



Carole Elliott

Lancaster University Management School, UK

Emancipating Assessment: Assessment Assumptions and Critical Alternatives in an Experience-based Programme

Abstract *This article aims to make a contribution to management education by proposing a critical alternative to assessment on experience-based programmes that has emerged from a study of an MBA programme based on action learning principles. The article discusses the programme's learning and assessment design and students' responses to their learning experience. It analyses elements forming the MBA design, including Revans' action learning model and Kolb's learning cycle, as well as its assessment procedures, to put into context a discussion of learners' responses to these pedagogies. The article concludes by suggesting how a critical perspective might be introduced through the adaptation of collaborative assessment methods, currently more common in adult and professional education. This would lead to a repositioning of the student's experience in which the experience of the MBA itself becomes a source for knowledge. The article ends with the suggestion that 'being assessed' could form the basis of an experientially based examination of a practice of institutional power. **Key Words:** assessment; experiential learning; management education; MBA; pedagogy; reflection*

Introduction

In this article, I examine the significance of pedagogical assumptions, as informed by various knowledge interests (Habermas, 1972), upon MBA students' responses to their management learning experience. Advocates of a critical approach to management education have made a significant contribution to understanding the political significance of management education content. More recently, the salience of learning processes in respect of educators' adopted theoretical positions has also been acknowledged. Management learning, in this sense, has been accepted as a highly problematic concept (Griffiths et al., 2005). Nevertheless, in its development, critical management education has been criticized for not confronting the 'repressive myths' of critical pedagogy, of having failed to address

the authoritarianism of most student–educator relations (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004). The tendency within critical management education has been one in which educators either critique the practice of perceived ‘non-critical’ management educators, or reflect on their own practice (Elliott, 2003). There has been little empirical examination of educators’ practices from the management learner’s perspective – with particular account taken of the assumptions underpinning educators’ pedagogy – that might expose incompatibilities between these practices.

This article is based on findings collected over a 32-month research period, with a selection of part-time MBA students in a UK university. It aims to contribute to management education debates by examining students’ responses to the degree in the light of the public presentation of the MBA’s pedagogy and overall course design. A study of learners’ responses to this particular degree draws attention to ambiguities and contradictions in a course design that adopts a variety of learning practices. The article argues that closer examination of the knowledge interests underpinning the various pedagogic practices poses a challenge to management education approaches that encourage learners’ reflection on experience as a basis for learning and assessment. The article concludes by suggesting how a critical perspective might be introduced through the adaptation of collaborative assessment methods, currently more common in adult and professional education. This would lead to a repositioning of the student’s experience in which the experience of the MBA itself becomes a source for knowledge. I suggest that ‘being assessed’ could form the basis of an experientially based examination of a practice of institutional power, enabling management educators to work positively with the ambiguities and contradictions inherent to qualification-based programmes.

Reflecting on Experience

In common with many similar management education programmes, the MBA studied here publicly promotes the view that managers learn best from their own experience. One of the central features of learning from experience is that of reflection (Boud and Walker, 1999), and concepts, such as Schön’s (1983) ‘reflection-in-action’, intended to surface tacit understanding through reflective conversation on experience, have been influential in management learning (Reynolds and Vince, 2004). Revans’ (1971, 1983) ‘action learning’ methodology and Kolb’s (1984) work on learning cycles have been incorporated in the design of some postgraduate and post-experience management education programmes. Kolb’s work in particular, but also Malcolm Knowles’ (1984) idea of ‘self-directed learning’ draw on Dewey (1916), including learning as ‘the intentional pursuit of a course of action’, (p.138; quoted in Reynolds and Vince, 2004: 2).

The more recent emphasis on *critical* reflection in critical management education (Perriton and Reynolds, 2004) derives from Habermas’ (1972) identification of a third knowledge constitutive interest – an emancipatory interest – that requires the development of self-knowledge and understanding that is generated through self-reflection. Self-reflection seeks to demystify ‘the previously unacknowledged distortions and enables awareness of the link between

knowledge and interest' (Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 119). It promotes a move away from 'classical theory' that considers science to be independent of human interests (Ottman, 1982). The proposal is that reflecting critically on social and political forces that can distort communication between individuals within the emancipatory interest can lead to more authentically democratic relationships. Unlike the Freirean influenced practices of earlier forms of critical management education, emancipation in the Habermasian sense would seem to require students to be more self-directed in their learning. Reynolds (1997) summarizes the questions this poses for students:

1. Question taken-for-granted, both about practice and its social and institutional context.
2. Identify and question relevant purposes, and conflicts of power and interest.
3. Relate the experience of work to wider social, political and cultural processes with the prospect of changing them.

For management education, 'critical reflection' constitutes the possibility of a departure from more familiar understandings of 'reflection' used in programmes that draw on – in a 'simplistically' reduced way according to Reynolds (1999a) – Kolb (1984) and the work of Revans (1971, 1983).

If management education can take on a more critical form by encouraging learners to reflect on their experience it would, however, constitute a departure from the ways in which the work of writers, such as Revans and Kolb have, according to Vince (1996), been used in practice. Developing McLaughlin and Thorpe's (1993) distinction between traditional management education and action learning, and Vince's (1996) insights regarding the insufficient attention paid to the political and emotional issues in some experiential approaches, Willmott's (1997) proposal for 'critical action learning' seeks to counter action learning's failure to acknowledge individuals' 'development and embeddedness within structures of social relations' (p. 171). The specific intention here being to draw on the principles of action learning pedagogy as a means by which to 'understand and transform the contradictory forces that play upon organizational work' (Willmott, 1997: 171). Insights that this would encourage include a recognition that individuals' experience 'is conditioned by, and an exercise of, power' (Vince, 1996: 115), challenging the application of popular models of learning, which emphasize learners' rational/intellectual skills to interpret their experience.

In addition to the importance of recognizing management learning's emotional aspects, writers on adult and professional education warn of other dangers in an uncritical application of reflection in educational programmes. In the context of programmes aimed at professionals, including teachers, social workers and nurses, educators have identified approaches that are overly instrumental, or seek inappropriate levels of student disclosure (Boud and Walker, 1998). Without sufficient consideration of the social and cultural context in which reflection takes place, Boud and Walker (1998) argue, there is a danger that we remain unaware of the forms of reflection that can be encouraged.

Reflection and Assessment

Although examinations of the ways in which experiential methods are used in management education have identified an overemphasis on the individual and their perception of experience, it is nevertheless possible to identify ways in which experiential methods might be used more critically. Vince (1996), for example, points out 'all educational contexts represent and replicate, within their own internal processes, external social power relations' (p. 124). Episodes redolent with power and equality issues that occur within the management education classroom might therefore be examined in respect of their parallels and contiguity with broader social systems.

More commonly in adult and professional education than in management education, programmes that encourage reflection on experience often use more participative assessment methods. Boud (1999) points out that on professional courses a concern with salient problems is nothing new. What is new, by contrast, arises from the 'learning-to-learn to become professional' (p. 121) enterprise, which on professional programmes leads to an emphasis 'on student learning and the need for students to act and think professionally' (Boud, 1999: 121). This new focus has led to a number of shifts in professional education, including the use of self-assessment, intended to develop critical thinking and independent learners (Boud, 1986). Hodgson (2004) points to the white paper for higher education – 'The Future of Higher Education' (Department for Education and Skills, 2001) – and the HEFCE 2003–2008 strategic plan (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2004) as evidence for broader recognition of assessment's use as a tool that will encourage learners to take responsibility for the development of their knowledge and skill strengths.

Heron (1981), among others, has drawn attention to the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of assessment. Yet, as Reynolds and Trehan (2000) observe, examples of critical management education pedagogy have not necessarily led to alternative assessment practices sympathetic to a critical pedagogy agenda. To a great extent, there remains a reluctance to take into account the learners' experience of learning and assessment (Hodgson, 2004), and to analyse assessment practices in relation to their institutional power (Reynolds and Trehan, 2000). So, on the one hand, there are experiential adult and professional education programmes that demonstrate a greater willingness to implement more participative, and ostensibly less hierarchical, assessment processes; on the other hand, there are management education courses that adopt a critical pedagogy but which stick to conventional forms of assessment.

While experiential adult and professional education may demonstrate a greater willingness to implement more participative, and ostensibly less hierarchical assessment approaches, researchers have recognized there will always be a tension between reflection and assessment (Boud, 1999). The literature that discusses ideas about reflection and experience challenges teachers' conventional position of authority. Where practitioners avoid focusing on their own practice, reflection on experience can be translated into 'technicist prescriptions' that fail to address 'the importance of respecting doubt and uncertainty and distrust of

easy solutions' (Boud and Walker, 1998: 192). By contrast, assessment requires learners to present in the best possible light what they know, as opposed to what they might remain uncertain or doubtful about. This would seem to point to one of a number of potential dilemmas in the professional education context that can arise when learning and assessment practices, underpinned by different pedagogical assumptions, co-exist within one programme. For programmes that encourage *critical* reflection this creates the challenge of considering learning and assessment practices as significant elements within the broader sociopolitical context.

The apparent failure to consider the significance of assessment to students' overall management learning experience is curious when we review the contribution critical management education in particular has made in a number of areas. Most significant has been its concern to encourage a less technically driven and informed content to management education; to analyse management 'in terms of its social, moral and political significance, and in general terms, to challenge management practice rather than seek to sustain it' (Grey and Mithev, 1995: 74–5). Recognition is also given to learning's emotional aspects (Fineman, 1997, 2000a,b; French and Vince, 1999a,b; Gabriel, 1998; Höpfl and Linstead, 1997; Vince, 1996, 2001, 2002). The significance of the 'learning milieu' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) to the development of a pedagogy that incorporates both critical content and critical process (Reynolds, 1997, 1999b) illustrates a further move away from the 'Harvard model' (Grey and Mithev, 1995) of management education. Most recently, reflections on the difficulties faced by educators when attempting to implement a critical pedagogy on an MBA programme (Currie and Knights, 2003), and an examination of the emotions experienced by management students when returning to full-time education (Griffiths et al., 2005) alert us to the significance and relevance of learners' experience *within* the classroom, as much as beyond it, when considering a pedagogical approach.

Research Setting – The 'Executive' MBA

The students I interviewed were following a part-time MBA aimed at currently practising managers who have a minimum of five years' work experience, and who hold a first degree or equivalent. I gained access to the students by approaching the programme director, who approved the research design and who, although expressing interest in the eventual findings, did not impose any pre-conditions or constraints on the research.

The programme comprises an introductory module plus a further eight modules. The first six modules form the taught element of the programme and are staggered over a 13-month period. The final two modules comprise the examinations, and the project and dissertation element of the programme. In between modules students attend two tutorial group meetings with six to eight fellow students, and the group's assigned tutor. Students are placed into tutorial groups by the programme director and remain in the same group throughout the period of study.

Assessment

Assessment for the programme comprises four main elements: five assignments, two case-study examinations, project performance and the dissertation. In the assignments, students are encouraged to draw upon issues raised during the module just attended and to adopt an action research methodology to their organization-based research. In the examinations, a case study is presented to students one day prior to the three-hour examination. Students are then expected to work in their tutorial groups to analyse the case study, as well as to conduct any library research they think will be necessary to answer questions posed in the examination the following day. The final piece of assessed work is a dissertation of 15,000 words for which students are expected to carry out research within their organization where they can apply theory presented during the MBA to a practical issue or problem. Included as part of the assessment for the dissertation, is a presentation to an academic panel of three tutors that takes place shortly before the submission deadline for the written piece of work. Another element to the assessment of the dissertation is students' 'project performance'. This is based on how students manage their project, as they relate it to fellow students and a tutor during tutorial meetings, and the project reports that students submit at the tutorials during the project phase. The dissertation, including the presentation and the project performance, forms 30 percent of the overall assessment.

Background to the Research*The Empirical Work*

The empirical work involved a selection of students following the degree. The location of the research was principally influenced by questions I wished to explore that had arisen from a reading of the critical management education literature. The small amount of research investigating students' responses to management education's pedagogic practices led to a line of enquiry that I viewed as best facilitated through discussions with experienced managers following a part-time MBA. Managers who follow a part-time MBA bring with them experiential knowledge and demonstrate a willingness to develop themselves; so they represent the target group for programmes that promise to work with their experience as practitioners.

The research was undertaken over a 32-month period and comprised 24 in-depth interviews with six students, of at least 75 minutes in length, occurring at staggered intervals. Interviews took place at the start of the programme, at the 8–10-month stage, 17–19 months into the programme, and 3–7 months after students had completed the degree. The promotional materials produced for the MBA, tutors' feedback on student assignments and all materials provided to students were also examined as part of the research process. The research was exploratory and mainly concerned with hearing students' responses to their MBA learning experience. Data from the interviews were analysed using grounded analysis techniques for qualitative research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). This involved familiarizing myself with the data by transcribing all interviews, identifying

and coding emergent themes in each transcript and then comparing transcripts within each set. One theme that emerged from the first set of interviews, for example, was an emphasis on learning and skills enhancement. The emergent themes were then examined in relation to existing knowledge. I repeated this process across each set of transcripts in order to conceptualize the interview data and to develop categories and relationships between categories. From this process the three approaches to learning (discussed later) of accommodation, resistance and ambivalence emerged.

Research participants were aware that I was a junior staff member at the same university pursuing a part-time research degree, but also knew that I had no prior or current direct involvement with the programme. Nevertheless, I was aware of the barriers that my employment within the same institution might create in terms of the nature of their responses. For that reason, I adopted a number of strategies that I hoped would reduce any anxieties that participants might have regarding the confidentiality of the information. For example, when introducing the research to the MBA cohort on the first day of the introductory module, I invited anyone who might wish to participate in the research to contact me confidentially to arrange a first meeting. By giving individuals the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the research a further aim was to remove, as far as possible, any sense of obligation they might have felt towards taking part. When arranging the first interviews I also asked participants to suggest the interview location. Some interviews subsequently took place away from the university, for example, in their workplace or a nearby hotel. Interviewees occasionally asked me either about my work, or were curious about my experiences as a PhD student. This sometimes extended to them seeking my advice on how they might approach a particular assignment!

As the period of the empirical research developed, interviews were quite unstructured, but did return to issues raised during earlier interviews. The first set of interviews was more semi-structured as I wished to hear about their educational and work backgrounds, to discover why they had chosen to follow an MBA degree and to listen to their expectations from the degree.

The MBA: Examining its Pedagogic Assumptions

In the spirit of Willmott's (2003) commendation of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests for a greater understanding of management and organization, I suggest that one way to work towards an understanding of the students' responses is to take the cognitive interests as a heuristic framework to examine some of the assumptions underpinning the MBA's pedagogic practices. Such an approach sets learners' responses within a framework that acknowledges the existence of competing conceptions of knowledge, thereby appreciating the MBA's – and the students' – embeddedness within the broader social context.

Examination of the MBA's design, as articulated through promotional and other materials, shows it to be a programme in which a particular emphasis is placed on the learning approach. The knowledge students bring to the programme through their work experience is presented as providing a basis for discussion. Through the application of theory to this experiential knowledge, further

knowledge will be developed. Value is placed on the learning opportunities that arise through collaboration with other students, and the tutorial groups are described as environments that offer space and support to develop assignments. The action research assignments are articulated as the mechanism through which students can learn by applying theory presented during the modules to an issue or problem in their organizational setting. The view that learning is a collaborative process, which is best facilitated through the application of theory to a situation based in individuals' practical experience, is reflected in this quote from the programme brochure that refers to the role of the tutorial groups.

The groups not only allow members to benefit from the diverse experiences they each have but also to learn together about the ways in which theory is being applied to the issues within the (sic) organisations (part-time MBA programme brochure, p. 4).

Drawing on Revans' (1983) action learning model, programme materials claim that the approach taken to the tutorial groups leads them to become 'learning sets', that provide 'practical support for each of its members' (Revans, 1983). The learning to be gained through the application of theory to practice is presented by a diagram used in the programme brochure adapted from Kolb's (1984) work on 'learning cycles'. This comprises four stages: questioning, using theory, testing and reflecting.

When managers first come into contact with the programme, via its promotional materials, they discover that the experiences they bring to the programme will be recognized and used as part of the learning process. The educational approach is apparent through the emphasis placed on the learning process within 'learning sets'. In recognition of the intellectual focus of Kolb's learning cycle, albeit possibly unintentionally, the programme is presented as encouraging an intellectual approach to learning. The message imparted to managers before the programme even begins is therefore of an approach that favours 'the organized use of rational thought' (title given to another model, creator not cited). It is a programme that 'increases the capacity and willingness of students to *take control* over events at work and encourages learning about all aspects of management' (MBA programme brochure, p. 2, my emphasis). Students are encouraged to reflect critically on their own experience to enhance learning. The tutorial groups in particular are presented as a means by which individual members can 'benefit from the diverse experiences they they each have . . . The tutorial group therefore becomes a "learning set", which provides practical support for each of its members' (MBA programme brochure, p. 4). Managers entering the programme are therefore led to believe that the learning gained will be a transformatory process, over which they have a significant amount of control to influence their learning outcomes.

Examined within Habermas' framework, the action learning principles underpinning this MBA can be interpreted as leading to a design that is guided by two cognitive interests. Underpinned by a conception of the individual that views her/him as capable of instituting some form of change, the action learning model implies that individuals can gain a measure of control over an aspect of their work lives. Its principles appear driven by a humanistic intent to enable

individuals to take authority over a situation, and therefore might be considered emancipatory.

Examining Assessment

The conception underpinning the MBA's learning model would seem to contrast with that underpinning the programme's assessment process. In relation to organization theory, Willmott (2003) associates the technical cognitive interest with management literature that seeks to predict and control people in work organizations, ranging from Taylor's 'Scientific Management' (1947) to the 'excellence' literature most famously represented by Peters and Waterman (1982). In relation to assessment practices, it might be most closely associated with traditional models, whereby the awarding of a particular mark symbolizes the level of effort judged by the awarder of the mark to be reflective of a student's capabilities. Assessment performed in the technical interest might be used as a means to motivate students to improve academic performance, and encourage them to learn. Perceived in this sense, assessment might therefore be interpreted as constituting an element of the 'hidden curriculum' (Apple, 1982; Young, 1971), over which the educator has a degree of control. Assessment organized in the technical sense is a method in which the educator's role is defined as knowledge expert. Although being asked to apply their learning to an organizational issue, and to discuss this process within tutorial groups, it is the programme tutors who ultimately assess the MBA assignments. Each marker completes an 'assignment report form' upon which are recorded the mark agreed to by both markers, as well as markers' comments. The assignment-writing process signals a move from the collaborative learning phase of the tutorial group process to one where students must work on an individual basis and be assessed against criteria developed by tutors.

My Approach

To understand more fully students' responses to the MBA, which highlight tensions within the programme's design assumptions, interviewees' responses are considered in relation to the model of anxiety and learning proposed by Vince (1996). Within an educational setting that emphasizes the development of skills and competences associated with the notion of change, a model informed by psychodynamic thinking is especially useful as it has the idea that 'learning and change are inevitably associated with anxiety' (Vince, 2001: 1332). It provides further insights regarding the individual's response within a social setting through its theory of 'relatedness', that is, it recognizes that 'people in organizations are inevitably "creatures of each other" (Hinshelwood, 1998), involved in a mutual process of becoming that obscures the notion of a separate self.' (Vince, 2001: 1332). Taking this perspective, any form of organization, including the MBA studied here, can be seen as 'an establishment – a political container within which individual and collective emotions can be "managed"' (Vince, 2002: 75). This provides us with a way into discovering 'what collective emotions might reveal about an organisation as a system in context' (Vince, 2005: 1). In acknowledging

the overemphasis placed on intellectual/rational skills present within methods contributing to the design of the MBA studied here, such as Revans' action learning model and Kolb's learning cycle, a model that recognizes learning as an emotional process allows us to ask what students' responses to the pedagogy, and by inference the programme as a whole, reveal about it as an organizing process. The model Vince (1996) proposes is one in which learning can go in two directions and which seeks to acknowledge and make explicit that learning is, at least in part, a political and social process. Individuals' relative power or powerlessness within learning groups therefore becomes an inherent aspect of learning and 'represents and replicates' (p. 124) sociopolitical processes beyond the classroom.

The model raises our sensitivity to anxiety's influence on learning and my intention here is to use it more specifically as a basis for interpreting learners' responses to their assessment. If we acknowledge the authoritarian and hierarchical nature of assessment (Heron, 1981) we might consider it as the most overt example of power relations in relation to student learning. Courses informed by experiential learning principles aimed at practising managers, which stick to conventional assessment methods, would seem to tread a delicate line between encouraging learners' independent thinking while adhering to tutors' institutional power. So, although the MBA's action learning approach encourages reflection on experience, to examine this in relation to theory and to discuss this with fellow students and tutors, the assessment process reasserts tutor's institutional power. In taking Vince's model as a basis of analysis, my assumption therefore is that discrepancies between two pedagogical methods might lead to learner anxiety. That learning is taking place in a context in which managers, generally accustomed to a certain level of authority, have this work-based authority removed, increases the possibility of learner anxiety. In taking what we fear as the starting point of the learning process, the model provides a basis from which we can interpret, for example, the extent to which learners are willing to take risks, or to accept their learning being challenged either by tutors or other learners (Figs 1 and 2).

Figure 1 Cycle of emotions promoting learning

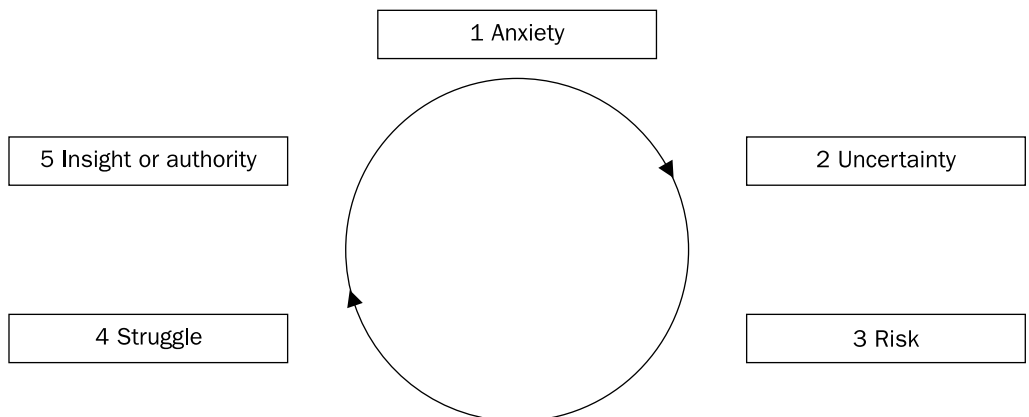
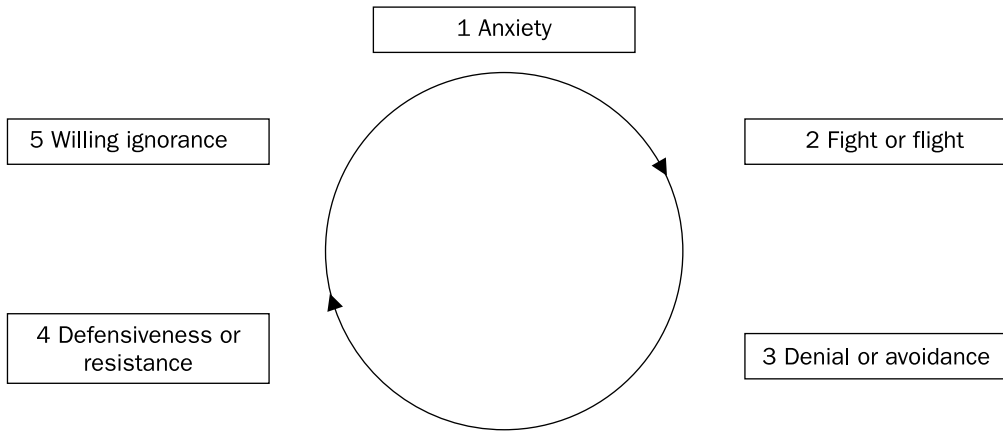


Figure 2 Cycle of emotions discouraging learning

To begin the discussion of the findings, I first present those from the initial set of interviews, which included questions that asked:

1. How much did they know about MBAs prior to starting the programme?
2. What did they think the benefits of an MBA education would be?
3. Why did they choose this university's MBA?

Initial Responses to Pedagogy

Following initial preliminary analyses of the interview data, responses indicated a degree of anxiety and confusion about aspects of the pedagogic approach.

During initial interviews interviewees placed most importance on learning and skills enhancement to improve their work practice. They also saw it as a way to manage others' expectations of them. For example, working towards the MBA was seen as a way to counter colleagues' perception of them as allied to a certain style of working. Overall, they looked forward positively to the MBA, but did express concerns about whether they were capable of fulfilling the intellectual requirements of the MBA, and whether they had the ability to manage their time effectively. From the second stage of interviews onwards mention was made of the initial reasons given for choosing to follow the programme. Although initially enthusiastic about the insights promised through undertaking research in their organization for the assignments, having received their first mark and tutors' accompanying comments on a piece of assessed work, interviewees' own assessment dominated responses to their MBA experience. These responses showed performance expectations that had been disrupted, with some interviewees comparing marks they had received on the MBA with previous educational experiences.

I can't say I've been particularly pleased with my marks. I got 57 on the first one, I don't know what I thought I was going to get, but with hindsight I don't think it was worth

much more than that. But, I was still disappointed by it. I didn't like it, I thought of it as a poor mark, just middling. I've always been at the sort of top end of classes I've been in, at university and that, so I suppose I expected it almost, which is not right at all, but that's what I measured myself against, and I didn't think it was very good. (Huw)

Assignment writing was considered to be difficult, somewhat irrelevant, or both. Nevertheless, it was something they had to do in order to achieve the MBA. This need to fulfil certain criteria is mentioned by Richard.

I don't know. I've always tried to do something that I was interested in, and I don't think that's the way to get good marks.

This comment hints at tensions between interviewees' original expectations of the MBA, as well as drawing attention to the ambivalent expectations held within the programme's pedagogic philosophy, which publicly acknowledges the value of students' experiential knowledge. During initial interviews, interviewees remarked that they were looking to the MBA to offer them insights into work and organizational practices and context, as illustrated by Gerard's comments here.

To try and learn some of the, I think, some frameworks on which to try and take five or six years' experience and say well, how does this all fit together? Because I then see a full picture . . . and so what I hope it will do is provide me with a much better, not necessarily strategic, but a much better overall view of the business world.

This is effectively the promise of an MBA informed by an experiential learning model; one where tutorial groups – run on action learning principles – and the action research assignments provide a means through which students can learn by applying theory presented during the modules to an issue or problem in their organizational setting. However, as the earlier quote from Richard indicates, conventional forms of academic assessment would seem to sit uneasily with the assumptions of this pedagogic philosophy.

The significance of the relationship between teaching and assessment methods upon learning experience has long been recognized. Cardinal Newman (1852), Pattison (1876) and Veblen (1918) all wrote critiques of traditional forms of assessment, judging them variously to be tests of memory or destructive of scholarship (Ramsden, 1984). Studies conducted by Becker et al. (1968), Entwistle and Wilson (1977), Miller and Parlett (1974) and Synder (1971) appeared to confirm the powerful influence of assessment. Miller and Parlett (1974) for example, identified different degrees of 'cue-consciousness', that is 'the extent to which students recognized or actively sought out "cues" from staff to help them guide their attempts to play the assessment game' (Entwistle, 1984: 16).

Interviewees' responses to the marks awarded to assignments, and tutors' accompanying comments, reveal that on the whole interviewees used them as a judge of their ability to understand and implement content presented during the modules. The emotional nature of learning and assessment, particularly evident in responses to the case-study-based examinations, contrasts with the emphasis placed on the development of intellectual skills and rational thought highlighted in the programme brochure. Interviewees variously described the examinations

as 'fearful' or 'stressful' experiences. Others candidly expressed the way in which they were 'pissed off' or 'mad' about their marks. Confusion was expressed regarding different marks received by individual members of tutorial groups, despite the collaborative nature of the preparation phase. The level of detailed comment from tutors following the mock examinations was not considered to be sufficient for the examinations. The six interviewees also indicated a lack of motivation to continue with the MBA at this stage.

The necessarily brief introduction to some of the issues arising from the research does not make explicit reference to the changing emphasis placed on different aspects of the MBA by interviewees as they progressed through the programme. Over the course of the four interview stages their response to their experience contrasted increasingly with the expectations inherent to the pedagogical principles underpinning the course design. Interviewees' accounts of the tutorial groups, for example, in relation to their learning, received attention only in the latter stages of the programme. They questioned the usefulness of the tutorials as a vehicle for learning, but persisted with them because they believed to do otherwise would have detrimentally affected their 'performance' mark.

Examining the Politics of MBA Learning and Assessment

Building on from Vince's (1996) identification of the political nature of the learning process discussed earlier, the findings discussed later indicate that interviewees' approach to learning shifts as the programme progresses. This shift arises predominantly in response to learning and assessment practices, lending itself to an examination of issues of power and authority manifested within these practices.

The combination of different cognitive interests, and the corresponding influence this has on the programme's pedagogical assumptions, leads to responses that do not fit neatly into either of the learning directions suggested by Vince's model. Rather, the responses emerging from the interviews oscillate between them.

Among interviewees' responses I identified three approaches to learning, which in order are:

1. accommodation
2. resistance
3. ambivalence: private doubt/public acclaim.

Accommodation

In the early stages of the MBA the majority of responses related to how they would perform on the programme. Richard illustrated this concern:

I'll have less (sic) anxieties after the first assignment has been marked and I'll know exactly whether I'm pointing in this direction, or whether I'm pointing in this direction. Erm, you know, in terms of what's required.

Once they had received marks and comments on their first assignment, interviewees were generally disappointed and confused by the marks they had received. At this stage, however, they articulated their determination to improve their marks by taking tutors' comments into account in preparing the second assignment. Huw, for example, was unhappy with the mark he had received for his first assignment

I can't say I've been particularly pleased with my marks. I got 57 on the first one. I don't know what I thought I was going to get, but with hindsight, I don't think it was worth much more than that. But, I was still disappointed with it. So on the second one, I did a hell of a lot more work, reading around the subjects, based on the comments fed back from the first one I did – it was a bit too narrow. So I thought, 'right, I'll take it on board, I'll do something about it and see what happens'.

At this stage, following a period of reflection on his performance, Huw eventually agreed with the mark and tutors' comments. He resolved to accommodate the points raised by tutors and to incorporate them into future assignments.

Jo justified her anxiety regarding her programme performance by the external factors she believed would impinge on that performance. She accommodated her own expectations in the light of these factors and within the context of the marking system used. She admitted that she found the marking system used on the programme 'difficult to understand'. Her view was:

I don't know whether I have the capability to be a postgraduate distinction student, but I know that certainly I don't have the time and energy to give it enough. Now maybe that's, maybe it's bad to feel that way, but I think at some point you have to accept what is possible and what is not possible.

From managers' anxiety arose some uncertainty concerning what was expected from them. Expectations of the marks they would receive had been disrupted by actual marks eventually awarded. This led to a rationalization of their performance followed by a response that accommodated the criteria of the marking system.

Interviewees' responses to the programme in its early stages supports Hanson's (1993) contention that tests function to control us, that we are willing accomplices in our own surveillance and domination. In the very act of registering for a management education programme, managers were accepting continuing education's role as objective regulator of their work practice, and as the public symbol that rewards those who seek to improve themselves for work. In order to accommodate their own needs, and to receive this accreditation, interviewees sought guidance from tutors' comments to learn why their performance had been assessed in such a way, as well as to understand how they might improve their performance next time. Rather than the change they were experiencing leading them to take open risks in their approach, as suggested by Vince's first model, they instead accommodated their learning needs and approach to the assessment criteria.

Resistance

Approximately three-quarters of the way through the programme, after students had completed the case-study-based examinations, the nature of their responses

regarding their learning approach showed less acceptance of the pedagogic practices employed. Having accommodated their approach to the assessment criteria in the early stages of the programme, interviewees expressed feelings of anger and confusion towards the MBA's assessment system, and to the examinations in particular. All expressed their confusion about the discrepancy in performance between the mock examinations and the examinations proper.

Students prepared for the exam by working on it collaboratively within their learning sets, allocating research tasks to different members of the group. They then later gathered to collate all the information they believed would be required to answer the questions in the three-hour written examination. Notes could be taken into the examination, but individuals sat it separately.

The style of examination employed initially promoted a participative approach to learning, before returning to a more conventional examination model as a means to make judgements on individuals' learning. The combination of varied pedagogical principles contained within the case-study based examination model created confusion. For the first time during the course of the programme, the examination allowed the students to compare directly their performance with others, a performance based on access to the same information and materials.

When their individual performance (in the form of a mark) was perceived to be disappointing in comparison with others, interviewees' approach to the programme made an apparent shift. The examination process had clearly placed some of the managers in an antagonistic position with regard to this form of assessment, and this impacted upon their approach to the MBA as a whole. They remained on the programme, however, and so continued to consent to their own assessment. In questioning assessment requirements they were nevertheless challenging their position within the educator controlled organization of the MBA.

Richard expressed his change in approach when preparing assignments:

I think it's often easier if you can step back and just do it as a piece of work for the MBA. You know rather than actually having it . . . rather than trying to get something useful out of it.

Richard expressed a tension between his own needs and the requirements imposed by the assessment design. An earlier willingness to accommodate the assessment criteria to individual learning needs is replaced by a more instrumental approach. He recognizes that the values he assumed would be achieved through MBA learning do not necessarily fit with the technical demands of the MBA assessment design.

Although putting their originally expressed needs and expectations from the MBA to one side, the students nevertheless persisted in pursuing it as a course of education. An example of this strategy was illustrated by Huw's description of a tutorial he had recently attended:

Yeah, it was a bit of a disaster 'cos the tutor didn't turn up for some reason, so it's just been a do it yourself job this morning, which is OK to be honest. We get most of our comments off each other. The tutor tends to put in the odd barbed question usually, which stops you in your track when you're waffling on about something. So it's not a big loss I guess, it just keeps us on track. If there's any queries about the technical – does

the assignment need to cover this or that he tends to answer those questions. So, yeah, we learn off each other I guess as much as anything.

The last quote indicates confusion around tutors' role in the experiential learning process, further illustrating the tensions between the mix of cognitive interests present in the MBA. The participative, self-directed nature of the programme encourages students to learn from each other, with a less didactic role for the tutor. This accords with one of the premises of the experiential approach, in which the tutor 'really has to listen to the experience' (Rowan, 1988: 113) if the student is to gain anything positive. The interviewees judge the technical approach, as represented by the tutor and assessment criteria, by contrast to be more a restraining feature. Assignments become a series of technical requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to pass. Assessment, in an experiential approach rooted more deeply in a humanistic psychological framework, however, questions the relevance of conventional models. The marking of students' work is seen not as 'inevitable', but 'offensive' (Rowan, 1988).

Educational theories of learning are helpful in working to understand learners' responses. Mann (2001) discusses how the education literature on student learning has consistently found that students variously adopt either a surface or strategic approach to learning. Both approaches, she argues, could be described as expressing an 'alienation from the subject and process of study itself' (p. 7). A psychoanalytic analysis alone of interviewees' responses to the MBA, 17–19 months on, might interpret it as one of alienation. However, this does not take into account the organizational dimension of their learning; what triggers these responses and what role is played by assessment in this process? Managers are questioning the programme design, but have not become alienated from it to the extent that they wish to drop out. Their resistance, one might surmise, arises from the insight that the values they ascribed to learning are different to assessment's utilitarian tendencies. The publicly promoted MBA premise holds that managers' experiential knowledge will be valued, but this is a premise whose validity can be challenged with reference to its conventional assessment modes. To paraphrase Argyris (1990), the publicly espoused learning theory underpinning the MBA is contradicted in the translation to the overall learning and assessment design.

Given the interviewees' preoccupation with the marks and examinations of assessment practice, an alternative insight might be gained from a Foucauldian (1977) perspective, one that sees examination processes as rendering visible the individual and placing him/her in a hierarchy of success and expertise. From a Gramscian perspective, interviewees' resistance might be interpreted as a challenge to the authority of traditional intellectuals (Elliott, 2003). However, given the tempered nature of this resistance, recognition also needs to be given to the wider political–economic context in which interviewees' learning experience is occurring: one in which an accredited qualification is a public demonstration of an improvement in professional practice. An appreciation of the organizational dimension of the emotions and responses raised by the dynamic of the assessment relationship recognizes that to some extent all educational contexts represent and replicate external power relations (Vince, 1996). Interviewees'

move towards resisting elements of the programme design can be interpreted as a political response to an institutional practice of performance measurement.

Ambivalence: Private Doubt/Public Acclaim

Having moved from a position of accommodation to one of resistance towards the end of the programme, a position taken up to six months after completion was one of ambivalence. One of the main factors driving interviewees' responses continued to be assessment practices, and they remained confused about the criteria used to judge their performance. That this remained an irritant 6 months down the line, and even though they had been awarded the MBA, found expression in Richard's comment:

When the actual exam came I didn't get such good marks. I don't know why and that's one of the things I suppose looking back, that it's slightly irritating about Luneside is you never get to see any reason why your marks are bad.

Some anger was expressed regarding the final meeting with tutors that occurred during presentations for the dissertation, which comprised part of the assessment. In this 'live' assessment encounter issues of power and authority are starkly apparent. A panel of three assessors questioned and commented on students' presentations, and interviewees raised objections to both the type of questions posed and the manner in which they had been asked.

I mean one of the questions that the panel asked was 'say what's the issue'. And it's like, well, I just thought it was a really stupid question and it was just totally ignorant. (Gerard)

The way Sej asked me the question I felt was very aggressive. So I'll respond in a very aggressive manner if he wants to ask me in one, 'cos I think, treat people how you want to be treated yourself. (Rob)

These comments draw attention to some of the political sensitivities arising from the dynamics of pedagogic practices. In the final stages of the programme doubts have emerged concerning the ability of assessors to judge performance. This creates a situation in which a process of two-way judging occurs. Tutors are assessing students, and managers/students are aware of the power held by tutors over them in this setting, but do not consider them worthy of this authority.

However, other responses indicate that the interviewees realized that they could not afford to express their doubts over tutors' expertise in public. To do so would be to devalue the qualification they have just obtained. So while they questioned the extent to which the MBA had impacted on their working practices:

I do think differently, but having said that, that could have come from my changing role because I changed role a couple of months before the MBA . . . So I think my role has developed me an awful lot. But I've used some of my learning and the models that you get taught to organize your thoughts, that kind of thing. So the MBA must have worked for me, it must have helped me in the work that I do now and some of the areas of work I do now. Being in the position has offered me as much I think. (Rob)

They recognized the impact that being the holder of an MBA could have on potential job changes, career development opportunities and others' perceptions:

For the new job, they did ask me quite a lot about it (the MBA) because I think they wanted an injection of fresh blood really. I mean I am sure that was why I was interviewed because I wasn't one of them. I didn't come from the station, and I'd done this thing called an MBA, so that might be interesting. (Huw)

It changes people's perceptions of you somehow. It's not something that they say, except just in passing. For example, we were talking about writing business plans and the consensus in the management team seemed to be, well you know, you've got an MBA, you should know how to do it. (Jo)

Their response to the anxiety regarding their MBA performance in the early stages was one that manifested itself as uncertainty about the way they were assessed. Rather than the change they were experiencing leading them open to take risks in their approach, as suggested by Vince's (1996) first model, they accommodated their learning needs and approach to the assessment criteria. At a later stage, interviewees spoke openly about their anger and confusion regarding assessment systems and they began to resist a number of pedagogic practices. Arguably, interviewees' articulated responses demonstrate a degree of insight concerning the discrepancies that arise when multiple pedagogic principles co-exist within one programme. Thus, their resistance arose from insight. In discussing the cycle of emotions that promote learning, Vince states that '(T)he result of this cycle of uncertainty, risk and struggle is a feeling of empowerment involving either an insight or increased authority' (1996: 122). The ambivalence emerging from the responses, after completing the programme, might suggest a struggle in reconciling views on their learning experience with the way they wished to present their learning publicly. The use of action learning and other similar experiential learning models has encouraged the 'rational/intellectual skills of managers in interpreting and working with their experience' tending to ignore the 'emotional and power dynamics generated in learning processes' (Vince, 1996: 119). This, it could be assumed, might be compounded when experiential learning methods operate within traditional assessment practices that locate authority to evaluate student learning in the hands of the educator.

If interviewees in any way perceived they had greater authority following their management education experience, their ambivalence would suggest that it was an authority gained from insight into pedagogic discrepancies, and the shifts in power between student and educator arising therefrom.

Concluding Discussion

Working Towards More Critically Reflexive Learning and Assessment Practices

This study approached the MBA as a practice informed by multiple pedagogic assumptions. From the responses provided by learners, the contradictions arising from the various knowledge interests, engaged by the various learning

and assessment practices, heightens awareness of the anxiety and disruption to learning this can create. It is not only programmes that introduce critically reflective practices that are in danger of disrupting individuals' self-identity (Reynolds, 1999); the study points to the need to remain alert to how ostensibly less critical programmes might have a similar impact on the learner. One of the contributions that a more critical approach to management education has made is that experiential models of learning have a tendency to ignore the emotional and power dynamics occurring within learning processes (Vince, 1996). This article has presented ways in which this is compounded, from the learner's perspective, when experiential learning models operate alongside conventional assessment methods. Underpinned by different pedagogical assumptions, and engaging different knowledge interests, the power to decide the value of knowledge shifts from the learner to the educator. This is by no means a situation unique to MBA degrees or to management education. The issue raised here is that there are specific consequences to student learning that arise from contradictions operating within MBA programmes, aimed at currently practising managers, which work to multiple pedagogic assumptions. Such programmes publicly claim to value students' experiential knowledge, and to give them specific tools to gain more control over their work lives, while simultaneously nullifying any sense of control through the way their learning is assessed.

Towards More Critically Reflexive Assessment Practices

Although the study showed the students taking an ambivalent attitude towards the MBA after they had completed the degree, the research does indicate some room for optimism. In terms of learning and assessment practices, interviewees' recognition of the need to position their MBA degree positively to colleagues or employers – despite any personal doubts regarding its value they may hold – demonstrates awareness of the political significance of qualifications. It is this *experience* of the pedagogic encounter that might be used to more positive effect in the move towards a more critically informed management education.

To follow Reynolds' proposals (1998), in the classroom setting a reflexive stance encourages the analysis of roles and relationships in the light of wider contextual processes that they reflect. In this study, interviewees' ambivalence towards their MBA experience appears to arise from the 'control' they are expected to take – through the development of knowledge and skills – in their work environment, any sense of which is subsequently tempered through educators' assessment judgements. This ambiguity is accentuated by interviewees' desire to have their knowledge and skills publicly accredited. A more critically reflexive pedagogic environment would require a reconsideration of experience, so that the *experience of the MBA* itself becomes a source for knowledge. Following the findings emerging from this study, for example, this would involve students and educators taking the experience of 'being assessed' as a unit of analysis. Having previously equipped students with relevant analytical frameworks and theoretical perspectives, 'being assessed' could provide the basis of an analysis that recognizes, for example, the emotional and political nature of assessment and its links to wider social, cultural and political institutions and processes.

Such an undertaking would not be without its difficulties. To introduce such a reconfiguring of experience without making changes to how assessment is practised might well lead to an even greater sense of student disillusion regarding the educational process. For this, we might turn to examples cited in the adult and professional educational literature in which moves towards less hierarchical, more participative, assessment methods have arisen from the concern that conventional assessment methods are not consistent with educational goals such as 'developing independent learners and critical thinkers' (Boud, 1986: 14). Approaches such as peer, collaborative or consultative assessment seek, in different ways and to different degrees, to relinquish some of the authority traditionally held by the educator to decide how work is judged and marked. The intention is therefore to include students in the assessment decision-making process.

Examples of specialist programmes employing more collaborative assessment methods currently operating within Management Schools include the MA in Management Learning and Leadership¹ at Lancaster University Management School.² The MA offers an instructive example as, although designed on participative principles, in its earliest iterations tutors ultimately controlled assessment (Hodgson, 2004). In common with programmes working to similar principles during this period (the mid-1980s), a more collaborative assessment system was later introduced that was seen as more akin to the programme's overall course philosophy.

Such approaches have, however, been criticized for being more concerned with aspiring 'for social equality' as opposed to examining assessment in the context of institutional power (Reynolds and Trehan, 2001). Within the context of calls for more critically informed pedagogy, asking students to reflect on 'being assessed' would, for the purposes of epistemological coherence, need to occur within a more participative assessment model. It would require assessment, and 'being assessed', to be considered as a practice of institutional power. For consistency purposes, this would necessarily ask educators to be prepared for their own theoretical and ideological preferences to come under scrutiny.

If management educators aspire to develop more critically informed programmes, this does not necessarily require the abandonment of principles that value student experience. Informed by the learners' experience, what the study here draws attention to is the opportunities offered by a learning design framework in which participative principles informing some pedagogic practices are extended to include assessment procedures, and enhanced by critical perspectives.

The exploratory nature of the research has led to a proposal that suggests there is room in experience-based programmes for more critical assessment processes. One strength of the approach taken is that in listening to students' responses to their management learning experience, the research has raised awareness of the political nature of assessment and the impact this has on students' learning relationship with the MBA. Given the research's preliminary nature, however, the proposal for an alternative assessment practice is necessarily speculative. There remains therefore, scope for further research, which might include the implementation and study of the suggested assessment approach.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Michael Reynolds, Sarah Robinson, and the anonymous referees for their constructive comments on earlier versions of this article.

Notes

1. Formerly known as the MA in Management Learning, the programme changed its title in 2003.
2. Another example includes the postgraduate course in Management Development at the University of Central England, which uses peer assessment (Reynolds and Trehan, 2000).

References

- Apple, M. W. (1982) *Education and Power*. London: Ark.
- Argyris, C. (1990) *Overcoming Organizational Defenses*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Becker, H. S., Geer, B. and Hughes, E. C. (1968) *Making the Grade: The Academic Side of College Life*. New York: Wiley.
- Boud, D. (1986) 'Implementing Student Self Assessment', *Higher Education Research and Development Society* 5: 3–10.
- Boud, D. (1999) 'Avoiding the Traps: Seeking Good Practice in the Use of Self Assessment and Reflection in Professional Courses', *Social Work Education* 18(2): 121–32.
- Boud, D. and Walker, D. (1998) 'Promoting Reflection in Professional Courses: The Challenge of Context', *Studies in Higher Education* 23(2): 191–206.
- Boud, D. and Walker, D. (1999) 'Barriers to Reflection on Experience', in D. Boud, R. Cohen and D. Walker (eds) *Using Experience for Learning*, pp. 73–86. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University press.
- Currie, G. and Knights, D. (2003) 'Reflecting on a Critical Pedagogy in MBA Education', *Management Learning* 34(1): 27–49.
- Department for Education and Skills (2001) *The Future of Higher Education* (White Paper). Norwich, UK: The Stationery Office Ltd.
- Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education*. London: Macmillan.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2002) *Management Research: An Introduction*. London: SAGE.
- Elliott, C. (2003) 'Representations of the Intellectual: Insights from Gramsci on Management Education', *Management Learning* 34: 4.
- Entwistle, N. (1984) 'Contrasting Perspectives on Learning', in F. Marton, D. Hounsell and N. Entwistle (eds) *The Experience of Learning*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Entwistle, N. J. and Wilson, J. D. (1977) *Degrees of Excellence; The Academic Achievement Game*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Fineman, S. (1993) *Emotion in Organizations*. London: SAGE.
- Fineman, S. (1997) 'Emotion and Management Learning', *Management Learning* 28(1): 13–25.
- Fineman, S. (ed.) (2000a) *Emotion in Organizations*, 2nd edn. London: SAGE.
- Fineman, S. (2000b) 'Emotional Arenas Revisited', in S. Fineman (ed.) *Emotion in Organizations*, 2nd edn, pp. 1–24. London: SAGE.
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.
- French, R. and Vince, R. (1999a) *Group Relations, Management and Organisation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- French, R. and Vince, R. (1999b) 'Learning, Managing, and Organizing: The Continuing Contribution of Group Relations to Management and Organization', in R. French and R. Vince (eds) *Group Relations, Management and Organisation*, pp. 1–19. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gabriel, Y. (1998) *Organizations in Depth. The Psychoanalysis of Organizations*. London: SAGE.
- Grey, C. and Mithev, N. (1995) 'Management Education. A Polemic', *Management Learning* 26(1): 73–90.
- Griffiths, D. S., Winstanley, D. and Gabriel, Y. (2005) 'Learning Shock: The Trauma of Return to Formal Learning', *Management Learning* 36(3): 275–97.
- Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*. London: Heinemann.
- Hanson, F. A. (1993) *Testing, Testing. Social Consequences of the Examined Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Heron, J. (1981) 'Assessment Revisited', in D. J. Boud (ed.) *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*, pp. 77–90. London: Kogan Page.
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (2004) *HEFCE Strategic Plan 2003–2008* (updated April 2004). London: Higher Education Funding Council for England.
- Hinshelwood, R. D. (1998) 'Creatures of Each Other; Some Historical Considerations of Responsibility and Care and Some Present Undercurrents', in A. Foster and V. Roberts (eds) *Managing Mental Health in the Community*, pp. 15–26. London: Routledge.
- Hodgson, V. (2004) 'Participative Assessment and the Learners' Experience', in P. Ashwin (ed.) *Charting the Changes in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Höpfel, H. and Linstead, S. (1997) 'Learning to Feel and Feeling to Learn: Emotion and Learning in Organizations', *Management Learning* 28(1): 5–12.
- Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2000) *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology*. London: SAGE.
- Knowles, M. S. (1984) *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Mann, S. J. (2001) 'Alternative Perspectives on the Student Experience: Alienation and Engagement', *Studies in Higher Education* 26(1): 7–19.
- McLaughlin, H. and Thorpe, R. (1993) 'Action Learning – A Paradigm in Emergence: The Problems Facing a Challenge to Traditional Management Education and Development', *British Journal of Management* 4(1): 19–27.
- Miller, C. and Parlett, M. (1974) *Up to the Mark: A Study of the Examination Game*. London: Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Newman, J. H. (1852) *On the Scope and Nature of University Education*. London: Dent.
- Ottman, H. (1982) 'Cognitive Interests and Self-reflection', in J. B. Thompson and D. Held (eds) *Habermas. Critical Debates*, pp. 79–97. London: Macmillan.
- Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D. (1972) 'Evaluation as Illumination: A New Approach to the Study of Innovatory Programmes', Occasional Paper No. 9, Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh, UK.
- Pattison, M. (1876) 'Philosophy of Oxford', *Mind* 84–97.
- Perriton, L. and Reynolds, M. (2004) 'Critical Management Education: From Pedagogy of Possibility to Pedagogy of Refusal?', *Management Learning* 35(1): 61–77.
- Peters, T. J. and Waterman, R. H. (1982) *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-run Companies*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Ramsden, P. (1984) 'The Context of Learning', in F. Marton, D. Hounsell and N. Entwistle (eds) *The Experience of Learning*, pp. 144–64. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Revans, R. (1971) *Developing Effective Managers*. London: Longman.
- Revans, R. (1983) *The ABC of Action Learning*. Bromley, UK: Chartwell Bratt.
- Reynolds, M. (1997) 'Towards a Critical Management Pedagogy', in J. Burgoyne and M. Reynolds (eds) *Management Learning. Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE.

- Reynolds, M. (1998) 'Reflection and Critical Reflection in Management Learning', *Management Learning* 29(2): 183–200.
- Reynolds, M. (1999a) 'Critical Reflection and Management Education: Rehabilitating Less Hierarchical Approaches', *Journal of Management Education* 23(5): 537–53.
- Reynolds, M. (1999b) 'Grasping the Nettle: Possibilities and Pitfalls of a Critical Management Pedagogy', *British Journal of Management* 9: 171–84.
- Reynolds, M. and Trehan, K. (2000) 'Assessment: A Critical Perspective', *Studies in Higher Education* 25(3): 267–78.
- Reynolds, M. and Trehan, K. (2001) 'Classroom as Real World: propositions for a Pedagogy of Difference', *Gender and Education* 13(4): 357–72.
- Reynolds, M. and Vince, R. (2004) 'Organizing Reflection: An Introduction' in M. Reynolds and R. Vince (eds) *Organizing Reflection*, pp. 442–56. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Rowan, J. (1988) *Ordinary Ecstasy. Humanistic Psychology in Action*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Schön, D. A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. London: Temple Smith.
- Snyder, B. R. (1971) *The Hidden Curriculum*. New York: Knopf.
- Taylor, F. W. (1947) *Scientific Management*. New York: Harper.
- Veblen, T. (1918/1957) *The Higher Learning in America*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Vince, R. (1996) 'Experiential Management Education as the Practice of Change', in R. French and C. Grey (eds) *Rethinking Management Education*, pp. 111–31. London: SAGE.
- Vince, R. (2001) 'Power and Emotion in Organizational Learning', *Human Relations* 54(10): 1325–51.
- Vince, R. (2002) 'The Impact of Emotion on Organizational Learning', *Human Resource Development International* 5(1): 73–85.
- Vince, R. (2005) "Learning-in-Action" and "Learning Inaction": Systems Psychodynamic Thinking and Critical Action Learning', paper presented at the Critical Management Studies conference, Cambridge, UK.
- Willmott, H. (1997) 'Critical Management Learning', in J. Burgoyne and M. Reynolds (eds) *Management Learning. Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice*, pp. 161–76. London: SAGE.
- Willmott, H. (2003) 'Organization Theory as a Critical Science? Forms of Analysis and "New Organizational Forms"', in C. Knudsen and H. Tsoukas (eds) *Handbook of Organization Theory*, pp. 88–112. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Young, M. F. D. (ed.) (1971) *Knowledge and Control*. London: Collier-Macmillan.

Contact Address

Carole Elliott is in the Department of Management Learning and Leadership, Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster LA1 4YX, UK.
[email: c.j.elliott@lancaster.ac.uk]