

- SAMPLE ONLY -

The concept of action learning is certainly not ~~a new one~~. It was developed by Professor Reg Revans in the 1940^s when he was Director of Education for ~~at~~ the National Coal Board. According to Johnson (1998:296), ~~where he was Director of Education.~~ Revans ~~He~~ developed the idea, ~~according to Johnson (1998:296),~~ “that the colliery managers who were experiencing organisational problems might learn from one another by talking through their difficulties and personally taking action”.

Revans continued ~~with~~ his work on action learning throughout ~~all~~ his entire life from ~~(~~1907 – 2003. During this time, he ~~)~~ inspired ~~ing~~ many others, including Mike Pedler, who was a ~~(Revans~~ professorial fellow at the University of Salford. Pedler ~~), who has~~ updated an original book by Revans entitled ~~(The~~ ABC of Action- ~~Learning-1983)~~ in particular, to take the ~~bring~~ more attention to the ~~concept~~ on board. The Revans Centre for Action Learning and Research ~~is based~~ was eventually established at the University of Salford.

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This ~~provides an illustration of~~ illustrates how much progress action learning has made within academia since its inception in the 1940s. The concept of ~~as~~ action learning was ridiculed by management schools throughout ~~in~~ the 1960s and 1970s. However, ~~as~~ Revans described action learning as “*freedom from teachers, from any form of printed syllabus or regulations, from any fixed institution or even from any literature save the most occasional... not even a case study or business game*””. He also ~~and~~ referred to the material ~~what was~~ being taught in business schools in 1976 as “*an inexhaustible avalanche of lofty hocus pocus*””. Given these statements, ~~”~~ it is ~~perhaps~~ not surprising that many ~~they~~ were initially ~~sceptical of~~ action learning ~~to say the least.~~

It is this concept of ~~taking~~ of action that distinguishes action learning from any other. Bourner et al (1996) ~~;~~ state that action learning is a “*process of reflection and action, aimed at improving effectiveness of action where learning is an important outcome*”. However, the author notes that learning by doing is a long-standing concept. Koo (1999) ~~;~~ provides two very early quotes: ~~;~~ firstly, “*What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing*” (Aristotle, a 4th -c ~~Century~~ BCE Greek philosopher) and secondly, “*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand*””. (Confucius 500 BCE). The author^s ~~;~~ prefers the following ~~one for a~~

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quotation from Revans: ~~e is~~ "...one is forced to enquire into what one really believes, as distinct from what one may claim to believe while arguing in the seminar or at the case-study". ~~(Revans).~~

In action learning, the learner should become the focal point of the learning process. The success of action learning relies on ~~the~~ learners being motivated to learn for themselves ~~yes~~. (O'Hara 1997, cited by Koo 1999). There should be a collective approach to the problem solving of real problems with a cycle of inquiry that never varies. This cycle consists of a person completing the following:

- Presenting their problem without interruption
- B, ~~being~~ questioned by the other set members
- E, ~~exploring~~ the problem
- S, ~~then the person to summarising~~ ing what they have heard
- Declaring, ~~state~~ what action they intend to take

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~~-~~ This continues for as many set members as time allows ~~and then until the~~ ~~there is a~~ review of the set's progress ~~of the set at the end at the end~~. The review is may focus on ~~could be about~~ the process, the ~~or~~ content or both. This cycle of inquiry will begin again at the next set meeting. However, ~~except that~~ the members who agreed to take actions ~~need to~~ must report back at the beginning. The set needs to maintain ~~be~~ strict ~~about~~ timing and process boundaries each time and recognise that the conduct of the set mirrors its values. Pedler (1991) sums up action learning well by stating that ~~aying~~ it involves ~~has~~ three components: the people who take responsibility for taking action (this is key); the problems or tasks themselves and the set of colleagues who support and challenge each other to make progress on problems. Zuber-Skerrit (2002) identifies the latter as critical friends.

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Revans ~~,~~ (1998) makes the distinction between problems and puzzles. He argued that the difference is that ~~there is often~~ some a puzzle requires some knowledge and a solution ~~to a puzzle~~, whereas there is no correct ~~right~~ answer to a problem. Revans also formulated a learning equation for action learning:

$$\text{which is } L = P + Q$$

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~~where L is Learning, P is Programmed Knowledge & Q is Questioning Insight.~~

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~~Although There have been~~ some variations to this ~~formula have been~~ suggested (Mumford 1995, Smith 1997), ~~but~~ Revan's equation ~~continues still seems~~ to be the most widely used.

~~There would seem to be~~ a plethora of articles ~~have been~~ written about action learning during the 1990s; ~~M as more~~ programmes for ~~undergraduate and postgraduate~~ degrees (~~both under and post graduate~~) and management programmes within organisations incorporated action learning as one of ~~or~~ the primary methods of learning. ~~In fact, Indeed~~ the author was the programme manager for Bury Metropolitan Borough Council for a Diploma in Management by Action Learning in 1992/93. This was carried out in collaboration with ~~the~~ Manchester College of Arts ~~a&nd~~ Technology (MANCAT) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

In this programme, the author ~~played had~~ a role as a Set Adviser to one of the three sets ~~or~~ project supervisor to some students ~~on in~~ the programme, ~~as well as and as~~ a co-deliverer of the design. ~~This project also involved Recruitment to the programme and~~ co-delivery of the residential induction ~~part of the programme were also part of the role for this project and recruiting to the programme which~~ was the first central in-house programme ~~that~~ incorporated ~~ing~~ action learning. ~~The author's set reflected the There were a~~ approximately 20 middle managers ~~who came~~ from a variety of departments ~~and with had a mixture an array~~ of responsibilities ~~regarding on~~ the programme ~~and this was reflected within the author's set.~~

Much of the published research focuses on managers from the same organisation ~~who~~ ~~took~~ taking part in action learning sets. ~~T As~~ this was the author's first experience ~~regarding of~~ action learning. ~~Consequently,~~ I have used it as ~~a~~ part of my reflections of action learning ~~and the approach to it~~ within the MSc programme. ~~It will have affected the approach to the action learning for the MSc programme too. A It is recognised that~~ although this ~~former~~ experience ~~occured is now nearly some~~ 14 years ago, ~~the~~ memory of it still remains clear. ~~This experience t was represented~~ one of the most challenging and richest ~~ones experiences~~ of my ~~entire~~ life, ~~and therefore the memory of it is clear and It~~ can be used to illustrate how it could be incorporated into the ~~the~~ thinking and reflection of ~~the~~ more recent experiences.

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~~There are~~ reflections sheets for each of the sets attended between December 2005 and February 2007 ~~are~~ included in appendices 1-6 using the format by Pedler (1996:85) which will be referred to briefly ~~in~~ the following paragraphs. ~~However, the author has decided to use~~ the perspective on action learning offered by Bourner & Frost (~~1996~~) when they ~~investigated~~ ~~looked at~~ how action learning had been experienced by the reflections of [

Comment [T1]: Incomplete sentence