other stuff which is called critical'. However, he sees a problem with marginalisation:

CME people have turned in on themselves and do what people on the left always do.....split into groups, fighting and defending against quite minute differences, theoretical nuances, political positions, don't get anywhere because it becomes an internal conversation. Slight worry is that the institutionalisation of Critical Management mitigates against this wider set of engagements. (John)

John also felt that he is oscillating about keeping the name separate:

Anyway it does not matter because it will do what it will do. Things have changed, ideas will not go away regardless of what happens to the label. Ambivalent about label because of tension between question of marginalisation and giving a home to those who otherwise be marginal. Don't know what the answer is. (John)

However, Brian was of the opinion that 'CMS will fade away':

It was rather a silly exaggerated point of view by a number of academics who don't like management, who keep a distance and arrogantly think they can go in and insult managers in front of students. I know a number who do it. There is one in particular whose practices as a professor I totally deplore. ...but he is a friend and I tell him that to his face and we are still friends. So I am not here having a go at people who are my rivals and enemies. I think in the CMS camp there is not one of them that I am not friendly with but they know particularly with the more extreme stuff and one in particular who gets up and storms managers, I am just in contempt of it. (Brian)

However, he recommends that the recent crisis gives us a chance to be good social scientists making an input as people who look hard at the evidence at what went on:

Some of the stuff say a year ago I might have been teaching and said about senior managers do this and that and students would just look at me and he is just exaggerating. Now they look at me and say I know that's what goes on because we have seen the evidence of what goes on with the senior bankers. But if we go in there and say it's a capitalist plot against the workers. If we go in there to say they are all bastards, they are all crooked, this and that, we will get absolutely nowhere. (Brian)

Also the role of Business Schools was also discussed in this context. John mentioned how they could do much more in the public domain in particular to speak about the disaster of business culture over the last 30 yrs. Notwithstanding all the issues discussed here it was expressed that the biggest issue really is the extent to which business schools stay in a university. So long as business schools are in universities there is going to be some room for critical work. According to David 'the biggest threat is for business schools is to be taken out of universities or to become complete cash cows within universities'. However, James believed that CME can provide one answer to the question of what is relevant in management education. There is a network of interesting people in the field that he feels he can work with that helps him sustain his own interest and commitment to it. That he believes is not going to go away. However, he is clear about what's important in relation to CMS:

It can get bigger and it would be fine if it did. In a way it does not matter. What matters is that some of these issues and questions that we have talked about are sustained and the recognition of their importance to schools of management and business schools are sustained. (James)

Also at an individual level the relevance of self-reflection as an educator was discussed. Questioning what our jobs as educators are and what we are trying to do was stressed by Catherine. This question is also at the heart of my own research:

If you look at your job description, why are we doing CMS. We could deliver what we have to do in a very functionalist normative way and that is us doing our job but obviously it doesn't feel like that is enough. So are we doing it because we like it, are we doing it because we really do want to make a difference? I think these are the questions we have to be asking ourselves. (Catherine)

However, Catherine questioned the impact that CMS has had on the wider community. She feels from her own experience that it works on an individual level but questions how that difference gets translated beyond individual practice. She quotes from a conference participant who said 'we open things up but we don't offer solutions in terms of a way forward. As a result, she suggests that CMS has huge opportunity but it should not perpetuate the same.

CMS was radical and was a pedagogy of its time but it also needs to innovate and move on in terms of its impact in terms of the various forms we are working at but making a difference. It needs some evaluation methods and I don't mean mechanistic. I think you can measure hard stuff but I think we need to be addressing some of the softer stuff both in terms of the current economic climate as well as the political context we operate in. I think CMS has potentially a great future but it is potentially whether we want to take that or whether we just want to teach or just pedal the same. I think there is a danger that's just what we do and we only do it in an educational context as opposed to an organisational context as well. (Catherine)

However, regardless of how educators perceived their critical identity, many spoke about its timely relevance as a 'pivotal moment' and 'a lot to play for now' in the midst of the financial crisis. It has the potential to 'open up questions about the relationship between business and society and the nature of the polity that we live in'. One educator asserted that it was easier to have conversations about the politics of business and business education, which critical people wanted to have but have been quite marginal. Many educators believe that it is not a question of relevance or irrelevance but relevant to what and whom? (Grey, 2002). Therefore in relation to being relevant to whom I asked the question about how critical educators can reach a wider audience through their work. By a wider audience I mean research focused academics, teaching focused academics and the general business community. It was acknowledged by many that relevance should be to a potentially wider constituency. As a result, it was suggested that there should be a connection with a much wider world and a more variegated set of interests. How CMS/CME is communicated is something that needs to be addressed according to educators. Zald (2002) also stresses that regardless of whether CMS is fated to be a marginal activity or can take a central role it must find a way of getting its message across. John believes that this involves communicating itself differently. This includes communicating to academic circles and a wider terrain, as 'very few people would guess that this stuff was going on'. Making institutional connections outside the business school for example connections with policy makers, trade unionists and activists is key:

Where is that connection? As far as I am aware of it there is not a great deal of it. Finding a way of writing and talking and engaging which is more accessible. This is true for mainstream academics. Critical people

could learn from the mainstream about how you articulate. When are we going to have the first critical management education guru? (John)

It was mentioned by John that the future potentially is healthy but the question was raised about what needs to be done 'Is CME going to go into the space that has opened up? If so it as to be outward looking in a way'. John also referred to the relevance of the North American Journals. He stressed how they had zero interest to any management practitioner. He saw a problem with adopting the American journals as gold standard as it was seen as being very damaging because of the inaccessibility:

How many senior executives would get anything out of reading an article in the Academy of Management Review. Critical work at its best can speak directly and very informatively to the experience of people in organisations whether managers or not. Making those connections, which is important. (John)

James and Tracy also spoke about trying to write not only with academics in mind but also with practitioners in mind. Critical writing has previously been criticised for being too theoretical and abstract (Cunliffe, 2009). However, to now have a critical division in the Academy of Management is also seen as an opportunity to give additional credibility and profile.

It has also been suggested that we as management educators need to be more reflexive about what we are doing. A question was raised about the recent controversies and whether that is a response to management education or a lack of criticality in management education and a lack of responsiveness in teaching people:

Is that what we do? Do we actually educate managers to apply particular techniques without consideration of their impact? I think CMS/CME can play a role in the world today in many different areas. We are just not very good at being able to incorporate that within our programme. There are some critical programmes around but it's not necessarily embedded within the programme itself. I think to make a difference it needs to be embedded in the whole programme. It does not mean to say that all you teach is critical stuff. You can teach mainstream stuff, the mainstream stuff is one alternative here is another. (Tracy)

Also as a consequence of the financial crisis it was also discussed as to whether there will be some changes to what some students are encouraged to study. David sees evidence for this already in relation to mainstream textbooks incorporating more of a critical approach. He feels that this is what reviewers and publishers are requesting in response to what has been happening in the last few years. However, he warns that this is just content and there is a danger that people will just read it and re-gurgitate it and forget it. He believes that such ideas need dialogue and reflection. Perhaps Paul's suggestion of using alternative teaching methods which don't consist of standing up and telling managers what to do out of a critical perspective but working with them in something like action learning is a way forward? However, this raises the question as to how such critical approaches can become more prominent in Business Schools?

As a result, the role of training educators was discussed in the context of reaching a wider audience. How relevant is training educators in critical approaches in management education? In asking this question I was thinking about myself as someone who is new to the field and wants to learn more about it. There were mixed opinions on the subject. Some had concerns about the quality of how such training would be delivered. Also some spoke about current programmes for new lecturers already providing training in approaches to teaching. However, it was suggested that the formal and informal networks that go along with training are just as important. As a result, many spoke about the networking opportunities for research students at conferences etc. The importance of academic leadership was also highlighted. However, Sally would recommend training as long as it is not badged as critical. She feels that it would add to the potential toolkit as a professional lecturer that you can use action learning, critical reflection and problem based learning. Another use she suggests would be to gain an understanding around the power relationships with students. She feels that many lecturers are uncomfortable with facilitation getting down from the pedestal, which she describes as being scary and uncomfortable. This is another reason she believes that such training would be relevant to a lecturer's development. However, Catherine disagreed with the notion of training as she believed that most HR departments wouldn't know what it means as it is not mainstream in most people's thoughts. Although she believed it was an interesting concept, it

was thought to be fraught with contextual issues. She thought it would be far more helpful and constructive if newcomers learnt from co-training. This is how she herself was trained. She spent 3 years co-training before she began tutoring on a programme. Lily described this as an apprenticeship or community of practice having worked on the same programme. Overall there was mixed opinions from educators about the role of training educators in critical approaches.

From the discussion above the role of criticality and the wider society is an important issue for educators. However, their critical identity and its role in society differed amongst educators. Some were comfortable using various labels to help identify their work whereas others felt that the labels were too simplistic and narrowly defined. Distinctions were also made between those who were more influenced by critical pedagogy and those who were more politically influenced. Some had very little interest in critical pedagogy and did not find it helpful. Others were of the opinion that being critical involved a more pluralistic approach rather than stressing your own political views. The future direction of the CMS label was discussed. Some felt that it was a pivotal moment for criticality in management education but there were mixed views on keeping the name a separate entity. It was felt more important that the critical agenda was sustained in Business schools than whether the name stays or fades away. However, many were of the opinion that there was a need to connect with a wider audience. The question of relevance to what and to whom was discussed (Grey, 2002). Making institutional connections outside the business school was also recommended. The accessibility of critical work was also questioned. Some highlighted the inaccessibility of some journals. The way some critical educators write was also questioned. A recognition that it was important to write with academics in mind as well as practitioners was stressed. The need to be more reflexive about what and how management educators are practising was important in the context of relevancy. Many educators developed their own critical content but some stressed the need for a more critical approach in mainstream texts. Some had started to address this issue by writing critical texts in their field. In light of the financial crisis some had seen more evidence of a demand for a more critical approach in mainstream texts. The issue of reaching a wider audience of academic practitioners was also discussed. Academic leadership, networking and

conferences were recommended. There were mixed views about the role of training practitioners in critical approaches. However, it was suggested that co-training was invaluable to those who practiced action learning.

Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of both research questions. The questions explored how criticality is perceived and experienced by critical educators. The four themes were the critical effect on teaching, the student, the educator and the wider society. Within the effect on teaching the focus on content and or process had implications for how critical educators practiced. From the analysis it can be seen that there are two types of critical educator emerging from the data based on their focus on the content and process of their practice. These are the critical experientialists and the critical traditionalists. The overall critical effect including both the benefits and challenges to the student and educator were explored. Lastly, with regard to the wider society educator identity and connecting to a wider audience were key factors.

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATION ANALYSIS –I

UNIVERSITY A⁴

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of the observations, which were conducted in the second stage of the research. This chapter will address the second question of the research study. How does criticality translate into the professional practice of critical management educators? From the 15 interviews that were conducted four were selected for potential research observation. (See Chapter III, p. 38) The sample chosen was based on the following criteria:

- the educators conducted their practice in a critical way.
- the educators were open to being observed

Of the four selected three were based in the UK and one in Ireland. From the sample of four selected two observations in the UK were conducted. It was not possible to conduct the other two observations due to the incompatibility of work schedules and commitments of both the educators and myself. In this section the first observation will be discussed. I have divided my findings into four main sections:

-WHAT WAS BEING OBSERVED

-WHO WAS THERE

-WHAT WAS INTENDED TO HAPPEN

-WHAT HAPPENED

⁴ UK University where Observation I was conducted.

WHAT WAS BEING OBSERVED

The module 'Leadership in Context' is a module on the full-time and part-time executive MBA programme in an elite university in the UK (University A)⁴. In addition the MBA alumni of the school frequently join this module to refresh and update their knowledge. The module was conducted over 2.5 days by a male professor (Tutor A)⁵ working in the school of management. The format for the module included an introductory lecture at the beginning. This was the only lecture given over the duration of the module. The design of the module included experiential learning to critically reflect on and examine group processes and dynamics in order to generate insights about leadership in organisations. The experiential exercises included the following;

- The Inter-Group Exercise
- The Whole Group Exercise
- The Temporary Learning Organisation Exercise
- The Application Groups

The programme also included reflection sessions on the exercises during the module. Students had already received module literature prior to their commencement on the course with some preliminary questions for reflection. The students also received supplementary material during the module. The main group room was arranged with groups seated at separate tables. The configuration of the room was changed during the module for the experiential exercises. The module was conducted using one main room for the whole group and smaller breakout rooms for the group exercises. Before the session began the room and module resources were organised by the tutor and an assistant. All rooms were bright and well ventilated and equipped with the facilities required on the day. Tea and coffee facilities were available to all students whereby they could leave their smaller groups and bring back refreshments at their convenience during the breakout sessions. IT resources were used for one Powerpoint presentation used

⁴ UK University where Observation I was conducted

⁵ Pseudonym for tutor who conducted module in Observation I.

over the 2.5 days. Flipcharts and a whiteboard were used also. The professor's office was adjacent to the main group room.

WHO WAS THERE

Participants on the programme included full- time, part-time and alumni students. I was present for the full duration of the module as a non-participant observer. There were 8 full- time, 5 part- time and 12 alumni students attending the module. This represented 15 male and 10 female participants. The group was diverse in terms of student background, culture and employment characteristics. Students' nationality ranged from the U.K., France, Spain, Germany, Pakistan, Thailand, Uganda, China and India. They worked in industries from banking, education, technology, manufacturing, consultancy, healthcare and the food sector. Their job titles included managers, directors, co-ordinators, specialists and officers.

WHAT WAS INTENDED TO HAPPEN

Leadership in Context is designed as an advanced programme on understanding leadership theory and practice. The word 'advanced' signifies moving beyond a mainstream interpretation of leadership in terms of individuals' skills and knowledge of 'how to do leadership' in order to include collective approaches, the importance of context, and the impact of emotions and power relations on leadership (University A, 2010). The specific aims and objectives of the module are can be seen in Appendix III.

WHAT HAPPENED

In the section **WHAT HAPPENED** I will be discussing the findings under the key themes arising from the observations over the duration of the module. The headings are ones that I have decided to use as they are based on my interpretations of the key themes during the module.

The four themes are:

- 1. Deconstruction of Learning Habits***
- 2. Creating an Organisation in the Classroom***
- 3. Learning through Anxiety***
- 4. Learning about Leadership -Being Critical***

These themes are inductive and have emerged from the following data sets. They are comprised of observation field notes, comments from student recordings, extracts from student evaluation forms and written feedback from student e-mail correspondence. The following convention will be used to capture the voice of the students.

* direct quotes from the observation

** direct quotes from the student evaluation forms

*** direct quotes from student e-mails

In doing so the actual student group, which the individual belongs to, is also identified. i.e. Full-Time MBA, Part-Time MBA and Alumni. Tutor comments are also identified throughout. Quotes from participants are the actual quotes used. However, fictitious names have been included to protect anonymity.

1. Deconstruction of Learning Habits

'A lecture on why it is important not to lecture you'

In stage 1 of the research process I interviewed the tutor being observed about his teaching methodologies. He describes how his opening lecture with students is like delivering a health warning. The tutor lets the students know what they have signed up for and why it is different. He does this through the use of the lecture method and assures the students that this will be the 'one and only lecture' of the 2.5 days. Even though this was the only lecture given over the duration of the module it was a pivotal lecture in setting objectives and expectations. It was important for both the student and educator that these basic foundations were put in place so that further learning could be built upon.

From analysing this first and only lecture I observed it to be a form of deconstruction of learning habits (hooks, 1994). Here the tutor explains his rationale for the teaching methods to be expected over the coming days. The reason being for such a deconstruction is that students bring their own expectations into the classroom and a lecture is one of those expectations. As part of this deconstruction the tutor emphasised why he would not be lecturing throughout the module. He believes that it is not seen as a good model of learning about leadership. According to the tutor it is not effective because it does not deal effectively with the emotional experience and power relations of learning or leadership. The power relations that the tutor speaks of are illustrated in the following quote 'I speak, you listen, I choose, you comply, I know, you don't' These types of power relations are not what the tutor wants the student to experience over the module. The reason given is that if we learn about leadership from this particular way it reinforces a set of expectations about leadership that are unhelpful.

The approach taken in the module is what the tutor calls learning from experience. Rather than the banking model the tutor uses the problem-posing model by Paulo Freire. Again the tutor talks about using this approach at the interview stage of the research and how he was influenced by Paulo Freire. The rationale behind this

model is that there is knowledge among the group that can productively be shared and that the ability to share knowledge will help to transform the groups understanding of leadership. The tutor is interested in the groups experiences of leadership – ‘we each have our own narratives’. These stories are seen as being productive in helping with the understanding of leadership but also these stories can inhibit the group from learning and developing understanding.

Verbally during the lecture and non verbally in the course literature the tutor emphasises that ‘if your expectations are to find out how to become a better leader then this course is not for you’. This is the opposite of the more rational approach to teaching leadership. The more rational approach to teaching leadership is seen in more mainstream approaches. Here the focus is on how to become a better leader and the skills required. This model of learning is seen as a more dependent model of learning whereby a dependency model of educating leadership reinforces a dependent approach to leadership. For example, MBAs have been described as creating better followers than leaders (Gabriel, 2005). The tutor emphasises that the ‘leadership in context’ module is a different model of learning and leadership. Part of this approach is understanding that learning and leadership are relational processes that can help us understand the complexities of leadership. The tutor emphasises how positive emotions that encourage learning can be thought about in relation to leadership. These emotions include curiosity, patience, hope, empathy, the capacity to doubt things, desire, passion and sympathy. These are connected with our willingness to challenge assumptions. A main theme throughout the module is challenging the students to reflect and interpret what’s going on in action? This is further discussed in group work over the duration of the module.

As part of this deconstruction of learning habits the shortcomings of the rational approach to leadership are highlighted in the lecture. Students are asked if they would like to see ‘the ultimate slide on leadership.’ This is a list compiled from the literature on what various writers have articulated about what leadership is. The rational and instrumental approach to leadership is highlighted by a student expressing why he wants to see the slide ‘it’s a shortcut it saves me having to think about it’*. However, for one student they want to see the slide because they

feel that someone else has the knowledge and they don't feel that they are in a position to question what has already been written about.

..how do I match myself up against the wisdom? Coming from a position of humility. I assume somebody knows a lot more than me and I reckon I'd like to know because I suspect I'm not doing it very well. *(Jack-alumni student)

However, the tutor stresses that very often students' expectations of getting a 'list' comes from the way business education is written about and presented to the students. This 'technicist approach' as described by Holman (2000) emphasises skills and techniques. This is a common critique of the mainstream literature on management education. The tutor tries to introduce the student to a more critical content of 'leadership' than they would previously have been exposed to:

..pushed by what we read towards a conceptualisation of organisations and leadership that ignores a high percentage of what's actually happening in the organisation around leadership and leadership dynamics. We are pushed towards imagining that leaders behaviour is primarily positive, supportive and empowering, linking people together, inspiring, listening, communicating the vision. (Tutor A)

This expectation of wanting a list or 'how to guide' was repeated by other students during the module. In response the tutor asks the students to try and think differently about leadership. He challenges them to look at leadership not in terms of language but in terms of interpretation of experience or an image. An image of leadership is shown on screen and students are asked to imagine the story behind the image. He asks them to bring out the depth of the story that we imagine is taking place:

When we allow ourselves to shift from imagining that there are a set of words, competencies or key capabilities or performance factors and begin to understand that we can interpret situations very differently, we come to a complex understanding of what is happening. You can begin to see the way leadership in context works. (Tutor A)

Here the student is being asked to reflect and not given 'the answer'. This is a characteristic of the more critical approach to management learning (Holman,

2000). This opened up through discussion different ways of looking at leadership for the student. However, throughout the module some students wanted to know 'what we would be taking away from this module'. The educators in their interviews also articulated the instrumental student culture. However, in response the tutor emphasised the characteristics of this type of learning:

The more you are able to open yourself up to the possibilities of acting in this safe environment, the more you are going to learn from it. The more you give to participating in this temporary learning organisation the more you are going to get from it. (Tutor A)

However, one student struggled with this approach:

I would feel an obligation to this group, I would be wanting them to get what they wanted and that would please me.....but I don't sense that in you, I sense in you ..It's there if you want it, you get it. I perceive you are here to help us learn something ...I would take responsibility for that. I would be wanting it to work. That would be my motivation for getting up that morning. To come and see a group of people I have got something clever to help them get for themselves. Whereas with you I don't perceive that. That does not seem like leadership to me that sounds like it's on the floor go get it if you want it. Leadership for me is to get us to a place. I'm intellectually struggling with the disconnect... Very easy to say its there if you want it, the profits are all out there go find them for yourselves and I'll be looking at the results. *(Jack-Alumni Student)

In response other students try to highlight what the benefits of the more critical approach are:

'Are you able to share your issues... Do you expect to be fed or give a little in order to get something.' *(Paulo-Full-Time MBA student)

'Leadership is about experience about being open and learning. It is not a checklist that you have to perform.' *(Isobel-Part-Time MBA student)

Comparisons were made by one student in relation to previous ways of learning and how this critical approach was contrary to previous experiences of learning:

A difficult journey to go through because this specific module is contrary to the whole of the MBA. The way we are being trained generally is go and do your finance module, you take that and you go into the workplace and do your profit and loss. You have a very concrete and tangible end

game. This is very philosophical and it is difficult to go through this experience because it is contrary to what an MBA is about for a lot of the other modules and also a lot of people would say, the real world is like. * (Alex-Part-Time MBA)

However, for one student it was this approach that was the most effective:

That's the whole crux of it. If you think the MBA is about managing people but you don't know and are not self-aware yourself then you are completely as far as I'm concerned lost the point. What was the point in doing all the other modules if you cannot understand yourself and the way you relate to people, because how are you going to get the best results from them by just cracking the whip? *(Anne-Alumni Student)

Also measuring the 'value' and looking for tangible results from the course were a frequent theme raised by some students. Perhaps this reflects the instrumental nature of business students as described by Ottewill and MacFarlane (2003). Ultimately some students just wanted to know 'At the end of 2.5 days what are we expected, what do we hope, what do you the lecturer hope that we take away. ' * (Michael-Alumni Student) Also wanting to measure the value and outcome of the learning was important to some students:

Do you have a mechanism to touch base with people to see how they are doing? ..Ultimately everything that you do has to have a purpose. If you can measure it is fine.' * (Pierre-Alumni Student)

In response to the instrumental objectives of the student, the tutor spoke about the value that the module could make in the workplace:

Think about it instrumentally how has particular aspects of the experience made a difference to my individual understanding as to what's happening to me as a leader can be measured. The social capital can be measured. What are the social processes that are mobilised within my organisation, my team that I can recognise as a result of having this kind of experience? The social dynamics of this group are similar to the type of social capital issues we face in organisations. (Tutor A)

However, for some the value of the module was not seen as something that needed to be measured:

But you are very analytical and it is coaching as well. I think sense making, trying to sense what is around the body language, I got a lot of points from it to be honest. Well, it was like wow actually. *Isobel-Part-Time MBA

The tutor also stressed that the learning may not be instant, 'It maybe 3 days to 2 months from now that you suddenly realise that something happened that made a difference to you'. (Tutor A) This was particularly evident in one student who struggled with the approach and expressed his anxieties and frustrations during the module. However, by the end of the module he acknowledged that he found the time well spent 'the final juxtaposition of personal feedback and a problem was actually very helpful. I felt the time well spent'. (*Jack-Alumni Student) Overall from the findings it can be seen that some students embraced the deconstruction to a new way of learning whereas others had doubts and wanted something 'tangible and of value' to take away.

2. Creating an Organisation in the Classroom

There were four experiential exercises during the 2.5 days of the module. Each exercise had the potential to create organisational behaviour and dynamics in the classroom. By this I mean the behaviour in the experiential exercises very often mirrored the behaviour and dynamics experienced by individuals in organisations. Firstly, the Inter-Group exercise highlighted how different groups perceive themselves in relation to others. The boundaries that the groups erected between themselves are often evidenced in organisations between departments and functions etc. The Whole Group exercise highlighted the conscious and unconscious in the classroom and how group dynamics in organisations affect the group and the individuals within them. The exercise is intended to reveal how quickly (and unconsciously) implicit rules and expectations are brought into groups. The exercise is designed to help students to engage with the emotional and political dynamics of the group, and how these create structures for action and inaction. The Temporary Learning Organisation exercise allowed the students to

take on organisational roles and make decisions amongst the power, emotion and politics within the temporary learning organisation. It is designed to help students understand the emotions generated in the organisation; what makes it function and malfunction; the limits and possibilities of leading change; and the ability of its members to communicate, contribute and add value. Finally, the Applications group exercise allowed students to reflect on the whole module in relation to their own behaviour and others (Tutor A, 2010)⁶.

According to the tutor the classroom provides a rare opportunity to highlight the contextually specific ways in which collective dynamics, emotional responses and social power relations within class combine to promote or to prevent learning:

Reflecting on behaviour in learning groups helps us to better understand behaviour in organisations. It provides us with a safe environment with which to explore difficult organisational issues like power, conflict, feelings, risk, confusion, fear etc. (Tutor A, 2010)⁶

The role of the tutor was very important in creating ‘the organisation in the classroom’. The exercises included both smaller groups and the full module group. For example, the tutor facilitated the formation of smaller groups for the inter-group exercise comprising of alumni, part-time and full-time students. In comparison to the temporary learning organisation the tutor allowed the students to select certain group members to fulfil specific roles for the group. Such similar activities could be performed in real life organisations. Each exercise was preceded by instructions communicated verbally and in the written literature given to students. Each of the experiential exercises was followed by reflection sessions. Also at the beginning of day two and three the students had an opportunity to reflect on the previous day and communicate their comments/feelings. Overall the tutor was observed to be what I would describe as ‘friendly at a distance’. He introduced himself at the beginning and welcomed everyone in a professional manner ‘Good morning nice to see you’. He always acknowledged peoples contribution with a thank you or very good point. He stayed present in the room for most of the group work but only intervened when requested to by a group. He

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

went to his office when one exercise required each group to break out into separate rooms but remained available at all times. He did not have lunch with the students and remained in the classroom area for the tea/coffee breaks. His body language was calm and relaxed at all times. This was especially evident when one student made remarks about his lack of preparation. He was friendly and used humour where appropriate. Students were given the time to reflect after all group exercises. Silences were naturally allowed to develop and were never tried to be filled. At one point the silence elapsed to 60 seconds before the tutor moved on. Facilitation skills were important in knowing when to ask questions, raise particular issues based on events, moving on and allowing individuals the option to contribute or not.

He was observed to have a casual but professional approach. However, the casual approach appeared to some as him having little input whereas in fact he was giving them control. Very often the tutor was observed to answer questions with a question for the group to consider. For students looking for the answer this was frustrating for them. However, he did not give the answer but offered what he called 'my own feeling on that is'. He had a laissez faire attitude as to whether the student embraced this way of learning or not. If they did it was good if not it did not matter.

Some students wanted to be dependent on him but instead he wanted them to take control of their learning. As a result, using the classroom in this way posed challenges and opportunities for both the students and tutor alike as evidenced in their reflections. The dependency between the group and tutor was observed. The group expected the tutor to lead the learning process, yet he provides reflections on what is happening in the group. The tutor appeared to have very little input in the process but this was because he was giving the students the power to take control. The tutor provides the group with the chance to escape from the group's dependency on him as an expert in the learning process. According to the tutor the purpose of this is twofold. Firstly to provide a way of understanding one aspect of the nature of power in organisations. There are a variety of different structures that a group or organisation creates just by being a group. A group will quickly establish a framework of power, which sets out the boundaries (the possibilities

and limitations) of individual behaviour within the group. The tutor does not want to get in the way of this process. Second, for the group to take responsibility for what it wants to learn. Ultimately, in the long run it is not the tutor who will create the right environment for learning and change it is the group itself (Tutor A, 2010)⁶. I observed how he did this during the exercise. For example, he only maintained eye contact with the group when making a comment but avoids eye contact after making a comment. The tutor only spoke to make comments on the process of the task. For example, 'why do you have a need to break up this organisation before it has begun'? * Where comments of anxiety and frustration were made they were generally made after the exercise in the reflection sessions. For example, one individual questioned the role of the tutor. To him the tutor appeared to be abdicating responsibility for the exercise:

I would feel an obligation to this group I would be wanting them to get what they wanted and that would please me.....but I don't sense that in you, I sense in you it's there if you want it you get it...* (Jack-Alumni Student)

However, for one student the tutor's role was not seen as an abdication of responsibilities but one of usefulness 'you hardly said three words during the session but when you did people said lets reconsider' * (Charlotte-Alumni Student). As a result, some of the students were observed to be happy to have more control of their learning whereas others were waiting and wanting to be controlled. Therefore a key characteristic of the tutors practice was giving more control to the student for their learning. Some wanted that some didn't and some weren't sure yet.

3. Learning through Anxiety

Some emotions are particularly important in terms of learning and leadership. The tutor discusses the importance of anxiety for learning and leadership. According to Vince (2010) anxiety is part of learning whether you are a tutor or a student. Such anxiety in the context of teaching and learning can have both 'paralyzing and productive effects' (Vince, 2010, p. 30). For example, anxiety can provide the

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

energy necessary to take risks as well as underpinning the fear and desire to avoid performance. The tutor explains how we can use the uncertainty of the unfamiliar or new situations to take the risk to do what we want to do. To put ourselves into that situation that confronts expectations and struggle throughout the process. Anxiety can take us to a place of authority and insight. Authority is what we feel inside when we do something we are committed to, we feel we are right-convinced we are making a difference. This comes from anxiety and a willingness to take risks and to struggle. However, sometimes the risk is too great and takes us to flight or fight instead of uncertainty and risk. It can take us to avoidance and denial –can reinforce itself to defensiveness and resistance against new things/learning and change. (Tutor, A)⁶

This learning through anxiety theme was observed particularly on day 1 through a group exercise. This group exercise was called the Whole Group Exercise. The exercise is designed to help managers to engage with the emotional and political dynamics within organisations. (Tutor, A) The exercise belongs to the ‘group relations or systems psychodynamics’ tradition of experiential learning (French and Vince, 1999). Psychodynamic perspectives illuminate approaches, which differentiate between behaviours and activities geared towards rational task performance and those geared to emotional needs and anxieties (Trehan and Rigg, 2007). It is an exercise that is aimed at revealing the emotional and political ‘dynamics’ of the group and how these create structures for action and inaction (Tutor A, 2010)⁶. The exercise was run for 75 minutes and after a short break a 60-minute plenary took place to debrief the event. The exercise was conducted with all members taking part in one group seated in a large circle with the tutor amongst them. At the start of the exercise the tutor begins by saying:

This session is the whole group task. It will finish at...The task is for the group to decide and the management of the task is with the group. Your tutor will be commenting only on the process. * (Tutor, A)

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

The students reacted to the exercise in a number of ways. The following is a summary of what I observed:

1. Some people's body language conveyed impatience, frustration and annoyance with the exercise.
2. A main source of anxiety related to feelings of wasting time for the participants. Comments from students included; 'lets talk about holidays' 'it's like an AA meeting and 'lets come back at 3.00 pm'.
3. Some wanted more clarity and structure about the exercise. Others looked perplexed and did not know what was really going on but just went along with the process.
4. A perceived lack of preparation by the tutor was also commented on 'the preparation may have taken hours to do-those slides'. The student was referring to the previous lecture and suggesting that this part of the module did not have much preparation by the tutor and therefore it was a waste of time being there.
5. There was also an urgency to create a structure and do something. Some students started to introduce themselves to the group to fill in the silence
6. There was also conflict and disagreement about what to do. However, some still wanted to introduce themselves regardless of what others thought. Some students suggested splitting into smaller groups whilst others wanted to stay in the larger group.
7. Some students were more vocal than others and made their presence known. One student expressed their frustration with another member by saying 'I have an assignment -you are taking over'. *(Alan-Full-Time MBA student).
8. Some people started to take control of the task and talk about leadership issues.

It is important to note that the tutor did acknowledge that not all groups behave in the same way during the exercise. However, the exercise did highlight how the group responded to uncertainty. It revealed how some people needed to lead and how they needed to get the task done. It showed how people filled the silence to reduce the anxiety within themselves and the group. It was an exercise that explored emotions, communication styles and politics within the group. In that way I observed an organisation, which was created in the classroom but behaving like a real organisation. It was notable that the tutor was not challenged directly about any part the exercise or their frustrations about 'what they were supposed to be doing'. This may have been because he told them that he would only be making comments on the process. However, this was surprising considering the level of frustration in the room. This was especially from the managers who felt that they were 'wasting time'. The tutor had given the students the power to manage the task but they kept physically looking at the tutor for guidance and

structure. However, the students remained in the group and completed the exercise. Perhaps this shows an unwillingness to challenge authority as the tutor was still seen as the one with the power. This highlights the importance of tutor position, reputation and trust in conducting critical experiential exercises like this. The tutor also acknowledged that a less senior educator might find this more difficult to achieve.

On reflection of the whole group session one student spoke of still being confused on day two of the module:

I tried to explain to people last night what I had been doing. I'm not quite sure what I have been part of. I think that maybe at the end it will fit into place. Don't know what I am doing, not quite sure where I am, in a nice way not unpleasant, it's fine. *(Caroline-Alumni Student)

However, the tutor highlighted how it was okay to doubt and be confused. A definition of learning for him was the capacity to doubt those things that seem unquestionably true. This is because he believes that doubt and confusion is a very important part in the process of learning because what we imagine to be true changes over time. This is another example of what it means to be critical whereby the tutor expresses that it is okay to question our assumptions.

3. Learning about Leadership -Being Critical

One of the outcomes for some students was that by being open to the process of learning through anxiety they became more authoritative on the subject of leadership and how they could apply this in their workplace. These students had embraced the challenge and began to show examples of criticality in the classroom. There are many definitions of being critical and it was interesting to see how the students expressed what criticality meant to them. For some students they articulated how they were able to critique what was going on around them and how the experience affected them. This reminds me of Barnett (1997) and his definition of 'Being Critical' which includes a critique of knowledge, self and the world. The implications of this were a critique of not only of themselves, but their work practices also:

I found it really interesting looking at other peoples responses. I was thinking about how I interact with other people in different organisations... I was really enjoying the experience but some people were getting quite angry with the experience and really getting frustrated with it saying why are we here, we should be learning about leadership. I think some people are still looking for the positive traits and negative traits for a leader. ..You can't say that a leader is these things and what was interesting for me was that this was mirrored by the whole exercise we did yesterday. Lots of different people trying to lead the discussion ...but they were all doing it in different ways. * (Alex-Part-Time MBA)

Another definition of being critical is that it is not about looking for an answer or solution but asking questions about assumptions that we make (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004). For one student a conversation during a group exercise facilitated critical reflection of a problem:

What I think is important is not necessarily to recite your experience to help the person but to question them-not let the person necessarily find out the answer herself but can connect with her environment to maybe move forward. I got an off site discussion with 'x' about a problem that I will have right now and..... he just asked questions and actually gave me a totally different perspective into it. It was fantastic and you did not bring any solutions as such you just questioned me the whole time. So he was really triggering and kicking things. *(Isobel-Part-Time MBA)

Being critical also involved an awareness of the social and political issues in organisations (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996):

The whole exercise is very interesting because I am working for myself..if I go to other organisations it is very interesting to see how the politics within that organisation affects the individual within the organisation but also how me coming into that organisation is different, how it affects other people and vice versa. * (Alex-Part-Time MBA student)

The temporary learning organisation exercise also exposed students to the political manoeuvres of others in groups and their consequences. For example, students in their groups had to choose members who would be members of the Senior Management Team. It was interesting to see why some members made decisions about who would be members of this group and the consequences of their decisions. Some groups chose people because they themselves did not want to become a member. One group member was told that she would be 'really good

at it' even though she articulated that she was uncomfortable taking the role. Other members chose not to volunteer themselves and admitted afterwards how their actions had consequences for others. They themselves were still being political and holding on to their leadership role by directing the way the group should behave. What they believed to be empowerment was actually painful for other people. The tutor stressed this by saying that as 'leaders we need to be aware of the destructive consequences of our own helpfulness.' On the other hand other groups members found the experience of being 'chosen' as a 'fantastic learning experience, really grateful for 'X' he really helped push me out of my comfort zone.' *(Melanie-Alumni Student)

Another definition of being critical involves reflection, reflecting critically on knowledge but also developing critical self-reflection and critical action (Barnett, 1997). The realisation by one manager of her lack of reflection in her job was expressed to the group:

You taking the time to articulate what you are feeling actually helps you because you don't often have time. I never really reflect on anything even in my personal life. I probably think it's a waste of time, probably not good. It is important for someone like me to be forced to do that.
*(Caroline-Alumni Student)

Being reflexive, questioning one's assumptions and actions (Cunliffe, 2009) was articulated by one individual. She began to critique her own practice. She spoke about how she was now questioning what she had intended to do in work that very same week:

On Thursday I'm out to deal with a big issue with tons of emotions with it and I'm thinking I kind of knew what it was but I'm not sure now. Perhaps, I need to re-jig what I was planning to do with this team on Thursday, so thanks for that. *(Anne-Alumni Student)

The applications group exercise in particular gave students the opportunity to make connections between behaviour in the experiential exercises and behaviour in the workplace. Criticality was observed when they reflected on their own and others behaviour. It also gave the participants an opportunity to give each other feedback. One senior manager revealed to her group how she now had a greater

understanding of certain employees in her workplace. She stressed how she now understands how the Asian people feel that she works with. Other examples of criticality included students highlighting areas they need to examine 'need to work on aloofness' and 'my leadership style lacks energy'. In particular one student who had voiced his anxieties very strongly early on in the module commented after the exercise 'great really enjoyed it and grateful to the people who are with me'. However, for one student they realised that they actually got more than they expected from the module.

I came here to learn about leadership what I learnt yesterday was about learning. A learning process. A different way of learning in this kind of setting, I learnt a lot about myself and how others operate. Not just about leadership as a concept.' *(Edward-Alumni Student)

Student Evaluations and Reflections

In this section I will discuss the students' written reflections on the module. Their written reflections comprised of a summary of the formal course evaluation forms and e-mails sent to me from the students. The tutor provided the summary evaluation forms completed by the MBA students to me. They included the results of a questionnaire and comments from the students. The e-mails were sent to me after the module. During the module I asked all the MBA students and alumni if they would e-mail me their comments/reflections on their experience of the module. The following is an overview of their evaluation/reflections.

62% of the MBA students including full-time and part-time completed the university evaluation form. This represented 8 out of 13 students. From the evaluations the average rating from 1 to 5 for the effectiveness of teaching methods used was 4.38. The experiential learning approach used to help students learn about leadership in context was rated at 4.75. Understanding of the subject increasing was rated at 4.5. The content stimulating and interesting was rated 4.63. The module aims and learning outcomes being met were rated at 4.5. However, it is important to note that the alumni students did not complete the evaluation forms. The alumni represented nearly 50% of the attendees. After the module I received comments from some the students by e-mail. Some were sent

months after the event. The advantage here was that they had time to reflect on the module and I also received reflections from the alumni students. I received nine reflections: four from the full-time MBA students and five e-mails from the alumni students. The following includes a summary of their reflections from both the e-mails and comments on the evaluation forms. Comments from the evaluation forms were anonymous and comments from the e-mails have been attributed with fictitious names to protect anonymity.

Satisfaction with Teaching Approach.

There were some very positive comments on the teaching approach:

‘Enjoyed tremendously the teaching and learning concept of this module. Fantastic!’ ** (Full-Time MBA student)

‘I found it fascinating’ *** (Peter -Full-Time MBA)

‘...tutors methodology is very creative’ ***(Pierre-Alumni Student)

‘This is an excellent mode of learning’ ***(Anne-Alumni Student)

Comparisons about other teaching methods were also made and the importance of using this design in other MBA modules:

It was a real leadership in context that went on during the 2.5-day session, as I can’t imagine now what it would be if we follow just the normal lecture structure we always have in other MBA modules. I encourage other MBA modules could be designed in experiential learning way where their contents are allowed to. Thank you! ** (Full-Time MBA student)

Reflections about wasting their time were also spoken about just like during the module. However, it is interesting to note that in the comments below students acknowledge that it took time to see the value of the module:

Thought on the first day I was wasting my time but it turned out to be the most valuable session for me to learn about myself and others. ** (Full-Time MBA student)

Many learners would have been shocked and made uncomfortable in the beginning, but as the course progressed into the 2nd and 3rd days it became more useful.' *** (Pierre-Alumni Student)

One student articulated how and why they benefited from the course. The willingness to trust, reflect and see the value of doing so was very important for this student:

This is an excellent mode of learning, as it requires the student to dig deep within one's own psyche if real benefits are to be achieved. ...Many people go through life, not just work without ever reflecting on the impact of their actions, expressions and methods of addressing issues. This course asks you to consider this deeply, but again you have to be prepared to do so and to believe in the value of doing so. *** (Anne-Alumni Student)

Dissatisfaction with Teaching Approach

Dissatisfaction with the teaching approach included student's feelings of wasting their time and a lack of 'tangible' outcomes:

I found the 'whole group' exercise a total waste of time. I still am unable to see how that process related to leadership in a tangible manner. The temporary learning organisation and the application groups were quite interesting but in reality were difficult to take seriously because it was such an artificial classroom set up. *** (Caroline-Alumni Student)

Also the lack of some kind of 'measurement' of the training was seen as a weakness of the course:

Since there is no 'tangible learning' summary that can be carried with students at the end of the course, the effect of the course is not long lasting, unless someone takes necessary steps to implement the learning experience into concrete actions on day to day work, in the immediate days and weeks following the training. *** (Pierre-Alumni Student)

Dissatisfaction also included frustration with a lack of structure in comparison to that which is required in the corporate world:

I would have preferred a more structured learning environment with some clearer goals and outcomes but perhaps that's the reality of working in a corporate environment for over 20 yrs where you simply don't have the luxury to sit around and do nothing! * (Caroline-Alumni Student)**

Some individuals preferred a more formal teaching approach:

I thought that the course should have been longer with more theory and formal teaching to augment these exercises but that the emphasis could still have been on these types of exercise.*
(Alan-Part-Time MBA Student)**

I did note however that two of the students that had difficulties embracing the approach came from a scientific and technical background. This may have explained their need for tangible, instant and measurable outcomes. However, one student reflected on those who did not embrace the approach in the module as those that probably need it most:

I personally found it very interesting but not unexpected that the students who discounted these methods were those most in need of reflection and true questioning of their own methods of management. * (Anne-Alumni Student)**

Perceptions of the Tutor

There were mixed views in the reflections of how the students perceived the role of the tutor. It is interesting to note that in the following comment that the tutor style was perceived to be laid back but that the overall delivery of the module was successful in meeting objectives:

Unusual way to address the module but very efficiently delivered in this context. Leadership in slides would not have worked indeed! We had to take the lead and that is where we stretch ourselves in uncomfortable situations. Although 'X' appears to be laid back and almost too detached, his analysis capabilities have reflected on the group and I really enjoyed

how the experiential made me reflect on myself. *(Full-Time MBA student)

Another student acknowledged the 'powerful' approach of the tutor:

Tutor A's non-point scoring / unneedy style was key (not trying too hard to please is important in this - not being too earnest). This gets "powerful" people used to another way of being powerful. ***

(George-Alumni Student)

However, the tutor's style for one student was too far removed from the 'real world' and she felt that she could not relate to this 'typical' academic:

Unfortunately, I found the course tutor to be a 'typical academic' who seemed very sure of his own importance. I found him very difficult to empathise with and so focused on the esoteric guidance given by the tutor, this was a problem. Perhaps, I would have found it easier if the tutor had appeared to be more in touch with real life. ***(Caroline-Alumni Student)

As a result, the tutor appeared to be passive and disinterested by some and powerful, clever and insightful by others.

Diversity of Students

The alumni students represented just under 50% of the attendees. This mix added to the diversity in backgrounds and work experience. However, not all students shared this view. Their presence did not work at first for one student:

The presence of Alumni was useful but initially destructive in relation to this course. They didn't seem prepared for experiential learning, struggled to be open and clearly were uncomfortable. By they I mean a significant number to the extent that one just walked out! I found that this really got things off to a very bad start. I was frustrated not by the fact that there was disagreement in group exercises but by the inflexibility, lack of an open mind in some people and some patronising and disrespectful attitudes. But things improved vastly over the duration! **(Full-Time MBA Student)

In contrast, one alumni student found that there were some clear issues with the mix of method and participants. He felt that the MBA students present were not

strong enough to get the process. However, one of his fellow alumni believed that the mix of full time, executives and alumni gave the course its power:

The course attendees were a really interesting mix of people-lots of different nationalities and current and ex students. I did a modular MBA and I missed out on the international nature of some MBA courses due to the fact that most people on the course were from the UK. In fact the most I learned from the leadership course was from learning about the behaviour traits of some other nationalities, particularly Asia. I certainly feel that that has helped me since in my job. *** (Caroline-Alumni student)

Summary

Overall from the observations and written reflections received, the MBA students gave a positive response to the module and teaching approach. The alumni students were more expressive in their response to the teaching method. Some had their doubts and anxieties along the way and it took time for some of them to embrace the approach. Some of them were observed to be unsure as to what exactly they had learned as they wanted something tangible to take away. Others thought that that they had experienced a new way of learning about leadership. However, as the tutor acknowledged that even though the students were generally enthusiastic about the module it is important to bear in mind that a different group of people has produced the opposite reaction as well.

For some students the learning approach was a positive experience with a positive outcome. They went through the process of learning through anxiety. They were open to reflection and to suspend their usual habits of learning and leadership behaviour. They were learning-in-action. Their goal was to reach a position of authority or knowing. The experiential learning approach required them to challenge themselves to learn with and from the experience of others. The exercises challenged them to reflect on and to examine group processes and dynamics in order to generate insights about leadership and organisations. The module also invited participants to notice and to reflect on the emotions and

politics of leadership in the context of everyday organisational relations and practices.

The majority of students were enthusiastic about the approach. It was a 'fascinating, excellent, enjoyable, creative and different learning approach for them. However, it must be acknowledged that for some it took awhile to understand 'what they were doing'. It took 2.5 days for some students to see where they were going with the module. For others there was a mismatch between what they felt was needed in the workplace and what they were expecting to get on the course. There was a repeated theme of wanting 'something tangible' and not 'wasting time'. Some managers wanted solutions to problems or a checklist of what they needed to do to improve their leadership. For others they wanted to be able to measure in the future what they had learned. The instrumental and rational objectives of some students never went away. This may be because as some students had remarked that this was a different way of learning to what they had been used to. Also one manager admitted to not reflecting at all in either their work or personal life.

The role of tutor for some appeared to be laid back and passive. The shifting of power from the tutor to the student caused frustration and anxiety for some. Again this was at odds with how some senior managers on the course perceived themselves to behave in their work lives. This laid back appearance to some was associated with a lack of preparation and not wanting to empathise with the students. Although not perceived by everyone the role of the tutor was actually one of preparation and facilitation. Preparation was important both conceptually and physically in terms of module design and the learning environment. Students were given a written and verbal overview as to the approach to be taken and what they should expect and equally important what not to expect.

If you think that leadership is about being told what to do or telling other people what to do, then this module is not for you. If you hope to learn a prescribed set of skills that will make you 'a better leader' then you are likely to be disappointed in this module. (Tutor A)

As a result a comprehensive written course outline was given to students containing an overview of course objectives. Apart from the first lecture it was experiential exercises and reflections for the rest of the module. As a result the power shifted in the classroom from tutor to student. It was interesting to see how students reacted to this approach. For some emotions ran high and they were perplexed as to what they were meant to be doing. The experiential exercises highlighted examples of 'learning inaction'. Inaction resulted from the anxieties of not knowing what to do or what was expected. Inaction also resulted from the different method of learning. However, a key characteristic of anxiety is that it has both paralysing and productive effects (Vince, 2010, p.30). For example, for those who embraced this process of learning a degree of criticality was observed in them. They saw the value in reflection and how they could use the experience in their workplace. They began to see the importance of emotion and politics in the workplace. For others the teaching approach was at odds with their expectations of what the module should be about. They were more dependent on the tutor and wanted tangible outcomes from the experience. Undoubtedly an organisation was created in the classroom with organisational issues of anxiety, conflict, emotion and politics mirrored in the experiential exercises. For many this was a new and different way of learning in the classroom. The experiential exercises highlighted examples of learning-in-action and learning inaction. The experience of which for the student could be described as being 'from heaven and from hell' (Sinclair, 2007).

OBSERVATION ANALYSIS II

UNIVERSITY B⁷

In discussing the second observation I have divided my findings into four main sections.

-WHAT WAS BEING OBSERVED

-WHO WAS THERE

-WHAT WAS INTENDED TO HAPPEN

-WHAT HAPPENED

-WHAT WAS BEING OBSERVED

The observation was conducted in a UK university (University B) of two student groups. University B is a post 1992 University. Group 1 were completing an MA in Strategic HRM (MA.SHRM) and group 2 were completing an MA in Personnel and Development (MA.PD). The first group was chosen for the observation because the aims of the course emphasise a critical perspective throughout the programme (see Appendix IV). The second group was chosen as it had some elements of a critical perspective in two of the taught modules. The taught modules were Managing Development and Research Methodologies. Both programmes are designed to update student knowledge and skills in line with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) code of practice (see appendix IV). I attended the final 2 hr sessions of each course. The objective of both sessions was to chart each student's learning journey over the duration of his or her course. The objective of which was to inform the students when they came to completing an individual reflection paper. This reflection paper represented 10% of the overall marks for their dissertations. The room was arranged with individuals seated at separate tables. The configuration of the room was in a semi circle. Students were given instructions during the session from the tutor. They were required to chart their learning journey on flip chart paper. They were given markers; paper and stickers to use if they wished to chart their learning journey.

⁷ A UK University where Observation II was conducted

Each student was then asked to orally present their learning journey to the class using their individual flip charts as visual aids. They were asked to consider in particular, what it meant to be a critically reflective practitioner. This observation was different to University A in terms of institution type, tutor and student profile and modules being observed. As it was a reflection session the voice of the student is reflecting back on their experience of the module. As a result, I got the opportunity to see a critical classroom in action and also an insight into the critical teaching process that they had experienced.

-WHO WAS THERE

The tutor who taught on both of these courses conducted the reflection sessions. The total in the group who attended the final day session in group 1 of the programme were 11. This represented 4 males and 7 females. Group 2 represented 6 students, 5 females and 1 male. The groups consisted of individuals continuing their professional development in Human Resource Development (HRD) and Human Resource Management (HRM).

WHAT HAPPENED

In the section **WHAT HAPPENED** I will be discussing the findings under the key themes arising from the observations. The themes are inductive in that they have emerged from the data and are based on my interpretations during the observations.

THE THEMES ARE:

RECONSTRUCTION OF LEARNING

- Becoming Critical
- Being Critical

These themes have been generated from the following data sets. They are comprised of observation field notes, comments from student recordings and extracts from student reflection papers. The extracts are from a sample of 3 student reflection papers. The following convention will be used to capture the voice of the students.

* direct quotes from the observation of Group 1

** direct quotes from the observation of Group 2

*** direct quotes from the student reflection papers of Group 1

Tutor and student comments are also identified throughout using fictitious names.

Reconstruction of Learning

Becoming Critical

I observed over the two reflection sessions a reconstruction of learning. This reconstruction of learning was observed in the classroom through the critical practice of the tutor. It was also reflected on and articulated by the students during the sessions. The reconstruction of learning encompassed both the notion of becoming critical and being critical. Becoming critical was part of their learning during the course. Being critical was the result of this learning process. The students had gone through a process of deconstruction of previous learning and engaging in a new process or reconstruction of learning by the end of the module. Firstly, in terms of a deconstruction of learning, comparisons were made to the more mainstream and rational approach to management education that the students had experienced in the past. In particular, comparisons were made between the master's courses that they had now experienced and previous CIPD courses. Jessica said in her opinion that the (MA.SHRM) was a step up from the CIPD course in that you never challenged yourself as to why you had done things in a particular way. However, Deborah began to understand that there was no one universal truth. This in her opinion is in contrast to the positive perspective of the CIPD 'here's your best practice toolkit and take it and use it'. * However, for

Katie the module was also spoken of as being a challenging one because it was the one that made everybody think in a totally different way:

Up until doing the master's course you were told to learn, repeat take for granted that this is the correct thing...but if you go down the path of what you were taught to do, take it for granted, repeat it, it is not going to get you through, that's when you realise you are doing a master's. * (Katie)

The reconstruction of learning was observed from the beginning of the reflection sessions. An introductory lecture was given at the beginning of the session by the tutor. However, it was observed that this lecture was not used as a deconstruction of previous learning but was used as a way of crystallising the reconstruction of learning that had emerged during the module. The tutor referred to Michael Reynolds definition of criticality in the classroom, which was the same definition of criticality that she gave in her interview. It was also interesting to note that a lecture was also used as an introduction to the sessions in the other observation study and it too had an important role in communicating objectives. However, in contrast to that study the students were observed to be 'less tutor dependent.' They were not as dependent on the tutor but acknowledged her feedback and support. They commented about timely feedback, superbly supportive tutor and enjoyment of the discussions with the tutor and the group. Both student groups were found to be articulate, open and confident. It was also evidenced in the way the students articulated their reflections in a relaxed and non-threatening environment. From the beginning the students and tutor were observed to have an informal relationship. The tutor greeted each student and she inquired about their professional, academic and personal lives. They similarly enquired about her. Some not only greeted each other verbally but also sometimes even hugged. A classroom lunch was provided for each group whereby they continued their informal conversations. This was in contrast to the more formal approach in the other observation study whereby a friendly but more distant approach was used. A degree of trust and openness appeared to have been developed over the module. This was also observed in the way both tutor and student interacted. It was interesting to note how open and reflective the students were. Even though at times they were discussing their anxieties and frustrations with their work organisations, the atmosphere was relaxed and light-hearted. The tutor used

humour and engaged with it in the classroom, which contributed to the environment. She had a distinct and strong presence in the classroom, which was achieved through her voice and body language. She did say at the beginning of the session that the student may find it cathartic. Perhaps this was evidenced at the end of the session when one student commented 'we can now leave our baggage at the door'. *

Good facilitation skills of the tutor were particularly noted during the reflection sessions. Knowing when to intervene was crucial during the sessions. Students were given the time and space to reflect and then present to the group. There were interventions by the tutor only on request by students for clarification. During the presentations the students often got side tracked talking about issues relating to time management, work problems and general stresses of doing a master's. However, the tutor re-focused the students by intervening 'summarise what it means to be a critically reflective practitioner at this time. How would you explain it to someone else?*' Words of encouragement for those who were near completion of their dissertation were also noted 'you are nearly there'.* At certain points she invited the rest of the group into the discussion for their thoughts. It was observed that some of the students were anxious about being critical in their own organisations. Concerns were voiced about the future of being a critically reflective practitioner:

Who is my community of critical reflective practitioners in work? Feel like I'm on my own, on the edge, seeing loads of things to be done, where's my network, am I brave enough to open this can of worms and challenge it without that network on site. It has challenged my thinking. Should I change organisation? I feel like I'm on my own. I have the ability to question, in my nature, cannot just park it, feel like I need a support but I don't have one. * (Deborah)

As a consequence the tutor reassured them and acknowledged that it's common to feel like this, 'you are not the only one to talk like this'. However, she didn't just leave the anxieties and concerns with the student but promised to talk about them further at the end of the session. As a result, she guided them in looking at ways that they could be supported in becoming a critically reflective community. Overall there was a sense of concern for the outcome of their learning and how

they might use it in the future 'if it's a notion worth having and becoming how do you support being a critically reflective practitioner'. (Tutor B)⁸

Of course the students also provided another insight into the educator's practice when they spoke of their experiences of working in the action learning sets (ALS) during the course. The action learning sets were an integral part of their learning and becoming critical reflective practitioners. The sets met regularly to discuss member assignments and their research. Many students spoke about the positive aspects of the action learning set (ALS). Some recognised the contribution of both the tutor and students in helping them complete the course:

...the constructive and complementary feedback I received at that final set from both tutor and peers reinvigorated me and at last everything else took a back seat to the aim of submitting my dissertation on time.'
*** (Richard)

Working with other people in the action learning sets was empowering. Jennifer spoke of the confidence it gave her listening to other people's fears and hopes and that it wasn't just her that felt this way. Also questioning the experts view gave them confidence and this added a new dimension to their discussions. Louise enjoyed being with other people in that you could share ideas. The sets were also seen as being really useful because people could see what other people had done. Getting chapters read by the tutor and group members was also welcomed. The (ALS) helped people to keep focused. For example, Richard was inspired by two members of their action learning set in the way that they overcame personal and work related difficulties to their submit work. *** Reassurance from other group members in the (ALS) was also spoken of 'a lot of us were in the same boat not miles behind, valued the team, got along, helped one another out'. ** (Evelyn)

Others saw the sets as facilitating questioning which gets support. This may have been in contrast to what happens in their individual organisations. Another student thought that the sets facilitated learning from questioning. A form of learning that may have been new to them. The sets also highlighted power relations and hierarchies for some. A number of students spoke about how it had affected their

⁸ A pseudonym for tutor who conducted the modules in Observation II.

work. For example, from working in the action learning sets some students were being asked to get involved in projects. The student contact outside the action learning set days was also found to be supportive and facilitated the group becoming a community of critically reflective practitioners 'these networks and relationships were something that will extend beyond the life of the programme'.***(Amy)

However, the (ALS) did not work for everyone. Deborah thought the social process of the course was disempowering 'social processes made it worse for me, felt even more powerless, could see other people getting it.'* Some students felt on reflection that the group did not maximise the use of the seminars and action learning sets on occasions. Reasons given for this was that on a number of occasions participants either turned up late, not at all or unprepared. For others they acknowledged that the approach was relatively new and took time to adjust to. The critical language and terminology posed problems for some students. Feeling out of depth and not understanding the language was spoken about. Some referred to the difficulty of the language used in the module 'conceptual framework, reflective thinking, foreign language that you spoke that we did not understand for awhile'. *(Katie) For Amy it felt like landing on the moon and being lost in a new language. John described the critical literature as 'absolutely a bloody nightmare'. * He blamed academics for this 'I tend to feel that academics have the ability to complicate things, the language that they use, that never kind of goes away, kind of a club, not really my club'.* He felt that whilst his own organisation and the public sector broadly, are trying to connect with the general public and translate sometimes complex issues in plain English, academia appears to him to thrive on pushing the boundaries of the English language. Also, the writing in the field of criticality has been criticised in the past (Grey and Sinclair, 2006). However, some students believed that time helped them get used to the language.

Notwithstanding the challenges above, overall I observed how the students and tutor had become a community of critically reflective practitioners where learning was facilitated through the action learning sets. The culture I observed in the classroom through the common language that they used, bonds created and shared

values expressed, gave them a unique identity and sense of community. Many students spoke about the future of the action learning sets and hoped that the relationships within the action learning sets would continue.

Being Critical

The reflection sessions also provided an insight into the experience of 'being critical' for the student. This was an outcome of the reconstruction of learning discussed above. The students spoke about what it meant to be critical both inside and outside the classroom. For many students it was about questioning taken for granted assumptions (Reynolds, 1999). Susan spoke about 'having a deeper understanding of something that you might otherwise take for granted, it's not just taking what you read as gospel, be devils advocate'.* Amanda had a positive view of her organisation and wanted to question those assumptions. John explained that being a critically reflective practitioner 'helps you get under the skin of things as they may not be the way you thought they were'.* Michelle gave an example of the subject of leadership. 'I never considered things from the follower's perspective; my big mantra is now you can't possibly be a leader unless someone is prepared to follow you'.* However, Amy made comparisons about her meaning of reflective practice now and in the past:

My previous reflective practice has been centred on evaluation, lessons learned, solutions based and focused to organisational requirements. Moving to critical reflective practice has been a new learning process....I felt I developed the areas around questioning taken for granted assumptions and identifying and questioning both purposes and conflicts of power and interest. *** (Amy)

Many spoke about their identity as a critical practitioner as an outcome of their critical learning. Michelle referred to how 'it gives you a deeper understanding of yourself... not where I came from when I started the journey.'* For Louise it enabled her to add a different dimension to discussions in work. It gave her the confidence to question things in her organisation. The process also enhanced her self esteem 'being with other people where we felt we were talking about something clever, talking about clever things, it felt quite good'. * She even found herself telling other people that 'you should do it, the Master's'. She also got a

new job and would like to think that the master's was a contributory factor in her success. Evelyn gained an insight into work groups. She became 'more critical' as she became more frustrated by a group in work that she started to study the group instead of being just a member. Being critical for some people included wanting to inform or educate other members in their organisations 'I am contemplating how much I should encourage her to become more critically reflective'. *** (Richard) However, Sam saw criticality as being proactive and spoke about 'finding pockets of people who want to know about the challenges within the organisation and thinking those things through and finding ways of moving things forward'.* Self-improvement was also part of being critical for Emily. 'I always question things probably more now but I do it now in a better and appropriate way'.** Katie described being critically reflective as going back to the future 'look back at the research process what would you do differently, learn from mistakes'. ** She also felt that organisations could learn from that in that they are not critically reflecting.

Being a critically reflective practitioner for many students was also about learning power and politics within the organisation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2006). Articulating the challenges within an organisation when sometimes the organisation does not want to know caused anxiety for some. Deborah described herself as being once the shrill protestor 'throwing the bombs in all the time but now the tempered radical'* (Myerson and Scully, 1995). Her boss was somebody that if you challenged them 'you got knocked back and knocked back every time as her ability to listen and see others ideas was absolutely zero'.* She spoke about challenging her boss as being a political manoeuvre to take her on. Supported questioning within organisations is something that both the tutor and students articulated as being important. As discussed previously the tutor in allowing these anxieties to surface felt the need to support the students in finding ways of being a critically reflective practitioner. However, the tutor stressed how the choice is with the student as to whether such questioning would make them unemployed or unemployable. For example, thinking strategically about their position and raising questions about 'do I take this fight on today or do I leave it' reflected such student thinking. * (Deborah)

However, being critical also had challenges for some of the students. They were learning how to deal with this better through reflection. Jessica struggled with the questioning 'why' all the time 'you have a preconception of ideas about who are you to challenge somebody who has been looking at this work potentially for years and years in the field'. Reputation and not wanting to be perceived as always 'critical' was stressed. Some spoke about the importance of being the tempered radical rather than the shrill protestor. The old approach (being a shrill protestor) had got Deborah a 'bad reputation'. * However, irrespective of its merits too much questioning or challenging could lead to one being identified as a shrill protestor or professional suicide as described by Sam. *** Some students spoke about feelings of being alone and isolated in their organisations because of their need to be critically reflective. Both groups spoke about how the process had left them feeling frustrated with their job. It made some question their role and whether they should leave the organisation. Many articulated their frustrations with their own organisations for their lack of criticality 'why aren't we learning from this.'** However, being more insightful about the power and politics made some people question not only how they approach issues in the workplace but also whether they should just leave their organisation. Finding somewhere that they could fit in with better was an outcome of such criticality. For others it was about biding your time in an organisation until you are in a better position to make a difference. Getting support if not through the organisation then through a professional network was also discussed. Perhaps one student summed up criticality when he said that 'learning to question established approaches to HR was both challenging and stimulating at the same time and that the challenge for our 2009 cohort is to continue our critical reflection in our new community of practice'.(Richard)***

Summary

The observation provided an insight into the critical classroom and how it operates. The findings highlighted the reconstruction of learning that many of the students had experienced. Some students differentiated this way of learning from traditional/mainstream programmes. Some made comparisons to the more structured approach in other business education programmes. They had never

challenged or questioned the 'toolkit' prescribed by some of these programmes. The critical classroom that I observed had its own language, identity and shared values. These had emerged over the duration of the course. They used language like tempered radical, shrill protestor and aha and light bulb moment in delivering their presentations and in their written reflections. However, both groups mentioned the difficulty at first with the language of criticality (Cunliffe, 2009). The tutor's role was supportive and encouraging but not controlling. She created the environment where critical learning had evolved. Through her reassurance, encouragement, feedback and facilitation skills I observed an empowered group of critical students. Both groups spoke about the social processes and how the action learning sets had facilitated this learning. Some mentioned how they enjoyed the process. Only two students mentioned that they did not find the action learning sets useful. However, going forward from the master's it was also mentioned how some would like the action learning sets to continue in the future as a support to them in their careers. In a sense a learning community had been formed over the master's. Both groups spoke about the need for getting support within their organisations or outside networks.

Being a critically reflective practitioner had implications for students both inside and outside the classroom. For many it was about questioning assumptions and not taking things for granted in both their course work and workplace. Both groups spoke about their frustrations at work and lack of criticality from management. Learning about power and politics within organisations was also highlighted. It was also highlighted the importance of 'how to be critical' in an organisational setting. Many spoke about their identity and how being critical had raised questions about their future and the role of criticality.

On reflection I had observed a critical classroom in action and also the outcome of a reconstruction of learning. Both the tutor and students had a shared identity and had given me an insight into the process of becoming and being a critically reflective practitioner from both of their perspectives.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS

Reflecting on my own practice in management education initially prompted me to explore the field of critical management studies and its related field in education. Being new to the field I wanted to explore it from an educator perspective. It was through researching the educators who engage in its practice through interviews and observations that I began to learn more about what it is to be critical. The research was guided by three questions, which I have explored with practitioners in the field. By talking to practitioners I have learned about their perceptions of criticality and how they practice it. In doing so I have explored with them their background and intellectual journey. The pen portraits have revealed where their critical journey began. Although most of them practice in a Business School it was far from a business school that nearly all of them began. Only one educator had originally studied business in their undergraduate studies. Instead they undertook studies ranging from sociology, politics, psychology, English and medicine and theology. However, they all subsequently undertook further studies in the field of business. Also some educators unintentionally found their way into a Business School because there were more opportunities there at the time for their careers. It is also interesting to note that five of the educators completed postgraduate studies in the same Management School in 'University X'⁹. Their studies there have been influential in their critical perspectives and careers. Also two educators worked on the same programme in 'University Z'¹⁰ that proved to be inspirational in their careers.

Key writers that were mentioned as being influential to them in forming a critical perspective included; Freire, Giroux, Apple, Habermas, Willmott and Reynolds. However, the educators spoke more about being inspired by individuals that they had encountered during their careers or courses that they had attended or worked

⁹ 'University X' - A pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical approaches to its management teaching and learning

¹⁰ 'University Z' - a pseudonym for a post 1992 UK University using action learning methodologies.

on. It was very often through these means that they became inspired to explore further the field of criticality and its key proponents. As a result, the influences of the psychodynamic perspectives of the Tavistok Institute, action learning and experiential learning were key drivers for some. For others it was the interactions with like-minded people in their place of work and at conferences that inspired them. There was variation among their perceptions but there were also commonalities.

There was a common theme about criticality relating to questioning taken for granted assumptions about management (Reynolds, 1999). However, a distinction was made by some about being critical with a capital C and capital T or small c and small t. For example, within the field of critical studies distinctions were made between those who were more influenced by critical pedagogy and those who were more theoretically or politically influenced. Two educators within the group described themselves as having a left wing agenda and not having much of an interest if any in critical management education and its process of teaching. However, one educator stressed that it was definitely not about holding a particular political position. For most of the group where politics was mentioned it was more about political awareness and where power lies rather than what that position should be. Some mentioned that it is up to the student/manager to make those decisions and not the educator. It was interesting to note that emancipation was only mentioned by one educator as part of their perceptions/definition of criticality. They referred to the concept of micro emancipation where the student could make some small changes in their field. One educator thought that the idea of emancipation was outdated and too much to expect in today's classrooms. Also the importance of learning and critique was also mentioned as an essential element of criticality. Notwithstanding the fact that each educator had their own perceptions of criticality it was generally found that nearly all the interviewees welcomed an open perspective about what should be inside or outside the field.

However, when it came to answering the research question regarding translating their perceptions into practice there were differences in their orientations towards content and process. Such orientations were a key characteristic of how educators approached their work. Although it is fair to say that all educators focus on both

content and process to some extent. It became evident from the findings that some leaned more strongly to one or the other. Six of the educators were found to be more content focused and 9 more process focused. From the data analysis two ideal types of critical practice emerged. (Chapter 4, p. 64). These were the *Critical Experientialists* and the *Critical Traditionalists*. These are based on the educators' management education orientations. Their orientation is based on two dimensions:

- Content or Process

- Traditional or Critical

The content or process dimension relates to an emphasis on what or how they practice. The traditional or critical dimension relates to their orientation to process. Traditional process includes using more of the lecturing method and critical process includes using more experiential teaching methodologies. The following is a summary of both critical educator ideal types.

FIGURE I: CRITICAL EDUCATOR TYPE

CRITICAL EDUCATOR TYPE	CONTENT	PROCESS
1. CRITICAL EXPERIENTIALIST	<i>CRITICAL</i>	<i>CRITICAL</i>
2. CRITICAL TRADITIONALIST	<i>CRITICAL</i>	<i>TRADITIONAL</i>

1. CRITICAL EXPERIENTIALIST (*type 1*)

The characteristics of this educator are that they use both a critical content and process in their teaching. However, the process of their teaching is just as important as the critical knowledge that they are sharing. They engage with experiential learning that can include action learning and reflection. This type of educator emerged from the findings from the study. The value of this approach is that the classroom dynamics of action learning and other experiential exercises can be powerful in creating an organisation in the classroom. Such an approach has also the potential to raise questions about management practice and its relationship with society. The observation findings also highlighted how a different understanding of learning can be generated using this approach. The role of the tutor is paramount in creating this environment both conceptually and physically. Also the potential for learning communities to develop inside and outside the classroom can arise.

2. CRITICAL TRADITIONALIST (*type 2*)

The characteristics of this educator are that they prefer to use a critical content in their teaching but remain loyal to the more traditional process of learning e.g. lecturing. They are less interested in and /or unfamiliar with experiential techniques. Their main focus is on the critical content of their teaching. They emphasise a more theoretical and or political focus in their practice. This type of educator emerged from the findings of the study. The value of such an approach can help educators and students reveal the complexities of management and its impact on society. Such an approach to critical content also exposes the student to a side of management that is either less prominent or non-existent in mainstream approaches.

It is important to acknowledge that other educator pedagogies such as those by Giroux (1981) and adapted by Reynolds (1997) have also explored the relationship between content and process (Chapter 2, p.19). The research provides further evidence of this relationship in the field of management education. However, Reynolds describes pedagogy as radical whereas in the critical educator types above the words radical are not used. The reason for this is that the findings did not suggest that the educators used the language of being radical when describing their critical practice. Therefore it is appropriate that the ideal types reflect the educators' practice in the language used as well as the practice. The significance of the ideal types is that they reflect critical management educators' orientations to their field. It also enables us to examine and question- what I am teaching? why am I teaching it? how am I teaching it, why this way? and in whose interests am I teaching? (Mc Lean, 2000).

As a result, conducting the research reflects my own research journey in that I have explored a field of management education that was new and unfamiliar to me. It has enabled me to recognize where I am currently focused in my teaching and also where I might focus my teaching in the future. As a result, reflecting on my current practice I would identify myself as a 'Practical Experientialist'. The reason I have chosen this name to describe my practice is that although I use experiential techniques they may not be used in a critical way. The content would be more mainstream with a practical emphasis. It would involve a preference to depart theory and skill based knowledge with experiential techniques. Critical content would not be used but traditional management content would be used in conjunction with practical/skill-based content. This would also be the type of practitioner that I would have previous experience of as a student and as an academic. Therefore as a 'Practical Experientialist' I have explored criticality in management education from an educator perspective. I have wanted to learn more about why and how such educators engage with the practice. In doing so I have been exposed to the realities of teaching in this way. In conducting the research I have been endeavouring to define a practice for myself. The research has given me a new lens to view my practice. As a result, I now see myself as the emergent 'Critical Experientialist' (*type 1*). However, if I decide to pursue this form of practice there are a number of factors that need to be considered.

The Critical Factors

In answering my research questions regarding perceptions and experiences in the field the findings suggest a number of factors to consider when engaging in a critical approach. Such factors would be useful to educators to inform their practice. The factors are particularly relevant to those who might be considering adopting a critical approach. Therefore as a potential emergent critical practitioner what might those factors be?

- **How do you identify yourself as a critical educator?**

From the findings it was established that there are many perceptions of being critical. As an educator who wishes to pursue this approach what might your critical approach be? What kind of critical management educator do you aspire to be? Do you engage with a criticality with a capital C and T or small c and small t? Do you take a political perspective or a more pluralistic one? Will you call yourself a CMS, CME, critter, critter-lite or critical realist or pragmatic realist? Will the label provide 'a nice home a protective belt' to work within. Will it be useful in helping you to 'network, belong, articulate and debate'? Maybe you would rather not to be identified by any label (Hancock, 2008), as you don't want to privilege one position over another. Ultimately, what critical management educator type are you? When it comes to teaching critically educators were found to focus on content or process. Are you more content focused or process focused? From the ideal types above will you be a critical traditionalist or a critical experientialist?

- **How will you be perceived?**

How critical educators perceive themselves and others within the critical community was often referred to. Their critical identity was a theme throughout the research. Some people made distinctions between themselves and other people in the critical community. Distinctions were also made between those who were more influenced by critical pedagogy and those who

were more theoretically and politically influenced. Others were of the opinion that being critical involved a more pluralistic approach (Fournier and Grey, 2000) rather than stressing your own political views. Therefore will you be perceived as being someone who talks and theorizes about criticality or works with it and is interested in what it means to practice? However, regardless of your position be prepared to be perceived by some people in the following way; 'male posturing at conferences', 'top-down worshipping great figures from afar', 'tribal thing', 'lack of professionalism', 'certainty of some people's critique', 'CMS pedagogy as hippies playing in the sandpit', 'X's management learning a kind of piety' and 'with the more extreme stuff..I am in contempt of it', 'then you have a really good group of people brilliant group of people who judge people on the output of their work'.

- **What are your conditions of practice?**

Your conditions of practice including position, institution, location and gender where found by some to affect your critical aspirations (Perriton, 2007; Sinclair, 2007; Hagen, Miller and Johnson, (2003). Are you a senior, male academic, in an elite university or does it make a difference? Many of the educators in the study held senior positions as Professors or Directors of Programmes within their organisations. It was also noted by two educators that position within an organisation, might be a factor, which could help or hinder your efforts. One articulated that having a senior position might make it easier to work in this way. Another spoke about how being male with a senior position was a characteristic of key critical educators. However, even though most of the educators were now working in the elite UK universities many of them had experience of working in different educational environments. For some it was whilst working in community education, further education, adult education and in the non- elite universities that they had experienced or worked in a critical way. Also the observations highlighted criticality in action in the classrooms of both an elite university and post 1992 university. It was found that although most of the female educators held less senior positions in their organisations they were mostly found to engage in the more process oriented forms of critical teaching. However, it was acknowledged by one

educator that less senior educators might find working in this way more challenging.

However, three institutions were spoken of as having inspired and developed a critical ethos. 'University X'⁹ had developed a reputation for its work in the field of (CME) as five of the educators had either studied or were working there. It has focused its attention to the process oriented form of criticality. Also 'University Z'¹⁰ had also developed a programme that inspired teaching in a critical way for two of the educators. 'University Y'² was described as having built a reputation in the field of (CMS). However, regardless of the conditions of practice all the interviewees had found an outlet for their criticality no matter what those conditions were. They had found institutional support or support through fellow colleagues or networks. Such collegial support would be particularly relevant for those who are new to the field or which the field is less prominent in their organisations or country. Also CMS/CME was mostly spoken of as being a marginal activity (Zald, 2002) rather than the educators feeling marginalised in their organisations. It seemed to be a different challenge 'being critical' for the students than for the educators in their workplace. The educators had found an outlet for their criticality whereas the students seemed to be more challenged in trying to do that in an organisational context. Being critical had resulted in many students being frustrated with their organisation and its lack of criticality. For some it proved to be a catalyst for change in their career or organisation.

- **What Teaching Methodologies will you use?**

Teaching in a critical way was found to be less about departing skills and competencies (Holman, 2000) and more about a different understanding of learning. How will this philosophy of learning being communicated and

⁹ 'University X' - A pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation for critical approaches to its management teaching and learning

² 'University Y' - A pseudonym for a UK University that has built a reputation around Critical Management Studies in its Business School.

¹⁰ 'University Z' - A pseudonym for a post 1992 UK University using action learning methodologies

previous learning be deconstructed as observed in the study? Will it be something that emerges over time or articulated from the beginning of the learning process? Consideration must be made for the teaching methodologies that you use. From the findings most of the educators were focused more on the process of learning. Experiential methods using group work and action learning were prominent. Lecturing was less used but when it was it was powerful and well positioned. Uses of dialogue and communication skills are important for critical educators. In particular, facilitation skills were crucial for those using the more experiential methods like action learning. Having psychodynamic skills and co-trained with experienced critical educators were characteristics of some of the more process-oriented educators. The tutor's role in creating the environment where critical learning evolves is important. From the observations a supportive, encouraging but not controlling role was evident. A less tutor dependent student was observed as a result of the reconstruction of learning that had occurred. The action learning sets facilitated this and a learning community (Brookfield, 1994) was formed. However, there are potential challenges of teaching in this way. These include student audience, culture and resources (Choo, 2007b). Educators regarded it as being relatively easier to teach postgraduates rather than undergraduates. However, most of the educators in the study teach postgraduates and those that do teach undergraduates did not see it as being any more of a challenge. Large class sizes, teaching workloads and an absence of critical textbooks were also seen to constrain a critical approach.

- **What will be the effect of your critical teaching?**

The outcome of teaching critically may result in students who embrace this way of teaching in a positive way. For some students it may legitimize and vindicate their thinking. It may even empower them not only during their studies but also in their own organisations (Lawless and McQue, 2008). The establishment of action learning groups or networks outside the classroom could be a further extension of their learning. Teaching in this way can make a difference but the student may not see this at the time. The relevancy or

benefits of their learning may often be months or years later. The experience may not be pleasant for everyone. It may generate feelings of anxiety and unexplored emotions. A key characteristic of anxiety is that it has both paralyzing and productive effects (Vince, 2010).

However, from the findings this is something that is to be expected as a part of the learning process. Student resistance may result from this approach to teaching and again it is to be expected. Resistance may come from a source of anxiety within the student who is attached to familiar ways of learning. Student expectations about what they will take away with them whether it's the 'right answer, skills or capabilities can make them anxious about a different approach to learning. The critical language used also posed challenges to some students and contributed to their anxieties. Previous educational experience could also have implications for acceptance of the approach. The instrumental and rational objectives of some students made it difficult for them to open up to a new way of learning. A change from tutor dependency and the shifting of power to the student may also cause frustration and anxiety. Tutor competency may be questioned and complaints may be made. The observation study showed examples of learning in action whereby students embraced the critical approach and reflected on how they could use the experience in the workplace. It also highlighted learning inaction (Vince, 2010) where some students were reluctant to engage with the learning process. However, the power of the learning dynamic can be influential to students in becoming more open to a critical way of learning.

- **What is the role of criticality in the wider society?**

The role of criticality and the wider society is an important issue for educators. Some felt that it was a pivotal moment for criticality in management education but there were mixed views on keeping the name a separate entity. It was felt more important that the critical agenda was sustained in Business schools than whether the name stays or fades away. However, many were of the opinion that there was a need to connect with a wider audience. The questions of relevance of what and to whom were discussed (Grey, 2002). Making

institutional connections outside the business school was also recommended. The accessibility of critical work was also questioned. Some highlighted the inaccessibility of some journals. The way some critical educators write was also questioned (Cunliffe, 2009; Grey and Sinclair, 2006). A recognition that it was important to write with academics in mind as well as practitioners was stressed. The need to be more reflexive about what and how management educators are practising was important in the context of relevancy. Many educators developed their own critical content but some stressed the need for a more critical approach in mainstream texts. Some had started to address this issue by writing critical texts in their field. The issue of reaching a wider audience of academic practitioners was also discussed. Academic leadership, networking and conferences were recommended. There were mixed views about the role of training practitioners in critical approaches. However, it was suggested that co-training was invaluable to those who practiced action learning. However, seeing that having experiences of studying in other fields especially sociology, seems to be a common characteristic of the critical educator it raises the question as to whether business educators and students could benefit from such an addition in their studies/curriculum. Also some educators had business experience, which also enhanced their ability to engage in a critical approach in the field.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the main findings of both the interviews and observations from the study. In answering my research questions two ideal types of critical practice emerged from the data. The chapter has also explored the factors to be considered by educators wishing to engage in the critical approach in light of the findings above.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

My research objectives were to explore criticality in management education. I wanted to learn more about a field of management education that was new and unfamiliar to me. I had begun questioning my own practice and the taken for granted assumptions in management education. However, before contemplating how I would go about introducing critical teaching methods into my own practice, I wanted to explore the field from an educator perspective. The literature acted as an introduction to field, an appetizer if you like but it left me with a hunger to learn more. As a result, to answer my research questions I chose to undertake a qualitative study to reveal the critical practices of educators. I wanted to learn more about what their perceptions of criticality were and how they translated that into practice. Interviewing the educators gave me an insight into their personal journeys and the influences on their work. I found them co-operative interviewees who were open to exploring with me why and how they had found themselves engaging in critical practice. Also the research enabled them to reflect, question and engage in dialogue about their practice. It also got them engaged in reflecting about their past, current and future work. I began to understand who the critical educators were. Suddenly the authors of journal articles and books became more real. Their voices were not only being heard through their published work but through our conversations. Many of the interviews were conducted via the telephone and the effect of which enabled the interviewee to converse in a non-threatening and less formal environment. Many remarked how they had found the process useful and interesting. The dialogic process was not only useful to me in my study but also to the educators. For example, one educator during our interview began exploring a theme for her research, which she later published. My initial concerns about interviewing elites were outweighed by the opportunities in gaining rich data for the study.

In answering my research questions the findings from the interviews gave me an insight into the critical classroom. They also provided a platform to explore their teaching methodologies further. The opportunity to observe two of the educators

in practice provided an even richer picture. As I sat observing the 2.5-day module on leadership in context I became particularly focused on one of the main themes of the module. This theme was learning through anxiety as discussed previously (Chapter V p.104 and Chapter VI, p.138) in relation to the student's learning. The tutor articulated this theme on the first morning of the lecture. As I sat observing the process I became interested in the content and process of the module. It had just occurred to me that this was what was happening to me 'learning through anxiety'. As an educator teaching management I had become anxious about my own practice and the approaches taken in teaching management. I began to question my own practice as a result and had begun to use the uncertainty of the unfamiliar (critical management education) to take a risk and put myself into a situation that confronts expectations. On reflection it has been probably this anxiety that has led to my conducting research in my own field of management education. My questioning assumptions about management education and its alternatives have been a key objective in the research. By me putting myself into the situation that confronts expectations the potential outcome of this anxiety is that it has the potential to take me to a place of authority or insight. The alternative to this process would have taken me to avoidance and denial and maybe to resistance to new learning (Vince, 2010).

However, new insights have been gained through conducting the research. My research questions have been answered. I now have an insight into the perceptions and experiences of critical educators. I have become more comfortable in a field of management education that was unknown to me. I have learned more about what critical teaching is about. Critical educators are not all the same and they perceive criticality in a variety of ways. They also differentiate themselves through being more content or process oriented. The research has encouraged me to question how I differentiate myself in my teaching. It has also provided a new lens in which I can view my practice. As a result, through the process of identifying the 'critical educator ideal types' I can see where I currently position myself as an educator in my own practice. I am the '*Practical Experientialist*' who uses both mainstream content with a practical application to educate my students. Although the research has raised questions for me there remains one pertinent question. I have been exploring criticality in management education but

do I now want to engage in its practice. Therefore a theme and common thread throughout the research relates to whether I intend **'to be critical or not to be critical?'** That is my question.

Having now researched the field and answered the questions I had set out to, I do want to introduce critical management education into my work. Management education is not a neutral activity and I propose to engage with my students with a more multi-dimensional model of business education. I believe that a critical perspective can provide the way. I intend to engage with a critical content and process in my practice. The research has allowed me to explore what my own perceptions of criticality are. I want my students to engage with business concepts in an open and questioning way. However, the outcome and decisions from this exploration will be up to them to decide. I don't want to preach, or be political but neither do I want to communicate in a passive and neutral way. I want to use a critical content and process to educate for management and about management. I believe that the **'Practical Experientialist'** can learn from the **'Critical Experientialist'** and vice versa.

The research contributes to both the knowledge and practice of criticality. It contributes to my own field in management education where critical practice is less prominent. It also makes a contribution in other fields of education where educators want to learn more about criticality. This is particularly relevant to educators like me who are new to the field or work in organisations where it is less prevalent. The findings can be used in management/business education in both the Public and Private Sector. The research has shown both the benefits and challenges of engaging in such an approach. A critical management education can help educators and students reveal the complexities of management and its impact on society. It can legitimize their thinking and provide a way to articulate it. However, educating in this way has its challenges from both inside and outside the classroom. There may be anxieties and resistance to this form of learning, which the analysis has revealed. However, the classroom dynamics of action learning and other experiential exercises can be powerful in creating an organisation in the classroom. However, the research also reveals how important the role of the tutor is in preparing, creating and facilitating the critical learning

environment. This is an environment that has the potential for tomorrow's critical managers to emerge. Overall, the research provides an understanding of the critical classroom to the educator so that they can be better prepared. The ideal types contribute to knowledge in that they highlight exemplars of different ways of being critical dependent on the individual's own perceptions, temperaments and conditions of practice. The evidence demonstrates that it is possible to develop hybrid or alternative models of teaching and learning in business education without undermining quality or the need for content.

However, having answered my research questions it has also opened up new ones to be explored. The results of this research project also point to additional research that could be undertaken. For example, criticality in other UK institutions would provide further knowledge and experiences from those in practice. This would be particularly relevant as the field is a fertile area of research and less prominent in many higher education institutions. The study focused on observations in two locations in the UK and further research with different conditions of practice would add to our knowledge about how practitioners develop a critical practice. Conditions of practice including; position, institution, location and gender were found by some to affect your critical aspirations. As a result, further research on criticality could be undertaken in the elite and non-elite universities, inside and outside the UK and between different genders and positions. Also conducting observation research over a longer period of time for example a semester could also be explored. It would also be interesting to examine the use of critical methods of teaching within the corporate sector and also within programmes provided by training organisations. Also more Irish perspectives and experiences on teaching critically would also add to our knowledge where the field is less prominent. This would be interesting in light of the different educational context and conditions of practice. Perhaps this is where this story of criticality ends and a new one begins.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Thank you for reading this.

Research Project Title

Exploring Criticality in Management Education-An Educator Perspective.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of the study is to explore criticality in management education from an educator's perspective. The aim of the research is to explore how criticality is perceived, experienced and translated into the everyday practices of critical management educators. The research will be guided by three main questions:

- How is criticality perceived by critical management educators?
- What factors have contributed to the adoption of this management philosophy by critical management educators?
- How does this alternative management philosophy translate into the professional practice of critical educators?

The sample for the study will be mostly based in UK institutions. The sample will also include educators from Irish institutions.

Benefits of the Study

Such a study has the potential to provide an insight into the practical realities of educators in their institutions. I am an educator in management education in an Irish higher educational institution (Waterford Institute of Technology) and I want to explore this perspective to inform my own practice. This will enable me to gain

a greater insight into these educator experiences, which are less known in Ireland. Such local contexts and experiences have the potential to contribute to this existing field in the UK and emerging field in Ireland.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part in the study because you are an educator who has embraced a critical management perspective in your own practice. You have published accounts of your research and or experiences in the field. The sample of participants therefore will include potentially 10-12 key educators in the field. As you are a prominent academic in the field you have been chosen to take part in the project. However, taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time.

What will I be asked to do?

If you volunteer to take part in the first stage of the study, you will be asked to do the following things:

a. Take part in a telephone interview conducted by myself lasting approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be semi-structured in nature and a preview of the interview questions will be e-mailed to you before the interview takes place. A brief follow-up telephone interview may be necessary if I need to clarify information. The interview will be tape-recorded.

b. You will also be asked to review a summary of the main themes discussed for accuracy. Any clarifications must be communicated to me by e-mail.

I also intend to conduct a sample of non-participant observations to allow further exploration and understanding of the issues generated from the interviews. As a result, participants from the first stage of the study might be invited to take part in the second stage of the study. The participants selected for the second stage of the study will be selected on the basis on the issues generated in the first stage of the research and also from their expressed interest in taking part in this stage.

What will I do with the information you give me?

The results of this participation will be confidential. Data generated by the research will be kept in a safe and secure location in my workplace office. It will only be used purely for the purposes of the research project (including dissemination of findings). Computer based research data will be password protected. A coding system will be used for interview recordings and transcripts to protect the anonymity of participants. An identification number will be given and the names of participants will be removed. A separate password protected file containing names and identification numbers will also be kept. No one other than the researcher, supervisor or examiners will have access to any of the data collected. The tape recording of my interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study's data collection, analysis, and write-up December 2011. All necessary steps will be taken to protect the privacy of participants– e.g. by the use of pseudonyms, for both individual and institutional participants, in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination. However, as the sample size is small in a well-known field full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Nevertheless, it is not envisaged that there will be any controversial statements that will require absolute anonymity.

How can I obtain further information?

Should you require any further information you can contact me or my supervisor at the contact details below:

Ms Judith Breen (MBA, BBS)

Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford, Ireland.

E-mail: jbreen@wit.ie

Supervisor: Dr Simon Warren,

Department of Lifelong Learning, University of Sheffield, UK.

E-mail: s.a.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.

APPENDIX II-INTERVIEW GUIDE

Please find below an overview of the issues I would like to explore in the interview.

A. WHY CRITICALITY?

I would be interested in exploring your professional background:

1. Could you tell me a little bit about your background?
2. Why did you choose to teach management?
3. What factors do you think have contributed to you adopting your approach to teaching?

B. HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE CRITICALITY?

There are many definitions of criticality how do you define criticality in management?

C. HOW DOES THIS ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY TRANSLATE INTO YOUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?

1. What teaching methodologies do you use?
2. What assessment strategies do you use?
3. Why do you use these methods over other methods?
4. What have been the benefits to you as an educator in using a critical perspective?

5. Do you face any challenges when using these methodologies?

D. THE FUTURE OF CRITICALITY?

How can this philosophy be communicated to potential critical management educators. For example, how do management educators who are new to the field and who want to embrace its philosophy translate its principles in the classroom? What role can critical management educators play in disseminating CME to practitioners?

APPENDIX III- MODULE INFORMATION-UNIVERSITY A

Module Information⁶

Leadership in Context is designed as an advanced programme on understanding leadership theory and practice. The word 'advanced' signifies moving beyond a mainstream interpretation of leadership in terms of individuals' skills and knowledge of 'how to do leadership' in order to include collective approaches, the importance of context, and the impact of emotions and power relations on leadership.

The specific aims are:

- To explore and to challenge assumptions and expectations concerning what leaders and followers do, as well as how they act.
- To develop students' understanding of leadership in theory and in practice.
- To draw on students' personal knowledge, experience and reflection in order to better understand leadership within the context of complex organisational relations, dynamics and processes
- To emphasise the impact of emotion and politics on leadership in organisations
- To make an explicit link between the experience of learning about leadership with the study of leadership. This is achieved through an educational design based on experiential learning.

Following the course, students will have:

- An understanding of leadership 'in action' within the context of complex work organisations
- Awareness of individual and collective assumptions and expectations of leadership
- An understanding of the dynamics of leadership in groups and a greater awareness of the consequences of individual and collective action and inaction.

⁶ Reference from module literature given to the student prior to commencing the module.

- **An ability to analyze and to address complex issues surrounding leadership and followership through different contextual lenses (e.g. emotion, power, difference, reflection, change).**

APPENDIX IV- MODULE INFORMATION-UNIVERSITY B

1. COURSE INFORMATION¹¹ MA IN STRATEGIC HRM- (MA.SHRM)

The MA in Strategic HR has been designed to enable experienced Human Resource and Human Resource Development (HR) practitioners to update their knowledge and skills in line with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Code of Practice for Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The programme is studied in part time mode typically over one academic year and provides 90 Master's (M) level credits. This Master's is a specialist 'top up' degree and is designed to build upon prior knowledge, skills and experience within the HR subject area.

Programme aims

To enable experienced HR practitioners to 'become' critically reflective by supporting and encouraging them in questioning and confronting the internal and external forces which provide the context of their work. To enable practitioners to take a critical perspective on current, and future, developments in order to support change at an individual, professional and organisational level.

Learning activities and attendance

The learning activities are designed to facilitate the development of critically reflective practitioners able to undertake research into their own practice and thereby develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the subject area and their professional practice.

Three two-day workshops provide an initial introduction to the programme and input on HR strategy, strategies and research methodologies. The emphasis during the workshops is to critique current theory and its relevance to practice. The focus of the initial learning activity is to enable practitioners to develop as independent

¹¹ Course Information provided by Tutor University B.

learners and to develop their own research interest. This research interest will form the focus of the enquiry into practice and will culminate in the production of a dissertation.

Six action-learning sets support the development of the dissertation. The sets are facilitated by tutors and enable practitioners to share experiences, support each other and to develop their understanding of research into practice. The action learning sets also support the development of critically reflective practitioners, students and academics, and the development of a 'community of research into a community of practice'.

Assessment

Learning outcomes are assessed formatively through contributions to discussions during the workshops and the action learning set meetings. Summative assessment is through the production of three assessments including a critical review of relevant literature; a research proposal and a dissertation. The first two are designed as preparation for the final dissertation. All the assessments are work based, requiring the students to undertake research into work problems or issues.

2. COURSE INFORMATION¹¹- MA PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT (MA.PD)

This part-time day and evening / evening only programme covers the new Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Advanced (Level 7) Standards. It provides the knowledge requirements to apply for Chartered Membership of CIPD, the recognised level of membership for HR and Development professionals. The programme aims to develop in course members the ability to apply what they learn within the context of their own organisation, and to critically evaluate alternative approaches, which may add value to a range of business sectors. The need for HR professionals to continually develop throughout their careers and to take responsibility for their own learning is central to the design of the programme and its assessment. After completion of the

¹¹ Course Information provided by Tutor University B.

taught modules course members undertake research into an HR issues relevant to their own organisation leading to the writing of their Master's level dissertation. This both develops and assesses course members' ability to apply concepts; techniques and models to a complex HR issue and benefits the employing organisation. The programme is offered as part of a suite of HRM and CIPD linked programmes offered by University B⁷ Business School within the Faculty of Business and Law.

Programme Structure

The programme is designed in two stages. For the first 18 months of the programme eight modules are studied with students attending University normally on an afternoon and evening or two evenings per week basis. After this students work on their dissertation supported by their dissertation tutor and dissertation workshops held approximately every eight weeks, with the dissertation being due for submission in November.

Assessment

Developmental formative assessment and feedback takes place throughout the programme and all course members are required to keep Continuous Professional Development Logs throughout the programme. Assessment of the different modules is undertaken in various ways, which include assignments linked to organisational context, portfolios to show development of knowledge and skills, case studies, two-hour unseen examinations, a research proposal, documentary reflection on learning and the submission of a dissertation.

Entry Requirements

Course Members are normally graduates working in an HR role. They may have previously undertaken the CIPD's Leadership and Management qualification.

⁷ A UK University where Observation II was conducted