

Case Study 1: Transforming Management Thinking Through Alternative Pedagogies

UoA 19

1. Summary of the impact

The North East of England has seen a rapid decline in traditional heavy industry, leading to high levels of unemployment. The Business School recognised that traditional pedagogies were less than effective at engaging managers within the region, and developed a programme of on-going research to inform management curriculum development. Initially the research focused on developing an innovative model of work-based learning, and has subsequently developed into four core themes of professional identity, inter-professional working, creativity and coaching. This case study describes the developments since 2001 and the resulting impact since 2008 on policy, local business and individuals.

2. Underpinning research

The programme of work was initially underpinned by research carried out by Sanders (nee Thompson) as part of her PhD programme (Thompson, 2002), which was initiated to explore alternative pedagogies for management development. Decline in heavy industry had led to high levels of unemployment and a need within the region to engage, develop, and retrain managers to enable them to react to the changing employment dynamics. In 2001 she was awarded a £10,000 innovation grant to develop a novel work-based programme informed by findings from her work. This was financially supported and reported as part of the Tyne & Wear Work-related Learning Project: 'From Modern Apprentice to Graduate and Beyond'. The model developed from this work adopted a process-based approach to management education (Sanders, 2006) where personal transformation is the key aim. The processes of reflective practice, tacit knowledge transfer, and inter-professional learning are key to the model's success (Sanders, 2010). The model was adopted for all part-time undergraduate provision in the Business School, and also formed the basis for a number of significant corporate programmes with More Than, Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service, BT and the Police.

As the model of delivery has matured our research has focused on those three core processes of reflective practice, tacit knowledge transfer, and inter-professional learning, and how we can make these more effective and meaningful to our management learners. The theme of professional identity has been progressed as a way of exploring how managers learn within the workplace and interact with other professionals. It now forms a core theme not only in the part-time undergraduate provision, but also our full-time postgraduate programmes and the University's generic Professional Doctorate and DBA (Sanders et al, 2011). The work has recently developed beyond the operations of the Business School to inform work on the NHS agenda for modernising scientific careers, through collaboration with colleagues in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, where a PhD project is using the model to compare the development of professionalism in the Medical Education England training route with traditional training methods for healthcare scientists.

The process-based approach that we are using in this model has demanded a different approach to both the tutor-learner relationship and to the learner-learner relationship. Our pedagogies are no longer based on information delivery and instead have at their core the notion of transformative learning. Our alternative learning approach is based on dialogue and enquiry. Our research strand on transformative learning, storytelling and coaching (Reissner and Du Toit, 2011) underpins our developments in this area and has recently led to the award in 2012 of a competitive tender to develop a coaching mentoring and leadership programme for the Department for Education and the Association of Directors of Children's Services as part of the Institute for Local Governance's North East Succession Planning Programme (NESPP).

Our most recent developments have centred on the area of reflective practice and particularly on using reflection to encourage managers to think in different ways, which is particularly important for learners who are re-skilling or who have to adapt to significant change in the employment environment. A cross-University team led by Sanders is working on various aspects of the use of creative techniques and artistic intervention for their Professional Doctorate studies (Sanders et al, 2011) and their work is currently being used to inform the delivery of several successful corporate contracts for management development, including Nissan, Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service, and the Police.

A series of qualitative studies have evaluated the impact of the model on learners and their practice (Sanders et al, 2011) and revealed that it is the unique combination of reflective practice, tacit knowledge transfer, and inter-professional learning, underpinned by novel methods of pedagogy which draws from coaching and storytelling (Reissner and Du Toit, 2011), which provides the model with its transformative power.

Staff involved in the research: Professor Gail Sanders (Professor, Sunderland 1991 – present), Dr Paul Smith (Associate Dean, Sunderland 2012 – present), Ron Lawson (Senior Lecturer, Sunderland 2010 – present), Dr Stefanie Reissner (Senior Lecturer, Sunderland 2006 - 2010), and Dr Angelique Du Toit (Senior Lecturer, Sunderland 2000 - 2012).

3. References to the research

1. Reissner, S. C., & Du Toit, A. (2011). Power and the tale: coaching as storytelling. *Journal of Management Development*, 30(3), 247-259. *This paper explores the power of the approaches of coaching and storytelling which have been developed by the team. The paper was subject to rigorous peer review prior to publication in the journal.*
2. Sanders G, Kuit JA, Smith P, Fulton J and Curtis H (2011) Identity, Reflection and Developmental Networks as Processes in Professional Doctorate Development *Work-based Learning* 2 (1) 113-134. *This paper reports on a qualitative study which evaluates the impact of the model on a group of 65 Professional Doctorate students. The paper was subject to rigorous peer review prior to publication in the journal.*
3. Sanders, G (2006) 'Programmes that Work for People Who Work: A Process-based Model for Part-time Management Studies' in N Becket and P Kemp (eds) *Enhancing Graduate Employability in Business & Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, Tourism*, Threshold Press, Newbury. *This paper presents the early foundations of the model. This book was commissioned by the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST), and Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance (BMAF), with funding from HEFCE. Hosted by Oxford Brookes University, HLST and BMAF are two of the 24 national subject centres who work collaboratively to enhance the student experience by brokering the sharing of good practice across the UK.*
4. Sanders, G (2010) *Towards a Model of Multi-organisational Work-based Learning: Developmental Networks as a Mechanism for Tacit Knowledge Transfer and Exploration of Professional Identity*. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* 4 (1). *This paper explores the importance of interprofessional learning within the model. The paper was subject to rigorous peer review prior to publication in the journal.*
5. Thompson G (2002) *The Psychological Contract as an Explanatory Framework for the Student Experience at Sunderland Business School, University of Strathclyde*: PhD thesis. *The work from this thesis was supported by a competitively won innovation grant from the Tyne & Wear Work-related Learning Project: 'From Modern Apprentice to Graduate and Beyond'. The thesis is the basis for the work published subsequently, and the research in this case study. The thesis was subject to the normal rigour of the PhD examination process.*

4 Details of the impact

The research has influenced management thinking, and has had impact in the form of improved business and management performance. This impact can be demonstrated from individual, corporate, and policy perspectives. Key to the impact of both the individual and corporate cases is the interlinking of business knowledge with personal transformation. In each of the cases presented below, qualitative data have shown that it is the unique combination of reflective practice, tacit knowledge transfer, and inter-professional learning, which have facilitated the individual's transformation, and enabled the individual to extend this to transform their organisation.

Individual: Since the introduction of the model of transformative learning a number of individuals have gone on to use their learning to significantly improve their business or workplace practices. Notable examples are offered here:

Kookaburra Ltd: Kookaburra is a food processing company based in Peterlee. In 2005 the shift manager, who is now Director of Operations, embarked upon the BA Applied Management programme at the Business School, progressing subsequently to the MSc Applied Management in 2008 (Evidence 1). The transformational learning achieved on these programmes has allowed him to make significant impact within his organisation. This includes: the introduction of change

management programmes which have led to a reduction in the running costs of the factory during the period 2009 and 2012 (Evidence 2); consultative work for market leaders in the food manufacturing industry during the period 2010 and 2012, offering a service that provides Kookaburra with a competitive edge, increasing the profile of the organisation and leading to a significant increase in sales, and winning an award in Meat Trade Journal Meat and Poultry Processing Awards for Environmental initiative of the Year in 2011. In his words: ““During the last five years, through research at the university, I have transformed my leadership skills and used them to transform some of the business aspects of Kookaburra.”

The Care People: The Care People is a social enterprise established to provide care to children and older people. The Chief Executive of The Care People undertook a Professional Doctorate study during the period 2009 and 2012. She used personal transformation, and the model of transformative learning, to develop The Care People and her staff, resulting in a new organisational structure, a growth in staff numbers and the winning of three new contracts with a Local Authority in 2012 (Evidence 3).

North East Shared Services (NESSP): NESSP is a not for profit collaborative partnership comprising of four FE (Further Education) colleges in the North East region, with the aim of sharing common services. The Manager of NESSP used the model of transformative learning in a doctoral study to create the business structure for a shared service which is now offered as best practice for the Further Education sector (Evidence 4). A toolkit, based on her shared service development was commissioned by the 157 Group, which is a consortium of 30 of the UK's largest FE Colleges. This toolkit was developed and delivered by the Manager of NESSP and AK&N Associates, using the model of transformative learning as a core, during 2012/13. The Manager of NESSP states: "I really thought I was a well-qualified and experienced manager until I experienced the development programme. I had not anticipated the intense academic rigour together with demonstrating significant impact to my professional audience. The programme stretched me in a way I never dreamed possible and I now know that the work I undertake has moved up many gears in quality! I am presently working with Colleges in the South West to develop a shared services joint venture company, and a College in the South East to develop a Federation group model of Colleges/University Technical Colleges/Academies and Private Companies, further embedding the knowledge and experience gained as a result of undertaking the programme."

Corporate: The Business School has adopted the model used for its open programmes of work-based learning to develop customised corporate programmes for major organisations. BT: Work-based programmes based on the BA Applied Management model have been offered to BT from Foundation Degree to Masters level. 64 students graduated from the programme in the period 2008 to 2012. Graduates of the programme have described impacts such as improved ability to negotiate deals with clients, better ability to prioritise, improved people management skills, and improved information management and sharing which has helped to 'win big deals'. Various graduates from different divisions report potential additional income as a result of the programme from £500,000 to £12 million, and potential cost savings at £100,000 (Evidence 5).

NHS. The model is also being delivered through the NHS North East Leadership Academy. The aim is to use the research to develop high level leadership capacity in the North East public sector. This work is having impact across all 14 of the region's NHS trusts and North East Strategic Health Authority. This link has been further strengthened by the appointment of Maxine Craig, head of organisation development for the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, as a visiting professor with the unit (Evidence 6). The NHS are using the model to explore ways to support NHS teams and clinicians in difficulty and improve team working. The impact of this work to date, which has been evaluated by a qualitative study and was presented at the British Academy of Management conference in 2013, is a developing culture of openness and insight (Evidence 7).

Policy and Strategy: Sanders reputation in the field of work-based learning and management development led to her acting in an advisory capacity to Government Office Southwest on funding bids for enterprise and work-based learning, and as such has impacted upon educational provision for businesses in the South West region. The then Director of Skills and Business Support at South West Regional Development Agency states: "Cornwall is a Convergence area and hence is the beneficiary of significant ESF funds. The priorities for ESF spend in the county are set out in the Framework document, and a significant proportion of spending is allocated for Higher Education spending. The Framework was developed by the Regional Skills Partnership through a collaborative and consultative process. I was at the time Director and led the process. A panel was

established to consider proposals for ESF funding, and it was clear that outside expertise would be required to ensure that funding supported development proposals that were cutting edge. Gail Sanders was engaged to provide critical third party expertise to help shape the responses to bids. The panel to which Gail was co-opted included Government Office, DWP, SFA the SWRDA and independent members. The guidance and expert advice that she provided was invaluable and helped to shape the programme commissioned guidance given to bidders.” (Evidence 8). Sanders has also acted as specialist adviser for the Open University for the development of overseas work-based learning programmes. Sanders has recently joined together with colleagues from across the HE sector with an interest in critically reflexive approaches to research processes. This work has attracted the support of the HE Academy with a view to establishing a sustainable Special Interest Group (SIG) and co-hosting a future symposium (Evidence 9).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Individual Impact

1 Kookaburra: contact details of the Operations Manager can be provided on request

2 Kookaburra: press release in the Northern Echo May 2013

http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/business/training/10427528.University_graduate_helps_meat_firm_continue_to_grow/

This press release summarises the impact of the work on local company Kookaburra.

3 Training in Care: Brown, A, Smith, Peter and Kuit, Judith (2013) A Personal Perspective of Building a Social Enterprise to Support Child and Adult Care. In: Social Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Social Change. Research in Management Education and Development. Information Age Publishing. ISBN 978-1-62396-446-7. This book chapter uses storytelling techniques to relate the story of the transformation of an individual, and the company Training in Care.

4 Shared Services North East.

<http://www.nessp.org.uk/> and contact details can be provided on request. The work led to the development of a tool kit for the Further Education sector to support the development of shared services.

http://www.157group.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/practical_guide_and_toolkitv6.pdf

Corporate impact

5 Article on BT website 2009 <http://www.btplc.com/today/art88343.html>

This article provides early evidence of the impact of the model of transformative learning, in use in a development programme at BT.

6 NHS contact details can be provided on request

<http://www.nelacademy.nhs.uk/development-programmes/nela-emerging-leaders-programme>

Use of the model to deliver the North East Leadership Academy Emerging Leaders Programme.

Appointment of Visiting Professor

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/people/appointments-1-august-2013/2006077.article>

7 Craig M and Sanders G (2013). Dealing with the hidden side of organisational life: Supporting NHS teams and clinicians in difficulty. Session at British Academy of Management conference, 2013. <http://www.bam.ac.uk/civicrm/event/info?id=1161&reset=1>

This paper explores the use of the model by an NHS Trust in the North of England to improve team working and develop a culture of openness and insight. The findings from the study are being used to address some of the key recommendations from the recently-published Francis report into failures of care provided by the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Impact on Policy and Strategy

8 Former Director of Skills and Business Support at SWRDA

Written evidence provided of impact of the model, and Sanders’ work, on research policy in the South West.

9. HE Academy Special Interest Group

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2013/BCU_Reflexivity

Establishment of a Special Interest Group for colleagues working on reflexivity.