DOORS

To

Action and Reflection

Examining some of the impacts and outcomes of what happens when a leader attempts to shift focus from action to deep reflection

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by
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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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This dissertation has been a journey of discovery about others and myself. The path opened Doors to further understanding and insight about leadership and the many other hats I wear.

One of my greatest discoveries along this journey was the support, friendship and love I received along the way from my family, friends and colleagues who walked with me shining a light along the path and opening doors to facilitate my understanding.

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And a man said speak to us of self–knowledge.

And he answered saying:

Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and nights.

But your ears thirst for the sound of your heart's knowledge.

You would know in words that which you have always known in thought.

You would touch with your fingers the naked body of your dreams.

And it is well you should.

The hidden well-spring of your soul must needs rise and run murmuring to the sea;

And the treasure of your infinite depths would be revealed to your eyes.

But let there be no scales to weigh your unknown treasure;

And seek not the depths of your knowledge with staff or sounding line.

For self is a sea boundless and measureless.

Say not, "I have found the truth," but rather, "I have found a truth."

Say not, "I have found the path of the soul."

Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path."

For the soul walks upon all paths.

The soul walks not upon a line neither does it grow like a reed.

The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals.

(Gibran 1998, p.65)

Abstract

In today's busy and complex world, leaders can become mired in action and activity driven by a strong desire to achieve. Increasingly this drive for action and achievement coupled with the pace of life can preclude–or severely limit–time for reflection, which, in turn, can impact adversely on the quality of decisions made and on the lives of people at work.

I have been involved for over a decade in designing and facilitating training programs to improve reflection and leadership skills. Much has been written about the practices of reflection and leadership, and reflection as a practice of leadership, with a wide community of researchers and practitioners using different lenses and traditions. As a leadership consultant, I came to realise that while there is much written and taught about the topics, leaders seem to practise associated reflection skills to a limited extent once they leave the boundaries of the training program.

I also noticed, eventually, that in my professional and personal life, my own behaviour was enacting those very behaviours that I was encouraging leaders to change, bringing to mind the phrase, 'You teach best what you most need to learn' (Bach 1977). As I became aware of my own habits I also realised there is limited research chronicling the iterative journey of the practitioner attempting to model and learn from the practice of reflection as a leader, whilst simultaneously enabling such a process for other leaders.

This doctoral research is, therefore, essentially a self-study of my own learning about being a leader and a reflective practitioner, within the context of designing and facilitating programs to improve leadership via reflective practice for senior managers in corporate organizations. In essence, it reports how I have approached the task of emulating and representing what I encourage others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners. To explicate the objective of analyzing my own reflective practice I decided to explore two research questions: 'How can I as a leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?' and as the research unfolded I found myself also

addressing a third question – 'How do I undertake to role model and represent what I encourage others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners?'

Specifically, the research chronicles and documents learning and insights gained from designing and facilitating two leadership development programs, based on action research with senior managers within Feedsmoore (a pseudonym) a global food business. The research draws on my learning and insights associated with implementing programs as a program director within a top ranking business school.

The research methodology is primarily autoethnography and action research supported by relevant literature and interspersed with a genre that I created and titled, called 'Pictoems'. These are pictures combined with poems capturing moments in time, providing opportunities to reflect metaphorically and symbolically on issues explored through my work on the research questions, as well as upon my awareness of life's essence.

As a direct consequence of the research, a model evolved over time framing the practice of reflection within a broader more holistic cosmology. I have called this the 'DOOR' model, with its name being a mnemonic, for the metaphoric and literal means of 'opening' doorways to understanding. The model draws on–and in a way, renames–the more familiar action learning/action research approach to exploring and documenting resolution of complex problems. The 'D' in DOOR stands for 'Design', the First 'O' stands for 'Operate', the second 'O' stands for 'Observe' and the 'R' stands for 'Reflect'.

As I worked at understanding my research question through the journey of the Doctorate, another model emerged which I have called the Four Frames of Learning. The Four Frames are a means to locate an organisation's readiness and maturity for introducing deeper learning and change processes.

Each of the eight chapters in the thesis applies the mnemonic of the DOOR to facilitate reporting of my evolving process of learning about being both a leader and a reflective practitioner in modern organizations and in my own life.

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Figure 1.1 DOOR Model Mapped to Eight Chapters of the Thesis

Door to Enquiry

This first chapter provides an overview about the design and underpinning theoretical frameworks of the thesis, details the rationale for the thesis and positions the research historically and chronologically.

This doctoral research is essentially a self-study of my own learning about being a leader and reflective practitioner, within the context of designing and facilitating programs to improve leadership via reflective practice for senior managers in corporate organizations and specifically designing and running two Leadership Programs for the client organisation Feedsmoore (a pseudonym). In essence, it examines how I undertook to emulate and represent what I encouraged others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners.

Design of the Thesis

Figure 1.1 shows the eight chapters of the thesis mapped onto the octagonal diagram of the DOOR model and the steps involved in understanding the process of combining leadership and reflective practice. A larger diagram is located as a foldout at the front of the thesis. The four-leaf clover shape is the journey of the Doctorate, winding its way through the eight chapters of the thesis. This journey commences with the chapter on Door to Enquiry, and moves sequentially as each Door is opened, concluding with the chapter on the Door to the Future. Each of the Doors expands on and deepens my understanding of the Research Questions, which prompted, and sustained, the work that has produced this dissertation. The initial questions were:

1   'How can I as a Leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?'
2   'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?'

A third question emerged as the work proceeded.

3   'How do I undertake to role model and represent what I encourage others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners?'

DOORS to Thesis Chapters

Each chapter applies the metaphor of the DOOR to structure its content and also link the entire document together.

Chapter 1–DOOR to Enquiry outlines the rationale for the design of the theoretical frameworks, structure and process of the thesis.

Chapter 2–DOOR to Methodology introduces and explains my use of the research methodologies chosen to complete the work viz: auto-ethnography and action research.

Chapter 3–DOOR to Doors compares the DOOR framework, to relevant theoretical frameworks in the field of learning and growth. It also highlights the importance of deep reflection and design and their criticality for balancing action and reflection. The chapter also introduces and expands on the Four Frames of Learning.

Chapter 4–Door to Work (External of External) provides a rational and objective account of facts surrounding the action. It reports on the journey, represented by the 4 leaf clover, focusing on External aspects of the External world, and describing key aspects involved in designing' and operating the Leading Talent program.

Chapter 5–Door to Work (Internal of External) shifts the focus to my internal observations and reflections of the external events associated with the Leading Talent Program.

Chapter 6–Door to Work (External of Internal) returns the focus to external or Third Person 'observations' and reflections of my internal state and actions.

Chapter 7–DOOR to Self (Internal of Internal) reflexively exposes my key insights emerging from my personal journey. I ask the questions:

- Who am I?

- How have I come to better understand myself?

- What has the doctoral journey brought to me

- Where am I now? This is an internal / first person observation and reflection on my internal first person state

Chapter 8–DOOR to Future – summarises key findings and recommendations for possible future research.

DOORS and the Interplay within the Octagon

Using the research genre of autoethnography (explained in detail in chapter 2) enabled the use of story, metaphors, and personal narratives to both illustrate aspects of, and elaborate on, the research questions. As the author is the subject, the enquiry impacted on many facets of subjective experience, interconnecting with various broad areas of life including work, family, spirituality, philosophy, and an evolving understanding of myself.

Some of the deep and symbolic metaphors represented within Figure 1, will be expanded on further in the thesis, however for the purpose of illustration and clarity I will discuss some of them now.

The Octagonal is the ancient 'Bagua' map, originating from the I Ching, or Book of Changes, an ancient Chinese book of divination. The word Bagua describes the eight basic building blocks of the I Ching. Like the eight building blocks of the Bagua, the thesis also has eight chapters. The eight DOORs of the thesis have symbolic and metaphorical meanings. DOORs open both inwards and outwards; inwards to explore the rich dimensions of the inner world as in Chapter 1, the 'DOOR to Enquiry'; and outwards to the external world to discover the dynamics of this world

- as in Chapter 2, the 'DOOR to Methodology', symbolizing the search for knowledge, which then informs and illuminates the inner or intrapersonal and perception of the external world. Four Doors explore the inner/Intrapersonal and four doors explore the external domain.

Interestingly, there is synergy, interplay and dialectic within the octagonal representation, for example, between the DOORs within the model. The DOOR to Enquiry leads to a better understanding of the DOOR to Self, and conversely improved self understanding helps to expand our horizons and broaden the nature of our enquiry as we are no longer seeing the world through a narrow lens or filter (Kegan & Lahey 2009).

The DOOR to Methodology and the DOORs to Work are critical to each other. Within the context of my doctoral research, literature is used to both inform and illuminate practice. Practice is also the foundation of theory from which a body of knowledge is built inductively. In my doctoral research this goes to the core of the research questions, as I need to embody what I know and enunciate to others. Knowing is not enough; it needs to be infused with doing to impact on practice.

The DOOR to DOORs literally represents the understanding of the inner working of the DOOR model and the frames of learning. Metaphorically it represents my understanding of the various DOORS to the inner domain of the self and DOORS that constitute my perception of the world are interlinked.

The DOORs to Work and the DOOR to the Future are interconnected. Theory applied to the present impacts on the future. More dialogue is needed within organizations about plausible, possible and our preferred futures. We need to challenge our current theories and worldviews given the complex and intractable problems we face globally. Working on articulating our preferred futures allows us to 'back cast' to the present, reconceptualise our current understanding and from there develop new theories to assist us to create our preferred future (Inayatullah 2007).

The eight Doors have other symbolic meanings. The number eight appears in musical octaves and the periodic table and symbolizes the eight-fold path to enlightenment in Buddhism. Islamic ornamentation uses the geometry of Eight to express the compassionate breath of God and Chess offers a symbolic and metaphorical interaction between the chess pieces and positions bounded by the 64 black and white squares (8X8), and two sets of 16 pieces (8X2).

The green line in the shape of a four-leaf clover, as noted earlier, is about my journey of exploration, referencing the ancient Druids, filled with magic, wonder and ultimately luck, which can refer to the luck of discovery and the luck of unearthing dimensions of myself as yet unexplored. Ultimately this path loops in on itself representing my awareness that life is ultimately a continuous journey of enquiry and change.

The original DOOR model, as used to structure the thesis, was developed to represent the simplicity and beauty of a process of design with personally significant outcomes for myself as a leader in providing leadership support and education to organizations.

The Appendices contain another doorway for the reader to journey through and to look at some tangible and substantive outputs as a consequence of the work undertaken. I have structured the Appendix under 2 parts:

Appendix A – As I have tried to keep the chapters contained within the dissertation as succinct as possible, I have placed my expanded thoughts and any additional research linked to the respective chapter within this Appendix.

Appendix B – Contains material associated with the implementation of the LTP and any other material such as my journal articles.

Operating on the research

My operational design for the doctoral research is outlined below. My Doctoral journey commenced in February 2006 six months after commencing the work on the Feedsmoore Leadership Talent Program 1 (LTP1). While the LTP1 did not trigger my decision to undertake doctoral research, it was the key vehicle in shaping and guiding the development of the work summarized in this dissertation. In this section, I outline the rational for the research and detail how the research was conducted

Research Rationale

Our world has reached a tipping point where our very survival as a species seems to hang in the balance (Davies 2004). We are confronted with issues and problems of immense complexity that go beyond current known methods and systems to solve them (Homer-Dixon 2000; Laszlo 2008). These complex challenges require each one of us to be accountable and to take personal responsibility for addressing the issues (Gore 2009).

Accountability and responsibility are key aspects of both personal leadership, and leadership as vested in individuals via organisational roles. Leadership includes an understanding of the inner dimensions of one's self along with an understanding of the behaviour of others. These dimensions and associated behaviours have a direct and critical impact (whether conscious or unconscious) on other individuals, organizations and the world at large (Goleman 2002; Sinclair 2007).

Studies of leadership tend to parallel in many ways studies of leaders in history. Much has been written about the topic of leadership and, from various lenses, there are currently a myriad of options for learning about leadership. Yet despite this body of research an agreed understanding of leadership is elusive (Collins 2010b).

In today's busy and complex world, leaders can be mired in action and activity driven by a strong internal desire to achieve. Increasingly this drive for action and

achievement, coupled with the pace of life, can preclude or limit time for reflection. This can, in turn, impact adversely on the quality of decisions made and on the lives of people at work. Since the mid-1990s the drive for achievement, labeled by David McClelland (1987), an eminent Harvard psychologist, as one of the three key internal drivers or social motives, has been on the rise. The other two are, Affiliation and Power (netmba 2013).

Leaders are driven to overachieve – sometimes at great cost and suffering to those around them, (remembering also that some leaders overachieve and produce good results). High-profile scandals and reduced trust in leadership and big corporations (Spreier, Fontaine & Malloy 2006) are seen as part of the cost of an unthinking drive to overachieve. One does not need to look far, as newspapers over splash with headlines decrying organisational greed and excess. British Petroleum and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, Exxon Mobile with over 7000 spills in the Niger Delta, Union-Carbide and their release of toxic gases in Bhopal India, killing over 5000 people and adversely affecting the health of over half a million people, are some of the current examples.

One would have thought we had learnt from all this. Suzanne MCGee's (2010) surgical deconstruction of Wall Street highlights how a combination of greed, ego and drive to be at the top of the market led, in 2007 to the biggest Global financial crisis since the Great Depression in the 1930s . What is frightening is that this could happen again. 'Wall Street has been saved, but it hasn't been reformed' (McGee 2010, inside flap). As I write this, I observe a current newspaper article quoting the Australian Securities Investment Commission has claimed that a number of top 200 listed companies are failing to properly report their profit results in an effort to hide bad news from investors (Kitney 2010).

A consequence of this drive for achievement is leaders working long hours at the cost of health, and family-life, and limited time for introspection and reflective analysis. Action, uninformed by reflection, perpetuates such problems and locks people and their organizations in a vicious cycle. Leaders who do not review their

behaviours can negatively impact on the organization and its systems. (Langer 1989) argues there is a tendency for people to act without any 'conscious volition' and that many acts demonstrate a state of mindlessness, in contrast to the mindfulness linked to reflecting on what we do (Sinclair 2007). Essentially mindfulness is being purposely aware of our present state.

Along with mindfulness, leaders need to adopt and learn different styles that use what McClelland calls socialized power (McClelland 1987). Leaders need to also understand and become practised at understanding the inner landscape, being mindful of their emotions and beliefs and the impact these have on their decisions (Newman 2005).

Much has been written about reflection and leadership, with a wide community of researchers and practitioners using different lenses and traditions. As a leadership consultant, I was also involved for over a decade in designing and facilitating training programs to improve reflection and leadership skills in corporate organisations. I discovered that while there was much written and taught about the topics, leaders practised these reflection skills to a limited extent beyond the boundaries of the training program.

I also discovered that in my professional and personal life, my own behaviour was mirroring and embodying those very behaviours that I was encouraging leaders to change, bringing to mind the phrase, 'You teach best what you most need to learn' (Bach 1977). Also, whilst there is much written, there is limited research specifically chronicling the iterative journey of the practitioner who is simultaneously modeling and learning from the application of the practice of reflection as a leader whilst enabling such a process for other leaders 'in situ'.

Who and What

This research chronicles and documents the learning and insights gained from designing and facilitating two leadership development programs that applied action

research (explained in Chapter 2) strategies to the skills and knowledge development of senior managers within a global food business.

Research methodologies used during this work were autoethnography and action research. These were supported by reference to relevant literature and the work is illustrated – at relevant points - with a representational form I have called 'Pictoems', which are pictures combined with poems that capture moments in time. They offer an opportunity to reflect metaphorically and symbolically on the issues explored within the research questions and upon life's essence.

The data used in developing the research is essentially qualitative, drawing on the content of my own learning logs and records and recollections of the evolving narratives, metaphors, stories, pictures and insights I experienced. Reference is made to a wide range of relevant literature and data, including quantitative data drawn from reports, minutes of meetings, behavioural and organisational evaluations, psychometric instrumentation, 360 degree feedback, interviews and personal communications.

Background and History of the Enquiry

I use the telling of my story to capture important threads influencing my growing self-awareness of the impact of my practices on myself and others which, over time, gave rise to the research questions as finally framed and explored in this work.

I have worked for more than 20 years, in various professional and workplace roles including Trainer, Social Change Agent, Academic, Organisational Development practitioner, Program Director of Executive Education programs for one of Australia's leading business schools, and Managing Director of my own business providing Leadership and Process consultation to organizations. Through all these roles my focus has consistently been on Organisational Development and Change. During this period I designed and facilitated Management and Leadership development programs and other longer organisational change interventions, while gradually realising that participants wanted, and felt safe with, a mostly

transactional approach to acquiring skills and knowledge and that trainers like me perpetuated this by designing programs filled with content and information which mostly kept participants locked into a restricted cognitive space, filling their need for more knowledge but having little significant impact on improving practice or achieving the espoused outcomes of self-realization and personal and/or organizational growth.

Any 'doing', was usually limited to incremental skill building, what Lewin (1952) calls single-loop learning[1]. Interestingly, I kept my passion for philosophy and social change separate from this work of training and this separation remained until my dual role as Training Manager and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Co-ordinator focused my attention on training and education. Gradually I reimagined them as possible vehicles for enabling personal growth and organisational and social change by causing individuals to take charge of their own learning. I began to reorient my own practices as well.

My understanding about my practice grew as I began to incorporate frameworks from the literature on personal and group development (Leiberman, Yalom & Miles 1973; Margerison & McCann 1990; Mezirow 2000), psychology (James & Woodsmall 1988; Jung 1978; Levine 2002; Newman 2005; Nicholson 2000; Schutz 1989; Seligman 1992; Siegel 2009) organisational change (Andreas 1987; Blanchard 2008; Handy 1990; Kanter 1985; Kotter 2002; Stace & Dunphy 2001) leadership (Bass & Riggio 2006; Buckingham & Coffman 1999; Clawson 2006; Collins & Porras 1994; Covey 1991; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2001; Hersey 1992; Tichy & Cardwell 2004) and neurolinguistic programming (Bandler & Grinder 1982).

This was a significant shift for me, though looking back I can now see that, in my Training Manager role I was trapped within the bonds of expert, anointed prophet,

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[1] Single-Loop learning – Usually refers to learning that is routine, it facilitates maintenance of the status quo, and it has a limited ability to change behaviour. As opposed to double loop learning, which involves challenging the underlying norms, values and assumptions that underpin our behaviour and worldviews.

decipherer of the tablet or code, performing the role as 'the one' skilled to interpret knowledge for others.

However, at the same time, wearing my EEO hat, I was influencing power structures within organizations where I worked, gaining momentum and in some instances effecting significant change to entrenched practices and behaviours. I began to encounter a broader frame for training and education and started to learn about, and apply, processes related to organisational development (Schein 1992), systems thinking (Checkland 1985) and organisational politics (Block 1987). I was also becoming more skilled in facilitation and process consulting (Schein 1987) and could begin to relinquish the comfort of being an expert and work towards enabling *learning* within organizations rather than implementing *training*. This significant shift in emphasis from implementer to enabler needed empirical support and, in 1994 I commenced a Master of Philosophy through action research and immersed myself in a whole new critical body of work (Fernandez 1997).

Action research (Dick 1992; Revans 1980; Schon 1987; Torbett 2004; Winter 1987) proved to be a useful framework for integrating my thinking. It fitted well with my values, which sought to integrate learning and social change in a democratic fashion. This was a cathartic learning journey as I experienced a metamorphosis in my conceptual paradigms and mental models. My research question at that time explored 'the value of reflective practice in the process of change'. I learnt to look at my role critically as a researcher and to observe the actions associated with my own practice more closely. I discovered that the practice of leadership was deeply entrenched in a paradigm of work, crammed with activity with little time or attention given to reviewing practice let alone reflecting on outcomes. That research documented my journey as an action researcher working as a consultant to one particular organization for over 15 months.

Similarly the journey of this Doctorate study has paralleled and interwoven research and contemporary work, continuing to explore themes of leadership and reflection.

Overview of this Doctoral Enquiry

The learning accumulated in this initial research provided me with a focus for more than a decade of designing and facilitating programs to help leaders reflect on their practice. When I began this doctoral study the first version of my research questions was: 'What does it take to shift a leader's focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of such a shift?'

However analysis of the focus implied by these questions would have caused me to focus on the continuation of the journey of facilitating reflective processes in, and for others, and I was becoming more interested in understanding the internal processes involved in such an application of reflection, so the questions shifted to: 'How can I as a leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?'

Thus the focus is now on how I embody reflection within myself. Do I actually practise what I preach? By embodying such reflective practice in myself, can I better enable it for others? 'You teach best what you most need to learn' (Bach 1977, p.48) is a common expression in which there is some truth. I found myself coming to the conclusion that the teacher should embody what he or she is presenting as being 'good practice'.

Shifting Focus

This shift in my research questions occurred as I began to explore the complexities of choosing a relevant research methodology and gradually realised that I was already using aspects of autoethnography and action research to influence the way I positioned myself relative to my research activity. Both of these methodologies enable a more subjective and situated approach than conventional, positivist research methods, and as I saw myself becoming the subject of my research, they inevitably became the basis for the remainder of it. Thus the revised research questions better represented the self-study of my own learning about being a leader and also encouraged me to take charge of, and to own, my learning and growth as a person.

To 'shift' implies movement, accompanied by a willingness to challenge one's own perceptions and beliefs at a fundamental core level. My own shift was gradual and now seems more like a process of moving through layers of insight as the research demanded expansion of my understanding of my practices. This shift in my thinking was, therefore, not a linear direction of movement, along an axis or scale, but more of a circling of ideas with an accompanying sense of expansion in understanding. To shift focus from action to reflection implied being willing to both observe closely, and make any necessary changes to behaviours and norms performed at an otherwise deep level of unconscious habit. At moments when such habits were revealed as no longer aligned with my espoused ethics of leadership practice I had to choose whether to change them. To do so required conscious awareness of what I was acting on, with intent to analyse and reflect critically and analytically. This in turn required reassessing the alignment of my actual practice as experienced by others, with what I publically espoused [and believed I practiced]. This dissertation records a selection of the small – and large – events that provoked such moments of awareness.

Reflection and Deep Reflection

Undertaking this research encouraged me to extend the application of my work helping leaders within organizations to develop better reflective skills, whilst learning how to embody within myself what I claimed to be enabling others to take up. This embodiment is attempting to be a physically enacted representation of theoretical frameworks developed and promoted by Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith (1985) and Schon (1987) among others. This allowed me to focus on the concept and practice of 'deep reflection', an umbrella term referencing various frameworks of critical reflection (Fook & Gardner 2007) and the notion of reflexivity (Steier 1991), as well as concepts of critical social theory and traditions such as integration theory (Wilber 2007), neuroscience (Pockett, Banks & Gallagher 2006), nonduality (Pillay 2007) and spirituality (Lama 2006; Rinpoche 1988).

My experience aligned with the findings in the literature and emphasised that organisational and leadership practices pay scant attention to reflection. While lip

service may be given to reviewing action, it is usually done in a cursory fashion and like post implementation reviews promoted by project management practices, it fits with established business practices, rarely challenging the *status quo* or identifying deeper underlying issues. Learning from such practices tends to be single loop, incremental and decontextualised.

The notion of deep reflection differs from surface reviews, going beyond the limitations of a technical problem-solving approach. Reynolds (1998) argues that it is a cornerstone of emancipatory approaches to education, and contends that critical reflection on practice helps leaders explore some of the key issues in organizations related to powerlessness, complexity and risk. Reflexivity plays a key role in deep reflection (Bourdieu 2004; Colombo 2003; Popper & Eccles 1990) and for me, is linked to individual degrees of awareness about the source and types of knowledge we use daily, and how we create our knowledge and worldviews.

Once established as habit, leaders can draw on the benefits of deep reflection on their learning, to challenge previously unacknowledged notions including use and abuse of power, types of authority exercised, beliefs about economic growth and the kinds of economic assumptions driving an organisation. Deep reflection on learning can assist in erasing inequality and peel away the organisational mask to reveal layers of issues influencing an organization's behaviour and culture.

DOOR Framework

As a direct consequence of observing the resistance and dilemma associated with enabling reflection for leaders and myself, a model evolved over time that framed reflection within a broader, more holistic cosmology. The model, which I have titled 'DOOR' is used as a mnemonic, and also metaphorically and literally as a means to 'open' doorways to understanding. The 'D' in DOOR stands for 'Design', the first 'O' stands for 'Operate', the second 'O' stands for 'Observe' and the 'R' stands for 'Reflect'. Each chapter in the thesis applies the mnemonic of the DOOR to unfold my understanding of my practice.

I use the image of a circumplex[2] to provide a comparative analysis of the DOOR's framework with key theoretical frameworks including Revans (1980), Kolb (1984), Boud and Walker (1998) and Mezirow (2000). This analysis highlights aspects of deep reflection and design and the criticality of balancing action with reflection in life.

Four Frames of Learning

The four (4) frames of Learning emerged through the journey of the Doctorate and as a result of my attempt to work with clients and organisations willing to embark on a critical action research based intervention. The 4 frames provide a means of locating an organisation's readiness and maturity for introducing deeper learning and associated change processes.

Frame 1 is bounded by a need for greater stability and less complexity than Frame 4. The outer edge of Frame 4 is at the edge of chaos, where self-organising thrives (Dyer & Ericksen 2008). Frame 1 is titled The Gatekeepers, Frame 2 The Technical Rationalists, Frame 3 The Developers and Frame 4 The Integrators.

Leadership

The term 'leadership' is central to my enquiry and goes beyond a title or positional role to reference the core task of taking personal responsibility for decisions we make in life while helping others to do the same. Raelin's (2004) views on leadership accord with my own. He sees leadership as a collective property as opposed to the title of a person 'out in front'. He calls it 'Leaderful Practice' (Raelin 2004), similar to Greenleaf's concept of 'Servant Leadership' (Greenleaf 1977). Raelin (2004) underpins his concept of leadership with four themes: collective - everyone in a group can serve as a leader; concurrent - everyone can do leadership at the same time; collaborative - control is shared by every member and all members

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[2] Circumplex– has an equal ordering of variables measured from within the circle (Redeker et al. 2012).

can speak on behalf of the team; and compassionate - every member considers the other individuals and their needs (Raelin 2004).

Within this framework my research questions position myself as a leader who is attempting to apply all four of Raelin's tenets as I work with other leaders. In this role I lead learning projects within corporate organizations, in Australia and overseas, primarily intended to assist senior managers improve their ability to deal with the complex issues facing them, their organizations and our world.

My leadership is enacted through influencing stakeholders to take up the co creation of the design of leadership/management programs and the subsequent application of the program's product through action learning based real work projects for re-shaping aspects of an individual leader's workplace habits and performance. This aspect of my leadership 'performance' is produced via several different modes of operation: I facilitate content driven sessions (input on theory and concepts); I operate as a 'set advisor' influencing small groups of senior managers to improve their decision making and achieve better outcomes for accommodating, and/or dealing with, the core dilemmas and issues confronting them; I work as a consultant to shape the organisational decision makers' capacity to accept challenges from program participants; and I manage and attempt to control aspects of the organisation's emotional state as change begins to impact on the status quo.

In this context I am also a leader in the traditional sense of being the person out the front when I wear the 'hat of legitimacy', a formal representative of my own employer. My obligatory responsibility and accountability for such projects is enshrined in contract and company law (Baxter 2000). In other words I have a legal responsibility as well as a moral and ethical responsibility for the processes I use and the outcomes I attempt to achieve.

I explore the theme of leadership in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Conclusion to DOOR to Enquiry

Writing this dissertation provided the impetus and the vehicle to apply a rigorous framework for unearthing key insights relevant to deepening my understanding of the application of my research questions. It would have been much harder for me to embark on this level and intensity of enquiry without the strictures and support built into the doctoral program. This is one of my key findings; namely that there needs to be a valid and compelling reason to propel a person to embark on a journey of self-reflection. This needs to be supported by a significant commitment of time and effort to explore the nature of deep reflection and learning. In addition, the very nature of the topic, the ontology[3], requires a framework that fosters and promotes an open, reflexive and critical way of understanding the self and its interaction within the world at large. Autoethnography is an appropriate epistemology[4] for accessing both the surface and the deeper critical nature of reflection. My enquiry also had a hermeneutic quality insofar as it pertains to the broader interpretation of human action and the need to understand it from the perspective of the individual actor.

Gandhi best expresses the intent behind my engagement with this work of reflection and for working with a genre of research that lays bare my vulnerabilities, when he said, 'Be the change you want to see in the world' (Gandhi & in B'Hahn 2001)

---

[3] Ontology …the study of the nature of being in general. Specific scientific theories do not constitute ontology but rather ontology gives account of what general kinds of things exist and, hence, can give account of what in general such specific scientific theories could refer to. (Spencer 2000)

A theory of the nature of Social entities. (Bryman 2008)

[4] Epistemology ….the study of knowing - essentially studying what knowledge is and how it is possible. (Spencer 2000)

A theory of knowledge. (Bryman 2008)

Chapter 2

DOOR to Methodology

Chapter 1 introduced and explained the design, rationale and nature of this enquiry. Chapter 2 explores literature relevant to the methodological frameworks employed in the enquiry. It addresses the theoretical, epistemological and philosophical frames underpinning my inquiry, explains the rationale for selection of the methodology and locates this within the broader discourse on research. The green path continues the visual metaphor of the DOOR. In this chapter the door opens to the external world, rich and resplendent with data and knowledge awaiting discovery and exploration.

Design of Methodology Chapter

In this chapter I again apply the DOOR acronym where '<u>D</u>'esign looks at broader theoretical constructs underpinning my chosen research methodology. '<u>O</u>'perating addresses the methodologies employed, specifically autoethnography, action learning and action research and provides an overview of the fieldwork in which the research is located. The chapter concludes with my '<u>O</u>'bservations and '<u>R</u>'eflections on the methodology.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Frames

The research questions went through a number of iterations, as my focus shifted from developing and enabling reflective practice in and for others, towards exploring how I could embody reflective practice within myself. The changing nature of the research question occurred in parallel with my investigation and understanding of the nature of research methodologies.

Confusion reigned for some time. There is a bewildering array of methodologies and methods. Each author had their own version of how the methodologies related to each other; and terms were sometimes used in contradictory ways. Crotty (1998) had also experienced this and his framework helped facilitate my understanding of the interrelationship among theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods. As I developed my own mental map I was better able to draw on and understand the work of various writers on research methods including (Bryman 2008), (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000), (Lemert 1999) and (Harris 1996).

Crotty's (1998, p.2) framework addresses four questions:

> 1   What methods do we propose to use?
>
> 2   What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
>
> 3   What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
>
> 4   What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?

Illustrated in Figure 2.1 is a visual representation of these four elements
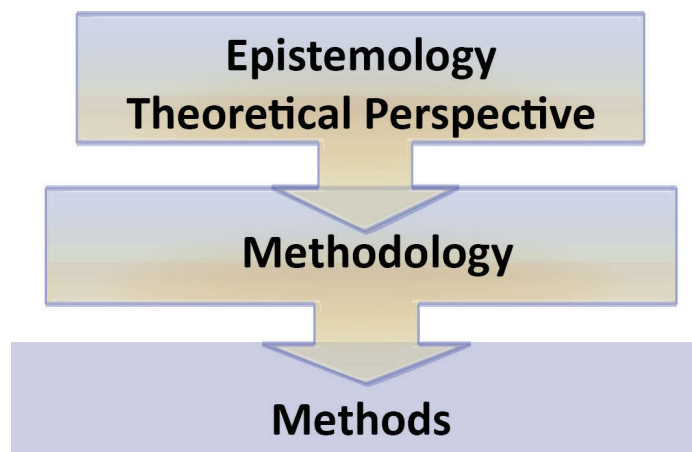
Figure 2.1 Crotty's arrangement of research components

This helped place both methods and methodology within a context and frame and the specific theoretical and epistemological frames informing my enquiry became

clear to me. I could see why the nature of my research question required an approach that would foster and promote open, reflexive and critical ways of understanding myself and my interactions with the world.

Figure 2.2 sets out my understanding and interpretation of the categorization of epistemological, theoretical and methodological frames and their relationships and interrelationships, based on the work of Bryman (2008), Crotty (1998), Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000), Harris (1996), Lemert (1999) and Pillay (2007).
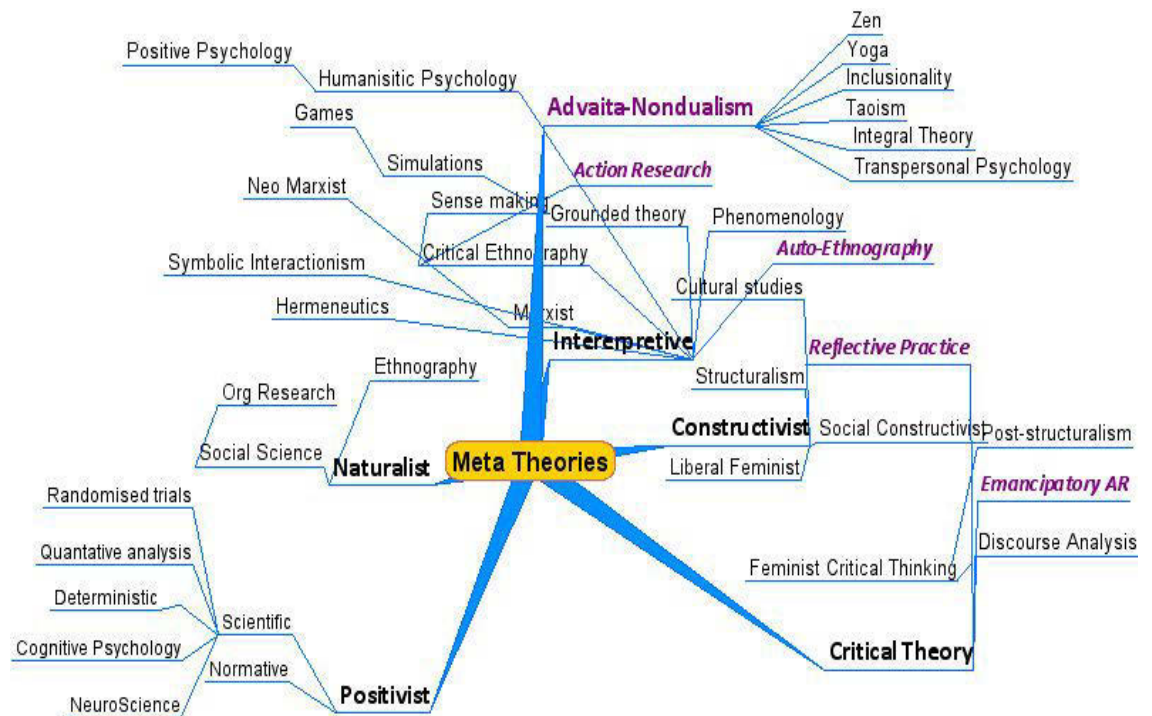
Figure 2.2 Epistemological and Methodological Research Frames

Positivist, naturalist, interpretive, constructivist, non-dualism and critical theory are epistemological perspectives each with their own underlying theoretical constructs and drivers. Linked to these perspectives are specific research methodologies, and those influencing this dissertation are highlighted in colour (maroon). Non-dualism is also highlighted, because its intent is to peel away the bivalent veil and show the world, including the self, as one essentially indivisible whole. This is important in my work because leaders and managers need to go beyond dualistic black and white thinking and look at the grey that is inherent in most issues within organisations.
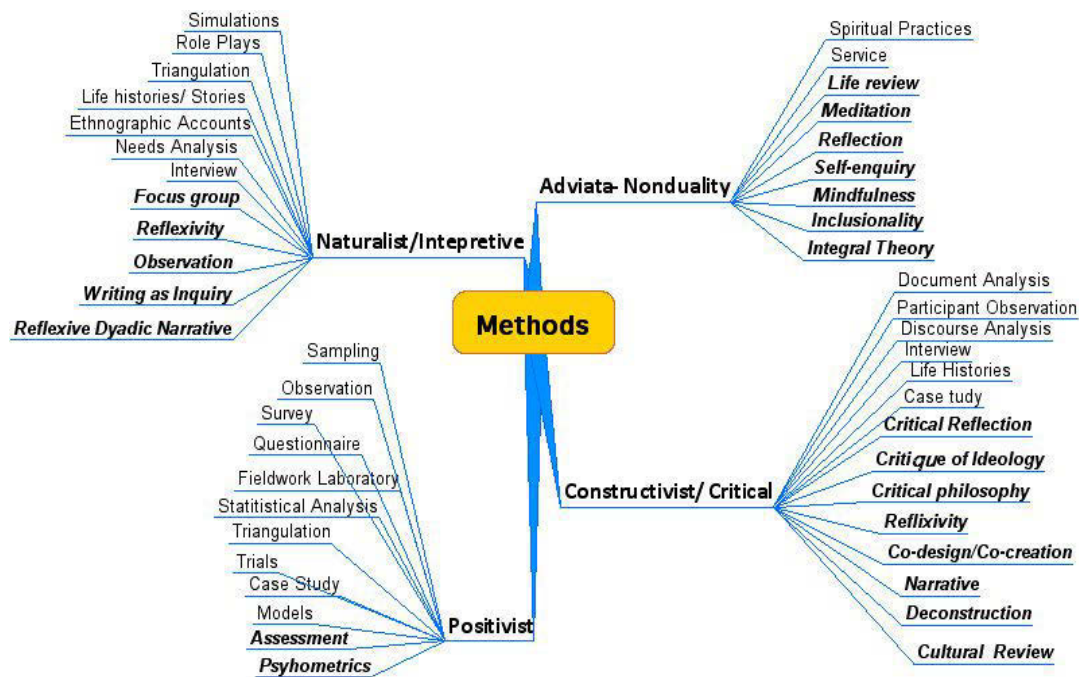
Figure 2.3 Methods and Techniques

Figure 2.3 itemises some of the methods used to collect and interpret data, linked to the methodologies most likely to use them. Processes highlighted in bold italic were especially relevant to my work and are explored further in this chapter and elsewhere.

Rational for Selection of Methodologies

The section below explains the reasons why the methodologies of autoethnography and action research were selected for my research. My work involves naturalistic, interpretive constructivist and critical approaches to research. Key points on each of these methodologies are detailed below. I also comment about the influence of an overly rational, reductionist and positivistic approach on my area of work in Appendix 2.1. Whilst this approach is not central to my research it influences the decision-making of my stakeholders.

Naturalistic, Interpretive, Constructivist and Critical Approaches to Research

Users of positivist research use validated data to **explain** human behaviour. Conversely researchers seeking to **understand** human behaviour use naturalistic, interpretive and critical approaches. These enable researchers to more precisely acknowledge that they are part of the research process and assist with immersion in the complexity of planned interventions, rather than vainly attempting to stand aloof from a research process of which they are an integral part.

Naturalistic Approaches

Naturalistic researchers approach individuals and their worlds using a—more or less—subjective point of view. Some underlying beliefs of naturalistic enquiry include:

- humans naturally construct their own meanings of situations
- meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretive processes
- knower and known are interactive and therefore inseparable
- inquiry is value bound
- inquiry is influenced by the choice of theory to guide the research intervention and collection of data
- the attribution of meaning is continuous and evolves over time.

Autoethnography, a methodology I used in my research, draws on a naturalist approach to connect the personal to the social. Meaning is derived from a first person account, which features dialogue, emotion and self-consciousness. I explore this further, later in this chapter.

Interpretive Approaches

Interpretive approaches to research require the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman 2008, p.694) and aim to investigate the subject to understand the issue/process from that person's perspective. The central endeavour is to understand the subjective world of human experience by reducing to a minimum any impact of the view of the external observer. Theory is grounded in the data generated from the specific situation. Theory follows from the research (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Constructivist Approaches

Constructionism or constructivism rejects the held view that there is a reality removed from consciousness. In this paradigm there is no objective truth waiting to be discovered. (Bateson 2000; Kincheloe 2008; Mertens 1998) Truth and meaning come into existence through engagement with the realities of the world. Crotty (1998, p.9) comments that there is 'no meaning without mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed'. People construe different things from a similar phenomenon. Different cultures perceive things differently. My commentary in Appendix A 3.1 on quantum physics applies here, namely that the very nature of the physical world at the subatomic level is reliant on observation. An unobserved particle seems to follow more than one different trajectory simultaneously. Frayn (2006) comments, 'No description of the world is possible without the theoretical Presence of an observer'. He adds that all of the big events from the beginning of time, many of them occurring far away from the human eye, are only events because they are nominated as events, in so far they lie in the chain of reasoning that leads back to the human mind, which reinforces Crotty's statement that there is no 'meaning without mind'.

In the quantum world, relationships are all that exist, particles come into being through their interaction with other particles, no particle can be drawn independent from the others, each particle is in relationship to each other. Physicists also observed that, wave-particle duality, and the relationship between the observer and what is observed is only the tip of the strange iceberg that is the quantum world. Further probing turned the perceived certainty of the world upside down. Scientists discovered that the more accurately they were able to pin down a particle's position, the less information they could obtain about its movement – and vice versa. This uncertainty principle means that there is innate uncertainly at the subatomic level of the universe. What we term reality can only be considered in terms of quantum probabilities rather than as absolute deterministic events. Scientist have termed this 'quanglement', (Laszlo & Currivan 2008) and are using this uncertainty to build quantum computers.

Quantum matter develops a relationship with the scientist (the observer), if they want to study waves then matter behaves likes waves, and if the study is particles then that is what they get. Before the observer can act there is a huge profusion of possibilities, but once choice is made then perception becomes reality. In Chapter 4, 5 and 6, I draw on the ramifications of this to leadership and strategy and the need to co create the realities we prefer in organisations. Chapter 3 looks more closely at both the role of an observer and the function of observation.

All of the above is in real contrast to where we started with positivism's view of an external reality outside of consciousness; the new science is informing us that this is a construct. Bateson (in Wheatley 2006, p.35) asks us to also stop teaching facts, 'the things of knowledge' and focus on relationships. With relationships we give up predictability and open up to potentials. As you will see later in the thesis, the Feedsmoore case highlights the journey of working together in relationship to look at how we jointly observe and impact on the world. Chapter 7 elaborates on my learning about the constructed nature of reality from a personal perspective.

Critical Theory

Whilst the positivistic paradigm is concerned with technical knowledge, the interpretive with hermeneutic knowledge and the constructivist with subjective knowledge, critical theory's expressed intention is political and strives to unmask hegemony and oppression. It is explicitly prescriptive, entailing what behaviour in a social democracy should entail (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). Its intent is social change; it looks at issues of repression, power, participation, inclusion and interests through the lens of social equality and justice.

Critical theory strikes at the core of what I do as a practitioner involved in leadership, and organisational and social change through emancipatory action research. Critical theory is also fundamental to the nature of my research question as 'it is concerned with praxis – action that is informed by reflection with the aim to emancipate' (Kincheloe 1991).

Non-Dualism

All of the research models reviewed so far are based on 'western' values and thought. Nondualism is rooted in Eastern philosophy and is deeply embedded in Hindu, Buddhist, Zen and Taoist thinking and ways of being. The Sanskrit term for Nonduality is 'Advaita', which translates 'not two', as opposed to the dualistic, which is a binary position. Pillay (2007) states that Nondualism is concerned with the world as a continuum where the finality of binary opposites makes way for the relativity of the multivalent position.

In the context of my research, nondualism adds a critical lens with which to consider the synergies inherent in the contradictions in organizations and leadership. It complements autoethnography as a methodology, as it deals directly with the subject/object separation that would otherwise make 'I' distant from 'the other'. In the work on autoethnography (including seminal authors), I found no reference to connections between autoethnography and nonduality. I have therefore drawn on the work of these authors to explore the nondual: (Krishnamurti 1964) one of India's preeminent philosophers; (Pillay 2007) an educator and writer on the

nondual; (Rayner 2004) on the theory of inclusionality and (Wilber 2007) on integral theory, to help me better understand how I may, as a leader, look through the dualism and explore the shades of grey.

Postmodernism and Poststructuralism

It is important to also note two other methodologies, which influenced my understanding and enactment of action research, which I will explain later, and is the methodology I work with in the Feedsmoore LTP.

Postmodernism sits within the constructivist and critical epistemological frame, and also rejects the notion of objective truth. It is an approach, which focuses on the role that language; power and hierarchies play in constructing narratives of culture. Postmodernism challenged modernism's privileged and imperial foundations (Huyssen 1999; Perloff 1988).

My work aligns with postmodernism's principles in a number of important ways including:

> Postmodernism's adoption of the subjective approach, embracing a solipsist position and the rejection of objective knowledge (Kirkbride, Durcan & Obeng 1994), as opposed to modernism's focus on objective rationality.

> Postmodernism's openness and tolerance for diversity and the blurring or disappearance of boundaries (Rouleau & Clegg 1992) as opposed to Modernisms expressed need to contain and place boundaries around organisation and life's ambiguities. Also, modernism's emphasis on rationality, where reality is assumed to be known and research can be conducted as authoritative investigations guided by universal scientific principles (Willmont 1992) as opposed to postmodernism's holism and concern for fluid dynamics (Rouleau & Clegg 1992).

Postmodernism is used to emancipate, empower and liberate through critical reflection of assumptions and the discovery of true interest. (Belenky & Stanton 2000; Clegg 1992; Lyotard 1999; Mezirow & Associates 2000; Peters 1992) as opposed to modernism's organizational preference for prediction and control via rules and power embedded in social structures (Fletcher 1992).

Structuralism is a term related to postmodernism and is the study of the behaviour of the interiors (essence) of individuals, groups and cultures. In Wilber's (2000) terms, it is a study that looks at the inside from a third person's or an outsider's stance. For example when I look at my behaviour and myself from a dispassionate third person perspective and discover patterns or modalities of behaviour that I manifest, I am applying the principles of structuralism. Structuralism in a cultural workplace context delves beneath the surface to uncover underlying rules, social mores and patterns that inform the behaviour.

Poststructuralism originated in Paris in the late 1960s and is often linked with postmodernism. Poststructuralist writing tends to connect observations and references from many, widely varying disciplines into a holistic view of knowledge and its relationship to experience (Wilber 2000). Proponents view 'the self as a fictional construct and concept, for them 'self' is constituted by tensions around sex, race, gender, profession, religion etc. Poststructuralists would argue that no text has a single purpose and that a person reading this thesis for example, reads and creates their own purpose, meanings and implications from the text. The reader (signified) through their own interpretation and meaning has primacy over the author or the writer of the text, the signifier, (Niall 1999; Wikipedie 2010). There is some contention whether 'poststructuralists' went beyond the structuralists. Wilber argues that all they did was challenge what he called 'inadequate structuralism' (and ended up beneath 'adequate structuralism') (Wilber 2007), a term he now connotes to imply or take the place for structuralism.

Poststructuralism and postmodernism and achieved a zenith in the 1970s and 1980s, and have been declining since then (Payne & Schad 2003). Poststructuralist fallacies include: avoiding the consideration of authorial intention. One only has to look at the influence of the power of advertising to influence buying decisions to see that authorial intention has direct and applicable potency; proposing that meaning is undecidable and that there is no justification for seeking unity in a text (Harris 1996). Under this rubric, most fictional series, for example the popular book *Lord of the Rings*, would be rendered as disjointed, inconsistent and incoherent.

For many, including myself, postmodernism evokes a deep nihilism where the final act of deconstructing the self leaves a void, a deeply rational negative void, for postmodernism draws its symbolism from a deep well of Western rationalism. Even Derrida in his later years evoked the term 'Maran' seeing a deeper spiritual connectedness (Cixous 2004). Postmodernism's current destination is a form of protospirituality (Benedikter 2005). Ultimately, there is a witness to the deconstructed 'I'. This is the 'I' that remained as a witness after episodic deconstruction of the self.

Summarising Design of Methodology

The preceding text reviewed the frames of research, which informed my choices about methodology. This positions me and my research within a broader body of work, places my research within a particular research genre and provides arguments for the soundness of the underpinning research methodology.

In summary, my research is highly qualitative and adopts a critical, constructivist and interpretive frame. At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that "the 'green path' in Figure 2.1 continues the visual metaphor, opening a DOOR to the external world, rich and resplendent with data and knowledge awaiting discovery and discernment". Discovery is inductive and more congruent with a constructivist

mindset. Discovery is emergent. Discernment implies selective judgment, with associated synonyms of perspicacity, insight and wisdom. Both discovery and discernment played a critical part in helping me to learn from an emergent process.

Operating on the Literature

This section on 'O'perating introduces specific methodologies I employed in the research. As noted in Figure 2.2, both autoethnography and action research are linked to critical constructivist and interpretative frames, and are also distinct yet complementary methodologies. Both frames utilise reflection to maximize the benefits of the methodology. I outline and discuss each of the methodologies separately as well as examine the interrelationships between them.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is the primary methodology used in this research.

This section provides definitions and a critical review of seminal authors in this field, interspersed with my own insights and learnings as applied to my research on deep reflection and its potential impact on leadership.

I discussed the nature of reflection and deep reflection in Chapter 1. I expand on this further in Chapter 3 and refer to it in each of the other chapters.

Autoethnography locates the self within a social context and so connects the personal to the cultural (Reed-Danahay 1997). It uses texts usually written in the first person and features dialogue, emotion and self-consciousness which are relational and institutional stories affected by history and culture (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Reed-Danahay (1997) notes that autoethnographers may vary in their emphasis on *auto* (i.e. self), *ethnos* (i.e. culture) or *graphy* (i.e. the research process).

Whichever the focus, authors use their own experiences to look reflexively and deeply at interactions between self and other (Holt 2003, p.2).

In my enquiry *auto*, *ethnos* and *graphy* are given different weightings. In this chapter I deal with the research process *graphy* as it pertains to my unfolding understanding of the methodology. This research process does not operate in isolation but fits within a cultural context, *ethnos,* and in turn helps the self, *auto,* within the process. In other chapters I utilise different weightings, for example in Chapter 7, DOOR to Self, I focus more on the self *auto* and in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Doors to Practice, I emphasise the context ethnos.

Definitions of Autoethnography:

In her methodological novel on autoethnography, (Ellis 2004, p.xix) defines autoethnography as:

> *Research, writing, story and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political. Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterisation, and plot. Thus, autoethnography claims the conventions of literary writing.*

This broad and all encompassing definition supports the subjective and qualitative nature of my enquiry. Literary writing is a somewhat formal mode for the messy and complex world it attempts to represent. An honest articulation of self-awareness needs to accommodate an emerging understanding of the topic, and needs to be represented within the writing. Appendix 3.2 is an example of my 'stream of consciousness' verbal reflection into my iPod. It illustrates my emerging understanding, which was then refined, and in Chapter 3, contributes to a more articulate and literary telling about my new understanding.

Other definitions of autoethnography expand on the political, claiming that it locates the experiences of individuals with the dominant expressions of discursive power,

thereby democraticising the representational sphere of culture (Neumann 1996). Critical ethnography specifically attempts to unmask hegemony and address issues of control and domination (Crotty 1998). Denzin (2006) adds pedagogy as a moral and political influence, as it either challenges, contests or endorses the official hegemonic ways of seeing and representing the other. He specifically states:

> *Critical pedagogy, folded into and through performance (auto) ethnography attempts to disrupt and deconstruct these cultural and methodological practices performatively in the name of a more just, democratic and egalitarian society (Denzin 2006).*

The definitions from Neumann, Crotty and Denzin move away from an interpretive discourse, to the critical. I explore the nature of designing and facilitating 2 Leading Talent Programs at Feedsmoore in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 7 studies the inner dimensions of myself with a critical lens.

My story is subjective and situated. Even when I infer things and facts about others, I locate their otherness within my frame of reference. By this I mean, that I can't help but view the issue or facts at hand through my own particular filters based on my culture, age, sex, experience, etc. The objective observer is absent. Myself as observer selects what I want to see and represent.

Writing about one's own life experience can be criticized as too narrow a frame or insight on the world. Coffey (cited in (Maguire 2006) describes autoethnography as:

> *...self indulgent and* [he] *views this methodology of first person narrative scholarship as limiting human enquiry to what 'I' can speak about my subject and subjectivity or solipsistic soap operas about 'me', 'myself' and 'I'.*

Coffey's comments position him as a rationalist, firmly rooted in the enduring myth of objectivity. For the purpose of my study, the very process of immersing myself in the subjective liberates me from the constraints of perceived objectivity.

Autoethnography personalizes insights. Whilst positivist methods emphasise validity and reliability as important criteria, autoethnography lays claim to its own unique criteria and standards, articulated by (Clough 2000; Denzin 2002; Ellis 2004). These include: aesthetic merit; author's attempt to dig under the superficial to get to vulnerability and honesty; impact; lived experience; contribute to positive social change; present cultural and political issues and motivate cultural criticism; and reflexivity. A criterion that resonates powerfully is the question of whether the work has the possibility to change the world and make it a better place.

My research highlights the tenuous nature of objective reality and as discussed, evidence from quantum physics, cosmology and the new sciences reinforce the nature of a subjective universe imbued with human meaning, (Laszlo 2008; Wheatley 2006).

This personalized subjective view is encouraging interpretive ethnographers to view autoethnography as a means to affirm their own voices, and laying claim to the authoring of their own acts. Maguire (2006) refers to Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the 'act of authoring as a creative answerability/ responsibility' (Maguire 2006, p.3). In a similar vein Foley (2002) states that:

> *Most autoethnographers are openly subjective. They seek to undermine grandiose authorial claims of speaking in a rational, value free, objective, universalising voice. From this perspective the author (me) is a living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving multiple self, who speaks in a partial, subjective, culture bound voice (Foley 2002, p.474).*

The nature of my research questions, intentionally positions me as the object of my own ruminations, whose very subjectivity offers insightful opportunities to look at the implied and implicit meanings I add to perceived reality. Autoethnography creates an opportunity to unfurl the lotus petals, representing different aspects of myself. I expand on this in Chapter 5.

Within the context of the research question, autoethnography provides a critical lens through which to view and make sense of my inner landscape. This is not done in isolation, but is framed within the broader external social landscape (Besio 2004; Bruni 2002).

Autoethnography as Social Practice

Ellis proposes important interconnections between autoethnography and social practice, as she writes:

> *Increased self-understanding may provide a quicker and more successful route to social change than changing laws or other macro-political structures.*
> *(Ellis 2002, p.402).*

My evolving understanding about my practice of leadership influences, whilst at the same time is being influenced by, the system in which I operate. Similarly my contradictions are inherent in the conflicting ideas within the structures and systems in organizations and in society at large.

Individual experience and judgments about leadership are constructed and shared within an already shared world of others and it is through this mutual recognition that we can sustain our entitlements and commitments to each other (Stacey 2003).

Self and society are intertwined. Autoethnography provides a means of validating a more intuitive, experiential way of knowing and challenges the rational positivistic interpretation of events. Autoethnography uses tools of metaphor and irony creating a robust, embodied and situated language, representative of everyday life. As various autoethnographers have explained, the very act of writing becomes a way of being and knowing (Foley 2002). Furthermore, introspection and reflection are ways in which we come to know ourselves Montebello cited in (Boufoy-Bastick 2004). Also, this knowing of the self fits within the broader social and macro political-cultural system which impacts on the self and concepts of the self.

Autoethnographic methods

I utilise some of the methods of autoethnography to facilitate and add 'rigour' to my enquiry. Some of the terms used include: 'reflexive dyadic' and 'interactive narratives' as a means to capture and interpret narratives. Emic and etic are ways of collecting and interpreting data.

I used reflexive 'dyadic narratives' and 'interactive narratives' adapted from Ellis (2004) within Feedsmoore. I used reflexive dyadic narratives at meetings within Feedsmoore to focus my attention on meanings and the emotional dynamics contained within the meetings and narratives itself. I also considered my (own personal) feelings and thoughts and compared my experience to theirs. Our stories 'whilst distinctive' parallel each other. This process employed both the interpretive and critical methodological frames – interpretive in that it helped me to grasp the subjective and implied meanings within the narrative and critical as I attempted to locate myself within the social discourse of the group/s and more broadly within society. Chapters 5 and 6 elaborate on this.

In interactive narratives, the focus is on reflecting on my observations of the action research teams. Ellis (2004) recommends a group size of three to four people and in my case the size of the teams ranged from three to eight. The focus is on the story of collaboration between all participants as they interact and develop a relationship. Additionally there can be a focus on the story that each brings to the partnership. This process is useful for building trust and reciprocity. It can be argued that action research provides an equally rich framework for eliciting these outcomes. I find it interesting that authors within a research doctrine articulate, internalize and then name for themselves processes that frame human experience oblivious to accepted norms within other traditions.

I used learning logs and emic and etic processes[5] suggested by Boufoy-Bastick (2004) for collecting and reporting on data observations. I used emic processes by visualizing and recreating the events as soon as possible after they happened, including my impressions and feelings. I either wrote them down or taped my recollections on my iPod.

Subjectivity is inherent in emic reporting because it relies on the recollection of past events, filtered and influenced by one's present state. According to Gresle et al (cited in Boufoy-Bastick 2004), recollections are usually stronger and more intense than the actual lived experience and our current worldview permeates the retelling or recall of the event. Boufoy-Bastick (2004, p.4) states: 'Emic reporting was to make note of these recollected experiences hence to retrospectively draw up a log of major memorable events'. She cites (Siegesmund 1999) for whom emic reporting was a way to shift one's 'stance from the ethnographic emic gaze of the participant observer to an etic gaze of our own subjectivity' (Boufoy-Bastick 2004, p.4).

These emic perspectives are central to self-reflective research (Mruck & Bruer 2003). Most importantly they offer an opportunity to look at our worldviews by analysing the narratives etically. For example, my insights and understandings from the narratives were used as a basis to inform my practice. It also enabled me to investigate some of the ideological principles underlying my worldviews.

Action Research and Action Learning

The self-study associated with this Doctoral enquiry draws on the work I do routinely to improve reflective practice with senior managers within organizations. I employ action research, action learning and other blended learning solutions to

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[5] Emic and Etic are two kinds of field research that originate from the study of cultural anthropology.

accomplish this aim, and to complete this research I examined how I enable this process, which provided many insights about my own shift towards deep reflection.

What is Action Research and Action Learning?

There are many differing approaches to action research and, as such, there is no one single definitive description. One of the simplest, most elegant descriptions comes from Dick (1992, p.2),

> *Action research is a methodology, which has the dual aims of action and research.*
>
> ***Action*** *~ to bring about change in some community or organisation or program*
>
> ***Research*** *~ to increase understanding on the part of the researcher or the client, or both (and often some wider community).*

Action research bridges the gap between research and practice (Somek 1995). It is more deliberate than action learning, using collaborative group processes focused on delivering publishable outcomes. Action learning focuses on the learning of the individual within a team set, and is based on the relationship between reflection and action. Action learning is a term often confused with action research. Although action learning is incorporated in the process of action research, action research goes further.

> *Action research involves action learning, but not vice versa, because action research is more deliberate, systematic, critical, emancipatory, rigorous and public – that is, documented in a publication (Perry & Zuber-Skerritt 1992).*

Both action research (AR) and action learning (AL) have been in use for more than 50 years, its first proponents were Kurt Lewin (1946) who applied social psychology to solving practical social problems, and Reg Revans who pioneered action learning while working for the British Coal Board in the 1940s.

Action learning asks 'action takers' to focus on their own lived experiences rather than dissecting contrived issues. Action learning involves continuous learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with the intention of getting things done. Through action learning, individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences. The process helps us to take an active stance towards life and helps us to overcome the tendency to be passive towards the pressures of life.

> *Action learning is based on the relationship between reflection and action. We all learn through experience by thinking through past events, seeking ideas that make sense of the event and help us to find new ways of behaving in similar situations in the future (McGill & Beaty 1992, p.71)*

AL differs from AR in that it focuses on the learning of the individual and is based on a relationship between operating (action) and reflection (Fernandez, 1997). Action learning has its roots in organizations focusing on applying pragmatic and practical solutions to issues that arise out of practice. Margerison (2005) sees it as a 'foundation for applied organisational science' and as an integrated approach to professional development.

Action learning applies Revans' (1982) learning equation where, Programmed Knowledge (P) plus Questioning Insight (Q) equals Learning (L) produces the equation (P+Q=L).

'P' or Programmed Knowledge is promoted for its own sake. It is espoused in textbooks, by experts and within university programs. However, by itself, the acquisition of P does not necessarily equate to learning. Using established theory and insights from others, as a basis for continued learning can be a powerful starting point; however there is danger in taking P at face value and not testing its relevance to your own situation at an appropriate time.

P is valued because it tends to be quantified and available, and is deterministic and output focused. P survives because it fosters single-loop learning, which satisfies a human preference for exploring from a base of safety.

'Q' is questioning insight, a vital commodity particularly in times of exponential change. Nonetheless, it is overlooked by individuals and organisations, due to pressure to produce, be busy, protect one's back, and focus on immediate short-term tasks. The time and 'safe space' to be open, non-defensive, take risks, and challenge views or actions is seldom given priority because if such constraints. 'Q' is vital to the notion of emancipatory or critical reflection, which challenges underlying values and power relations associated at a personal and systemic level. Giroux, an exponent of critical pedagogy, emphasises that educational processes need to provide ways to question received information and received assumptions (Reynolds 1998).

One factor emerging from my research was the introduction of the concept of 'resistance'. I have decided to place 'R' under P+Q as the following equation illustrates

$$\frac{P+Q}{R} = L$$

Otherwise shown as P+Q/R =L

In this new equation R = resistance, which lies at the heart of reflective practice and change. My research highlights how resistance at the individual and systemic level prevents the application of reflective practice. This then formed the basis for a number of iterative action learning cycles using the mnemonic of the 'DOOR'. I did this by observing and reflecting on the process I used to design and operationalise programs that aim to shift a leader's focus from action to deep reflection. As I did this, I was also reflexively critiquing my own paradigms and learnings from the process. 'R' is now an enabler of the 'critical frame', and when applied to action research, it encompasses an integral and organisational change lens.

The distinction between action research and action learning is important in the work that I do within organizations and particularly important within this Doctoral research. AL has a rich history in Executive Education and I have been involved in designing AL programs for over 15 years for business schools and organizations. AL is now firmly entrenched as a methodology for Executive Education, though the pre-dominant model in many business schools still remains an expert driven model where participants come to listen to the wisdom of the expert and their current research (Muff 2012). This model is sometimes affectionately called the 'Sage on the Stage' or more disparagingly as the 'bucket and vomit' model. Unlike the Sage on Stage approach, AL adopts an experiential and interconnected learning process, focusing on learning as opposed to teaching as in traditional MBA education (Margerison, 2005) and training. The AL process incorporates the needs of the learner and encourages and supports the unfolding of their understanding through the learning journey.

I consider that a major limitation to action learning is that the focus on the individual limits and precludes a more systemic understanding of issues. In my 20 years of experience working for Business Schools, AL rarely deals with underlying issues of hegemony, and power as embedded in the fabric and systems of organisation. Action research on the other hand aims to change and challenge the social systems in which it operates. This increases and magnifies complexity, provokes defensive routines (Argyris 1983) and increases political risk. Cherry (1999) comments further that "the originators of 'AR' had in mind changes that went beyond superficial shifts in the practice of individuals". AR is in effect concerned with challenging the mind-sets of organizations and whole societies rather than that of individuals alone.

In my experience few executive education providers understand or choose to locate themselves in the AR space. However, this is the area where I have chosen to work, as I believe it provides the greatest opportunity for individual, organisational and social change. I explore this proposition further in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

There are various views and applications of A. R. for example Burns (2010) sees a family or spectrum associated with action based approaches to learning and change, where action learning is focused on the individual as a reflective practitioner, and he draws a distinction between two forms of AR, where participatory action research (PAR) is focused on the community and systemic AR, a term he coined, focuses on the system. He therefore sees AR as a tool for supporting learning across social and economic systems.

Other associated frameworks have either been directly influenced or have similar traits as AR, and among these are: Co-operative Inquiry (Heron 1996; Reason & Bradbury 2008). Like AR, a group gets together to inquire over an issue, but unlike AR, there is no need for each member to contribute equally, and groups can have a tendency to be internally focused, with limited understanding or engagement with the broader macrosystemic change lens. Another associated group process is appreciative inquiry (AI) (Cooperider & Srivastva 1987) which focuses on the positive in any issue, ensuring that success propels positive action for change. Its limitation according to Burns (2010) is that it does not deal adequately enough with power dynamics and the broader systemic lens. I draw briefly on Heron's work within the thesis with regards to group dialogical processes and on the core tenant of AI's positive lens.

Action research draws on the work of Habermans from the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Kemmis 2001) and in its emancipatory guise challenges established, and in particular illegitimate, operations of power. AR has an explicit agenda which is both political and educational (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). Also, AR's adoption of discourses associated with postmodernism and neohumanism point to a different way of understanding and dealing with the self and society.

The benefits of using AR are summarised below based on findings from the literature. (Bennett 1988; Bunning 1993; Dick 1992; Schon 1983; Winter 1989; Zuber-Skerritt 1993;(Cassell & Johnson 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart 1988).

Action research:

- Has potential to be an effective way of managing change within an organisation
- Creates a longer lasting learning process and has wider applications in that self-limiting patterns can be broken through double-loop or generative learning
- Contributes to improving the social context and conditions in which the research takes place
- Establishes self-critical communities of people participating and collaborating in all phases of the research process
- Provides practical, applicable solutions
- Generates solutions from within, does not impose them from outside. The people needing change are the ones involved in making it happen, and so own the process and outcomes
- Is emancipatory, where all can contribute on a fairly equal basis
- Is highly flexible, adapting itself to the specific (even changing) needs of the specific organisation
- Uses processes that are grounded in practice, so can more usefully be taken up and applied by others
- Provides a real contribution to public knowledge
- Has the potential for increasing the practitioners' conscious learning.

Observations and Reflections on the Methodology

Life is a holistic, multidimensional, interactive process. We impact on the world, and the world impacts on us. Life has its own momentum. As my inquiry progressed, I felt impelled to look at the big picture of knowledge, wisdom, life and learning. I had a predisposition for qualitative based methodologies as a result of my work for a Masters Thesis. I especially favoured action learning and action research. This Doctoral research provides me with the opportunity to extend and deepen my

understanding of research.

The development and writing of this chapter was both rewarding and painful. Rewarding in that I have come to better understand the landscape that underpins and informs the methodologies I have been applying for some time. For a long period I was a practitioner first and a researcher second, but now the research is allowing me to honor both equally.

The research and writing was painful in that it took an onerous amount of time to understand the frames, the definitions and the contradictions. I rewrote and completely reframed large segments of this chapter several times. What emerged from the fieldwork and the application of these methodologies is that I came to see how I draw on various epistemologies to make sense of my practice. From first perceiving them as separate and distinct concepts I came to realize their interrelationships and the tensions caused by their apparent differences. I could eventually see that the demarcation lines delineating each epistemology and methodology are constructs in themselves.

In conclusion, researchers using autoethnography adopt a post structuralist, (subjective, constructivist and critical) view of the self, which rejects a constructed view of a rational self (Bruni 2002). Autoethnography embodies life with its inherent complexity, ambiguity, contradictions and multiple meanings, which I inherently manifest through the process of living my life. Autoethnography has increased my self-understanding and allowed me to focus on my own experiences in developing reflective practice for leaders whilst reflexively looking at myself.

Both autoethnography and action research are highly dependent on reflection to maximize the benefits of the methodology. Critical reflection focuses the lens of both methodologies; it examines the personal, social and political taken for granted orthodoxies and established practices (Reynolds 1988). My Research Question probes the notion of deep reflection, which manifests the critical lens. Reflection is explored further in the next chapter on the DOOR to DOORS.

Chapter 3

DOOR to DOORS

Design of DOOR to Doors Chapter

Chapter 1 explained the rationale and nature of this enquiry and Chapter 2 provided a critical review of theoretical, epistemological and philosophical frames that underpinned it. It also placed and located the chosen research methodologies within the broader discourse on research.

Building on the first chapter's overview of the 8 Doors, this chapter's focus is on explaining the concept and model of the DOOR itself. It also expands on the 4 Frames of Learning, which emerged as a result of the doctoral journey. These 4 Frames are a means to locate an organisation's readiness and maturity for introducing deeper learning and change processes.

DOOR is a mnemonic, which serves metaphorically and literally as a way to describe a proposed approach to open doorways to understanding.

The 'D' in DOOR–Design needs to offer something different and of real value to be meaningful. Design also includes thinking creatively, innovatively and unfolding this into a meaningful plan.

The first 'O' in DOOR–Operate is about translating the design and the plan into its Operations. This is the action part that most of us are so good at. It brings to life what we have designed.

The second 'O' in DO<u>O</u>R–Observe to break away from the doing treadmill, try to Observe some of what we do and our current practices. In order to learn from what has occurred, we must first know what has occurred. That is, we must make observations about the action.

The 'R' in DOO<u>R</u>–Reflect is the vital ingredient that incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges your current mental models or world-views and can change the current paradigm. It is uncomfortable, but without it we are likely to achieve no more than trivial change.

This DOOR is represented here as a circle encompassing the Yin/Yang symbol as represented in Figure 3.1. A larger diagram Appendix B 3.1 is a foldout at the front.

Figure 3.1 DOOR Cycle Linked to Yin/Yang Symbol. (Fernandez 2009b)

Completing one cycle of the DOOR achieves the first iterative cycle, which then influences the next phase of the learning journey creating a spiral, which I have schematically represented as DNA, Figure 3.2 on the next page.

Figure 3.2 Iterative DNA DOOR Spiral (Fernandez 2009d)

The acronym of the DOOR again frames the major headings of the chapter. I first explore DOOR and its links to a cyclic and spiral cosmology, including its interrelationships to the Yin/Yang symbol. Each aspect of the DOOR is then examined in turn, exploring the nature of its contribution to the DOOR framework. This is followed by a comparative analysis of the DOOR framework and a selection of theoretical frameworks in the field of learning and growth, highlighting processes of deep reflection and design and their critical contribution to balancing action with reflection. The chapter concludes with my observations and reflections.

DOOR and Cyclical Cosmologies

The process of research and inquiry on which I embarked was not linear as questions and answers were interlinked and interconnected. Each step informed other processes. Heuristically it was a spiral with recurring themes, which, during the last ten years I have included leadership, reflection, change, and provided other subjects explored in the thesis. This interconnectivity provided me the opportunity

to explore connections between the two seemingly dualistic notions of action and reflection.

In my leadership workshops I emphasise the importance of creating balance between action and reflection, using a metaphor and story about the road across the Nullarbor Plains in Australia. The Nullarbor is a flat, almost treeless, semi-arid area of southern Australia, where the road is about 1200km long and straight, with the dead straight section 146 km long. (see Figure 3.3). The Nullarbor also includes the world's longest straight stretch of railway track, which is approximately 478 kilometres.

Figure 3.3 Longest Straight Road in Australia

In workshops I draw a road on the board and comment that:

> *'Many leaders (us) are locked in the 'doing' and 'activity' paradigm and like the road across the Nullarbor we cram our lives with activity and action that*

can seem endless. Focus is on the destination, travelling at speed from one end (of the Nullarbor) to the other. The landscape and the sound of the wheels, lulls the senses into a stupor. We see and receive more of the 'same stuff', cocooned in the prism of our own perceptions. Like life the road is stretched out ahead and we are fully engaged with the action of driving our life.

Cocooned against outside influences, we view and receive only those signals from the world that fit what we want to receive. Much of it reinforces our own mental models, affirming pre-existing beliefs, content with what is, and seeking more of the same. From a leadership perspective, relying on what we have always done, is at best likely, to give us more of what we had before and at worst diminishing returns. So if we want something different, we need to slow down, get off the road, stop 'doing', observe the terrain, ask questions, dig a little deeper, probe a little, look for unfamiliar things and mull it over.

Stepping off the treadmill of activity enables us to move away from the linear. Having disembarked, we can look with new eyes at the Nullarbor and the natural cycles that abound around us. Taking a deep breath and 'being present' we can gently take in the towns like Cook, Bates, Barton, Ooldea, and Immarna, which have remarkable histories and stories woven into the fabric of the journey we are on. In fact we become part of the tapestry, flowing within the continuum, from the historical presence of the Ngalea tribe to the tracks that we just imprinted in the fine sand beside the road.

What was a seemingly monotone journey is now layered and textured. 'Doing' is now nuanced and linked by observation and reflection, not just about the current journey, but the journey of life, its meaning, purpose, intent, etc. This rich process informs and contextualises the 'doing'.

As the Nullarbor metaphor suggests, we need to get off the track of doing which is the 'DO' in the DOOR model. Like most leaders, I am well and truly immersed in the practical activity of 'Doing' and much of this (doing) operates mainly at an

unconscious[6] level, because our brain has relegated most of what we do to an automated pattern that sits just below awareness and we therefore remain unaware of a large part of what we do. If we only involve ourselves with activity and doing, then the brain devotes more of its cortical real-estate to this function (Begley 2009).

The strength of the connections we create is patterned in the brain physically and shapes the lives we live. Constant activity without reflection is patterned and imprinted within the architecture of the brain and perpetuates more Doing. Much of this Doing becomes relegated to routine behaviour which then becomes automatic and as a result, we remain unaware of our motivations and impact (Jeannerod 2006). To create balance, 'OR' needs to be added to the equation. This represents 'or else' thinking which includes observation, divergent thinking, creativity, play, questioning, challenging and reflection.

'Doing' and 'OR else' thinking when combined, steers us away from the linear and towards a cycle of action and reflection. Insistently being caught in action/activity creates an imbalance in our own health and in the systems and organisations we work in. This is important, because more than ever today, humanity is acting in contradiction with the cycles long established by nature, with impending ecological disaster. Cataclysmic events around us including the rise in global temperature, species extinction, floods, droughts, hurricanes and tsunamis and accelerated consumption of finite resources is claimed to be evidence of this (Gore 2009). If constant activity perpetuates linear thinking, space and time needs to be allocated for observation and reflection so that we can step off the treadmill (like the Nullarbor metaphor) and look for the meaning and purpose in life.

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[6] Unconscious – Inaccessible to the conscious mind but which affects behaviour and emotions.

Life cycles abound all around us from the fluorescence cycle[7] operating at the quantum level (Le Bellac 2006) to cosmological cycles within planetary systems across the universe. Similarly the DOOR cycle operates at the micro level of thought, when I intentionally observe an action, think about it and then initiate a new action as a consequence of it. It also works at a large scale, when I observe my whole life at a macro level to attempt to discern the recurring patterns and ways of being that operate within it.

A gradual realization of cycles operating in all domains, led me to an ever-expanding journey of exploration including the biggest known cycles of the universe and the cosmos. Appendix A 3.1 details my research and writing on cycles and their relatedness to the DOOR model and expands on the Yin-Yang symbol and its integral relationship to the DOOR model.

Appendix A 3.2 elaborates on my earlier thoughts about the DOOR model and is an example of my conscious reflections on the DOOR model. This is both a form of reflective practice and an autoethnographic method.

Each of the key aspects of the DOOR model is explained in more detail below. This is extracted from a published article the 'Door to Reflection' (Fernandez 2013) which is the most recent of four published articles and one short story on the DOOR. For a complete list of related publications see Chapter 7 page 227.

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[7] Fluorescence is the result of a three-stage process that occurs in certain molecules. The fluorescence quantum yield, which is the ratio of the number of fluorescence photons emitted (Stage 3) to the number of photons absorbed (Stage 1), is a measure of the relative extent to which these processes occur.

DOOR to Reflection

Trainers, facilitators and organisational development practitioners are critical agents in helping to challenge people's view of the world by encouraging deeper thinking and reflective processes throughout an organisation. The DOOR framework emerged as a result of helping managers and leaders to think and reflect on what they do and can lead to deep learning and generative change when utilised with Action Learning.

DOOR is used as a mnemonic, and also metaphorically and literally as a means to open doorways to understanding. This article was written whilst on a family holiday in Fiji. It was an opportunity to use my holiday journey as a metaphor to illustrate and elaborate on the framework.

At its elementary level the 'DO' stands for 'doing'. Like most organsational development and training practitioners, I am immersed well in truly in the Doing paradigm. For me doing is at a most robotic and unconscious level. The 'OR' stands for 'or else' and includes divergent thinking, creativity, play, questioning, challenging, meta reflection and being present in the moment.

The open door of the 737 aircraft was an invitation to leave behind the treadmill of Doing. Stepping inside I was met with a sun-blessed cheery face and a warm 'Bula' (Hello), which I followed with 'Vinaka', which means thank you. Those of you who have been to Fiji know that this is an invitation to slow down and to take on board what the Fijians call 'Fiji Time' – essentially chill out and go with the flow. A Fijian bitter beer eased me as I settled back into the seat and reflected on the year just past.

Observe
I have found that Observation is usually a good place to start with the DOOR cycle. We are so busy, bombarded with action that we rarely get the time to stand back and observe.

As a Leadership Consultant, I design processes to help busy executives to understand more about themselves. I'm also a conduit in enabling deeper more reflective processes to emerge, thereby helping to transform the lives of many leaders. I did this for over a decade, (Fernandez 1997) though found that whilst I enabled this for others, I rarely engaged with these processes myself. My Doctoral journey changed this through addressing the question – "How can I as a leader (add facilitator and consultant to this) shift my focus from Action to Deep Reflection?"

The lens that was externally focused was now firmly focused on the internal frame and me. Interestingly the old adage, 'We teach what we most need to learn' (Bach 1977), was true in my case. It helped me to see that what I encouraged in others, I needed to embody and emulate for myself. As Managers and Leaders we influence people and processes at different levels. Our whole persona is integrally linked to the processes that we enable. We influence and are also influenced by every interaction with others - in many ways our role becomes one of co-enabling and co-creating processes with people. The old science model of the distant disconnected observer and expert plying their trade to others has had its day in the sun (Hawking and Mlodinow 2010; Kaku 2009; Laszlo 2008).

If I was to enable deep change for others, then I needed to observe and recognise my own mental models and filters that constructed my view of reality. I needed to work at growing and developing further as a person. Pragmatically speaking - as a Facilitator and Leader - through self-observation I needed to understand what my own mental models and filters of the world are. How do these models and filters reinforce my view of the world? What is the breadth and depth of my worldview? What are the deeper metaphors and stories that inform my worldview? How accommodative of others' worldviews am I? Observation is essential as it provides the data for Reflection.

Reflect

Breathing with excitement, I snorkeled at the edge of a reef en-route to stepping ashore for a barbecue lunch at a secluded sandy cay. I reflected momentarily on a Sufi quote I often use in my programs. 'Deep in the Sea are riches beyond compare but if you seek safety it is on the shore' by Shiraz. The person's name not the wine, though I did indulge in a glass at the cay!

To keep the metaphor going, there are many species of reflection, some allow you to explore the shore, close to the surface and others enable the exploration of the depths.

Like the coral reef, there are layers of interrelated, symbiotic connections; rich, colorful and imbued with meaning and purpose.

Time for reflection is scant in our busy lives. Even when we do reflect, our primary means is to reflect in the middle of action or briefly on action. This surface level process reflects back the world that you know - much like the shallow pool of water at the cay that reflected my face and the blue sky in the background. In business, Review is compensated for Reflection, and even this is done in a cursory fashion.

Also, review - like the postimplementation review within project management frameworks - sits comfortably within established business practices. It rarely challenges the status quo or the deeper underlying issues. In this context review and surface level reflection are single loop, incremental and fragmented from the context. Deep reflection on the other hand is the vital ingredient that incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges current mental models or world-views and can change the game altogether. It is uncomfortable, creates dissonance but without it we are likely to achieve no more than trivial change (Fernandez 2008; Fernandez 2009).

Deep reflection does not occur by happenstance. Given the pace and demands of life it needs to be designed, fostered and embedded systemically in organisations. Deep reflection involves the individual as both the subject and object of reflection. Also, group/team reflection sessions are a powerful enabler of high performance. Critical skills in dialogue, inquiry, advocacy and empathic listening help in developing openness, trust and camaraderie (Issacs 1999).

Observation and reflection are linked to our worldviews and the meta models we hold in our head. Leaders with myopic self-centered world views who are non reflexive, impact disproportionately on the lives of individuals.

Design

Our Observations and Reflections provide the data and critical thinking that help us in designing something new. Design incorporates a creative forward-looking process. It can be intentional or unintentional, planned or emergent. Design plays a key part in transforming our lives and in developing solutions that go beyond what we currently do and know. Leaders, who spend time designing and planning for the future, intentionally create better outcomes. Recent research on the brain (Carr 2010; Fine 2007; Levine 2002; Siegel 2007) also highlights the critical need to engage the forebrain in designing and creating the future. If we don't, this part atrophies and we get locked into the daily grind. Also, the Design element associated with creativity and play unlocks understanding, freeing up imagination and providing out of the box solutions to intractable problems (Bacon & Heward 2006).

Some time ago, I facilitated a leadership program for the Ratus (chiefs of Fiji). There were significant insights and learnings for me and I valued the cross-cultural immersion. For my children, this was a holiday where I wanted them to have a similarly immersive cultural experience apart from the orchestrated one at our resort.

Whilst waiting in the foyer the valet, David, enquired about our trip. I briefly provided the highlights and commented that I was also hiring a car so my children could see the real Fiji. He open-heartedly invited us to his house for dinner in a village amongst small sugar cane plantations. We took up the offer, exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet at the car park of a local supermarket in town and then follow him in our car.

We decided to bring a bottle of Australian wine along with an envelope containing money as our gift. With David in tow we also bought some nibbles and chocolates for his son plus a couple of bottles of Fiji bitter. David had two bags of ice, apologising that they had no light or fridge due to a recent cyclone. He asked us to follow him. I was glad that I had hired a large all terrain vehicle with plenty of clearance at the bottom, as we had to take a longer route through boggy tracks due to the bridge being damaged by the cyclone.

We left the highway and entered a dirt road, after some time David left his car at a friend's place and hopped in our car. He did this so that he could come back with us for the more dangerous part of the ride. It started to rain, the terrain was boggy and hilly, we crossed two bridges, and one made of timber had my hair on edge. My rather limited driving in boggy terrain skills were also tested. A little later the rain had cleared and we entered lush green countryside. Farmers waved at us as we passed. David commented that due to the hilly terrain and the high cost of fuel, most work was done by ox and spade. The mixed community (Fijian and Indian) helped each other out during the cutting season and for other communal activities.

We arrived at a small house tucked away amongst giant Neem, Mango and Tamarind trees. There were herbs, vegetables and flowers around it and chickens and goats in separate pens. The house was clean and tidy; food was cooked in an annex kitchen that was fired with timber and charcoal. Water was drawn from a bore, though the pump was not working due to the electrical wires coming down. Dinner was served in the courtyard, as the house was too

hot. We had a feast of crab and fish that David and his extended family had caught the day previously on his day off from work. He stated that we were lucky as the full moon meant fleshier and plumper crabs.

We explored a range of issues including the environment and global warming, and the impact on his community. He commented that he was paid $3.90 per hour, as was most of the service staff at the resort. He said that this was unsustainable and inequitable given the amount the resort charged their guests. His income was supplemented by what they grew.

For example he bartered some herbs for the lettuce in our salad. David and his wife saved $20 a fortnight for the education of their son. We discussed the traits and strengths that their son was already demonstrating and we talked about their aspirations. David and his wife had hope for a better future for their son. They were realistic, optimistic and intentionally and purposefully made plans for a brighter future.

My children were privy to all that was said and done during this time. We had a great conversation on the trip back about our experiences, about the deeper pervading issues in society, about the future and its potential. I also had an opportunity to look up at the night sky; it appeared like every star was visible and twinkled.

The story captures many aspects of the design and planning process. My intention for a deeper cultural experience meets the warmhearted opportunity offered by David. We are all designers of our life, making choices along the way that create and bring to life a future drawn from many other possible futures (Inayatullah 2008). Awareness of this is critical, for if we are not willing to actively engage in this design, then we may be unconscious of the influences around us and have a future imposed on us.

Operate

Operate is the final frame of DOOR and many of us are very good at this. In fact our whole life is engineered for this to occur; our very cortical architecture primes us for pattern and predictability. Neuroscience recognizes that this pattern making approximates 96% of what we do and this is mainly unconscious. The 4% is working memory and our window to consciousness (Langer 1989; Rock 2009). The DOOR's iterative process enables us to meaningfully and intentionally work with the 4% and to understand the patterns and processes that drive us. The beauty is that when you deeply think and reflect your Doing also becomes more present. I was present and enjoyed my time with David and was alive to the journey. I had trust in the future that was unfolding around us.

We are constantly experiencing something through our senses. It is when we place this DOing through the filter of Observation and Reflection that we add meaning to it. Meaning which is individualised, constructed and context bound, gains significance and power through a process of dialogue with others. Managers and leaders who are reflexive practitioners can with their whole being 'Be the change they want to see in the world'. (Gandhi & in B'Hahn 2001)

I received a number of phone calls from other trainers in the industry about the article. They liked the model and the narrative, and the article is provided as a handout to managers and leaders as part of my consulting and coaching practice. The DOOR model is now an integral part of my practice, helping managers to better improve their skills in observation and reflection.

As the article illustrates, the DOOR model uses the Door as a convenient metaphor and I discovered that you could commence the model at any point in the acronym. However it seems more logical in practice to start with the first 'O', Observation. Observation of what happened during the previous Doing of a task, activity or behaviour provides data for the Reflection stage, which is useful when dealing with pragmatic, data driven managers and leaders, my primary audience. The second 'O'

in the DOOR model is also used as a metaphor. After Design you open the Door to carry out or Operationalise the Design.

History of the DOOR model

I designed the door model as a simple way to get managers to engage with an iterative cycle that balances their heavy emphasis on Doing, the DO part in the DOOR model, with a need for OR which I term OR else thinking'. I encouraged managers and leaders to think about the interrelationship between doing and reflecting.

At one level the model is uniquely mine, though like life and the cosmos, I cannot lay claim to exclusivity, as it has evolved from a longer framework extending back more than 15 years when I began my Master of Philosophy researching on themes of reflection and change.

In many of my workshops with Leaders and Managers (I would have invariably spent some time on the topic of Action and Reflection) I conclude the workshop with a quote from the poem 'Ulysses' by (Tennyson 1833). See Figure 3.4

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams the untravell'd world, whose margins fades
For ever and for ever when I move
Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Ulysses'
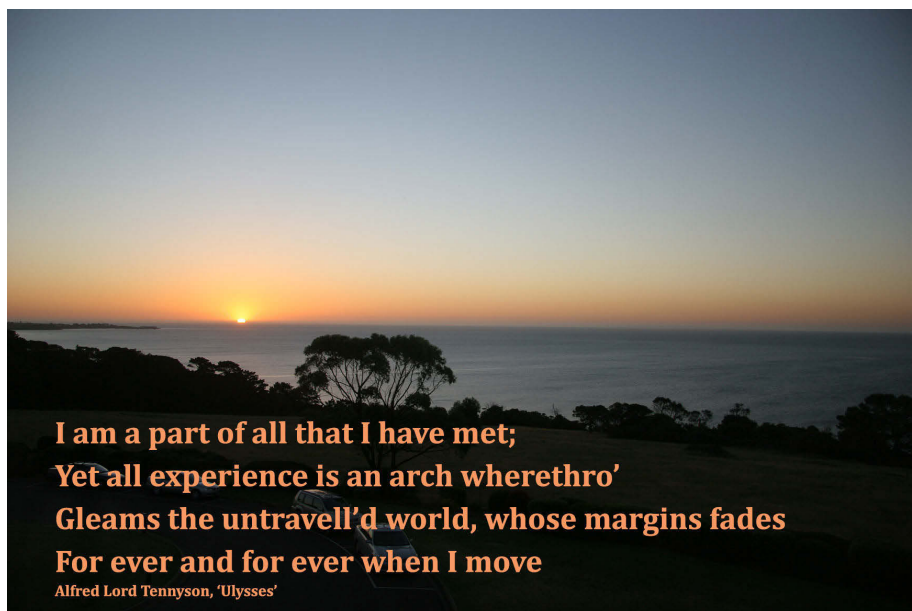
Figure 3. 4 Quote from Ulysses

In October 2005 I was concluding a public workshop for the Executive Education Business School (EEBS) and as I normally do when reciting the four lines from Ulysses, I point to an opening - an arch, window or door. This particular room had a Door that opened to a courtyard overlooking a magnificent bay (Fig 3.4 is the actual shot of the location). I had an 'Aha' moment about combining Doing with OR else thinking, with the Door, though the specific details of how I formed the link remain vague. During this time much of my energy was focused on the Feedsmoore intervention as we had weeks earlier concluded the first workshop. I was giving a lot of thought to the process of Reflection and this no doubt focused my mind, enabling the epiphany. I spent the next month refining the acronym and had another insight about the word Design when developing a session on Creativity and Innovation. I saw the need for us to become designers of our life.

I began to review many of the models on learning and change and saw immediate connections with (Kolb 1984) experiential learning cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, illustrating the process of action learning. Revan's work also added to this with the concept of 'P' or programmed knowledge, which is used in the design and planning stage to enhance the impact of action. 'P' is also useful in the reflection and abstract conceptualisation stage, in extracting meaning and understanding of the action taken.

The DOOR expands on Kolb's cycle to accommodate the process of both group and individual learning. This is congruent with my journey, which is both the unfolding of my individual insights and understandings and, as previously discussed, the self is enfolded to form a symbiotic and interconnected relationship with the social and others.

Door and other Models Associated with Learning
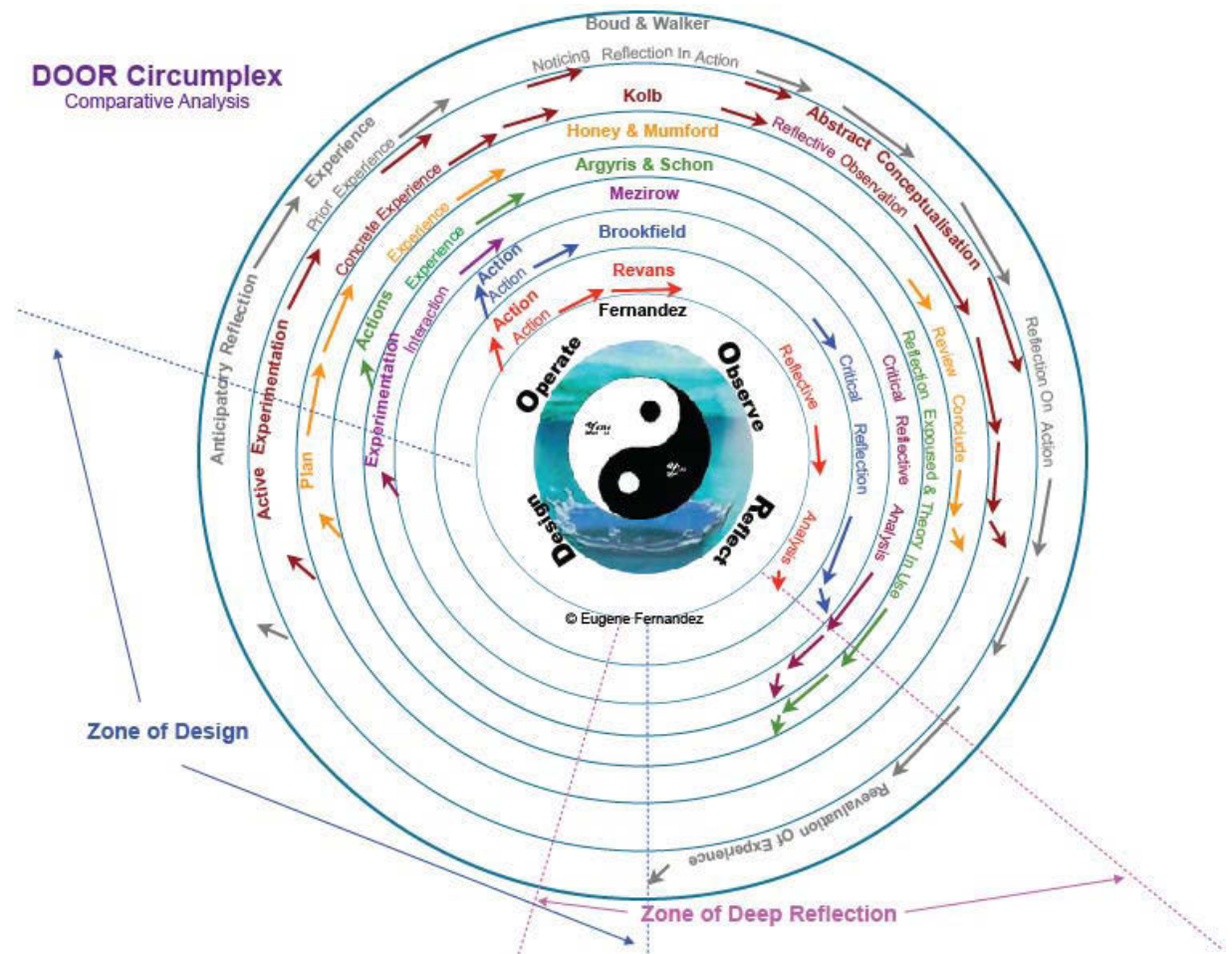
Figure 3.5 DOOR Circumplex Comparative Analysis. (Fernandez 2009a)

A larger foldout version of Figure 3.5 is located in Appendix B 3.1 of the thesis. I have chosen to represent the comparative analyses in a circle rather than a chart, which was my original intention, because this better represents the iterative nature of the model. I refer to the DOOR as a Circumplex based on the research of (Fabrigar, Visser & Brown 1997; Redeker et al. 2012) wherein it is assumed that a Circumplex has an equal ordering of variables measured from within the circle and that these variables are located on the circumference spanned by two orthogonal dimensions,

of the DOOR Model. There is much contention in the literature about what constitutes a true Circumplex. I have chosen to steer away from this as it is beyond the scope of my current research and study.

To locate the DOOR model in a broader context, I have compared it to other models associated with learning and including (Argyris & Schon 1974; Boud 1998, 2006; Brookfield 1985; Honey & Mumford 1982; Kolb 1984; Mezirow & Associates 2000; Revans 1980). My object is to use the comparisons instructively rather than to empirically validate my interpretations of the models. It is my intent after the Doctorate to research this further and add authors from other traditions to this matrix.

I have attempted to correspond each of the author's facet statements to the corresponding mnemonic phase of the DOOR. For e.g. In contrasting the (Honey & Mumford 1982) model, I correspond their facets of:

- plan with the phase of <u>D</u>esign

    experience with <u>O</u>perate and Review
- conclude with <u>R</u>eflect.

Though review in this context might be better placed under <u>O</u>bserve, as there is an implication of it being cursory as opposed to Mezirow (2000) notion of critical reflection, which is deeper and linked to his notion of critical reflexivity, which makes meaning transformation possible.

Concepts from Boud (2001) and Boud & Garrick (1999) on reflection correspond to:

- 'noticing reflection in action' with the phase of <u>O</u>bserve
- 'reflection on action' with the phase of <u>R</u>eflect
- 're-evaluation of experience' moves between the <u>R</u>eflect and <u>D</u>esign phase
- 'anticipatory reflection' is a term I coined, in place of Boud's 'reflection in anticipation of action' is connected to the <u>D</u>esign phase which includes planning for the event
- experience with the <u>O</u>perate phase.

Validating the relationships within this framework could itself be the subject of another dissertation, but my intent here is to identify similarities with the DOOR model and theories associated with learning, which are already well validated.

The analysis highlights a gap in the areas of <u>D</u>esign and Deep <u>R</u>eflection. Both Mezirow's (2000) frame of Critical reflective analysis and Brookfield's (1985) Critical reflection correspond to the DOOR's frame of <u>R</u>eflection.

However what I have termed 'deep reflection' goes beyond the notion of personal reflection and reflexivity. Frame 4, to be defined in the following section, accommodates reflection at the level of the group, what (Romme & Witteloostuijn 1999) call 'Collective Mindfulness'. Deep reflection also encompasses triple-loop learning (Flood & Romme 1996; Snell & Man-Kuen Chak 1998) which aims at increasing the depth of learning about complex issues, by creating links to all local issues of learning, in an overall learning infrastructure as well as developing the skills to use this infrastructure, much like the complex and blended learning framework created for Feedsmoore.

The participants on the Leading Talent Program practised deep reflection on occasions, when they reflected collectively (as a cohort) on the systemic issues impacting on their learning of promulgating change within Feedsmoore. As the architect and gatekeeper of the LTP process and framework, I had more of an opportunity to reflect on and learn about the interrelationships and patterns associated with the intervention. When I articulated these insights to the group and we were able to co creatively analyse the systemic issues, we were collectively practicing triple-loop learning.

Four Frames of Learning

The Four (4) Frames of Learning emerged through the journey of the Doctorate and as a result of my attempt to work with clients and organisations willing to embark on a Critical Action Research based intervention of the type adopted by Feedsmoore.

I began with my observation that such programs met strong resistance from some organizations whilst it was more easily negotiated in other social and cultural systems.

The 4 Frames provide a means of locating an organisation's readiness and maturity for introducing deeper learning and associated change processes. It is also a way to map Organisational Development and Learning interventions against each of the 4 Frames. This section outlines and describes the model. The work on the 4 Frames is ongoing.

The 4 Frames of Learning in figure 3.6 can be viewed as a hierarchically nested Complex Adaptive System (Dyer & Ericksen 2008), visually similar to the popular 'Babushka Russian Dolls'. (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000) sees this as "… agents in relationship(s) continuously evoking and provoking responses in each other".
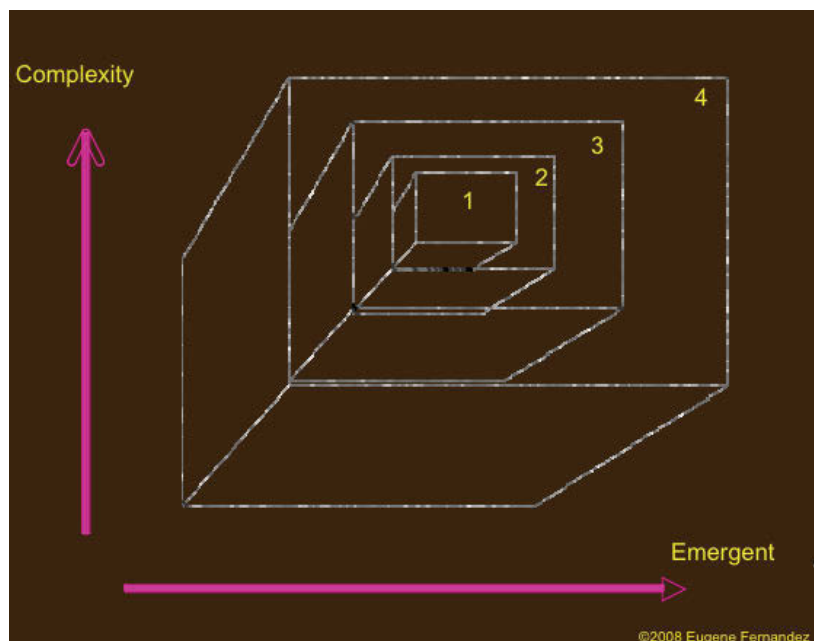
Figure 3.6 Hierarchically Nested Frames of Learning (Fernandez 2012b)

The 4 frames can each be viewed as discrete entities with identifiable boundaries, factoring that these boundaries are value laden constructs imposed by my

conceptualisation of the model and thus raise questions about ethics as in who rules who in and out (Flood 1999)

Frame 1 is bounded by greater stability and far less complexity than Frame 4. The outer edge of Frame 4 is at the edge of chaos, where self-organising thrives. Dyer and Ericksen (2008) state that:

> *Self-organizing at the edge of chaos engenders emergence, which can involve two types of outcomes – new forms of CASs and outputs. The beauty of emergence is that it tends to consist of outcomes imbued with two critical emergent properties: novelty (in the sense of being truly unique) and coherence. At one level, as CASs co-evolve they constantly emerge in new forms of dynamic processes and patterns. Often emergent forms are the outcomes of interest. But for firms, forms tell only part, albeit an important part, of the story. System outputs are also critical. Self-organizing at the edge of chaos tends to engender a stream of innovative, but also potentially viable, products, services and solutions. (Dyer & Ericksen 2008)*

An analysis of interrelationships among the frames and chaos and complexity theory may be taken up perhaps in postdoctoral work. For the purpose of this current work, Frame 4 accommodates and includes the other three Frames within its scope.
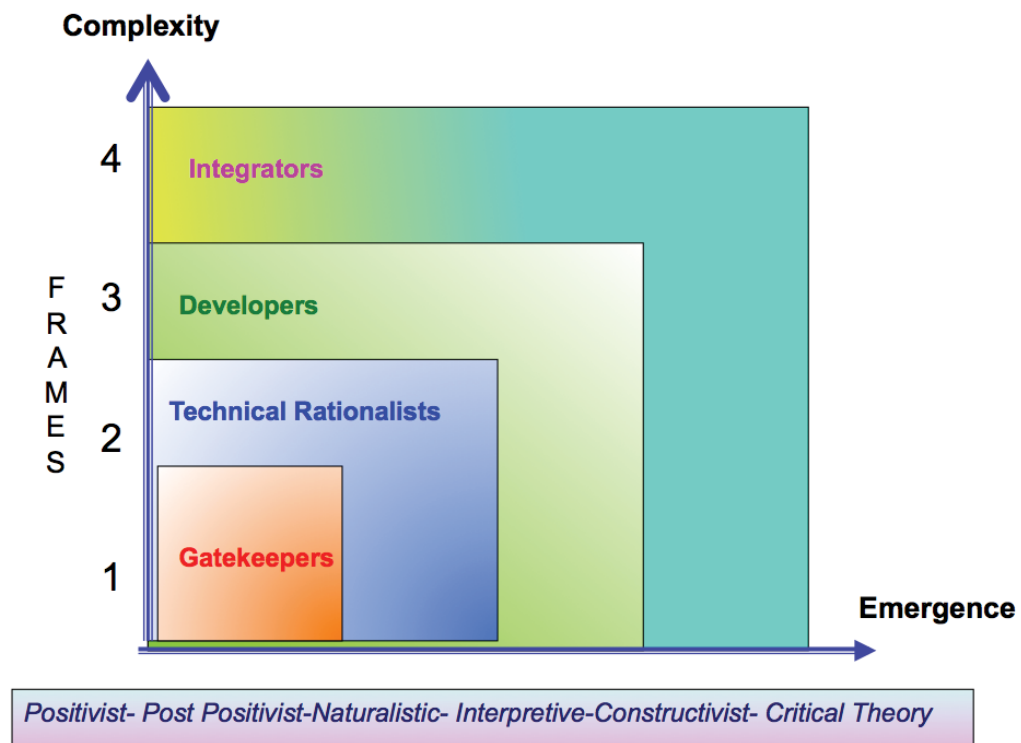
Figure 3.7 Four Frames of Learning (Fernandez 2012a)

The 4 Frames of learning are shown in figure 3.7. The vertical axis represents the increasing level of complexity from Frame 1 to 4. Frame 1 is bounded by a need for greater stability and less complexity than Frame 4. The outer edge of Frame 4 is at the edge of chaos, where self-organising thrives (Dyer & Ericksen 2008). The horizontal axis plots the degree of willingness to embrace change and emergence ranging from the safe and known to challenging and unknown. Emergence is located at the far right, representing acceptance that no action can be reducible to its constituent parts and the acceptance that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Bedau 1997; Laughlin 2005).

Each of the higher frames subsumes the lower frames within its worldview and constructs, for example, Frame 4 accommodates all the other frames within its constructs and worldviews. As readiness to embrace emergence and complexity

increases, an organisation becomes more able to expand its options for taking on more challenging Learning and Development and Change programs.

Frame 1 – The Gatekeepers

Knowledge is Propositional and Disciplinary.

The first frame is that of The Gatekeeper where the focus is on the teacher as expert. It adopts a master and student relationship and moves from deep dependency to intermittent dependency, where the teacher is the sole fountain of knowledge and the student the willing vessel. Knowledge is propositional, that is, knowledge is about the facts and discipline. Learning is contained and controlled, specialised and compartmentalized (Fantl 2012; Gibbons et al. 1994). Frame 1 Gatekeepers reflect a time when universities were accepted as gatekeepers of codified knowledge and compartmentalised knowledge. Governments funded the university as the 'guardian of public interest' (Scott et al. 2004).

Scott et al. (2004) call this kind of specialised knowledge 'Disciplinary Knowledge' as reflecting the confining nature of the disciplinary practice of a profession. As the discipline is the ultimate arbiter, knowledge is codified and corralled within the paradigm of the discipline. Frame 1 uses the disciplinary practice setting (where the teaching is done) as a source for constructing theory, and practitioner, considered as students are told that their experience is inferior and subordinate to rational science, a problem created by the fact that scientific knowledge is organized as disciplines while the world challenges are essentially non disciplinary (Barabasi et al. 2013).

In Chapter 5, I expand how Frame 1, is modeled by Business Schools and the expert-driven 'we know best' beliefs, which considers learners as "tabla rasa", or blank slates on which the experts can write. I explain this view is now being questioned and challenged (Lorange 2008; Mintzberg 2004; Moldoveanu & Martin 2008; Muff 2012).

Key points drawn from (Fantl 2012; Gibbons et al. 1994; Lorange 2008; Muff 2012; Scott et al. 2004) that constitute Frame 1 are covered under 4 headings and include:

1.   ***What is knowledge?***
- Knowledge is static and complete
- Propositional and codified
- Teaching is expert and transactional, and insisting on the primacy of abstract conceptual knowledge
- Newtonian, Cartesian.

2.   ***What is valued?***

- Theoretical, disciplinary, formal, foundational, generalisable
- Objective and value free (purportedly).

3.   ***How is it acquired?***

- Indifference to practice setting
- Organisational practice understood in terms of a fixed knowledge base of facts–may be studied and understood by observing events and behaviours and producing descriptions of what is happening
- Factual knowledge replaced over time as new knowledge becomes available.

4.   ***When is it useful?***

- Useful particularly when there is a need to understand and learn about core principles, subject disciplines, theory and abstract knowledge.

Frame 2 – The Technical Rationalists

Knowledge is Procedural and Technical

I have termed the next Frame 'Technical Rationalists', which focuses on Technical and Procedural knowledge, as manifested in the use of a skill. Trainers, industry experts and consulting practices all signal that the real world is different, that the

gatekeepers no longer are the only source of the knowledge. Whilst the Technical Rationalist frame appears to allude to an environment that is open, innovative and synoptic, pulsating with the beat of the marketplace (Scott et al. 2004), the reality is that it is only marginally different from the Frame of the 'Gatekeeper'.

Frame 1 positions universities as gatekeepers or codifiers of knowledge. The Technical Rationalist Frame corrals knowledge around the profession or guild, which establishes standards and operating norms of the profession. Knowledge is codified or excluded. The Practitioner (accredited or endorsed as being of the profession) is viewed as a technical problem solver operating within the prescribed rules of the profession with the ultimate aim of improving efficiency and performance (Hansen 2009; Hessels & Lente 2010). Progress is usually considered as locked into the groove of the profession.

Nonacademically based trade schools (DeAngelo, DeAngelo & Zimmermann 2005), Registered Training Organizations (AustralianGoverment 2013) and Corporate Universities (Prestoungrange, Sanderlands & Teare 2000) fit within this frame. In this frame most learning is contained (competency driven) and controlled (assessment/quantification driven) with a focus on competition and individual achievement. Knowledge is specialized, and still compartmentalized, but focused now on the task and output.

This type of learning has its place in improving knowledge and skills but is limited in its capacity to deal with the complex issues faced by people and organizations. Frame 2, though a radical shift from Frame 1, shares some of its features a master; student relationship and veneration of the expert outsider as giver of codified knowledge. Superficial rearrangement from the compartmentalized university to the silo'd practitioner. Academics masquerading as pseudoprofessionals and professionals as pseudoacademics run programs for the silo'd profession.

One of the negative aspects is that innovation is still contained within the deep groove of the industry, reducing the possibility for creative strategies to lift an enterprise out of the groove of the profession or industry and onto a global arena.

A key benefit of Frame 2 is that learning is focused by the context of application and codified and professionalised knowledge has enabled the development of a modern functioning society.

Key points drawn from (DeAngelo, DeAngelo & Zimmermann 2005; Hansen 2009; Hansen 2013; Hessels & Lente 2010; Scott et al. 2004) that constitute Frame 2 include:

1. ***What is knowledge?***
   - Outsiders produce superior knowledge than practitioners working in situ
   - Procedural, technical, specialized and compartmentalized
   - Corrected from prior incorrect knowledge and adopt principles based on the objective study of practical activities
   - Resides within a positivist frame–dualistic thinking, reductionism, and determinism. E.g. TQM, Six Sigma etc.
   - Is expert and transactional
   - Institutionalised –Industries and large organizations take this further through the establishment of corporate universities or colleges.

2. ***What is valued?***
   - Knowledge that is conditioned, and legitimised to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise or industry
   - Know-how that is transmittable as skills for jobs
   - Knowledge, codified as systems to be learnt within a guild or profession

- Reasoning that is applied to the realms of experience - to what we see.
- Specialised knowledge
- Objective and value free knowledge.

3.   *How is it acquired?*

- Nonacademically based Trade Schools, Registered Training Organizations and Corporate Universities
- Organisational practice understood in terms of a fixed knowledge base of facts–may be studied and understood by observing events and behaviours and producing descriptions of what is happening
- Factual knowledge replaced overtime as new knowledge becomes available
- Through demonstrating competence.

4.   *When is it useful?*

- When there is a need for a trade or professional qualification that is directly linked to a job or career
- When learning is focused within the immediate context of application.

Frame 3 – The Developers

Knowledge is Personal, Experiential and learned through action

The Developer's frame has a focus on individual empowerment and growth through learning. The focus on practice extends from practical personal knowledge and personal development to learning intended to transform the individual at the level of 'Being'[8]. Frame 3 covers a wide field with a number of traditions. My focus is contained to the sphere of work and organisational life, which includes: action

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[8] Being- Development of higher consciousness through religious and spiritual practices.

learning, reflective practice, project-based learning and experiential learning. Development is focused on use of iterative cycles of action and review for project based and experiential learning and 'reflection' in the case of action learning and reflective practice. Knowledge is understood as non-predictable, non-deterministic, situation specific and contextualized. Multiperspective views are adopted. There is an emphasis on tacit knowledge and an understanding that we know more than we can say.

In this frame, trainers and teachers are no longer gatekeepers or technical rationalists but have taken on skills as coach and facilitator. Many extend this to a position as change provocateurs with the goal of disrupting, dissolving and fragmenting the accepted beliefs and norms of the learner without offering a definitive replacement, since their purpose is to devolve responsibility to the learner. Participants are no longer students but worker–learners.

Whilst Frame 3 The Developers is a radical shift from the prior frames they too are limited by a tendency to be overly rational with a psychologised[9] view of the individual (Farlex 2013). Individual development and growth is mostly considered in isolation from the context, the group, the organisation and the broader industry (Reynolds 2004).

Organizational learning, when viewed from a Frame 3 perspective, is the result of the accumulation of individual learning in an organization (Vince 2000).

To use an old adage 'the fish is cleaned but then thrown back into the polluted pond', meaning individuals are sent on training programs or are coached independent of what happens to the environment they work in which usually throws up barriers to the application of their learning.

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[9] Psychologise – To investigate, reason, or speculate in psychological terms (Farlex 2013). I also imply by this statement that psychology is but one lens with which to view the individual, there are many others including a sociological view. The Training Industry and Executive Education providers and 'Business' are overly influenced by the field of psychology and develop a 'psychologised' view of the individual to the detriment of viewing the holistic nature of the individual and their work and life.

Key points drawn from (Dortlich & Noel ; Farlex 2013; Reynolds 2004; Vince 2000; Wyatt 2001) that constitute Frame 3 include:

1. ***What is knowledge?***
- Knowledge is understood as nonpredictable, nondeterministic, situation specific and contextualised
- Multiperspective views are adopted. Texts and stories are amended and reviewed in the light of current practice
- Theory is applied experientially and is applied to practice
- Learning is gained through iterative cycles.

2. ***What is valued?***

- Development of the Individual
- Action and reflection
- Individual growth translating to better practice
- Coaching, and mentoring
- Challenging individual limitations and worldviews with a view to growth and development.

3. ***How is it acquired?***

- Indifference to practice setting
- Tacit Knowledge - We know more than we can say. 'A vast fund of practical, local and traditional knowledge that is embodied in dispositions and forms of life and is expressed in flair and intuition, which can never be formulated in rules of scientific method, of which our theoretical or articulated knowledge is only the visible tip' (Collins 2010a; Gray 2014; Polanyi 1958; Wyatt 2001)
- Personal Development training programs
- Management and Leadership Development programs other than provided by an industry body or as part of a formal qualification
- Action Learning when it corresponds to the development and growth of individuals within a team set. AL as it applies to pragmatic and

practical solutions to issues that arise out of practice. (Margerison 2005).

4.   *When is it useful?*

- Individual development
- Personal growth
- Professional development
- Career development.

Frame 4–The Integrators

Knowledge is Transdisciplinary, Critical, Socially Constructed and Integral

Integrators explore a holistic, systemic, context bound and qualitative frame. They take a Meta Systems and Organizational Development and Transdisciplinary view, consistently looking for ways to integrate the whole system (or as much as possible of it) within the learning and change frame. Learning is seen as a constant process of transforming existing knowledge into new knowledge through social interaction (Nicolescu 2008; Nicolescu & Cilliers 2012; Wilber 2000).

Integrators utilise critical reflection on practice, as it helps to explore the key issues in organizations, related to such factors as: powerlessness, complexity, and risk. Fook & Gardner (2007) and Reynolds (1998) argue that critical reflection is the cornerstone of emancipatory approaches to education.

Integrators employ critical theory to unmask hegemony (by those in positions of power) and they focus on issues of repression, power, participation and inclusion through the lens of social equality and justice (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000).

Integrators understand that knowing and learning is an active, socially mediated process that happens in authentic[10] contexts and through interactions with real

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[10] Authentic- By this I mean dealing with issues that are located within the context of practice.

world practitioners. Drawing on the methodologies of constructivism and social constructivism, they focus on the cultural embeddedness of learning which is distributed in the environment, rather than stored in the head of an individual (Cunningham & Duffy 1996).

Frame 4 adopts action research (AR) which bridges the gap between research and practice (Somek 1995). Action research adds resistance 'R' to Revan's (1982) formula of L= P+Q. I now see 'R' as an enabler of the critical frame; when applied to action research it encompasses a critical, integral and organisational change lens.

Action research aims to change and challenge the social systems in which it operates. This increases and magnifies complexity, defensive routines (Argyris 1983) and political risk. AR is concerned with challenging the mind-sets of organizations and whole societies (Cherry 1999).

Frame 4's loose, complex, innovative and emergent nature, relies on trust built on real dialogue and understandings that factor a multiplicity of options and outcomes, some of which will move individuals to real points of tension and dissonance.

Integrators encourage and support people to ask more complex questions, understanding that this may challenge both the system and the individuals. They draw from the fountain of expert knowledge without venerating it and knowledge is reflected on, and is used to inform, practice. Theory is constructed not for its own sake but is grounded in practice.

Integrators focus on both the content and the process and the process of the process[11], encouraging learning within a community of fellow learners and seeing this as an iterative process. Learning is enacted for the individual as well as the supra and subsystems[12]. Sustaining learning here is built into the very fabric of the intervention.

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[11] Process of the Process – Designing and implementing a process that critically looks at the process and systems at play within the program or intervention.

[12] Supra system -A system of higher order in relation to some systems or subsystems of lower order.

In this frame, the learning specialist is a facilitator, co-creator and co-learner of an intervention. Prescriptive formulaic methodologies are an alien concept and the search is for a theory of 'one' that fits the purpose and needs of the participating community.

Frame 4 adopts green, yellow and turquoise memes based on a Spiral Dynamics[13] Frame (Beck & Cowan 1996). Figure 3.5 encompasses the respective colours. Frame 4 incorporates a set of practices embedded within an Integral Paradigm (Wilber 2000, 2007).

Integrators have a deep knowledge of the other 3 frames and can draw on the strengths of each to orchestrate enablement of transformational change processes.

Integrators draw on the methodology of connectivism[14] understanding that learning happens more rapidly in a connected, information rich world through technological mediation (Marquis 2011). Within this context Integrators utilise current Web 2.0 technologies[15] to facilitate systems of engagement between people through the use of social platforms encouraging real time conversations that are both self-organising and self-sustaining (Morgan 2006).

Projecting ahead in the immediate short-term, Integrators will utilise Web 3.0 technologies[16] to design and integrate the human interface with machine intelligence (Stevens 2013). In the long-term (decades) Integrators will facilitate the

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[13] Spiral Dynamics- is a theory of human development where humans are forced by life conditions to create more complex conceptual models to handle problems. These conceptual models are organized around 'memes' where each meme is a collection of core values. The Green, Yellow and Turquoise memes are the three highest stages of development.

[14] Connectivism - The relationship between work experience, learning, and knowledge, as expressed in the concept of 'connectivity', is central to connectivism. The term is now more applied as "a learning theory for the digital age" on how people live, communicate and learn with and through technology (Stevens 2013).

[15] Web 2.0 – Technology and Internet services where people interact and engage with each other within a company or between companies. These technologies facilitate knowledge, which is a key strategic resource and enabler within an organisation.

[16] Web 3.0 – Emerging technologies that learn to anticipate our needs for example Google knows what's in our Calendar and where we are located via GPS.

emergence of collective intelligence across vast interlinked semantic networks[17] in tandem with human participation (Malone, Laubacher & Dellarocas 2010).

Key points drawn from (Bokor 2012; Fitzgerald 1999; Fook & Gardner 2007; Goleman 2007; Inayatullah 2007; Kegan & Lahey 2001; Morgan 2006; Nicolescu 2008; Stacey 2005; Wilber 2000; Young 2011)

1   What is knowledge?

- Transdisciplinary, Critical, Socially Constructed and Integral
- Holistic, Systemic, Context bound and Multi perspective
- Complex and Emergent
- Connected, Information rich and Technologically enabled
- Ecological, Transformative
- Construction of meaning, which is continuous and evolving
- Truth and meaning come into existence through our engagement with the world.

2.   What is valued?

- Inquiry is value bound
- Integration with the whole system
- Inclusion, Social Equality and Justice
- Individual, Organisational and Societal Change
- Challenging world views, myths.

3.   How is it acquired?

- Social interaction
- Meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretive processes
- Inquiry is influenced by the choice of theory to guide the research intervention and collection of data

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[17] Semantic network – An extension of the current web, provides a common format so that all information is easily read across all platforms.

- Dialogue within the participating community
- Systemic organisational participation
- Adversity, risk and challenge
- Management, Leadership Development and Change programs integrated within all areas of the business, where the learning focus is to challenge deeply ingrained practices and world views
- Action research and other interpretive, constructivist and critical approaches when it corresponds to emancipation of the individual and transformation of the system.

4. *When is it useful?*

- Learning needs to be part of a social process
- Leadership Development
- Change required in a system
- Organisational and Industry Change
- Social Change
- When dealing with complex, emergent and chaotic environments.

Frame 4 Identifiers

The list includes key indicators that need to be in place to ensure the success of a Frame 4 intervention. The list is clustered under 2 headings.

Organisational Identifiers

- Capacity to adopt an integrated systems perspective
- Understand the limitations of formulaic, quick fix processes and usually have tried a number of these interventions without achieving the desired results
- Organisation that has reached a point where business as usual negates its position or survivability within the industry
- Capacity to go beyond the current body of knowledge and practice.

Client and Senior Team Identifiers

- Willingness to explore complex, and emergent interventions.
- Stakeholders who champion the intervention and are senior enough to have immediate access to key decision makers, can be convinced to play a vital part in the intervention
- Willingness to work in partnership and to co-create the journey ahead. Understanding that this is a journey rather than a destination
- Willingness to explore and challenge deep metaphors and myths that are embedded within practices and reward structures
- Understanding that the deeper the intervention, the more resistance that emanates from the system. Fortitude to take on risk and adversity
- Willingness to challenge the leadership style and values congruence of the executive team
- Willingness of the executive team to shift and modify their behaviour and processes
- Willing to work in partnership with each other. Adopting critical feedback skills in association with dialogue.

In Conclusion

Both the DOOR model and the 4 Frames of Learning emerged as a consequence of the Doctoral journey. Like the journey itself, both models were integrated within the learning *insitu* at Feedsmoore and are elaborated further within chapters 5 to 8. The DOOR model can be used within any of the 4 Frames and can be a means to iteratively apply strategies and learning to assist individuals/organisations shift between the frames.

Chapter 4

DOOR To Work– The Feedsmoore Case (External of External)

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explore the context, trials, successes and consolidations experienced by myself as an emergent Reflective Practitioner introducing an Action Research Leadership Process and Program to Feedsmoore, the client organisation.

There were four clear DOOR cycles in operation from 2005 to 2008. These were specific sequences of events and experiences delineated by:

- The two Leading Talent Programs (LTPs);
- My own personal journey as a Program Director (PD) within the organisation;
- My Observations and Reflections about my practice
- My learning as applied to both current and future work with other clients.

I have chosen to take a helicopter or meta view of the specific DOOR cycles in a manner akin to Fletcher & Zuber-Skerritt (2008) concept of 'meta-action research'.

These chapters are the nub of the research journey and the dissertation. This centrality along with the complexity, the length of time involved in completing the work, the volume of material covered and the need for clarity, led to dividing the material into three chapters.

Chapter 4 focuses on the facts associated with the case study. The green line continues the metaphor of the journey, opening a Door to the External world. I have

called this an External view of External reality as I provide a factual and dispassionate account of the case study.

Chapter 5 takes an Internal or First Person view of the case study. The focus is on observing, interpreting, reflecting on and forming generalizations using the External events of the LTP.

Chapter 6 continues to use the case as a backdrop, although my focus there is on elaborating 'External' or Third Person 'Observations' and 'Reflections' on my 'Internal' state; that is, looking back on what was happening to me at that time.

Design of Chapter 4

The Design element in this chapter describes the process of engaging with the client organisation and explores key issues to be factored in as an employee of a brand conscious business school. The Operating element describes two Leading Talent action research programs run between 2005 and 2008 for a multinational Fast-moving consumer goods manufacturing (FMCG) business. The Observation element uses selected events that explore my insights about the achievements and the difficulties of running these programs. The chapter concludes with Reflections on deeper issues of personal change and the process of becoming a Reflective Practitioner. The two programs achieved outstanding results for the participants and the organisation, though this in itself was not enough to sustain their continuity.

A process of observation and reflection was used to deeply investigate the huge volume of information recorded during 2005 and 2008 and recollected to develop this factual account of the Feedsmoore case. As Kosko (1994) suggests, facts are extracted via our own interpretations from a tapestry of events, linked to our own beliefs, which condition our observations, ensuring that there is no single set of unambiguously agreed 'facts' about such a complex situation. As discussed in Chapter 3, my use of the Yin Yang symbol recognizes this interplay. If this seems

disjointed, your perseverance as a reader will bring you back to a point of unity, however temporary this may be in the flow of your life.

The Design and Operating sections of this chapter focus on the facts of the case study, and a review of an extensive amount of material, placing it in sequential order. Whist it presents the facts, it nevertheless offers occasional references to my emerging insights. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on observing, interpreting, reflecting and forming generalizations.

Design and Development of the Leading Talent Programs.

This chapter sets up the process of engaging with (Feedsmoore, a pseudonym), and explores parallel aspects of the issues emerging from my role as Program Director of Leadership for the Executive Education Business School (EEBS, a pseudonym), one of Australia's leading Business schools. My designated work goal was to design and implement a Leadership Program to be called the Leading Talent Program for Feedsmoore.

The Business School and my Role as Program Director

Industry leaders established EEBS 50 years ago and many senior Australian business executives have attended residential programs there, at some stage of their careers. EEBS values this rich heritage. The school also has an outstanding pedigree in the area of experiential education and action learning, having achieved Number 1 ranking in the Asia Pacific region on a number of occasions. The school offers both in-house and public programs for participants who are largely drawn from business and the public service in Australia and New Zealand. The organisation also tailors its public programs to meet the needs of individual organizations through (in-house) training. Some customization occurs to meet the specific needs of the clients organisation, though in practice, these programs effectively massage topics from their public offerings.

In August 2004 I was appointed as the Program Director (PD) of EEBS satellite office in Sydney, as the fourth staff member in Sydney. Historical rivalry between capital

cities meant that, the EEBS name, while a real asset in its own State, Victoria, could be a liability in the highly competitive Sydney market with its own locally based business schools and educational/consulting providers. This rivalry was always going to have an impact on the potential for generating work in Sydney. However EEBS was confident of it's reputation as a vehicle for generating new customers, and keen to extend its presence in this marketplace.

As PD I was the senior member of staff, reporting to the General Manager based in Victoria. The other staff were two Business Development Executives (BDEs) and an office Manager, who all reported to different functional heads in Victoria. In effect this meant there was no authority structure in Sydney to ensure coordination of daily operations. The structure relied on mutual trust and good interpersonal relationships to be effective. Whilst the number of staff at the Sydney office changed between 2005 and 2008, the dysfunctional nature of this structure created a need to constantly manage politically sensitive relationships. Chapters 5 and 6 detail some of the impacts of all this on my productivity, emotional stability and learning.

For most of this time I was the only Sydney staff member whose work was measured by billable hours. My PD colleagues in head office could fulfill their equivalent obligations by running public workshops at the residential facility relatively easily. In contrast I had to factor in travel to build relationships and contribute to the public workshops in Head Office (when I was fortunate enough to be included in a program). The situation eventually became untenable, and after a year in the role, and a relentless travel schedule, I tendered my resignation. However, I was persuaded to stay by the General Manager's promise that things would improve.

I realized that, to be effective in Sydney, even if things did improve I had to find my own clients. This involved first finding clients interested in working with EEBS and then designing, facilitating and managing relevant interventions. Because of my own predilections, emergent clients, needs and recognition of potential benefits, it became clear that these interventions would be more complex and time consuming than what was usually required for contributions to EEBSs public programs. I

gradually found I was doing more work in a more competitive and complex market to attain the same number of billable hours as my PD colleagues.

In early 2004 EEBS was merged with a leading Australian Academic Business School (AABS) (a pseudonym) with a similar 50-year pedigree. From the beginning it was not a happy partnership. There was inevitable tension between research-oriented academics, with expert driven individualistic frameworks and the practitioner-focus of EEBS Program Directors. Members of each group had prior, and entrenched, negative opinions of the other. A new Dean from a much-vaunted International University had also recently been appointed to head up the new combination.

Business schools are increasingly challenged about their purpose and the values they perpetuate in business (Mintzberg 2004; Starkey & Tempest 2005). Conversely, they are challenging and being challenged by practitioner driven and market training programs such as those offered by EEBS. All this added to the complexity of the role and is discussed further in Chapter 5.

During the first six months of my appointment I took every opportunity I could to educate the two BDEs about the difference between training and learning and then about the difference between Action Research and Action Learning. The BDEs held the purse strings and I needed them as allies if I was to receive a reasonable share of the potential billable hours. Their understanding of Organisational Dynamics or Educational/Learning frameworks was narrow and limited to marketing of 'stand and deliver'/expert-driven approaches to program design. Essentially they were motivated by extracting value via financial margins and operated primarily within frames 1 and 2. They were not interested in the educational outcomes or the delivery of programs with a long-term impact. Yet they were the first port of call with clients. They reported to the General Manager Business Development who did not get on with my General Manager.

They effectively had control of the clients and in theory, whilst they were supposed to take the PDs with them after the first meeting; they instead took contractors with

whom they had developed mutually beneficial relationships. Since the contractors' daily rate was less than a Program Director's there was financial motivation to use these external providers. My colleagues (PDs) were content to run their well-honed public programs, getting their billable hours with least effort. Nine months into my employment, I learnt that each PD had a separate arrangement with the General Manager regarding receipt of additional monies for work done beyond the contracted billable hours, thus perpetuating secret arrangements and the motivation to do easily repeatable work. This perturbed me, as it seemed inequitable and unfair given my circumstances.

Effectively most EEBS organisational interventions were being designed and managed by the least experienced and junior staff (BDEs) who were solely motivated by the margins. A formulaic process ensued, though expertly sold and beautifully gift-wrapped. Clients paid because of the brand and the Business School pedigree. Eventually my research on Frames of Learning (discussed briefly earlier in chapter 3 and in chapter 5 and 6) gave me a useful framework with which to plot a different kind of intervention better calculated to risk, complexity and depth of Individual and organisational change desired. However the BDEs were comfortable selling frames 1 and 2 which had met least resistance from clients and external contractors and were low risk and formulaic.

I had taken the PD position at EEBS because my passion for Action Research was matched by the apparent commitment by the organization to offer this, and related deeper interventions, to its clients. However as I became aware of the actual context as described above, gradually I realised that although such strategies are effective in helping individuals and organizations deal with critical issues, the benefits are associated with higher risks and greater costs than less intensive expert-driven programs.

Hindsight suggests the metaphor of climbing Mount Everest without a map or ropes and limited oxygen. However my passion and belief, bolstered by previous successes in using AR/AL and related deeper organisational learning interventions, drove me

on. Eventually many of the BDEs were avoiding me and some of them had the vague notion that my skill set was different to other trainers and academic experts. In this context different could be equated with not useful to us. I eventually came to the conclusion that I was looked upon as a bit of a maverick. While I am clearer about this in hindsight, in order to survive and sustain my employment I chose at that time to focus my energy on building a relationship with one Sydney based BDE and through multiple conversations and coaching sessions, was able to help him become aware of broader organisational theories, until I felt that I had one advocate for the benefit and value of more complex and deeper interventions.

During this time we received an enquiry from the Organistional Development Manager at Feedsmoore who happened to be in Sydney. We first met in February 2005 to discuss working with the organization's line management. The program was part of an internal initiative known as line manager excellence (LMX), which was, in turn, part of a $200 million investment in reshaping the organisation.

The Client Organisation - Feedsmoore

Feedsmoore is one of the largest confectionary companies in the world with sales revenue in 2004 estimated to be approximately $US18 Billion. Despite the size of the organisation, it is still a private company with family members as Directors. Non-family board members were only introduced to the organisation in 2003. This intended intervention would focus on the Australia/NewZealand region of this global business

The company sells over 700 products as diverse as mustards, marinades, relishes, sauces, herbs, spices, pasta, stir fry sauces, pet food, chocolates and snack food. These are exported to New Zealand, the USA, Canada, and throughout the Asian and Pacific region.

Structure

When I first encountered the organisation there were three divisions, headed by a President and located in regional areas in Australasia: Victoria, NSW and New Zealand. The Snack Food Division exported chocolates and related products to 30

countries. The Pet Care Division produced more than two million cans and some 30,000 packs of dry food per day and The Food Division supplied quality, branded food products to consumers in Australia and New Zealand, with a developing export business to the Asian region.

Context for the Leading Talent Program

The Leading Talent Program (LTP) was designed following nine months of extensive discussions jointly led by me as Program Director of Leadership at EEBS and the Human Resource and Line Management representatives within Feedsmoores. The LTP formed part of Feedsmoore's Line Managers' excellence strategy and was seen as a critical enabler for improved business performance through improving line management capability and delivering higher levels of engagement with employees. The CEO invited selected managers to join the program.

An imminent increase in the span of control for line managers was a major factor prompting the organisation to approach the business school to partner with them in creating an intervention to increase this capability. At that time the level of stress and the degree of complexity associated with this structural change had not yet become apparent.

Employee Engagement

Feedsmoore routinely gathered extensive data about the shape and performance of their organisation, and benchmarked this against other organisations considered to be best practice, using the Gallup organisation and Bain & Company to assist them in this process. The intended outcome of the benchmarking conducted prior to work commencing on the LTP was to improve efficiency.

The restructure commenced in May 2005 leading to a reduction in the number of line managers and a re-focusing on a wider variety of activities. As a result, staff with management responsibilities experienced an increase in the number of people reporting to them, in some cases by two or three fold.

Feedsmoore has a positive history of investing in training globally and the potential pool of participants for the LTP had already undertaken significant leadership

development training with some of the major Leadership Business schools and commercial providers in the world. However, in spite of this investment in development, the organisation was not experiencing the desired behavioral changes in its line managers, as identified by their Gallup Q^{12} results, which were below global and industry norms.[18] The Overall Satisfaction index had declined from 3.59 to 3.28, moving from the 37th percentile to the 20th percentile and there was a decline in the mean score on 7 of the 12 Q^{12} items. Because importance was attached to this information it was an immensely important driver. Also the ratio of engaged, to actively disengaged, employees was significantly higher than in other regions within Feedsmoore and the percentage of disengaged employees was increasing.
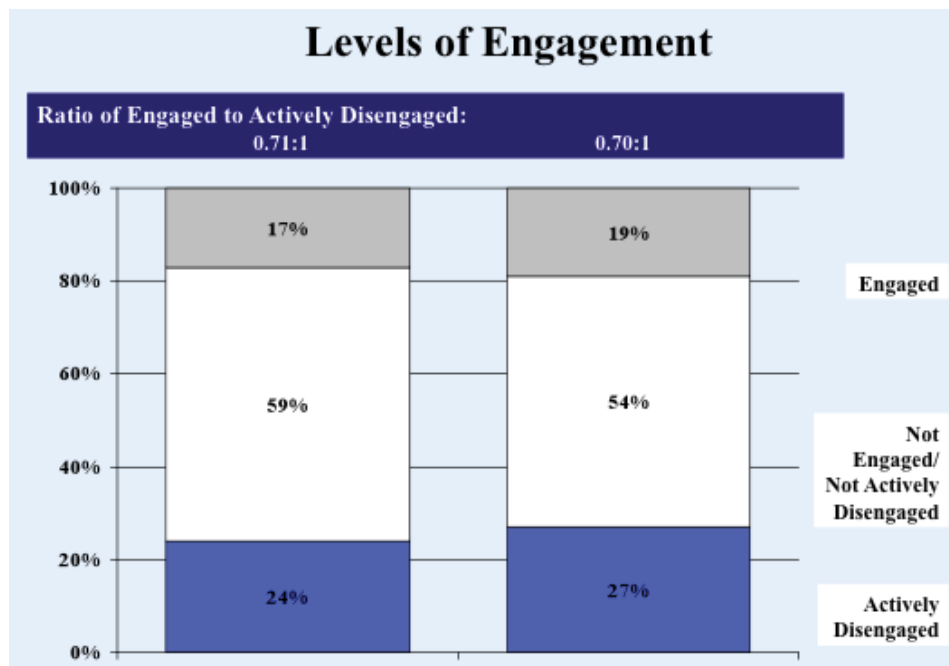
Figure 4.1 Ratio of Engaged to Disengaged Employees

This figure is a representative image of the data that was driving the organisation. Senior managers within the business viewed small changes in the ratios as significant. A manager's performance bonus was linked to the numbers.

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[18] Gallup Q^{12} is 12 questions measuring employee engagement. Scores are on scale of 1 to 5.

As seen in figure 4.1, whilst the level of engaged employees had increased by 2%, the level of disengaged employees had risen by 3%. Also, a 19% engagement score was the lowest in the global business; the highest was 33% and the score of 27% disengaged (along with one other region with 28%).

Feedsmoore had chosen eight core competencies, (see Figure 4.2 the Cereal box) from the Lominger Competency Framework (Lombardo & Eichinger 2004). All their development programs were required to map against these competencies, and this was then meant to link to the Gallup Q[12] employee engagement survey (Harter et al. 2009), an annual measure of non-financial performance, pegged against company norms as well as global industry norms.

The effectiveness of learning and development work completed by the organisation was measured in part by the changes seen in Gallup Q[12] scores after the development work had been completed and then implemented. Significant training resources were allocated to improve the performance of managers and teams, to lift the whole group within the region.

Gallup's research was similar to other research-based institutions on Employee Engagement. The (ConferenceBoard 2010), a global research and consulting organization, has done comprehensive studies on engagement and defines employee engagement as:

> *"A heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization, that influences him or her to exert greater discretionary effort to his or her work".*

(DTS-International 2013) another research based institution defines it as:

> *"The degree of emotional commitment that an employee has to their job and the organisation as a whole. Engaged employees "go the extra mile" for their company, their colleagues and their customers, while disengaged employees do the bare minimum".*

The Conference Board, condensed four studies with the following eight key drivers that impacted on employee engagement:

- Trust and integrity–how well managers communicate and 'walk the talk'.
- Nature of the job–is it mentally stimulating day-to-day?
- Line of sight between employee performance and company performance– does the employee understand how their work contributes to the company's performance?
- Career Growth opportunities–are there future opportunities for growth?
- Pride about the company–how much self-esteem does the employee feel by being associated with their company?
- Coworkers/team members–significantly influence one's level of engagement
- Employee development–is the company making an effort to develop the employee's skills?
- Relationship with one's manager–does the employee value his or her relationship with his or her manager?

Other key findings include the fact that larger companies are more challenged to engage employees than are smaller companies, while employee age drives a clear difference in the importance of certain drivers. But all studies, all locations and all ages agreed that the direct relationship with one's manager is the strongest of all drivers.

Despite all the work for over a decade, the Corporate Leadership Council also noted that employee engagement dropped since 2009.

Notwithstanding the Conference Board studies above, to me one of the best ways for OD/HR practitioners to drive engagement is to align and link frameworks and interventions directly to the organization. This has been the missing link; the supervisor is not the vehicle but is part of a systemic intervention. My learning was to help Feedsmoore to both rely on good management practices and embed them

systemically. Another key learning for me was to create the union between the Gallup process and the LTP.

I saw the importance of facilitating this connection for the HR group at Feedsmoore, as I was at the same time taking on the role of Designer and Program Director for the new 'HR Executive as Business Leader' program for EEBS. I was learning about some of the key issues facing the profession, including the heavy reliance on Human Resource Metrics as a means to provide data that validated many of the qualitative strategies. It was also a means for HR to shore up their strategies and equate it to what other divisions within the organisation did. That is, a reliance on numbers and measurement as a tool to drive and validate the decision making process within organisations. As discussed earlier, this fits in with a 'modernist' lens. Whilst other professions (Accountantancy, Engineering etc.) have been well versed in this practice for a long time, this was new to HR and therefore there was a proliferation of metrics. I published my thoughts on this in an article. An excerpt from the article (Fernandez 2007) follows:

> *HR's move to the rational end of the spectrum has seen a proliferation of data with hundreds of ratios measuring virtually every aspect of HR. These ratios are benchmarked against other organisations. There are also HR audits and a myriad of surveys measuring employee satisfaction and engagement. All this data can cloud HR's real value and impact on the business. HR practitioners need to place more effort on strategies for organizational effectiveness by trying to understand the impact of HR strategies on the business. Focusing on the impact shifts the gaze away from a focus on outputs such as turnover, training days completed, headcount, succession, candidate numbers, performance interviews and the percentage of employee engagement reports submitted.*
>
> *A question needs to be addressed. How does all of this affect organizational effectiveness and what are the outcomes? There are six strategies that HR*

professionals can apply to help chief executives execute for business success. These are:

- *focus on effectiveness*
- *link knowledge to human capital*
- *build critical capabilities*
- *enable business alignment*
- *challenge key processes*
- *build effective leadership.*

The article was well received at the time and my General Manager congratulated me on publishing it. On reflection, I had gained credibility in her eyes, as the PD community rarely published their work being more interested in the 'Doing'.

The Leading Talent Program (LTP)

The focus on improving the engagement scores as detailed above was part of Feedsmoore's Line Managers, excellence strategy and the LTP was seen as a critical enabler for achieving this, along with an ongoing sharing of ideas, maximising synergies, cross-fertilising, building bridges and creating a one-business focus whilst improving the leadership skills of the cohort.

The focus changed for program 2 (which began in early 2006) when the CEO and champion were promoted to a larger role in the European Business. The previous three divisions in Australia and New Zealand effectively became four separate businesses each headed by a GM, which changed many of the original intents of the program. Especially affected were those related to synergy, cross-fertilisation and creation of a 'one-business' focus. Whilst the GMs averred that this was still their intent, in practice they increasingly focused on their separate particular business drivers and issues. This emerging gap between espoused positions and 'in-action' ones (Argyris 1983) became an ever increasing barrier for the continuity of the programs of which there were ten proposed. The two programs, which were

completed, achieved outstanding results (See evaluations in chapter 6) for the participants and the organisation, though this success was not enough to sustain continuity of this approach to leadership development.

Contracting with the Client

A number of meetings occurred over a six month period prior to a contract being signed and I spent a great deal of discretionary time to achieve this. What I call discretionary time is my personal time, which is not paid or accounted for within billable or work related factors. The client representative team initially included the General Manager of Learning & Development and later the Vice President of HR, Learning and Development Specialist, HR Manager and the Regional President. Apart from the HR Manager who was a specialist, each of the others were line managers from across the globe who had moved into an L&D role, mainly from senior sales and operations backgrounds. This group now constituted the Steering Committee, which also included me, and the BDE.

Feedsmoore's representatives on the steering committee had a good understanding of the organization's Learning and Organisational Development frameworks, although many of these frameworks were being applied in the regions without a broader understanding of the body of work in which they are located. This was further compounded, as the steering committee members were not specialists in the HR/OD area. They were, however, specialists in other disciplines and their understanding of the broader learning and organisational frameworks was therefore limited to familiar contexts. This is an issue as the context within which a body of work is located is crucial. It was only through reflecting that this issue became evident for me.

All this impacted on the use of my discretionary time because the HR and OD staff were not familiar with the demands and constraints of AR. It took me a long time to explain the process and especially the nature of emergent and qualitative approaches to learning and change management. Explaining concepts and frameworks, particularly, highly emergent and qualitative ones such as AR, took

time, and besides, experience dictated that you had to be involved in the implementation of AR from the ground up to understand it. In Chapters 5 and 6, I expand on how this experience helped me to develop the four frames of learning.

It is important to stress that Feedsmoore is a global organisation where employees are financially well looked after. In return, they work long hours and make themselves available to move around the globe. They are usually paid at the high end of the market and usually 10% to 15% more than staff in competitor businesses. This was further exacerbated as most worked in regional centres in Australia and around the globe, where income is generally lower than the cities. The long hours (over 55 hours per week for many in the LDP group and over 65 for some) and total commitment was part of the package and trade off.

Another factor was the expectation that the program would use polished presentations, with all bases covered, allowing no room for error. An indicator of this is the way that meetings with the executive and CEO were honed and airbrushed many times. This is not my preferred way of operating. I am conversational, reflective and enquiry based, and while I can move into the other space for a short period of time and even facilitated programs using this mode, this infotainment must, in my opinion, be balanced with processes which encourage reflective thinking.

This slick and cover all the bases approach is natural to Learning and Development programs that are didactic and expert based. However, our extensive discussions helped the client representatives realise that such programs were not producing the changes in leadership behaviour or practice that were sought. I discuss this further in Chapters 5 and 6 and describe how a large part of my energy was expended on both factoring this need for making sure all the boxes were ticked whilst at the same time encouraging and prodding the learners and the steering committee's representatives along an emergent journey.

Operationalising the Design of the Leading Talent Program/s.

This section focuses on the operational aspects involved in the design and implementation of the two LTP programs.

The Leading Talent Approach

Line managers were selected by invitation from the CEO to attend the LTP, which comprised four modules, supported by individual coaching and Action research project work spanning 12 months. There was an original intention to run ten programs yet only two programs eventually ran.

The LTP was expected to map to the Lominger competencies chosen globally by the organization. It also had to be measurable via the Gallup Q^{12} survey. To meet these requirements the proposed approach would combine Action Research with Blended Learning.[19] I suggested that an AR based learning program could build a community of senior managers who could help learn together to resolve their own real workplace issues. Unlike traditional executive learning programs which focus on individuals, this approach would encourage managers to work cooperatively, blending theory and practice, enabling more effective decision making in their own functional teams. Issues associated with assisting the client to understand and accept such an AR process are explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Interestingly, whilst there were many discussions within Feedsmoore about the Lominger competencies and the Gallup Q^{12} process, there was no coherent process showing how they actually linked to each other. The concept of a cereal box came to me as a way to visually represent how these aspects of the program would be linked to the AR structure and process along with other requirements. Unveiling the image (Figure 4.2) of the cereal box provided an ah-hah moment for all, as evidenced by the ongoing discussions through the workshops. This was a company that used a lot

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[19] Blended Learning - Includes a combination of learning methods. The LTP case combined lectures from experts, facilitation, team-based approaches, self-paced learning and individual and team research using on-line databases.

of packaging to contain the value inside boxes. The box signified the importance of acknowledging what is on the box before getting to access what is in the box. The Cereal Box as shown in Figure 4.2 became a powerful visual metaphor for the LTP, effectively conveying inputs, process, outputs and outcomes linked to the LTP.   A larger diagram is located in Appendix B 4.1 foldout.
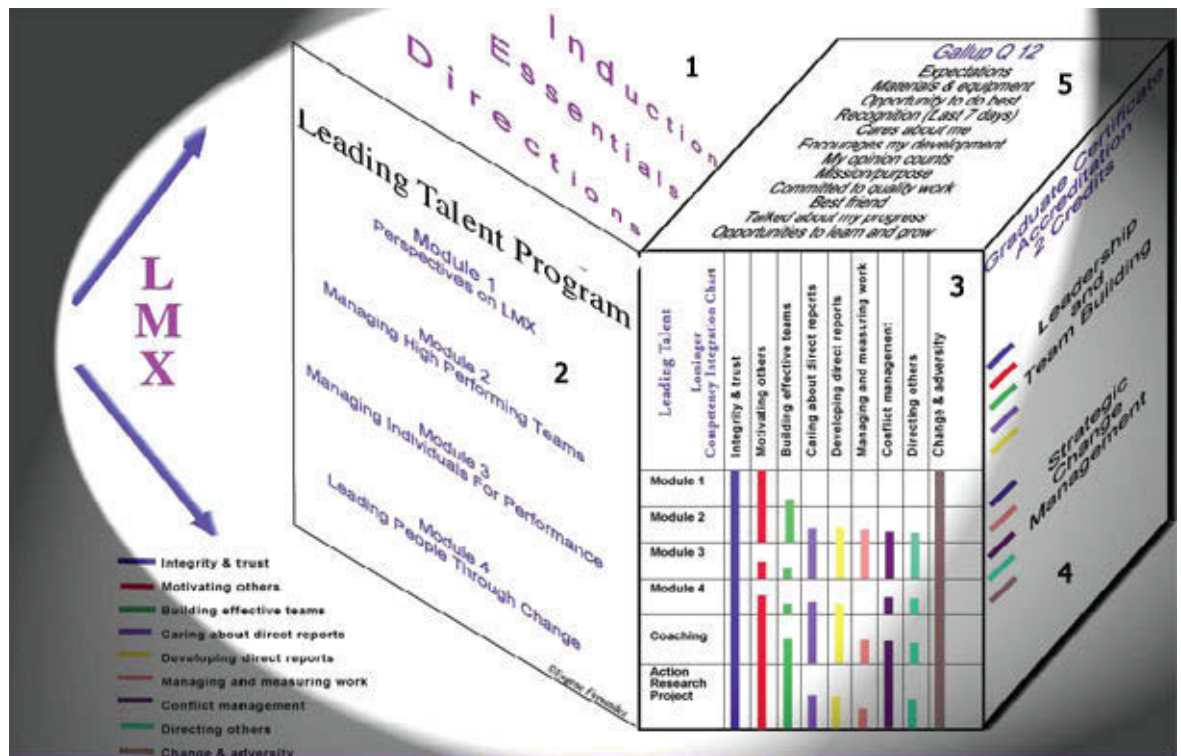
Figure 4.2 The Cereal Box - Key Links to the LTP

In this next section I use the management acronym IPOO (input, process, output and outcome), an operational framework by Brown, in (Neely & Mills 2000), to describe the structure of the program. The numbers 1 to 5 are located in the diagram.

Inputs

1. Refers to the mandated entry-level programs that participants needed to have completed prior to participating in the LTP. This included a

comprehensive Induction program and two Management Development programs.

2. The four modules of the LTP program:

- perspectives on Line Management Excellence
- managing High Performing Teams
- managing Individuals For Performance
- leading People Through Change.

We added a fifth module on Innovation for Program 2 and Coaching Sessions and the Action Research Project.

Process

3. The interrelationships between the modules, coaching the AR Project, AR Set, AR set advisor and the Lominger competencies, and the things said and not said, acted on and not acted. (More on this in Chapter 5)

Outputs

3. The eight Lominger competencies plus Change and Adversity, which were included to factor in the whole learning journey. (See more detail in the next figure)

4. Two credits towards the Graduate Certificate in Leadership

Leadership and Team Building

Strategic Change Management

Outcomes

5. The end result for the organization was measured by the Gallup Q^{12} questions

- expectations
- materials & equipment
- opportunity to do my best
- recognition (last 7 days)
- cares about me
- encourages my development
- my opinion counts
- mission/Purpose

- committed to quality work
- best friend
- talked about my progress
- opportunities to learn and grow.

Leading Talent Lominger Competency Integration Chart	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Coaching	Action Research Projects
Integrity & trust	██					
Motivating others	████████████████		██████		████████████████	
Building effective teams	████	██████	████		████████████████	
Caring about direct reports		██	██	██	██████	
Developing direct reports		██	████		████	
Managing and measuring work		██	██		██	██
Conflict management		██	████		████	████
Directing others		██	██	██	██	
Change & adversity	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●

Figure 4.3 Lominger Competency Integration Chart

Figure 4.3 illustrates point 3 within Figure 4.2 The Cereal Box. Each Lominger competency has a different colour code. The colour represents the competencies to be covered within the modules, the coaching sessions and the action research project. Full lines indicate that the competency was to be covered fully within the module or coaching. The colour also displayed a visual ratio of the amount of that competency covered. Change and adversity were additional competencies added that were not part of Lominger's competency code (hence the dotted red line). It was recommended by me and agreed to by the steering committee, as it underpinned the whole process. This is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Rollout of Leading Talent Program

The inaugural leading talent program commenced in August 2005. The 22 participants in the program were the most senior group of managers who reported directly to the senior executive team, the General Managers of each of the businesses or otherwise titled Vice Presidents Globally.

The intent was that in 2006 an additional four groups each of between 22 – 25 participants would commence, with a further four groups to commence in 2007. Depending on the number of line managers who completed either program 1 or 2, further groups would have commenced the program in 2008, making ten programs in all.

It was anticipated that at the end of this process, approximately 250 senior staff would have completed the program and taken up the accreditation option of two subjects built into the program and linked to a Graduate Certificate in Organisational Leadership from AABS. The LTP program was badged internally by the Feedsmoore Corporate University, which opened up the possibility that the organisation could consider using the LTP in other regions.

The proposed ten programs signified a large and continuing revenue stream for the business school. However, the pace of change and restructure were already making this unmanageable for the client, given the time each program was going to take (nine to twelve months each) and the pressure the managers were already under within the business. Along with the Business Development Executive, I spent a great deal of time working out a project plan, which included detailed Gantt charting of the ten programs. This exercise highlighted that the clients, expectations were unrealistic given the amount of time that needed to be devoted to the program, and the tumultuous organisational change the managers were going through.

I was conscious of this and worried about expectations being built within the business school about the potential revenue. The client's (HR and L and D) expectations were also unrealistic, failing to factor in the impact of the numbers on the business. I had an inkling based on work I had done for previous clients, that the

GMs would in due course seriously weigh the potential impact this was going to have on the business and that this may be detrimental to the program.

In Chapter 1, I referred to McClelland's (1990) work about how the leaders' drive to achieve at all costs can be detrimental to the organisation, its people and the individual's own health. (Virtanen & Heikkila 2012) in their research link long hours at work to coronary heart diseases, and time has proved that this was occurring. Ironically I was part of the overworked brigade, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Given the nature of the issues above, the complexity of the program, and the inherent resistance that I knew was likely to happen a few months down the track, I opened up conversations with the steering committee about the nature of AR programs, as I knew it. The client over a few months began to see the first program as a pilot and recognized the benefit of learning from it as we went along.

Program Benefits and Objectives

I include the Benefits and Objectives here, because this is part of the narrative and normative experience of agreeing the contract terms and outcomes of the intervention. This accommodates frame 1 and frame 2 thinking which was/is important to allay fears and build comfort for the client. Also, frame 4 needs to be accommodative of frames 1 and 2 for it to be really integrative. The objectives are also represented in outcome terms.

The following Key benefits were developed in conjunction with the steering committee and then endorsed by the executive.

- the Development of Leaders/Managers whose improved skills will make a significant impact on the people management capabilities of Feedsmoore.
- change in behaviour impacting positively on Gallup Q[12] results.
- lominger competencies will be actionable and applied.
- high–performing teams and improved intra team relationships.

- implementation of strategies to build and sustain a high performance culture.
- individual development and growth achieved through working on key business issues.
- continuing the transfer of learning from previous training completed.

An unstated aim and benefit (verbal agreement between the CEO, O. D. Manager and myself) was influencing the executive (the people to whom the participants reported) to role model desired behaviours. The General Managers were to receive informal coaching and support as Sponsors and Mentors. This guidance was to be provided by me – we did not use the word, coaching, as discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Learning objectives were designed by me and approved by the steering committee. They are listed under three headings in Table 4.1.

Learning Objectives

Organisation Wide	AR Project Specific	Individual and Role Specific
Improved understanding of what it is to be an excellent line manager	Defined, selected and committed to an action project	Improved their communication and emotional intelligence skills with a view to application
Understood the wisdom of great managers	Actively engaged in the action project & extracted learning	Demonstrated a greater understanding of self, and impact on their role
Understood how to integrate the learning within the program	Communicated learning to other 'learning sets'	Identified their impact on people and their team
A greater understanding of their team role & other roles within teams	Understood how to integrate the learning within the program	Identified and worked on improving a personal development area for coaching
A greater understanding of managing and measuring work	Presented the action project	Demonstrated their application of communication and emotional intelligence skills within their team/s
Developed strategies to build a high performance		Demonstrated application of change management principles

culture		
Built a learning community		Demonstrated application of improving motivation and trust within their team/s
Demonstrated application of the 8 Lominger Competencies		Planned for implementation of learning within their functional team
Understood the need to continue their learning past program conclusion		Increased understanding of how to build an effective team. Demonstrated strategies on building their team
		Developed and demonstrated strategies to better care for their direct reports
		Developed strategies to coach, counsel and discipline associates within their team/s

Table 4.1 Learning objectives for LTP

Structure of LTP

I sought to represent the program in a number of different ways to ensure that its features and structure were widely understood. Fig 4.4 Structure of LTP outlines the three components of the program: Learning modules; Action research projects and individual coaching.

Figure 4.4 Structure of LTP

Figure 4.4 outlines the four modules supported by coaching and linked to the Action Research projects. Participants focused on change and learning associated with the journey of the self, i.e.: their evolving discovery about their strengths; change and learning implemented within their functional teams; change and learning associated with the action research team and finally; the change that was impacting on the organisation as a direct consequence of the program.

Figure 4.5 was part of the PowerPoint presentation for module 1. It expands on the themes and key points to be covered in each of the modules.

The Leading Talent Process

Module 1 – 3 Days

Perspectives on Line Manager Excellence

- What is Line Manager Excellence
- The Leading Talent Framework
- Lominger &Gallup Q12
- Improved Self Awareness
- Relational Skills (EQ, communication, motivation and trust)
- Coaching (Directing others)
- Action Research Project work

3 – 4 Months

Module 2 – 2 Days

Managing High Performance Teams

- Transfer of learning from action research project teams
- Preferred roles within teams
- How to build and maintain high performance teams
- Relational Skills (caring about direct reports)
- Coaching (Building effective teams)
- Action Research Projects

3 – 4 Months

Module 3 – 2 Days

Managing Individuals for High Performance

- Transfer of learning from action research project teams
- Performance management tools
- Building a high performance culture
- Leading teams through performance management
- Coaching (Confronting direct reports)
- Action Research Projects

3 – 4 Months

Module 4 – 2 Days

Leading People through Change

- Transfer of learning from action research project teams
- Frameworks for leading through change
- Current issues at MFANZ and solutions
- Change and culture
- Coaching (Motivating others & Developing direct reports)
- Action Research Projects
- Project presentations
- Close and celebration

- 1-on-1 coaching for each participant
- A facilitated meeting of each action research project group
- Project sponsor meetings for each project group

- 1-on-1 coaching for each participant
- A facilitated meeting of each action research project group
- Project sponsor meetings for each project group

- 1-on-1 coaching for each participant
- A facilitated meeting of each action research project group
- Project sponsor meetings for each project group

Figure 4.5 The Leading Talent Process

The Residential Modules

Participants in LTP 1 completed four residential modules (nine days in all) during a 13 month   period. LTP 2 involved five modules over 16 months. The residential modules drew upon and leveraged leadership content which participants had completed previously in other courses, as well as the frameworks discussed above. The modules utilized the L =P+Q/R equation as a process described in Chapter 2. Content experts provided the P, with time then spent on Q, which included each AR set [20] challenging and supporting the others' work to date. This met a lot of resistance and there was a push to utilize more of this time to provide more programmed knowledge. Discussed further in Chapter 5.

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[20] AR set – Term used to identify the AR project team and the members that belong to it. The AR set is explained in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

The People Involved

The Leading Talent Program intentionally created various multileveled/layered connections with many opportunities for networking and support. Each of these elements plays a critical part in helping to achieve the final outcome. The following list in Table 4.2 outlines the various committees and teams that I, as Program Director Leadership (PDL), was involved with.

1. Program Director Leadership and Business Development Executive – Sydney Team	As the Program Director Leadership (PDL) I was involved in educating the Business Development Executive (BDE) for about six months prior to the Feedsmoore contract on AR. This person then worked with me for the duration of most of program one. The BDE was also part of the steering committee (2) and participated in this committee for most of program one. The BDEs changed over time.
2. Program Director Leadership and Steering Committee	The Steering Committee - Originally had three staff members from Feedsmoore; these individuals changed over time. I was the one constant from the Business school.
3. Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore Human Resources	Worked closely with the HR team.
4. Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore Chief Executive Officer and General Managers	I represented the business school during discussions with the CEO and General Managers of Feedsmoore, enrolling their support and participation in the program. The CEO became the overall sponsor for the program and the General Managers took on the roles of Mentors and Sponsors for the Action Research projects.

5. Program Director Leadership and Cohorts	Another hat I wore to ensure learning was maximized.
6. Program Director Leadership and Action Research Teams	My role as an Action Research Set Advisor.
7. Program Director Leadership and Presenters	Content Experts - Global experts in their field who presented the sessions. This included: a world renowned Olympic Coach who was also a sociologist who focused on team and group work, and two Gold medal Olympic athletes who focused on motivation, peak performance and goal setting. Program Directors with various specialisations including: Futures Thinking, Marketing, Leadership Change Management, Innovation and Psychotherapy.
8. Program Director Leadership and direct General Manager EEBS	Liased with General Managers within EEBS.
9. Program Director Leadership and Coaching Director EEBS	Worked together with the Director of Coaching in selecting and managing the coaches relative to the LTP.
10. Program Director Leadership and Coaches	Along with the Director of Coaching, I oversaw the coaches in the LTP. Coaches with Business and Psychology/ Sociology based qualifications were selected with the participant in mind. They had three sessions with each of the participants and one with the line manager.
11. Program Director Leadership and EEBS Academic Faculty	I was involved in a number of meetings with members of the faculty, including the acting Dean, negotiating an agreement to grant Academic

	credits for the LTP.
12. Program Director Leadership and Business Development Executive – Academic Credits	Worked along with the BDE in securing academic credits for the program and managing AABS requirements.
13. Program Director Leadership and EEBS Library	Worked closely with librarian to provide relevant research support to the AR teams.
14. Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore consultant /s	Liased with consultants who were contracted to Feedsmoore.
15. Line (Functional) Managers	The participant and coach had a pre and post program discussion with the line manager.

Table 4.2 Committee and team involvement

The Action Research Projects

Program 1 had 4 project teams (or Action Research Teams) and program 2 had 3 project teams, each tasked with defining, analysing and delivering a business project. Each Action Research Team (ART) had a sponsor/mentor from the Senior Management Team. Each of the ARTs was to meet between the residential modules for half a day, with me as the set advisor (role explored in Chapter 5 and 6). Each of the ARTs also chose to meet either at this time or on another occasion with their sponsor/mentor.

A great deal of time was spent prior to the first program thinking through the right mix for each ART. There was much debate on the pros and cons of having teams that were regionally based as opposed to spread across the business, but ultimately the overarching benefit of the synergy to be gained by cross fertilization of the four business units won the day. As a consequence of this, each ART had many team members spread along Australia's east coast and New Zealand. This brought with it

many logistical and coordination issues for the ART meetings, including creating added pressure on my discretionary time as a Set advisor.

The Action Research Sets worked at progressing their projects over the course of the program. Their discoveries along the way and their learnings were shared and updated with the larger program group at each module. The projects were presented at the final module to an audience, comprised of the executive, the project sponsors and the larger leading talent group. The final presentation and report provide a documented and narrated history of the project outcomes, the team learning and the individual learning of the participant.

Along with the methodology and design, the program drew on various bodies of work from a range of fields. Each project team also had access to the extensive Business School Library and on many occasions the helpful library staff offered their personal assistance. This was based on the rapport that I had developed with them. This level of support was reduced for program 2 as the business school was looking at efficiencies, (or that was the term used) resulting ultimately in the closure of the library. This made it harder to encourage managers to see the benefits of research, including helping them to work with data collection, analysis report writing and journaling.

Selection of Action Research Projects

More than three months were spent with the steering committee discussing the nature of AR projects. Much of this time was spent allaying the L&D & HR representatives, fear about getting the projects right and of fronting the executive, an example of the polishing the presentation meme I spoke about earlier.

To achieve the behavioural change desired by Feedsmoore, a pre requisite of 15% of each participant's time at work was agreed to by senior management to the program and the completion of the team based workplace project. This did not work in practice and many had to use their discretionary time due to workload. This was a contentious issue which some used as an excuse not to participate on occasions.

Others felt that it was a requirement to work for the organisation and was fair trade for the substantial remuneration they received. As such, the identification of appropriate projects for the Leading Talent was seen as being crucial to the success of the project in also delivering measurable business outcomes to Feedsmoore. The outcomes of this are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

It was stressed that the team–based workplace projects are the vehicle by which real behavioral change will be achieved through the program. By identifying Feedsmoore's real business issues and bringing together cross–functional groups to work through those issues, the projects would achieve a range of learning and organisational objectives, including to:

- promote improved communication between management layers and functional units
- drive a shift towards a culture of accountability
- provide a reason for individuals within Feedsmoore to re-engage with one another and with the organisation, after a period of uncertainty
- allow individuals from a cross section of the organisation to unify and move forward together from the restructure
- give participants a relevant business context which they can use to implement their behavioural change back to Feedsmoore
- supply the opportunity for participants to achieve their Key Result Areas and other performance targets while achieving learning goals
- ensure that the projects are supported by the necessary stakeholders and focus and deal with real business drivers
- create an opportunity for the executive, in their role as sponsors, to interact with senior managers from across the organisation
- encourage the senior managers within the ART to utilize the project as a means to build relationships with the executive and to showcase their strengths

- meet an unstated objective of influencing the executive to role model desired behaviours and receive informal coaching to support their role as Sponsors and Mentors.

The Action Research Project Topics

The Action Research projects, along with the sponsors are listed below:

LTP 1	
Embedding of Metrics and Measures-The cascading of Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures (OGSM)?	Sponsor – UH (Only Initials provided)
What is Feedsmoore's associate value proposition for the future and what if anything changes by segment?	Sponsor - CJ
How does Feedsmoore build a culture of effective follow through and commitment?	Sponsor - DA
What needs to be institutionalised to ensure world class follow through on Gallup Q^{12}?	Sponsor - MH
LTP 2 Under the overarching theme of innovation - Three projects were selected	
Culture and Organisation Capability	Sponsor -PW
External Collaboration	Sponsor - MH
Consumer	Sponsor – DA

Table 4.3 Action Research project topics and sponsors

LTP Program 1 and 2 Timeline

See Appendix B 4.2 a larger foldout image located at the back**.** LTP 1 preparations began in February 2005. Participants were nominated and selected by the CEO

between June and July and Project selections occurred in July. The program commenced in August 2005 and concluded in September 2006.
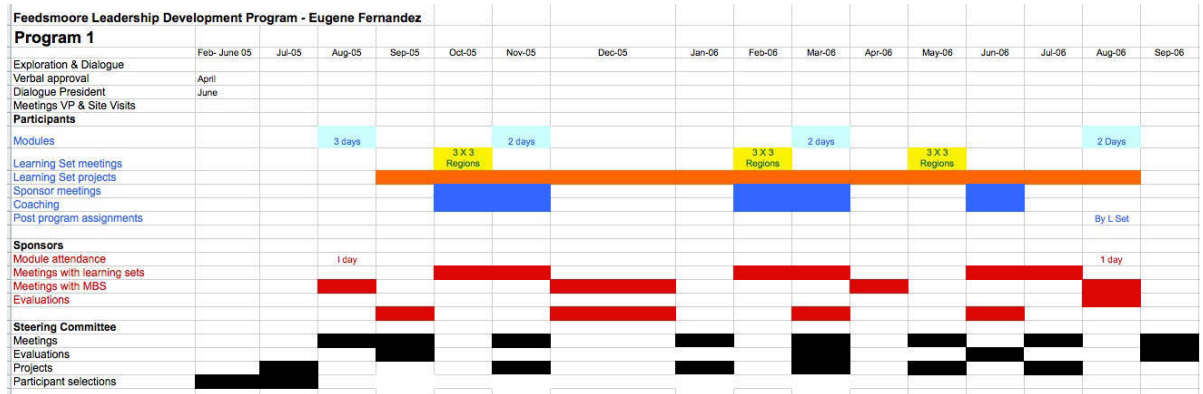
Figure 4 6 LTP 1 Timeline

See Appendix B 4.2 for a larger image of the timeline. LTP 2 participants were selected in March/April 2006. Project selections occurred rather late in May, days before program commencement. The program commenced in May 2006 and concluded in September 2007.
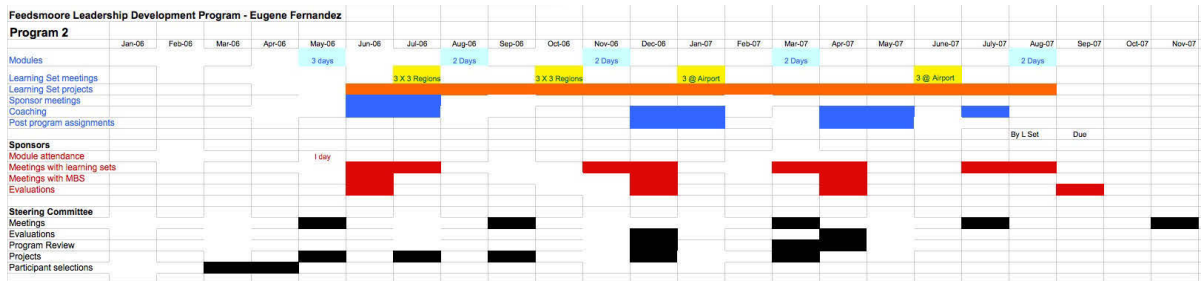
Figure 4.7 LTP 2 Timeline

The timeline of the two leading talent programs could not document the real investment of time and energy it took to implement the two LTP programs. Figure 4.8 highlights the discretionary time involved to support the LTP program. These proportions are based on my diary, journal and other data based on the best that I can understand.
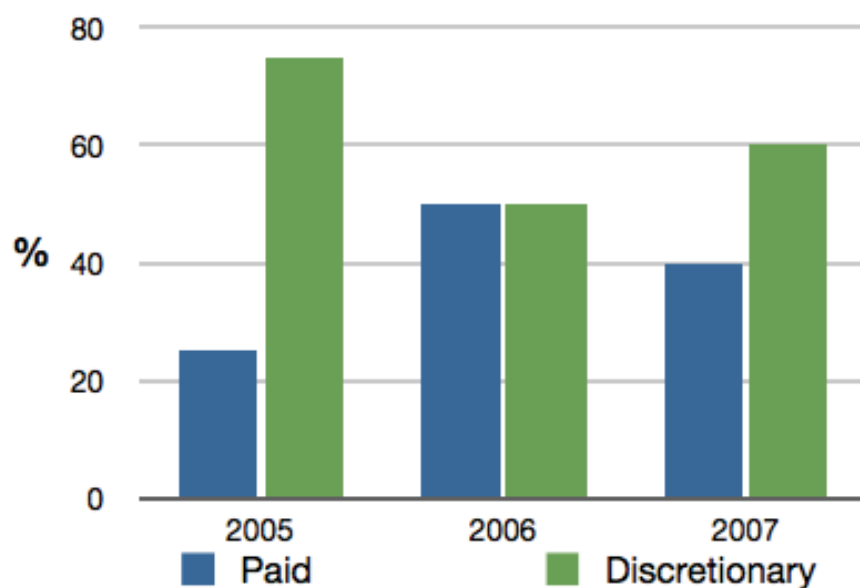
Figure 4 7 Relationship of Paid to Discretionary Time for LTP 1 and 2

Paid	Combined Paid/Discretionary	Discretionary
Design - 2004	Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore Human Resources	6 months-precontract Discussions/Strategy
Facilitating Modules	Program Director Leadership and Steering Committee	Business Development Executive Training in Action Research/Action Learning
Program Director Leadership and Action Research Sets X 7	Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore Chief Executive Officer and General Managers	Predesign Thinking
	Program Director Leadership and Action Research Teams	Program Director Leadership and Business Development Executive – Sydney Team
	Program Director Leadership and General Manager EEBS	Program Director Leadership and EEBS Library

		Program Director Leadership and Business Development Executive – Academic Credits/Faculty
		Program Director Leadership and Leading Talent Program Extra/s
		Program Director Leadership and Academic Faculty
		Program Director Leadership and Counselling
		Program Director Leadership and Feedsmoore consultant /s
		Program Director Leadership and Program Review

Table 4.4 Activities and Committees Involved

Table 4.2 highlights the paid and discretionary time involved with the LTP program. Both Figure 4.8 and Table 4.2 highlight what it takes to ensure the success of a Frame 4 program such as the LTP. Both EEBS and Feedsmoore remained unaware of the true cost involved in running the LTP. Chapters 5 and 6 provide a personal account, highlighting strategies and tactics adopted and the learning and insights gained from the LTP.

Observations and Reflections

Reviewing the huge volume of information recorded and prising apart the material, layered and deepened my understanding of the Feedsmoore intervention. I learnt that what we construe as facts is once again imbued with subjective interpretation. (Denzin 2006).

Chapter 4 in particular was an attempt to focus on a factual account of the action. Information was extracted from my reports, presentations and my personal

journals. However, subjectivity is inherent in emic reporting because it relies on the recollection of past events, filtered and influenced by one's present state. I was reviewing my writing or notes for the purpose of writing the thesis many years later.

I could not help but review these original notes from a much broader landscape, having long lived past their original utterances. Chapters 5 and 6 analyse these narratives 'etically' allowing me to form generalizations and to investigate some of the underlying principles informing my actions. Understanding that facts come bundled with subjective interpretation and reinterpretation directly impacts on my role as a leader and reflective practitioner, making it all the more important to enquire and triangulate our assumptions with others.

The Doctoral journey and the process of reflecting on my role and practice offered insights on the nature of business schools, encouraging me to observe with conscious intention all that was going on around me. Without this intent I would have been far more unconscious of the deeper frames and needs that were driving the behaviour of people, including my own.

Reflecting on my practice helped at a more pragmatic and technical level. I was able to create connections between frameworks and processes such as conceptualizing the Cereal Box as a means to link Gallup, Lominger, the LDP modules and accreditation pathways within a highly visual model.

Quantifying the discretionary time spent allowed me to reflect on the investment that was required to design and implement a complex program like the LTP. My personal commitment towards enabling the LTP came at great cost in time, energy and great sacrifice to my personal relationships. The analysis and writing of the Doctorate adds to this investment. The chapters that follow gradually elaborate on my insights about the value of reflection to my leadership practice.

Chapter 5

DOOR To Work–The Feedsmoore Case

(Internal of External)

Chapter 4 provided a factual report of events involved in designing and operating the Leading Talent Programs (LTPs).

Design of Chapter 5

This chapter presents my reflections, interpretations and generalisations emerging from events associated with the LTP. It addresses the crux of the research question about learning that occurs when - as a leader - I shift my focus from Action to Observation and Reflection. I am now able to tell my story of these events in a way that resolves issues, which for a long time had been unresolved in my mind and introduces a learning landscape for others who wish to understand how intensive activity, during a leadership change program, has an impact on everyone and most especially the facilitator.

Based on their impact and relevance to my enquiry, I have selected issues and events from a bank of data spanning several years. These were huge issues consuming my life. The tensions that drove the work at Feedsmoore together with the process and tensions at the Executive Education Business School (EEBS) created an enormous learning opportunity for me, which I can now distill in ways that I could not have conceived of prior to commencing this journey. Their consequences continue to impact my life, and I now layer the learning (Doing and Or else thinking) to everything I do as a leader and facilitator of Leadership programs. I am reminded of Mezirow's theory of adult learning in which the learner as subject, gives shape to

frames of reference as part of habit and points of view (Sherlock & Nathan 2004). Part of my habit is to now observe and reflect more frequently on what I do both in the middle of action and as a follow up to action.

This habit is similar to a natural intertwining of what Checkland & Scholes (1990) call Mode 2 Soft System Methodology (SSM), which Flood (2001) posits is a way of thinking day to day, of the roles, norms, values, political systems, power structures, and coalitions within the intervention.

Building on Flood's view, Fletcher et al. (2010) call this process 'Meta-action research', a term originally coined by Zuber- Skerritt (1992), to describe a process of reflecting and theorizing on the processes and activities of the Action Research (AR) program to arrive at new conceptualizations or models of action research, in short it is, action research on action research.

There was so much rich data and experience that much of it will remain unsaid, as elsewhere in life where there are more lived experiences than time to reflect on and process them. As David Snowden in Pollard (2006) states:

> *"We know more than we cay say. And we can say, more than we can write."*

Reflecting T S Eliot's observation that:

> *"We had the experience but missed the meaning". (Eliot 1941).*

Observing and reflecting on action encourages a process of making meaning out of those actions and experiences (Dewey 1916/1944; Rodgers 2002). The very act of reviewing and writing brings those experiences to life; meaning is now layered, textured and recontextualised within a more expansive or deeper frame. I am looking back knowing more and having lived more. The implications directly impact on my current practice, I am more aware of the frames that underpin and inform my views of the world, and consequently I am more openly receptive and

accommodative of other views, including those that are diametrically opposed to mine.

Chapter 5 therefore limits my observations and reflections to the key areas of:

- Business schools and executive education – as typified by EEBS
- My role as a Program Director as defined by my employer EEBS
- Program Directing the 2 LTPs.

Two cycles of learning, linked to the two LTPs are reported. Observations and Reflections (OR) during Program 1 enabled learning and insights to be developed and applied to Program 2. Observation and Reflection from Program 2 and the overall intervention provided multiple learning/s that continue to impact my practice.

As noted elsewhere my application of 'OR' associated with the LTP and the writing of this dissertation resulted in the emergence and application of the DOOR framework and the Four Frames of learning. Both of these enabled continuing development of my work and in particular helped to refine my skill and predisposition for developing models and frameworks.

My experiences as a staff member in a 21st century university-based business school informs the initial reflections on management education as provided in academic settings. The following section on the nature of business schools provides the broader context within which I was employed and foreshadows the tensions created by the design and implementation of a Leadership Development Program, which did not fit within conventional offerings.

The Nature of Business Schools and Executive Education

This section sets the context of the field of action in which I was engaged. It provides an overview of the political landscape in regard to Checkland's Mode 2 SSM.   It also outlines why I took up employment as a program director and how and why Feedsmoore became a client. I discuss why Frame 4 was apparently inaccessible to staff of the business school.

Causal Layered Analysis

One of the models used on the LTP is called Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), which affords me the opportunity to reveal the layers of my experience. Developed by (Inayatullah 2007, 2008) CLA provides a post structural lens that takes us beyond mere reporting of surface level events to an exploration of deeper systemic and psycho-social root causes of behaviours in organisations. CLA proposes four levels for analysis of these root causes:

> Level 1 is 'the Litany' to reference the unquestioned 'taken for granted' views of reality
>
> Level   2 is 'the Systemic' Perspective focusing on social, economic and political causes
>
> Level 3 is 'the Worldview' or 'Discourse', referencing paradigms and lens people use to make sense of the world
>
> Level 4 is 'Metaphor and Myths' and addresses the unconscious story buried deep within organisations such as archetypes. These myths and metaphors drive the other levels.
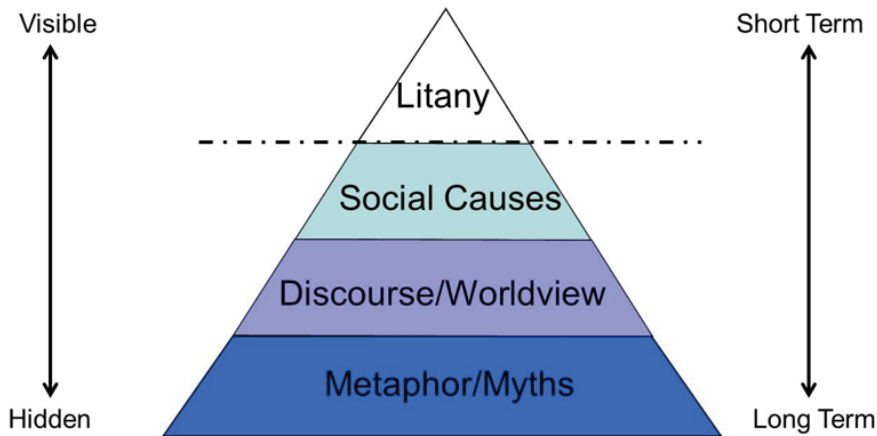
Figure 5.1 Causal Layered Analysis

(Figure 5.1 illustrates the 4 levels) – If one views Figure 5.1 as an iceberg, the litany at Level 1 is visible above the water line and indicates a focus on the short term. Levels 2 and 3 become increasingly less visible. Level 4, is usually deeply buried, mostly forgotten and almost totally hidden from sight.

Before describing Executive Education, I review the primary methodology employed by business schools. I do this because I have now realized that my innovative efforts were inevitably going to be seen as well outside the norm for business schools during the period of my employment and participation.

Frame 1 Learning - the 'Gatekeepers' - accepts unquestioningly, the business schools Litany (Level 1). This expert driven 'we know best' model considers learners as 'Tabula rasa' or blank slates on which experts can 'write or imprint' their knowledge. By the time my dissertation is submitted, business schools will be reconsidering their discourse about paradigms (Level 3) as well as the deep metaphors held within business schools (Level 4), which have previously sustained conventional ways of operating. At present, there appears to be more interest in challenging the Level 1 and 2 Frames, and while I am no longer working there my efforts were, in effect leading the way towards deeper and more integrated

leadership programs, although none of us could have really comprehended this at the time.

Feedsmoore is representative of this challenge. Their regular Frame 1 and 2 oriented programs were not achieving the change in behaviour that they were seeking. My offer to assist them to achieve real change by employing Frame 4 was in hindsight far more challenging to my Colleagues at EEBS and to the academic staff at AABS than I had originally thought.

Feedsmoore wanted a program that changed behavior, and was also validated and branded by a pedigreed business school. Conversely the business school wanted the business connection and the related income. Frame 4 was out of phase with the conventional offerings or methodological frames of the university and even challenged the existing paradigms (Level 3) and the deeper metaphors and ways of being that were normalized as professional practice (Level 4).

The end result of many at EEBS and AABS was that all kinds of conscious and unconscious barriers/obstacles were eventually thrown up to divert attention away from the real nature of the challenge being faced. What follows is a brief introduction to the forces that were most likely influencing the placement of these barriers. Of course, this is my own reflection and analysis of events, and other participants in these events may have a very different perspective on what was happening. My goal here is to report and reflect on how I see things, and explore the impact of how the effort to do so led to original thinking and created models and frames of reference, which will be of benefit to anyone wishing to connect their own principles to their practices.

As a consequence of reflecting on the differences I encountered between the LTP and the MBA qualification, the mainstay of Business schools and AABS. I began to research the differences drawing on the CLA.

The MBA is a North American artifact that is now a standard within business schools globally, including Australia. As stated in Chapter 4, business schools are increasingly being challenged about their purpose and the values they perpetuate in business (Bennis & O'Toole 2005; Friga, Bettis & Sullivan 2003; Gioia 2002; Mintzberg 2004; Petriglieri & Petriglieri 2010; Starkey & Tempest 2005). Use of the CLA litany surrounding the MBA is being challenged. Conversely the MBA is also being challenged by practitioner driven and market centered training programs and degrees, such as those offered by EEBS.

A comprehensive study of American business schools by Khurana (2007) found that the MBA has focused on short-term economic success for its students at the cost of more fundamental moral and leadership training. Pfeffer & Fong (2002) argue that the MBA does not yield the results advertised and has limited application as a development program. Using the CLA, this provides a Level 2 systemic perspective as well as introducing a basis for a Level 4 challenge at the myth level regarding the MBA.

Lorange (2008), president of Institute of Management Development (IMD) business school in Lausanne, Switzerland provides a comprehensive analysis on the current limitations of business schools and offers key strategies to make them more relevant. This theme is continued by Muff (2012), also from IMD, who challenges whether business schools are doing their job and cites research questioning the relevance of the methodology of teaching, and what and who does the teaching. Moldoveanu & Martin (2008) provide a critical analysis of the current issues and proposes that managers need to develop qualitative and tacit skills drawn from more integrative curricula from different disciplines such as philosophy and other social sciences. Ultimately, Mintzberg's (2011) critique that MBAs' do not make managers, strikes at the fundamental core and intent of business schools.

He claims that:

> *'Conventional MBA programs train the wrong people in the wrong ways with the wrong consequences" producing functional specialists as opposed to managers (in Muff 2012, p. 649).*

Mintzberg (2011) commented on these limitations and provided a unique perspective whereby he claims that there was little sense in trying to create leaders in classrooms, it made far more sense to get them to learn from and reflect upon their own experience and the experiences of those around them. These perspectives and principles are infused in Mintzberg's Masters Program in Practical Management at McGill University. Guttenplan (2012) called this approach the 'Anti MBA' commenting, that the hallowed Harvard case study method adopted by most MBA schools as their primary instructional methodology, was demeaning, as contrasted by Mintzberg's approach with a focus drawn from real life experiences and examples. All this is elegantly summarized in Mintzberg's quote, where he comments that:

> *'Management is a practice, rooted in experience, not a science rooted in analysis or a Profession rooted in training' (Mintzberg 2011, p.3).*

Australian industry leaders have voiced their concerns about the limited ability of business schools to produce graduates with the necessary skills for business, citing leadership, teamwork and communication as essential attributes. They comment that 'suede patch tenured academics' are mostly interested in preserving the status quo and their jobs. By 2013, MBA enrolments fell by a third. Hare (2013) states that this could be an indicator that potential students and organizations are acknowledging the gap.

Using the CLA, these writers are issuing a challenge at Levels 3 and 4. Mintzberg's McGill program shifts from a Frame 1 focus on case study to a Frame 3 process of experiential learning and a Frame 4 which enables more systemic, holistic, context

relevant learning bundled within a cocreative journey. The above paragraphs suffice to give the reader a good overview of the issues associated with business schools.

My role within EEBS is subsumed within this context. The recent merger between the EEBS and AABS accentuated the divide between a Frame 1 (expert/didactic) and a Frame 3 (developmentally focused) approach. This was occurring within a larger frame where traditionalists at business schools defended scholarship in management as a basis for 'evidence based teaching' and saw their success as based on moving away from the relevant but nonacademic trade schools of the 1950s.

Business Schools are concerned about being viewed as glorified trade schools (DeAngelo, DeAngelo & Zimmermann 2005). Referring to our discussion on Frames of learning in Chapter 3, this locates AABS within Frame 1, occupying the privileged and hallowed ground as gatekeepers of knowledge, (Scott et al. 2004) title this 'Disciplinary knowledge'. Lorange (2008) calls this 'Propositional knowledge' a conceptually driven frame, focused on the 'what' as opposed to prescriptive knowledge which focuses on the 'how'. While EEBS was educating senior executives who were interested in pragmatically driven executive education programs that spoke to their reality, EEBS was viewed as functioning within the lens of this dated trade school paradigm.

Unfortunately the program directors were swayed easily by what was popular and even questionable research; they had seen no need to develop the relevant intellectual property that underpinned the EEBS's programs. Most of the PDs were interested in Lorange's Prescriptive knowledge, focusing on the 'how'. Thus EEBS effectively operated from Frames 2 & 3 but did not extend into Frame 4, although there were opportunities to work in Frame 4.

During my time as a PD, various strategies were applied to build bridges between the institutions. Generally the EEBS PDs extended a hand, which somehow seems to have reinforced the rather elitist image, the AABS academic staff held of themselves.

In hindsight, it appears to me that they perceived the PDs as serfs clamoring for their recognition and patronage.

This contributed to the tensions between research-oriented academic staff, with an expert driven individualistic framework, and the populist/practitioner-focus of EBB's program directors.

At first I found that I was taking an oppositional stance like many other PDs but I saw strengths on each side and the benefits that could be reaped by collaboration. Most of the fundamental differences between the schools were never explored and there continued to be an uneasy truce. I was in an interesting place from which to observe the nature of the different groups. While I was firmly in the executive education camp, I gradually built alliances across the two groups. I could do this because it was left to individuals to build bridges as best they could and I experienced no leadership from either side.

I have spent much of my life working at building bridges amongst different cultures, both overseas and in Australia. I am the result of a creolized mestiso hybrid[21]and have honed my skills at living in-between and creating my own blend. From my perspective, the two institutions each had unique strengths and attempting to force them together would fragment one or both.

I also realised that each group held different maps in their head that neither was better than the other and each served a purpose that added value to the offerings in the marketplace. Later as I read more relevant research, different frames of learning and working were revealed. To try and encourage a broader perspective amongst my peers, I taught a number of sessions outlining my evolving thoughts for other program directors. I presented the Learning frames as detailed in Chapter 3 at the Australian Human Resource Institute National Convention (Fernandez 2008d), and was featured in a Boss article that described the frames (Fernandez 2008b). Given

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[21] This is explored further in chapter 7.

the EEBS's predilection for a focus on how, my own predilection for theorizing and model building was condoned but never embraced.

In an effort to share my insight into why the whole process was inhibiting the potential for synergy and that both schools had something unique to offer, I offered the following Sufi quote to the Executive Officer who had overall responsibility for this enforced integration.

> *'You can tie two birds together*
>
> *Even though they have four wings*
>
> *They cannot fly' (Rumi 2013).*

By this I meant that both schools had their unique methodologies and perspectives and could be leveraged to maximize the offerings based on these unique strengths. Despite my efforts there was little dialogue about the different frames and approaches to education and development and the end result was deeper distrust and heightened misunderstandings. EEBS at this time was under pressure, as public offerings lost traction and participant numbers dropped. This matched a global trend as clients became cognisant of the limitations of public offerings for changing leadership/management behaviour. Rather than offering a place on the program as a reward and an opportunity to build a useful personal network, organisations were asking questions about the return on investment. Many clients were now seeking custom designed interventions with a focus on specific competencies, capabilities and business issues and drivers (Deiser 2009; Friga, Bettis & Sullivan 2003).

Making this transition was not easy for program directors as the new environment involved dealing with the messy and complex needs of clients rather than supplying a calendar of published courses and waiting for people to enroll. It also required embracing responsiveness, flexibility, and working across a richer and more diverse landscape than that offered in the contrived and contained environs of a public program or a lecture theatre.

A fundamental issue for the PDs was that the work of Argyris was well known, including the differences between single and double loop learning (Argyris 1983; Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith 1985; Argyris & Schon 1978), however this awareness did not translate into any reflexive capacity within the program director group, and its implications were effectively invisible to them; that is they were essentially unaware that their theories in use were not the same as those they espoused (Dick & Dalmau 1990).

The significance to me was that I was frustrated by the narrow didactic approach and was already developing the 4th Frame of learning, and went about actively seeking clients interested in this area of work.

My role as a Program Director

After running my business for over 13 years and doing interesting work in action research and action learning, I needed a new challenge and saw the role of Program Director Leadership in EEBS as ideal.

The Sydney regional office was the only satellite office and I discovered after commencing that (prior to my engagement) the overall strategy had been to focus on containing the exuberance of Sydney office staff. As a result a rift had opened up between the Melbourne and Sydney General Managers and the latter had left the role to become a contractor to the business school. After numerous interviews and presentations, I felt privileged to be appointed to the role of Program Director and only much later did I learn that this process was unusual because the old boys network had by tradition, employed most of my colleagues.

I wanted the role because it seemed to provide an opportunity to use my skills in action learning/action research and to introduce clients to its benefits. I felt that the strong EEBS brand would give customers the confidence to work with action

research. I quickly learnt that 50 years of success had engendered a strong culture with a formulaic and prescriptive approach to designing development programs.

As a Program Director I was the senior member of staff in Sydney, reporting to the General Manager based in Victoria. For most of this time I was also the only Sydney staff member expected to generate billable hours. In what follows I explore some of the tensions, constraints and issues impacting on this role and consider how these created opportunities for reflection and learning both during that time and in the period since.

There was a multiplicity of issues that I had to navigate in fulfilling my role, including:

- Developing and fostering relationships with my peers, the program directors, at Head Office.
- Building bridges with academic staff from AABS whose personal and institutionalised views needed to be overcome to build a working relationship.
- Finding politically neutral ways to work with the Sydney office staff who reported to different General Managers in Head Office.
- Working with Business Development Executives who were driven by the numbers and bottom line, which propelled a narrow formulaic approach and with whose values I fundamentally disagreed.

The PD role was not easy as it was all consuming, and the LTP (when it arrived), though substantial, was only part of what I had to do. When it did arrive, it drained a substantial part of my energy, such that, despite being an income generator for the organisation with potential for expansion and growth, it became almost too heavy. I still had to meet my billable hours by working unrecognized discretionary time to make this work, and learn to hold my own council.

The Doctoral journey has been a useful means of drawing on (Bandler & Grinder 1975, 1981) work on perceptual positioning. It has enabled me to step out of 1st

position and to view the issues from 2nd position or from other multiple viewpoints and to finally take on a 3rd position meta view.[22] (Torbett 2004) labels the positions as persons and sees 1st person as subjective action enquiry, 2nd as intersubjective action enquiry and 3rd as objective action enquiry. He claims that this process of enquiry has only taken shape since the 1990s. This triple positional process was encouraging, and enabled me to be more reflexive and challenged me to think differently.

The following extract is an example of how my own learning has shifted my ability to write about issues and shift positions as my understanding evolved over time. The extract below was written when I was still immersed in 1st person. The account highlights my frustration and anger at having to travel and work harder to attain my billable hours. I can now see that the act of writing was part of the process of healing.

> *The situation was supported by the power elite (oligarchy) in the executive education school, who had invested time and energy in maintaining a system that they helped create and that amply rewarded them. Program directors operated under a framework of billable hours with what appeared to be different criteria and rules based on deals each was able to negotiate. This included salary, billable hours, bonus, profit sharing and access to work.*
>
> *These privileged souls, members of the oligarchy, got their billable hours by attending and running public programs in head office which was located in an old mansion next to the sea. For many this meant a short car ride from home, down tree lined avenues, through an old gated archway, past manicured lawns skirting a private vineyard by a hill overlooking the ocean, a gentle stroll past hedges of sweet smelling lavender and bird song got them to their office in the*

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[22] A mental map is a term used to describe how we each represent or construct our reality. Triple positioning is a framework that can be used to help you step back from your own mental map (self) and to view it from another person's map (other) and from a neutral (observer) position.

mansion. After settling in they ambled on for a tea or perhaps breakfast in the dining room and then a stint to present their well-rehearsed material to an audience now cocooned by the ambience and spell of the mansion.

The game was to get the best from the happy sheets (program evaluations). They knew the game and worked their charges, by entertaining and charming them, challenging them, but not too much. Their modus operandi was part of the tapestry of practice called 'The way'. The end game was the happy sheet; the espoused value was personal growth and change.

This writing is illustrative of the autoethnographic emic and etic method as discussed in Chapter 2 offering me the opportunity, quoting Siegesmund (1999) to shift my stance.

'from the ethnographic emic gaze of the participant observer to an etic gaze of our own subjectivity (Boufoy-Bastick 2004, p.4).

In Chapter 2, I described how autoethnography is a means to affirm your own voice and lay claim to the authoring of your own acts. Maguire (2006) refers to Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the 'act of authoring as a creative answerability/ responsibility' (Maguire 2006, p.3). In a similar vein Foley (2002) states that: 'Autoethnographers are openly subjective. They seek to undermine grandiose authorial claims of speaking in a rational, value free, objective, universalising voice. From this perspective the author (me) am a living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving multiple selves, speaking in a partial, subjective, culture bound voice' (Foley 2002, p.474).

Learnings associated with these emic perspectives offered me an opportunity to investigate my beliefs and worldviews. Upon reflection I can see that I have always opposed inequity, irrespective of whether I was involved. Previously in my role as the EEO manager in two separate organizations, I worked hard at influencing Affirmative Action policy aimed at providing opportunities for people who were marginalized within society. I was a strong advocate and achieved significant outcomes.

The last paragraph was an example of analysing my narrative 'etically'. Further examples are provided in the following chapter on DOOR to Self.

Program Directing the Two Leading Talent Programs

Working for EEBS was beginning to feel more and more like the road trip on the Nullabor until the arrival of the Leading Talent Program allowed me to step off the road and begin an entirely different journey. A retrospective analysis of that journey, allows me to select key highlights with which to elaborate on my learning and reflections as a Leader. The two LTPs constitute the major milestones along the journey; other highlights include: insights into the nature of contracting, development of the approach and methodology associated with the LTP and the conclusions associated with the two LTPs. Additional materials included as Appendices illustrate the extent of the work involved.

It is important to reiterate that the LTP adopted what I later titled 'Frame 4' learning as a means to enable real change in the behaviours of Leaders within the program. In my experience, Frame 4 represents a dynamic and revolutionary process operating at the cutting edge of management education; it challenged the participants, Feedsmoore, EEBS and me. As a journey it involved driving along unmapped roads, avoiding potholes, landslides, and unfriendly natives. At times it even meant driving in the dark without headlights and only a compass and the stars as my guide. The journey was made more interesting by contributions from fellow travelers and comrades whom I met at roadhouses and pit stops along the way. We offered each other opportunities to share in real time the conditions of the road, to plan ahead, to share resources and to support each other.

Although I was both navigating and driving us all through uncharted terrain whilst holding tensions and uncertainty about the emergent and dynamic nature of the program within, the LTP participants were seldom aware of my anxiety. By reflecting on why I was anxious, I realized much of it was generated by the need to

role model the new behaviours, which the LTP was promoting to participants as their own expected future behaviour. I decided there was just as much to be gained by choosing to reveal my own uncertainties and concerns, as a way to demonstrate how to align what I espoused, with my enacted behaviour 'theory in use'. The dilemma then became how much to do this and how often, as I was aware that revealing too much anxiety would adversely effect participants' abilities to attempt to do this for themselves. And at this meta level I became aware of my resistance to reveal any of this to my employer, as I felt this would demand a long briefing and education process, needing to overcome entrenched positions and frames.

The Nature of Contracting

As I was travelling in uncharted terrain for most of the time, I became acutely aware of issues of trust and risk at both the individual and personal level and how this was represented in both written and unwritten contracts within the intervention I led at Feedsmoore. The risk was real, as I had a legitimate management and leadership role to fulfill on behalf of EEBS, which was enshrined by contract and company law (Baxter 2000). Previously, when running my own business, I had been selective about the nature and types of contracts I was willing to sign. This meant that I had chosen not to work with organizations that I felt adopted an overly litigious or formal approach. In fact most of my Frame 4 work was done with clients who were willing to negotiate verbal agreements as the journey unfolded. A brief letter of understanding was usually negotiated and signed. This luxury was not available within EEBS since all work associated with the business school and with clients had to be covered by Contracts and Letters of Agreement. A legal firm vetted all EEBS contracts, which I could not afford to do when running my own business.

Contracts work best when the work is formulaic and repeatable with clearly specified outputs, outcomes, competencies and assessments. It is ideally suited to Frames 1 & 2 and the Modernist lens. Frame 4's nature is loose, complex, innovative and emergent and sits outside this. It relies on trust built on real dialogue and understandings that factor in a multiplicity of options and outcomes, some of which will move individuals to real points of tension and dissonance.

Like most other large multinationals, Feedsmoore had a separate department over seeing contracts and it was unlikely that they would have the time or inclination for dialogue regarding potential risks, since their primary aim was to mitigate risk and ensure compliance. Based on market data I had gathered, I knew that their suppliers viewed Feedsmoore as a highly litigious organisation using size and muscle to enforce punishment of transgressions.

I realized that to win the client over, I had to factor in the obligatory compliance requirements by conducting extensive discussions and dialogue which explored the opportunity and risk associated with a deep intervention (later called Frame 4). I held these conversations with the Organisational Development (OD) Manager, the VP Human Resources, and the Training Manager of Feedsmoore, relying on them to make the decision after the opportunities and limitations were set out in front of them. This took a number of meetings over several months, and involved discussions with the BDE about potential risks. And due to my investment in yet unbilled time, and the expectations of having lured a big global client, I was also troubled by the loss of income potential[23] that I knew would be troubling the senior management of EEBS.

At an earlier meeting attended by Feedsmoore's OD Manager, HR Officer, the BDE and myself, I was introducing key factors associated with making this type of program work. I outlined some of the conversations that needed to occur with the executive, including the President, and described the type of resistance we could expect to encounter from individuals and the system.

The OD Manager, who had the mandate and responsibility for this program, bent over in front of me, crouched, held his head in his hand and then looked up

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[23] Troubled by loss of income potential – As my time was finite and billable, the time I devoted to Feedsmoore was at an opportunity cost to me, as this prevented me from fee earning work, which was linked to my billable hours. The longer and deeper the intervention, the more time it takes to get across, and that time investment was at my expense. EEBS would ideally like to win the client across sooner, being unaware of the complexity of Frame 4, presuming another formulaic program was in order.

grimacing in agony. He then said 'I understand, if we want real change in behaviour, then this is what needs to be done'. My immediate reaction was to rescue him from his pain, however I saw the benefit of remaining still and staying with the emotion, as it was a demonstration that he understood the potential risk and emphasized the value of his support for the program. I had previous experience of similar responses, mostly anxiety laden; however this was demonstrably up a notch. The BDE who was with us often reminded me of it for many years.

I came to realise that we were fortunate to have the OD Manager as the critical gatekeeper; he was well respected within the business, had the ear of senior management and appeared to be astute. I later realised that he was also highly politically savvy. Though I was never able to clearly pinpoint this, he appeared to be unaware or unconcerned with the highly political jockeying that was occurring among his direct reports.

A series of meetings with this OD Manager, the Vice President of HR and a rotation of training and HR staff enabled me to describe the nature of more complex interventions including using the P+Q/R=L formula introduced in Chapter 2. Not covered in Chapter 2 is the interrelationship highlighted in the red circle in Figure 5.2.
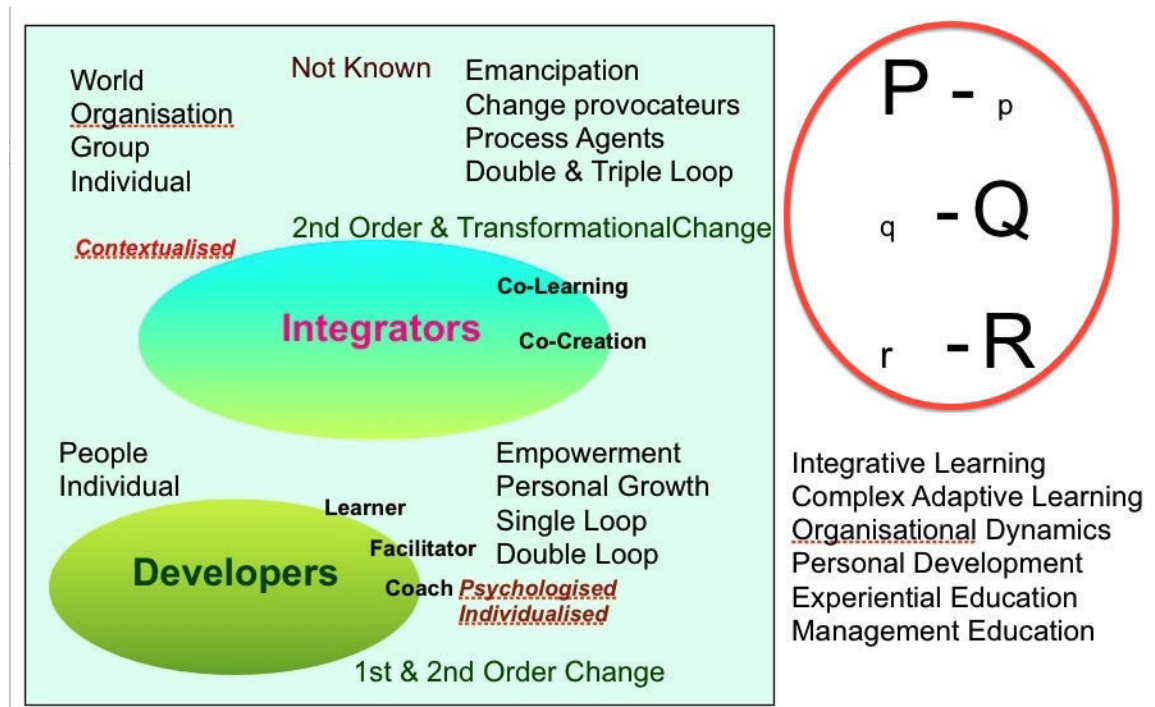
Figure 5.2 Frames 3 and 4

This diagram and the frames of learning only started to take shape about nine months after these meetings. However - at this earlier time - discussions focused on the interrelationships among the factors and the size of the factors i.e. what I called 'small p' and 'large P', where 'P' is programmed knowledge, with the larger the 'P' the more the reliance on the size and prescription of 'programmed knowledge'. 'Small q' and 'large Q' where Q is Questioning Insight, the larger the 'Q' the more the program enables challenging the assumptions, including the nature of the program itself and 'small r' and 'large R' where R is Resistance. The differences between small and large are explored further below.

Frames 1 & 2's programs are infused with expert driven large 'P', the learner is given all of the information which the educator or institution thinks is important. To explain this I used an example of my past experience lecturing for a subject within the Executive MBA program for a business school, where a complaint was lodged by

a student that I was bringing in material and drawing on current examples that were not contained within the four folders that they had as course material. The student felt this was unfair and that I should limit myself to what was known and preset. He was unable to conceive of learning that was not 'predigested' for him. Feedsmoore understood this, as it had already used such large 'P' programs without noticeable success. Large 'P' stifles 'Q', diminishing it to small 'q', meaning when there is an overreliance on prescribed knowledge and an adherence to formulaic textbook or expert learning, it tends to corral enquiry and contain it within limited boundaries. 'R' Resistance is managed and controlled within the environs of the subject since challenge is not condoned in this model. Frame 4 on the other hand does not rely on the safety of expert led 'P', but relies on participants drawing on their own experience, where practice drives the prerequisite for programmed knowledge. It is also possible that there is no known expert or knowledge for them to rely on.

I used an example of a deeper AR Leadership program (four months in duration and not as extensive as the planned LTP), which I ran for a Foreign Exchange business, where the group and I sat in a room. I had nothing to offer them for a number of sessions other than what was generated by the questions they asked. This process purposefully creates disjuncture and signals from the start that they are no longer dependent learners, nor reliant on an expert to fill the space and the silence. Similarly, Frame 4 within the LTP was likely to generate opportunities for Large 'Q' though it is was more likely to generate large 'R' first, as this process is uncomfortable and unfamiliar.

I used previous experiences to emphasise that the executive, sponsors, coaches and facilitators would need to hold firm, as there would be complaints and real resistance 'R', which from my previous experience, we could expect to emerge half way through the journey. This correlates with the 'Punctuated Equilibrium model' of (Gersick 1988) which proposes that teams progress in two phases over time. Phase 1 is where they try to establish a working agenda and norms, but this equilibrium is then 'Punctuated' at the mid-point, whereupon Phase 2 involves a process of refocusing and reorienting to meet the quality and time deadlines which would now

be seen as urgent. This model, along with that developed earlier by (Tuckman & Jensen 1977) known as the 'Stages of Group Development'' and (Janis 1982) concept of Group Think was discussed at these meetings and offered as possible 'p', programmed knowledge to the AR sets within the program.

Most clients, including (HR) professionals, want assurances that what is being offered has a proven pedigree, so that they can minimise the risk both to themselves and their organisations. I am aware that this is a real predicament for HR, and their fears about engaging in more emergent and complex work is valid. Few organisations, in my experience, are willing to embark on a journey of the kind the LTP was intended to be. Even fewer HR gatekeepers are willing to become distinctly uncomfortable or take the risk of allowing the process to begin. The many intense discussions prior to the signing of the contract enabled a deeper understanding about the LTP and its potential.

The contract at this stage became secondary to this deeper understanding, leading to discussions on how to deal with questions arising from the internal contracting arm of Feedsmoore.

Just after Program 2 commenced the VP of HR and the President of Feedsmoore were seconded overseas. The OD Manager, who was also a participant on the first program, soon followed for a more global role overseas. The tacit understandings we had about the program left with them, and although I tried to engender a deeper understanding with the new Training and Development (T & D) manager and team, time and their perception of priorities no longer worked in my favour. This, of course, is the nature of tacit knowledge, that it is deep and buried within the context of an evolving understanding.

The philosopher and chemist Michael Polanyi (1958) coined the term 'Tacit Knowledge'. Drawing on his work, Zack, a researcher, defines tacit knowledge as:

"Subconsciously understood and applied, difficult to articulate, developed from direct experience and usually shared through highly interactive conversation, storytelling and shared experience" (Zack 1999).

Research highlights that tacit knowledge is lost when employees transfer or leave (Droege & Hoobler 2003) and employee turnover negatively affects performance through the loss of social capital (Dess & Shaw 2001). Collins (2010a) suggests that tacit knowledge is prevented from being known for contingent reasons, including not knowing what the other person needs to know.

The tacit and deep understandings, effectively the unwritten contract that was developed, unfortunately left with those people who were seconded. My reflections now took into account the need to better communicate the message to a larger group of stakeholders and to enable any future organisation I work with, implement Frame 4 programs in order to better plan for unforeseen circumstances.

Discussions with the Steering Committee

I have written about the steering committee in Chapter 4 and at the beginning of this chapter. In this section I highlight specific topics explored with the steering committee and the Feedsmoore Executive that impacted on the LDP and aided my reflection as a leader.

LTP participants had access to a number of well-researched frameworks and tools to improve their leadership skills. Included in these resources was research on what derails managers, sourced from the Centre for Creative Leadership (Leslie & Velsor 1996), important leadership characteristics from the Corporate Leadership Council (Council 2004), and the Leadership Index, detailing the top five Leadership Challenges in Australia (Morley 2005).

There was much discussion within the steering committee about striking a balance between leadership and management. The Feedsmoore Steering committee members wanted a strong focus on the work of management theorist Marcus

Buckingham (2004, 2005), which focused on people's strengths. The thrust of this work is that focusing on things that you are good at and enjoy has a higher chance for enabling an individual to sustain higher performance. Most of the LTP participants had also undertaken the Strengths Finder Instrument (Gallup Nov 2001) which highlights an individual's 'signature themes' (strengths) in rank order. This instrument and my signature themes are discussed in this chapter.

I was familiar with the earlier research of Buckingham & Coffman (1999) and their book 'First Break all the Rules' and used it in my leadership programs. They distinguish between management and leadership, proposing that management is a key skill and managers are not simply leaders in waiting and challenge some of the conventional maxims like 'Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things'. They assert that such maxims cast the manager as a plodder and the leader as a sophisticated visionary executive, and argue that this differentiation encourages managers to label themselves as leaders since they are most likely to prefer to think of themselves as 'visionary' than as a 'plodder'. Their research indicated that the important difference between a 'great manager' and a 'great leader' is one of focus. Great managers 'look inwards' at the individual, goals and motivations, they pay attention to all of the subtle and nuanced differences, whilst great leaders 'look outwards' at the competition, market forces, the future, and they also focus on patterns, connections and a way to cut though complexity.

I had concerns about an overreliance on one frame and moved the discussion away from a reliance on one view and one framework, I encouraged the steering committee to see that value lay in the LTP participants exploring the grey areas and arriving at their own conclusions following extensive conversations and dialogue with me, as the 'Leadership' session leader, and with each other. The work of (Avolio 1999; Bass 2000; Watkins 2005) assisted to explore these issues further.

I am personally convinced of the need for both management and leadership within organizations. While management is a designated function and role in organisations, it relies on key attributes of leadership to maximize its potential. Kotter (2013)

comments that leadership is about behaviour and not attributes, and asserts that organizations need more leadership from more people, no matter where they are in the hierarchy.

Key leadership skills include enabling people and systems to deal creatively with ambiguity, complexity and rapid change. A leader is one who is self-regulating, emotionally self-aware and dedicated to guiding the enablement of positive emotions in others. Leaders, who must influence others to achieve outcomes, also need to skill themselves in some of the aspects of management such as planning, scheduling, monitoring, controlling, following-up, etc. to ensure that limited resources are controlled efficiently and effectively. The LTP participants were far removed from these ideal skill sets.

Along with these leadership models and frames, LTP participants had access to: models and frames linked to the training modules; models and frames associated with the specific AR project topic; and models based on previous training programs attended by the participants. I focused my discussions with the steering committee on simplifying and validating this complexity. For example, the cereal box simplified the integration of previous models including the Lominger and Gallup frameworks.

In agreement with the steering committee, I challenged participants to see the complexity inherent in organizations and the Leadership role by encouraging 'Q' - 'Questioning Insight' as a means to deal with complexity. LTP participants selected models and processes that they felt were valid and worked at helping them to deal with current reality. I shared my acquired learning with them that models and frameworks are always a work in progress, they represent our constructed view of reality, they are neither sacred nor cast in commandment stone and it is incumbent on leaders to critically challenge them. The Causal Layered Analysis framework, as discussed previously, helped in this regard.

Along with shifting the frame on the topic of management and leadership, I held discussions with the steering committee about the Strengths Based approach they

were adopting. Whilst I saw the benefit of the logic on focusing on ones 'Strengths', I challenged and questioned the implied assumption that this was done to the detriment of developing ones weaknesses, particularly when those weaknesses could be career limiting. For example, whilst I am highly skilled and adept at analysing the big picture, and using my intuition to recognize patterns where others might see none. I have had to work hard at developing a more analytical mindset and to learn to become more concrete, and granular, and to pay more attention to detail. I had to reiterate this view a number of times, as Feedsmoore, steering committee members unquestioningly saw the focus on strengths as the way forward.

Feedsmoore's steering committee members were querying the benefits between a case study as opposed to an AR methodology. I did not want to make this an academic exercise; however I needed to help them analyse the pros and cons of the two methodologies.

I had to start from first principles highlighting the differences in learning and insight associated with a framework that commenced with establishing a hypothesis as opposed to one that factored in the evolving nature of the 'Fuzzy Central Question'. The first was familiar and the later had to be lived through to experience it. See Appendix A 5.1, which elaborates further on the case study methodology and its limitations as a Frame 4 methodology.

Following our discussions, it was decided to include a case study on the leadership of Dell Corporation (Schmid & Vogl 2003; Spooner 2004; Stewart & O'Brien 2005) for the LTP at Feedsmoore. Dell's business model focused on a number of key indicators including: Customer Centricity by going directly to the customer; Information over Inventory; World Class Manufacturing; and Shared Leadership. These were capabilities to which Feedsmoore aspired. I had also suggested the case study because it was a methodology well inculcated and valued within the business school and it could bolster my arguments for accreditation.

The engagements with the steering committee affirmed to me the fundamental need and importance to both debate and have dialogue about key frameworks and models that impact on the intervention. Their responses to proposals also provided a litmus test for what would work within the organisation.

The steering committee's insistent need to focus on the pragmatics was frustrating me, but I saw the benefit of paying attention to it. I therefore gave close attention to providing processes that fitted with more 'P', essentially Frame 1 and Frame 2 thinking, to satisfy these concerns. I did, however, choose materials and concepts intended to lead towards large 'Q', essentially a Frame 4 perspective.

The following examples demonstrate tools used and visible artifacts linked to Frames 1 and 2 thinking:

The Cereal Box (Fig 4.2) – used familiar language and saved a great deal of time as it drew all of the threads and interrelationships together, representing them graphically. Reflection on how this image evolved has affirmed that one of my strengths is the ability to conceptualise and synthesise quite disparate data and build clear visual models which cater to the needs of those with a predisposition for Visual Learning (Hermann 1990).

Lominger Chart (Fig 4.3) – Although clients' representatives expressed a desire for deeper processes and interventions, they regularly went back to a didactic approach that needed all the conventional items ticked and connected - even though they saw the limitations of this way of thinking. Working in the manner they desired led to a conscious decision to make the client feel comfortable even though I knew the paradox of doing so. Keeping the big picture in mind helped sustain the tension. The Cereal Box and Lominger Chart were two visible artifacts, and others of a similar kind were Trojan Horses. They could affirm what was visible, quantifiable, and could be touched and felt. What was concealed inside the conceptualisations mattered. Achieving Frame 4 thinking and the changes they hoped for would be a process, a journey, a quest, and an exploration into the unfathomable grey, probing and

discerning the evading and evolving self. But this could only be revealed slowly in line with emerging acceptance of the value of taking new risks.

Gold Standard Checklist (Appendix B 5.1) – This developed following a request by the OD Manager at Feedsmoore, and provided to all those involved in the program at Feedsmoore. This document acted as a useful summary highlighting key benchmarks and criteria for success. Line Managers did not live up to the criteria set for them and sponsors were challenged by the participants on the need to comply with some of the criteria.

Learning Contract – Helped learners to think about and prioritise their goals including demonstrating through evidence that they have understood and applied the learning (Anderson & Boud 1996). In keeping with Frame 4, learning contracts include and encompass the broader system within the intervention. Use of learning contracts acts as an enabler for conversations with significant others – at Feedsmoore this included the Line Managers and HR staff. It also signals that learning operates with and through others and prepares the learner to share in team and community related activities (Twigg 2003).

Meetings with Feedsmoore Executive

To ensure buy in and integration and in keeping with an action research approach of ennobling the system, I held a number of meetings with the executive (CEO and VPs) to gain their trust, build rapport and to enroll their cooperation. As noted in Chapter 4, HR expected slick and polished presentations and to my utter frustration, an onerous amount of time was spent in drilling me on what I should say, and how I needed to approach the executive. I reiterated that my style was more Socratic and conversational with the use of story, metaphor and examples to get my message across. I nevertheless attempted the super polished slick PPT presentation style, which I assumed was successful because I had been appointed.

My observations of most of the executive and other managers were that behaviour within Feedsmoore was driven by an underlying culture that was task focused and transactional. Utilising Bass & Riggio (2006) model of Transformational leadership

and my observations, it appeared that Feedsmoore relied primarily on 'Transactional' styles of management. Management by Exception and Contingent Reward styles predominated, which included corrective action being taken when mistakes were made and meticulous attention to detail and monitoring of errors. Performance, particularly serving time through long hours, was rewarded. There was an implicit social contract implying that if you indentured yourself to the organisation you would be well looked after. Appealing to the benefits of self-interest through contingent rewards in most cases created constructive transactions. However such transactional styles reinforced managerialism over leadership.

Given this environment, my style of Socratic questioning and enquiry needed to be phased in, although it was congruent with the stated aims of the LTP for developing 'Transformational Leadership'. I needed to remind myself that the HR representatives and trainers within Feedsmoore did not have my wealth of experience in learning and facilitation and could only operate from what they knew.

I visited the regional locations of each of the businesses and met with the Vice Presidents. The VP of HR, who was part of the executive and involved in many of the preliminary conversations, smoothed the way. I focused on their business issues and dilemmas and spent time when I was there, learning about the business including taking tours of each of the manufacturing plants.

Employees in each of the businesses worked in large open plan offices located on one floor. The manufacturing centre was located adjacent to this office. The VPs occupied a space within this open layout and glass-enclosed meeting rooms were scattered around the perimeter. Whilst this signaled an environment of openness and accessibility, it nevertheless did not stop silos operating within each of the businesses and in particular between the businesses which were separated geographically.

These trips to each of the businesses helped me understand how the structure[24] of the business would probably impact on the transformational cultural change they were seeking. Each business had a unique style and culture dictated by the style of the VP. For example, through discussions and observations I was able to discern that one of the VPs was highly respected as they[25] consistently worked at practicing what they preached, another was new to the role and was working at building a team though was meeting resistance from a senior manager who reported to them, who was also one of the participants on the LTP. The third VP had a paternal management style, with low personal disclosure and did not like confrontation. He believed that decisiveness was the most important thing for a leader, that leaders could not afford to be confusing and that ambiguity kills organizations. Our first meeting was strained and I did not achieve rapport. My language about action research, dealing with ambiguity, complexity and transformational change was clearly the wrong approach.

However, my approach did work with the President and the other VPs. I learned to reframe my approach and spoke about the program as the next step in a management journey adding value to what they had done before, incorporating a rigorous process linked to agreed global competencies to improve the skills of their senior staff on the program. This approach achieved a better response, though over the course of the two programs, I did not feel that those I had visited were on board

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[24] Structure - Much has been written about organisational structure and its relationship with organisational size, strategy, technology, environment and culture (Brown & Harvey 2006; Handy 1990; Mintzberg 1989). Structure is necessary for organizations to function adequately and the complex nature of human interactions within organizations cannot operate in a knowledgeable and predictive way if there isn't structure. Ranson, Hinings & Greenwood (1980) argue that structure implies a configuration of strategies that are enduring and persistent. McMillan (2002) sees organisational structure as an architecture that weaves the visible and invisible activities of an organisation together.

[25] 'The word 'they' is being used to mean both genders. Introduced for added privacy.

relative to the other VP's. As the program progressed I heard a number of complaints from their AR team about a lack of support, including finding it hard to get their VP to meet with them.

I cautiously broached the issue from a policy perspective, encouraging the sponsors to engage with their AR sets, whilst keeping to our earlier understanding that the AR teams needed to work at engaging the executive. I also spent time with this AR team, exploring strategies about engaging their sponsor and the executive.

Earlier discussions with the President and the OD manager included an understanding that the LTP would also facilitate three other strategies:

- break down silos that existed between the separate business units
- maximise and leverage the synergy that would be gained
- enable learning for the VPs to role model expected behaviours as part of the leadership change process. (This was the sub-text).

The intent of the LTP was to break down these silos that were spread both by geography and ways of thinking. The President saw this as a deliberate strategy to develop crossfertilization and sharing of ideas, particularly given that each business had a different product mix and was separated by distance.

This was one of the benefits I had earlier discussed with the steering committee; that an AR based LTP adopted a broader system's lens and was a means to weave together related change strategies within the intervention.

The role of the VPs as Mentor/Sponsors was intentionally designed into the LTP, to ensure that, through engaging in the process, they were also remaining current with new information about the skills associated with leadership and coaching. I was careful not to call this 'training'. When the occasion allowed, I was able to use the messages about leadership and aspects of the program as a means to enable learning and insight.

My experience and concurrent research indicates that many senior executives and professionals don't consider that they need development in Leadership. Argyris (1991) for example, reported that managers are willing to enable development for people reporting to them and don't see the need for it themselves.

In my experience, they are content to attend knowledge based (Frame 1) training programs on topics like Corporate Governance or Risk Mitigation, and rarely the more challenging frame 3 or 4 programs.

Argyris specifically commented that:

> *"Professionals embody the learning dilemma: they are enthusiastic about continuous improvement - and often the biggest obstacle to its success...By constantly turning the focus away from their own behaviour to that of others, the professional brings learning to a grinding halt" (Argyris, 1991 p.101-103).*

The LTP intervention at Feedsmoore was now encouraging the VPs and senior executives to be cognizant of the impact of their leadership behaviours. At our steering committee meeting, I highlighted that the managers on the LTP were going to exert pressure upwards. There would be an expectation from program participants that the executives to whom they reported, would actively embody role model behaviours and practices that were being espoused in the LTP.

Observations and Reflections

Eliot's (1941) quote needs to be reframed from 'We had the experience but missed the meaning' to 'I looked for the meaning both implied and hidden in my experiences'. The Feedsmoore case and the doctoral journey provided the platform and the opportunity to analyse and reflect on the experience. I am more aware of the frames that underpin and inform my views of the world; consequently I am more open, receptive and accommodative of other views, including those that are diametrically opposed to mine.

Marrying my understanding of the research associated with business schools and the CLA allowed me to analyse and reflect at a deeper level. I began to appreciate why a Frame 4 intervention was out of the norm and how it challenged the prevailing discourse and worldviews at a fundamental level. Working with and around established practices and protocols at both EEBS, AABS and Feedsmoore to get the LTP implemented, assisted me to apply my learning in leadership in-situ.

The opportunity to analyse and reflect on the circumstances surrounding me at the business school enabled me to study the landscape of the two business schools and to develop relationships with both the academics and PDs.

Although my passion for action research and learning is deep, it fits within a spectrum of offerings, which I can offer to a client. I learnt to apply pragmatic solutions with regards to frameworks, processes, methods and methodologies. This is based partly on my acceptance of Soft Systems Thinking, where models are only ever considered to be representations of reality (Flood 2001). The end result was nesting Frames 1 to 3 methods within Frame 4 as depicted earlier in Figure 5.3.

One of my processes is to start from where the client is. I start with Observing and Listening. By this I mean:

- listen to their needs
- find what the business drivers are
- conduct desk research on the organization and the individuals involved
- understand what motivates the person (gatekeeper) in front of you
- build their trust in you and then work mutually on ways and means to conjointly influence their stakeholders.

I drew extensively on this experience when working with Feedsmoore. The added learning for me came from comprehending how to do this from within the constraints and confines of my role as the Program Director of Leadership within the business school.

 I worked at balancing the reliance on expert driven Programmed Knowledge, helping to include the need for a didactic frame without loosing the essence of

Frame 4. I learnt to juggle between the frames and the L=P +Q/R equation. This process was happening in the moment and contingent on what was occurring at any particular time. This was an understanding that remained elusive and tacit, even for me, until long after the two programs were over.

I worked hard at influencing others about the benefits of deeper interventions whilst at the same time maintaining my independence of thought and action and the conviction to follow through despite setbacks. Many in the school subsequently utilized the model and framework with other clients.

I saw opportunities to investigate my own behaviour and how they were congruent with the nature of the intervention. For example, I chose to reveal my uncertainties and concerns and doing this in a timely and considered fashion gave weight to the additional anxiety placed on the participants.

I reflected and worked around the limitations of contracts, generating dialogue and engendering trust with the stakeholders.

I learnt to grapple with the uncertainty involved in moving people to a real point of tension and dissonance which was critical to a Frame 4 methodology (big Q and R), understanding that this would challenge the established order and provoke a reaction, over which I had minimum control, but tried to influence in any case.

My learning from past experience was that I had to focus on the message about the final outcome and drive the learning on the assumption that the participants had what it took to get there; despite the setbacks I was experiencing at a personal level. I had to be the solid ground that they could land on, however temporary that was. Yalom & Leszcz (2005) point to evidence that facilitators of group processes influence groups by modeling expected behaviours. In the field of Group Therapy Bandura, Blanchard & Ritter (1969) have experimentally demonstrated that participants imitate the behaviour of other participants and the therapist, and Colijin (1991) comments that this modeling and imitation plays an important role early in the development of a group. This is explored further in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

DOOR To Work– The Feedsmoore Case (External of Internal)

Chapter 4 focused on the facts of the case study and Chapter 5 on observing, interpreting and reflecting on the external events of the Leading Talent Program (LTP).

Design of Chapter 6

This chapter addresses the nub of the research question about the learning that occurs when - as a leader - I shift my focus from <u>A</u>ction to <u>O</u>bservation and <u>R</u>eflection. I continue to tell the story for myself in a way that resolves issues that were long irresolvable for me and which provides a learning landscape for others who wish to understand how intensive activity during a leadership change program has an impact on everyone, and most especially the Facilitator. My focus here is also to elaborate on the 'External' or Third Person 'Observations' and 'Reflections' on the 'Internal' state and on the actions related to the LTP.

While there was an overall plan for ten programs each of the two LTPs that were completed had different issues emerge as defining elements. The chapter explores the major issues under six headings:

1. Setting the Scene
2. Multiple Hats
3. AR Project Teams and Associated Issues
4. LTP Conditions and reactions
5. Evaluations of the two LT Programs
6. Observations and Reflections

Setting the Scene

The first module was held at the residential facilities owned by the business school, in order to reinforce the signals of academic rigor and learning as a key experience for all participants.

To demonstrate their commitment to the LTP program, the Executive of Feedsmoore decided to move their bi-monthly Executive Management Meeting (EMT) to coincide with the opening of the LTP. The organisation had recently experienced the trauma of being the victim of a very public extortion racket where their products were tampered with. This meeting was crucial because they needed to urgently discuss their continued strategies with the media and key stakeholders. Some of the senior managers on the program were crucial to these discussions and it was agreed that they would leave at designated times, usually during the breaks, to provide their input at the EMT.

This was not ideal, as the issues being explored at the EMT, resulted in many corridor conversations that impacted on the program. In my experience this is not unusual, for senior managers have to multitask consistently. Though this situation was not ideal, the executives were willing to meet us more than half way, including the CEO opening the program. In contradiction of the old saying 'the Mountain moved to Mohammed'.

The residential program and accommodation for the 16 participants had been pre booked months earlier. The seven additional Feedsmoore executives were also booked three weeks prior to that program. Four days prior to the program commencing, I received an email from the facilities unit at EEBS, which effectively awarded some of the less desirable rooms to Feedsmoore, including three participants being billeted in rooms in the gatehouse, which were literally over the entry gate. I was also moved to external accommodation in the adjoining suburb. Preference was given to participants who joined the public programs. This was part of the political jockeying and the old boys' network at play with the better training

rooms and residential accommodation going to the PDs who had built long term relationships with the facilities management staff, my regional office location did not afford me the same opportunity to build those relationships though my guess is it would have taken years to weave my way through the incestuous and convoluted web of relationships at play. The Program Manager who was responsible for accommodation attempted to influence a better outcome as part of her email below shows:

> *'I'm not sure why Feedsmoore should have the single accommodation, twin accommodation and the gatehouse. As our booking was made some time ago, would it not be fair to give the latecomers from the public programs this accommodation or to share it with the other corporate programs scheduled for that night'.*

Both our protestations did not achieve anything. This situation was one of many that I had to deal with, in the short time before the program. The BDE, with whom I had been working closely to get this program underway, took a month's leave just before the program commenced. Three days before the program, along with organizing all of the guest speakers, the coaches, preparing for my sessions and the program overall, I was dealing with issues about accommodation and fielding queries regarding the contract from Feedsmoore's contract division, including overseeing critical issues about service levels and noncompetitor clauses.

Shortly before the day of the program, I received news that the Dean could not open the program as he had a last minute conflict with presenting an award for the MBA program. This was disheartening, considering I had spent time explaining and impressing on EEBS the real and symbolic importance of the Dean's presence, given the President and Executive of Feedsmoore would also be there, and given the potential opportunity this program posed globally.

More immediate ramifications arose – On the day, some of the participants complained to the executive about the poor state of their accommodation, which no doubt negatively reinforced the issues the executives were having about their own

accommodation. The missed opportunity for a formal welcome from the Dean perhaps also added to the overall mood. News was also filtering through that some of the participants were uncomfortable with the program. The nature of the program and the deliberate strategy to create disjuncture was previously discussed with some of the executives.

At lunch with the training manager and two of the executives, I worked hard to address these concerns. I could not reveal my disappointment with my institution; I listened, apologised where necessary and moved the conversation to the positives and the future.

Given the onerous amount of time and energy I had expended to get the client on board and the Business School's consistent mantra about focusing on getting high value clients, I was deeply disappointed by the snub from the Dean and the lack of professionalism associated with the service provided. Quality of service and professionalism are critical to keeping customers happy (Chapman 2012). Nykiel (1992) research also highlights that it can cost as much as five times more to attract new customers than to retain an existing customer.

During this time I was immersed in the cut and thrust of action presenting the program. Although I felt disappointed and let down by the people from my organisation, I had no time to dwell on it. Experience at running a small consulting practice had taught me that the 'show must go on'. I learnt that no matter what the circumstances, I needed maintain my presence and to respond effectively to what emerged, which is exactly what I did.

Looking back later at the theatre of action, I acknowledge that I demonstrate the capacity to continue to lead in the face of adversity and to move beyond such adversity, despite the personal setbacks. Whilst this is clearly a strength, I was also aware that the buzz associated with dealing with these issues once again locked me into a familiar pattern of action and activity. The issues also highlighted the need for me to build better relationships. I needed to have personally communicated to the

Dean the importance of opening the program, rather than relying by email and through formal channels.

The Opening Slideshow

Following the opening address, the training room went dark and a slide show began on a giant screen accompanied by the song 'Zaar' by Peter Gabriel, an instrumental that matched the theme. The themes in this presentation looked at our place in the bigger scheme of life, why humans are at a crossroads as a species, why leadership matters and concluded with positive themes associated with change.

The combination of slideshow and music in a darkened room was designed to have a physically visceral impact on the participants. I wanted to communicate messages at a deeper subliminal level, rather than sticking to a normal surface appeal to the intellect only. Figure 6.1 is one of a number of pictoems communicating the tenuous and perilous nature of our existence.
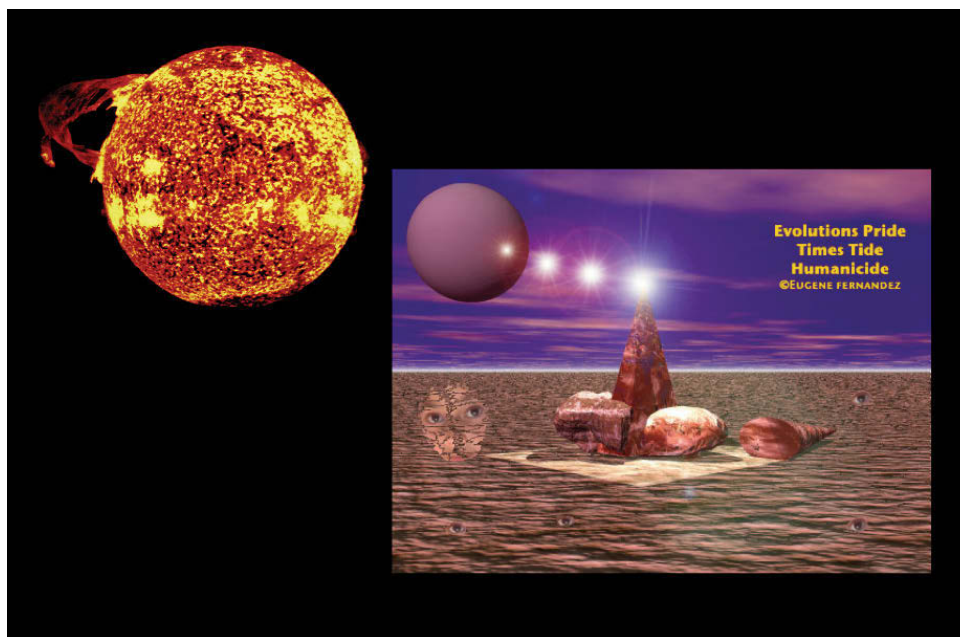
Figure 6.1 Pictoem Evolution's Pride

Two key messages in the slide show included:

> *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit."*
> *(Aristotle 2013)*
> *" Be the change you want to see in the world" (Gandhi & in B'Hahn 2001)*

This was an appeal to the LTP participants as senior Leaders – basically the message was "you don't leave Leadership at the office, it is a fundamental part of who you are" (Goleman 2002; Sinclair 2007). Taking accountability and responsibility for Leadership makes a difference to Feedsmoore and by extension impacts positively on the world.

The focus on Leadership and Accountability was discussed in Chapter 1. Davies (2008) asserts that our world has reached a tipping point where our very survival as a species hangs in the balance. Homer-Dixon (2000); Laszlo (2008) comment that we, are confronted with issues and problems of immense complexity that go beyond our current known methods and systems to solve them, and Gore (2009) argues that this complex challenge requires each one of us to be accountable and to take personal responsibility for addressing the issues.

The Opening Tribal Ceremony

The Tribal ceremony followed the opening slideshow. I had given a lot of thought to the beginning. I believe that beginnings shape all that follows. Covey's (1989) first three habits from his seminal text 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' come to mind here. These are - be proactive; begin with the end in mind; and put first things first. This activity, following the slideshow, served as an icebreaker and a way to instill deeper symbolic messages. Participants were broken into four clans to represent the four different businesses within Feedsmoore. Time was allocated for planning, with the goal that each clan had to develop their own ritual, which involved a procession and an offering of their 'Strengths' [26] to the chief of the tribe

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[26] 'Strengths' refer to the Clifton Strength Finder Instrument that each manager had completed prior to the program. The instrument provides a listing of 34 Strengths an individual utilizes at work in order of priority (Buckingham 2004).

(President of Feedsmoore -Substituted by VP HR) who was seated in the main training room.

On offer were a range of percussion instruments such as bongos, tambourines, castanets and maracas which they could use to accompany a tribal song of their own choosing, There were masks of all sorts, and wigs, coloured crepe paper, plastic spears, arrows and swords. The room also now had a tribal feel with feathers and big dream catchers on poles. I had also briefed the Chief (who was magnificently attired in long feathered headgear and a deer-skin jacket) that I would arrive ahead of the procession in my role as the counsellor (medicine man) of the tribe. I had a staff and coyote mask (which almost suffocated me).

The atmosphere was electric; we could hear chants, drum beats and much laughter in the adjoining rooms before I entered the Giant Tepe (Training room) as the counsellor and made the announcement, shown in Figure 6.2

Figure 6.2 Assembly of the Clans Announcement

Each of the clans followed in procession. There was an hilarious variety of chants, grunts, screams and bellows, a resplendent array of costumes, zany dance moves that included a mixture of John Cleese (2013) funny walks and 'Cheeta' the chimpanzee prances (Wikipedia 2013). There was an assortment of offerings to the Chief that were so wonderful and unimaginable that words cannot convey their magnificence or meaning.

Program 2 held 9 months later had an interesting twist to the tribal ceremony. The Program was run in a mansion, which was connected to a private Zoo. As part of the ritual, the President was held upside down by one of the clans. 'They wanted him to see the world as it really was, from "Down Under" [27] (Bryant 2013). This was both hilarious and symbolic as he was an Englishman and soon to depart to run a bigger part of Feedsmoore's business in Europe.

This was a process within a process. There were many symbolic messages possible within this short role play/simulation, including:

- The need to see each other as one tribe, by breaking down and building bridges across the silos
- Spontaneity, creativity and fun are a valued contribution
- Symbolic beginning of a journey with a band of comrades
- Exploration and celebration of each of their strengths
- Offering and acceptance by the Chief of their allegiance to the tribe
- Endorsement of the program
- Acknowledgment and endorsement by the chief of my role.

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[27] Comes from the phrase, 'Land Down Under' which first appeared in the 1880's when Britain was the point of geographic reference, it is now redundant given Australia looks increasingly to Beijing and Washington. The phrase became popular again with the song 'I Come From A Land Down Under' by the Australian band, Men at Work. The song was released in 1981.

I had taken a risk with the opening slide show, the deeper messages and the tribal ceremony. These granular details were not discussed with the steering committee and in any case it would have removed the element of surprise and associated learning for my client ,the OD manager, who was a participant on the program. I was unclear, how the American Indian tribal ceremony would be received, given it is a culture not familiar to Australians. I designed it because of the highly visual nature of the props and that Feedsmoore was a Global organisation with an American pedigree.

By the end, participants were visibly energized and connected to each other. Covey's (1989) three habits discussed earlier along with the sixth habit, Synergise, demonstrated the power that positive teamwork played in achieving the desired goals. The activity had indeed set the frame for all that was to follow.

Program 2 Further insights on setting the scene.

Program 2 started nine months after Program 1 commenced and three months before it concluded. In addition to the President, I had invited a participant (Alex) from Program 1 to provide his thoughts and insights about the program. I had also invited a recently appointed PD from the Sydney office, to observe the opening with the purpose of providing feedback to me. He had expressed interest in knowing more about action research and the LTP, and I had seen this as an excellent means to triangulate data and insights.

The outcomes were positive. Alex challenged them to take the risk and to be part of the journey. I had also cemented a better working relationship with the President and through my PD colleague, now had another advocate for AR and other deeper based interventions. See Appendix A 6.1 for the feedback comments and my thoughts.

Programmed Knowledge to elicit disjuncture and demonstrate P+Q/R in Action.

Following the Tribal Ceremony and intentionally slowing the pace, participants were asked to read two articles that elaborated on the concepts and frameworks that would be covered during the one-year journey. They had 30 minutes in which to read and highlight key points. The two articles were theoretical, dense and utilized concepts that were different to what they would have known. These articles are included in Appendix B 6.1 and B 6.2.

> **Article 1** - Research Methodologies, (Fernandez 2003) provides a broad overview on research methodologies and reviews the literature on action research/action learning. This introduced the participants to concepts, frameworks and language with which they were not familiar.
>
> **Article 2** – Science, Philosophy and Leadership, (Fernandez 2004) provides an overview of the factors that influenced scientific and philosophical thinking and the need for Leaders to move from a linear, myopic, cause and effect view, to a more holistic and cyclical view that extends to a longer time horizon. Leaders need to engage with a philosophical view of the world as much as they do the pragmatic and analytical.

The theoretical basis for starting the program in this way relates to the proposition that 'The beginning shapes what is to follow'. The intent was to introduce new and novel experiences to act as triggers for transformatory and emancipatory learning. Cranton (1992) suggests that events, contextual changes, reading and visual materials can act as triggers for transformational learning. This was a way that I chose to create disjuncture and signal that this program was different. I had discussions with the steering committee about why we needed to do this, given the overwhelming meme around learning and training as a slick action-filled occasion, where the expert lured them into a dependent learning model.

The articles created visible though well disguised emotions. I knew that not everyone would like it as the language and the propositions would have been alien

to them; some liked it but most found it uncomfortable and hard to grasp. There were various other reasons including getting them to look at the big picture, starting to think philosophically, and to take ownership for their own learning by being able to openly disclose their ignorance – in this case to stand up and state that they did not understand the reading and to challenge it.

The anticipated challenge to the process did not happen on the first day; this provided entrée the following day to discussion about the nature of the informal and tacit contract that was implied in the relationship between them and me as the facilitator. This conversation was uncomfortable, but initiated a process of 'peeling the onion', and deliberately sanctioned the unearthing and questioning of myths, metaphors and sacred cows. Participants were beginning to see the benefit of observing and reflecting on their behaviours and mindfully capturing their evolving thoughts.

Creating disjuncture, by layering dilemmas and getting the learners to look at the contradictions between what they 'Think' and 'Do' and between how they 'Feel' and 'Act' draws on the work of Mezirow (1991, 2000) and elaborated on by other educational theorists (Cranton 1992; Saavedra 1996; Sokol & Cranton 1998).

I held my concerns and doubts internally about how this process would work and waited with some trepidation to see what emerged. Detailed is a sample of comments at the steering committee meeting after Module 1:

OD Manager

> *"Overall good, a pretty good start. Good quality introduction – had a nice feel to it. Spoke to a lot of people and some sessions were particularly valuable, more so than others. Liked people being uncomfortable and thrown into the deep end straight away as people respond to and rose to the challenge of being in a difficult situation.*

> *The President would be good at opening the program and would be more than happy for him to do this in future.*

> *Some were quite happy with the pre-reading and felt comfortable with the material...I personally found the pre-reading to be very difficult to relate to – quite theoretical and hard to relate to in practical terms."*

This was useful feedback; I only included one article, on research methodologies for the second program, as the time to read and digest two articles was not enough. The one article sufficed to enable my objective for creating disjuncture. The comments by the OD Manager also relieved the anxiety I had about how he would distinguish the two hats he was wearing, that of an LTP participant and a key stakeholder.

Coaching Director (Colleague)

> *"A significant journey was made given the mix of attitudes and degree of confidence of the participants. This can be attributed to Eugene's powerful facilitation. Activity achieved what it needed to by way of discomfort. Possibly consider introducing a new learning style so they feel it is different but rewarding and valuable."*

It was affirming to get support from my colleague, who had been privy to the background conversations with the client. I took up the suggestion regarding learning styles and commented that reading and understanding the articles would help them towards adopting more on the Reflector and Theorist styles. When they did complete the instrument, the results showed not surprisingly, the participants had a strong preference for the other two learning styles, namely Activist and Pragmatist. LTP participants completed the 'Learning Styles Inventory' by Honey & Mumford (1982) as part of the program.

I have noted elsewhere that my preferences are heavily focused on Activist and Pragmatist, with Theorist scoring average against the norm. Over time I have learnt to increase my Reflector score. Reviewing and revisiting my own learning styles

helped me realize how far I have travelled. My Masters' degree study had been the catalyst to think and reflect deeply about my practice and this was a continuation of that journey.

Reviewing my own comments to the steering committee meeting. I found it fascinating reading the comments years later whilst writing this section. At the surface level, the comments elude to a rather prescriptive, intentional and planned process with the Orchestrator firmly in command, pulling the levers that challenged and jolted people out of their revelry. The reality was more like kayaking down a turbulent river which grabbed you the moment you entered where one had to use a combination of strokes, paddling furiously when required, slowing down at the turns whilst simultaneously studying the eddies and undercurrents and using them to negotiate around the obstacles that appeared. At times I got rolled, emerging once again breathless but exhilarated, paddles in hand, ready to meet the next challenge. After some time I became one with the kayak and the river, navigating the obstacles and all that the river threw at me with relaxed ease. I was in flow, seeing deeper and further, noticing connections, interrelationships and the meaning of things.

Multiple Hats

Chapter 4 described my role as a Program Director within EEBS. This section focuses on the learning associated with wearing multiple hats implementing the Leading Talent Programs for Feedsmoore.

The various hats include:

- Facilitator hat
- Program Manager hat
- Process Consultant hat
- Counseling hat
- Set Advisor hat

The Facilitator and Set Advisor hats are covered in more detail because they were more extensively used and provided valuable insights and learning associated with my research questions. Whilst I included the Set Advisor and Facilitator hats in the design of the LTP I became aware of the other hats and the need to manage their interdependencies after my first set meeting in Program 1, when we were exploring the application of the 'Six Thinking Hats'[28] by Edward De Bono (1985) to a problem we were exploring.

I was conscious that these multiple hats seemed confusing to the participants and during the course of LTP 1, I sought ways to signal which hat I was wearing to ensure clarity. This included letting them know when I was changing hats. Ultimately though it did not appear to pose a big problem for the participants; in fact, the different hats allowed me to deepen and strengthen my relationship, as I had a number of contact points and from different perspectives. It also gave me ample opportunities to observe and reflect their impact and interaction with each other and within their AR sets.

To help me identify and signal when I was changing hats, I applied a process called 'Anchoring' to each of the different hats. Anchoring is a framework adopted from Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) (Bandler & Grinder 1982). It is essentially a means of creating an association between two things; "If this happens, then this always follows" I had learnt NLP principles more than a decade before; my NLP skills were now operating at an unconscious level. In this context I sought to consciously apply one of the NLP primary skills and to observe what followed.

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[28] Six Thinking Hats is a book (De Bono 1985) that divides the process of thinking into six parts, symbolized by the six hats, and shows how using the hats can dramatically transform the effectiveness of meetings and discussions.

The Facilitator Hat

My facilitation role was anchored by the use of the Auditory term[29] 'Facilitator' and the context was the large group. As the program unfolded the facilitator hat provided many opportunities for personal learning. Some of it was familiar, while much of it was unexpected and new.

During the course of LTP 1, I was becoming increasingly conscious that Frame 4 learning creates dissonance, dislocation, anxiety and pain, which contrasts strongly with much of the experience of learning previously encountered by the LTP participants. I knew I was relying on the overall design of the program to balance the amount and impact of 'P and Q' knowledge, and sometimes envied content-based expert session leaders who entertained and occupied the LTP participants with their well-plied and orchestrated 'P'. This was Frame 2 in action. Many of these experts were unaware of other ways of ennobling learning. Brookfield (1985) suggests that many educational specialists hold on to the assumption that learning is a joyful, fulfilling experience and tend to ignore the possibility of anxiety and pain in learning.

I was conscious that Frame 4 time I spent with participants would need to be weighted heavily towards 'Q' and in a way that challenged them. I would be working with their resistance while also focusing their efforts on coming to grips with what I knew would be a long journey. Knowledge of Bion's (1961) framework of dependency, pairing and fight-flight in action made me aware that this could elicit unconscious responses from participants. I needed to be alert to selecting the right momentum with which to bring their attention to such unconscious responses.

I had to pick the appropriate time to help the LTP participants to understand their unconscious processes especially those deeply ingrained behaviours that were

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[29] Auditory term – One of three learning styles used in NLP, usually applied as an acronym VAK- Visual, includes seeing and reading. Auditory, includes listening and speaking and Kinesthetic includes touching and doing.

getting in the way. I saw this as holding a container and I was acutely aware that I had to hold the container stable, until it intuitively felt right to help them achieve understanding through the process of consciously analysing their own unconscious processes. Hunter (2007) metaphorically represents this as an artful dance requiring discipline from the facilitator, much like life on the edge of a sword, and Taylor (1987) describes it as an intuitively-guided exploration of what is emerging.

At such times I felt alive and awake with the tension, knowing that this was the 'artful dance' of my practice, the creative 'present' space. This was me - being mindful, simultaneously, of the many possible permutations that could emerge from the process. This feeling was indefinable, residing somewhere in the heart and gut space as opposed to residing in the head. Current research links the heart to the processing and decoding of intuitive information (McCraty, Atkinson & Bradley 2004) and the facilitators' role was the creative edge, a co-creative voyage into the future.

(Leigh 2003) comments that:

> *"The facilitator has again navigated the difficult path of being a 'knower' while not being a 'foreteller' of the story created"*

I became aware of Heron's (1999) model during LTP 1, which recommends that a facilitator applies three modes of decision making to each of the six dimensions of facilitator activity: planning, meaning, confronting, feeling, structuring, and valuing. The three modes are summarised from Heron:

> *In the HIERARCHICAL mode:'' In this mode you make sense of what is going on for the group. You give meaning to events and illuminate them; you are the source of understanding what is going on.''*

> *In the COOPERATIVE mode: '' You invite group members to participate with you in the generation of understanding. You prompt them to give their own meaning to what is happening in the group, then add your view, as one idea among others, and collaborate in making sense.''*

> *In the AUTONOMOUS mode, "You choose to delegate interpretation, feedback, and review to the group. Making sense of what is going on is autonomous, entirely self-generated within the group" (Heron, 1999, p. 16).*

Using this model, the program relied on the content experts to work within Heron's Hierarchical mode, while I also occasionally used this mode, being mindful of cues around passivity, dependence and resistance. I worked primarily in the Cooperative and Autonomous mode, to reinforce the principles of my then emerging understanding of Frame 4. Being conscious at the same time, 'that too much cooperative guidance may degenerate into a subtle kind of nurturing oppression, denying the group the benefits of totally autonomous learning. Too much autonomy and laissez-faire on the part of the facilitator may encourage the participant to wallow in ignorance and chaos' (Heron 1999).

Heron's model had many similarities to my evolving understanding of what became my 4 Frames. It also reinforced my overall design of the LTP, the processes of which were factored in all three modes of decision-making.

Given the goal of achieving structural change in the organisation, I positioned myself as someone who could absorb–without reacting to them–the pent up frustrations, anger, and bitterness expressed by some of the participants. Menzies (1970) notes that organisations have an unconscious, shadow side to their functioning. Staff learn to act defensively and the organisation itself develops socially structured defense mechanisms. Earlier in my career as a trainer, I would react negatively to such defensive behaviours by focusing on shutting down the participant's negativity. Fortunately, later career roles had involved both counseling and coaching, teaching me the benefit of accepting expressed emotions non-judgmentally.

As participants voiced their frustrations, the whole group eventually moved to a position of trust wherein 'un-discussables' were brought up and dealt with. This happened more frequently as the program progressed, and I could mindfully and energetically deal with this process wearing my facilitator hat, although it was

sometimes exceptionally difficult to do so, when dealing with similar issues with members of the Feedsmoore steering committee and my own organisation EEBS.

Along with establishing an environment that facilitated openness, I used a number of different methods and tools to encourage learning and insight, including story telling, guided reflection, visualisation, mindfulness practices, chi-gong, silence, music, role-plays, real plays, skits, pictoems, photo-language, etc. My own learning arose not from the use of the tool or method as such, but from within my moment-by-moment awareness, remaining alert to the environment and drawing on different items as the moment dictated. I did not preselect many of these, apart from allocating time during the sessions to allow me to respond spontaneously to emergent issues. Much like a jazz musician improvises, the participants were aware or unaware cocreators in a generative and emergent process. This helped me to progress the understanding of my research question, particularly around observing and reflecting in the midst of action.

Many of my sessions had little structure and usually did not rely on prescribed content, as I responded to group generated issues and generated learning in the moment. This was intentional - while not without some risk - since it could generate a mixture of anxiety, fear and excitement about what lay ahead in the session. I was excited by the freshness, the unknown nature of the path we were stepping onto.

Looking back, I can see that there was an implied contradiction here, as I was embracing the practice of what the Zen Buddhists call 'beginners mind' I was also holding at bay the 'expert facilitator' and observed that the more I did so, the more I felt connected to the group. I was not facilitating in the sense of conducting as a conductor would conduct music, but was consciously positioning myself as part of a Jazz ensemble and in sync with the rhythm, tempo, beat and harmony of the group. All anxieties about the program disappeared when I was with the group, and were replaced by a wonderful sense of being in a fully 'present' state.

In doing so I was role modeling a different way of knowing and being to the group. I occasionally revealed to the participants my fledgling thoughts about the process and where we were headed. There were occasions when I did not know what to do next. I spoke about this honestly, offering choices sometimes, and none at others. I was role modeling what Bohm (1996) calls 'Proprioception' which is self awareness at the level of our thought. Issacs (1999) comment's: 'it seems to us that our thoughts just "appear". I am suggesting that this is not so. Suspension can give us access, enabling us to perceive the impulses that lie behind everyday thought'.

The Facilitators hat was a key enabler towards progressing my understanding of the research questions, helping me to use the actions associated with facilitation to mindfully look at the 'art of my practice'. The outcomes resonate to this day.

Program Manager and Process Consultant Hats

The Program Director role needed two hats. The first was the official hat of Program Manager which I wore when managing the program overall in the context of the steering committee meetings and those occasions when I acted as an agent and representative of the business school. The formal and legal authority implied in my role anchored the hat. Most of the participants had limited contact with this hat. Chapters 4 and 5 explored various aspects of the program manager hat and the strategies I adopted to work with both EEBS and Feedsmoore.

The second hat was that of a Process Consultant (Schein 1999). This was the hat that I attempted to wear consistently with the Feedsmoore steering committee and the Executive. I anchored this hat when I fostered joint problem solving. I attempted to do this by:

> **Involving the client in joint diagnosis** of the problem.

> **Sharing power** by not being 'the expert'; instead sharing the insights and conjointly agreeing a course of action.

Refraining from 'rescuing' the client by consistently enabling the client to see that there was no simple solution, as opposed to offering a prescriptive formulaic process.

Ensuring that the client owned the problem and solution: By helping the client to be proactive in working with the complexity inherent in their situation.

Role modeling flexibility: Through enacting openness and a willingness to learn from the journey.

Admitting my ignorance by not laying claim to a fountain of knowledge.

I was mindful of Schein's (1999) advice that an effective process consultant needs to develop a trusting relationship that re-establishes the participants' sense of self esteem, by equilibrating the status, thereby reducing dependency and counter-dependency.

I worked hard at helping the steering committee and Executive group to take ownership of the process. This hat had direct application to my research questions. I was consistently attempting to role model the behaviours we were looking to embed within the intervention. There was risk associated with this as; it could appear that I was not directly addressing the Executives' needs with a detailed plan of action. Fortunately, the many conversations I had with the steering committee, which included the VP HR, and OD Manager helped set up a platform for joint diagnosis and ownership.

The Counseling Hat

I wore the hat of Counsellor, which was anchored in the One-on-One sessions with participants, when debriefing psychometric instruments and listening to personal issues. I was conscious of the importance of not encroaching on the role of the Coach, since participants had their own personal coach. The Mentor/Sponsor role

was enacted by one of their senior managers, so I was careful not to encroach on that role also.

I was mindful to emphasise to all that this was not the hat of a therapist. I defined this hat as having the duty of effectively resourcing individuals to identify and resolve issues around the themes of Leadership, Change and Personal Development. Feedback on psychometric instruments, included: measures of Emotional Intelligence using the BarOnEQi (Bar-On 2005; BarOn & Handley 2003) preferences for dealing with and managing conflict, utilising the Conflict Dynamics Profile (Capobianco, Davis & Kraus 2004; EckerdCollege 2004) and identifying individuals strengths and preferences within a team utilising the Team Management Profile (Margerison & McCann 1990).

By helping the LTP participants to understand the results from the instruments, I gained insights into the deeper motivations, drivers and barriers linked to reflecting and acting on practice. The instruments provided a platform for my counseling hat, helping me to provide insights and thus enabling deeper conversations. Appendix A 6.2 expands on my learning; l examine both the BarOnEqi and Team Management Profile in some detail. Chapter 7 provides a detailed account of how the instruments helped me to learn about my Leadership strengths and areas for development.

The Set Advisor Hat

The context for the Set Advisor was the learning set. This hat was anchored with 'deep and present listening' by consciously slowing and deepening my breathing when I wore this hat. This elicited a state of being totally present with the small group and I was pleasantly surprised. I had assumed I would work primarily from a 'Visual' anchor, believing that my visual presence within the context of the Learning Set would suffice to signal an Anchor to that role. I now realise that what I was adding to that visual anchor was a 'Kinesthetic' (touch, feel) anchor through slowing and deepening my breathing, thus adding congruence to this state.

Discussions with each of the AR Sets identified the Set Advisor's key responsibilities and tasks were to:

- encourage the Set to identify and manage group processes
- encourage a process enabling the group to identify and manage different roles and personalities within the Set
- influence the Set towards identifying, naming and discussing what is happening, within the set and why
- help the Set deal with issues which may constrain progress for the group, and for individuals
- encourage the set to raise the 'un-discussables' and to gain resolution.
- enable the set to confront individuals within it, in regard to unresolved major problems
- step in when invited by the set, to act as a coach/counsellor.
- help the Set in enabling development and growth within the group
- encourage the Set to review both task and process achievement.
- facilitate the set to focus on identifying individual and group learning processes and ways to implement them within work teams.
- encourage participants to document their insights and learning
- encourage participants to work on their individual, functional and AR project learning goals
- encourage the group to self-manage

To achieve this, the Set advisor would need to use the following methods:

- Questioning
- Challenging
- Encouraging
- Supporting
- Coaching

This became an extensive list as each group contributed to it. I was concerned about meeting all of the expectations listed; however found in practice that I focused on different aspects of the list depending on the nature of groups' needs and their issues at the time. In retrospect what mattered more, was the discussion I had with each group which endorsed my role.

Figure 6 3 outlines the application of the DOOR cycle within the AR sets and their respective functional teams.
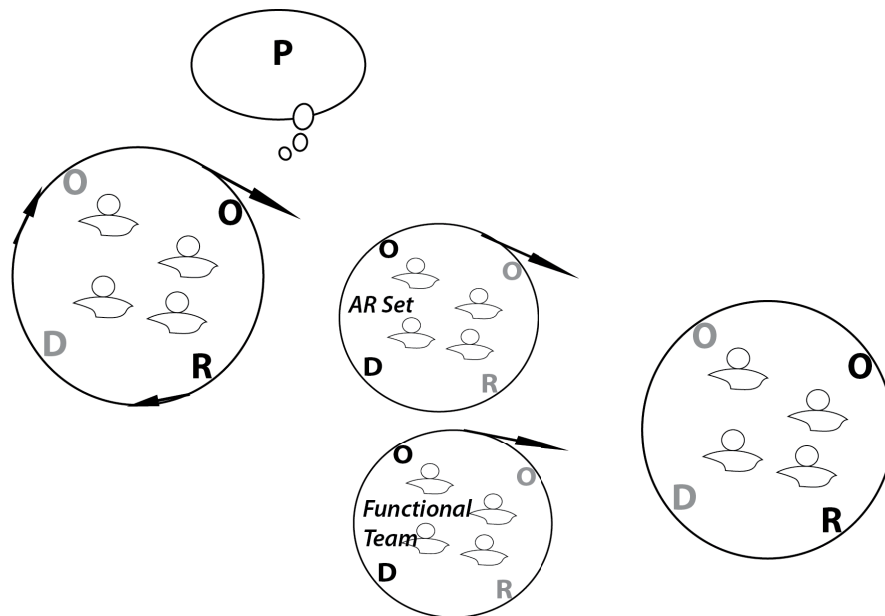
Figure 6.3 DOOR Cycles within AR Sets and Functional Team

The first circle represents the AR set members learning by Observing and Reflecting on the 'Programmed Knowledge' 'P' introduced via the residential modules. This helped them select Design and Operative elements for their AR project and their real-work functional team, represented by the two smaller circles. When the AR teams met they completed the cycle by reflecting on and reporting what they had Operationalised as indicated by the last circle. For example, an early session on day one of the first residential program concerned 'Rules of Engagement' during a

session on developing relational skills. Drawing on the work of (Kegan & Lahey 2001; Leiberman, Yalom & Miles 1973) individuals were given information about this process and other work-team contexts, which they were to apply as a skill in their AR team. They could choose to report back to their AR team members on the results of using the process and the learning they had gained.

As set advisor, I checked in with each group about their application of the 'Rules of Engagement', asking how they went about sharing those insights and what they gained from that sharing. I was becoming aware that many found the 'OR' process hard to do and tended to avoid it. The process of this Doctoral journey has also revealed that I can be equally guilty of this, so I decided to encourage the 'OR' process within the residential modules to reinforce the value of its practice. Allocating specific time for 'OR' is one way to ensure that it happens; this was true for me as well as the participants. Writing this sentence in the dissertation many years later has enabled me to realise the value of this focused time for reflection. The dictates of the Doctorate have no doubt forced me to mandate this time. It is highly unlikely I would have done it with this intensity or focus without the need to complete my Doctoral studies.

Along with dedicating time for reflection, another means to encourage this is to follow the advice of Schein (1999) who recommends that process consultants should focus on 'How things are done' before asking about 'What is done'. This advice had been significant for me earlier in my own career as a consultant and was vital now. Focusing on asking 'How' helped participants to comprehend the distinction between content and process, and sets up a practice-based framework with which to focus on Mezirow's (1999) third frame of reflection – 'Premise-based reflection'[30]. This three-pronged approach focusing on assessing content, process and premise emphasised the benefits of the DOOR framework for addressing deeper issues of personal, team and organisational leadership. Focusing on "How' also

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[30] Premise based reflection – Reflection that gets you to challenge the underlying beliefs and values that underpin an action or behaviour.

enabled us to look at the 'process of the process'. For example, I discovered that most participants initially found it easy to define and explain 'what' they learnt based on the 'content' from the module. When I purposefully withdrew from rescuing or helping to layer the understanding for them I encouraged them to look at the process happening within themselves and within others. I asked them to reflect on what happened when I breached this established norm and unwritten contract, whereby the participants listened passively as the facilitator gradually layered and unfolded the understanding for them. How did they and the group respond to it? And how did it make them feel?

I was aware that the overriding organisational meme at Feedsmoore was a fixation on the task and knew this would play itself out in the AR projects. Their focus was on the task and not the process or even the potential for learning. The President and Sponsors had agreed that learning associated with the journey had equal weighting with specific business outcomes of the project. However, past experience suggested that whilst this was stated explicitly, it was rarely translated into practice. Given that most managers are time poor, emphasis is nearly always placed on achieving outcomes at the expense of time spent on reflection and learning, and I anticipated this would happen at Feedsmoore.

Therefore I focused on ensuring that the conditions were in place for AR sets to attend to both the task and the learning associated with it. I encouraged them to seize every opportunity to learn from what was happening within the group. For example, at the start of the program, while groups were still fluid and forming, I sought to engage them in the opportunity of 'turning the lens onto themselves' by looking at the dilemmas and tensions they were experiencing during the process of forming their group.

This was not easy, because their tendency was to move quickly to imposing structure, since it provided comfort. I encouraged everyone to use the opportunity to look at the process *in situ* and to identify structures, which we impose to make sense of the world. There was great resistance to this suggestion, and I reduced this

focus in response to this resistance. In retrospect I can see that I was moving too fast. While I was fulfilling Schein's (1999) first principle of process consultation of 'always try to be helpful', I was in danger of not complying with principle two 'always stay in touch with current reality'. Only subsequent deep reflection helped me to recognise that I was selling my process to them and expecting them to immediately recognize its worth, forgetting that this had taken me time and experience to learn. I was imposing a strategy blessed with many degrees of hindsight – my hindsight – and forgetting how long I had needed to understand its benefits.

Group Need for Task Structure

Schein (1999) highlights that groups need what he calls 'basic task structures' which refer to more than a formal hierarchy or control system, or even what is taught to newcomers about 'the way things are done around here'. It refers specifically to stable and reoccurring processes regarding what the group defines as 'our structure'. These processes help the group to survive in the external environment. Comprehending the value of Schein's insights midway through LTP 1, I was better able to help the group navigate intentionally through this desire for task structure by leading conversations on the nature of chaos, turbulence and uncertainty drawing on the work of (Stacey 2005; Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000).

These authors emphasised that their exploration of the central question encompassed a more complex and chaotic journey. Though I had helped groups through this transition before, I reminded myself frequently that this process was alien and different for them, and I had to prevent myself from making statements, such as 'Let the Data Decide' and 'Order emerges out of Chaos' etc. I focused on reassuring them that they were doing well and it was ok to let the question emerge and base change on their research and conversations.

I had previous experience as a set advisor, though not for a program as long or involved as this. I felt reasonably comfortable with a number of aspects of the role, such as helping the set to focus on their learning and development, documenting

their insights, encouraging them to self manage and to deal with conflict. When I decided to intentionally use my experience for the Doctoral journey, I started to challenge what I had taken for granted by reviewing my earlier notes with a critical eye. The DOOR cycles in Figure 6.3 was a result of wanting to better explain the iterative cycles to one of the learning sets. My attempts at role modeling some of the behaviours I expected from the learning set, encouraged me to look at the subtle coercive strategy I was adopting to accelerate their insights, which was a self defeating strategy. I was imposing a structure on them; the very thing I was asking them not to do. Some years later, as I write this sentence, I see again with renewed eyes how hard it is to sit in the middle of an emergent situation without wanting to influence the outcome, however subtle that influence might be.

Given the various hats I wore and the number of discussions I had with various parts of the hierarchy at Feedsmoore, I took great care to adhere to a key principle of maintaining individual confidentiality; as a consequence I spoke less and listened more. This awareness gradually started to expand to the whole program. I also began to see every interaction I had with the client as the intervention.

I also became more aware as time passed that many of these hats fell under the general umbrella of Pastoral care (Wikipedia 2012) states that:

> *"The term is generally applied to the practice of looking after the personal and social wellbeing of students under the care of a <u>teacher</u>. It can encompass a wide variety of issues including health, social and <u>moral</u> <u>education</u>, behavior management and emotional support".*

Action Research Project Teams and Associated Issues.

Along with the preceding section on the Set Advisor Hat, this section draws on my reflections and learnings associated with the AR projects, which spanned a period of 12 months for LTP 1 and 15 months for LTP 2. In Chapter 4, I noted how there were

four projects in LTP 1 and three in LTP 2. Each AR team was a diverse group of between four and seven managers from across the business, along with a VP having the dual role of Sponsor and Mentor. I was the AR Set Advisor, meeting with each team during the residential modules and at prescribed times over the life of each LTP.

Each of the AR projects included substantial learning for the AR team members and myself. As expected, each team developed its own way of working and relating and each had its own unique issues and adversity to overcome. There were seven AR projects in total and I briefly comment on three of the projects in this section. I selected these projects as they best represent a cross-section of issues faced by the AR sets. Further insights and learning from these AR projects are attached to Appendix A 6 2.3

The AR project– 'How does Feedsmoore build a culture of effective follow-through and commitment'?

This Team was interestingly having difficulties in getting commitment from their sponsor. They were also experiencing difficulties with their line managers who failed to give the program the priority agreed to by the executive.

The AR set fortunately carried on despite these setbacks and by the second module, their research was starting to highlight deficiencies in Leadership, Reward, Selection, Planning and Measurement systems as being key areas to focus on.

Just after Module 2, two of the five team members had resigned from the organisation. I observed from a distance and chose not to step in, unless invited. The team was starting to fragment, with set meetings being postponed. I was worried, though I purposely continued to hold back, as I felt that they were senior managers and needed to deal with the issue. I also had a belief that they would persevere and get through. I waited for a few additional weeks for our planned set meeting. The atmosphere was somber and despondent and they looked beaten and worried. They were concerned about the volume of work needed to get the project through, given

the diminished resources. They were significantly concerned about how it would look within the business if they did not successfully complete the project. They commented: "We are stuffed".

I sat back and allowed them to talk about their frustrations. I asked a number of rhetorical questions. These questions had the effect of focusing them on the issues through third positioning. Bandler & Grinder (1982) and Wilber (2007) calls this third-person approach as 'Looking or Distancing'. This provided a dispassionate objective lens and could only be employed because I had previously allowed them to vent. I followed this up with a question that forced them to look at their present reality. We then future paced (NLP term) and adopted a Solution-Focused approach to the rest of the meeting.

I entered the meeting understanding there were serious issues I needed to, above all, demonstrate that I was listening to them holistically–listening to not only what they said, but empathically listening and acknowledging their emotions. I learnt to let go of my fear, for control and the need to overly direct the group and to trust in the process. I also used the meeting to help them to reflect on some of the models and methods that were taught in the modules. Their questions and quandaries developed links to "P"–The theory associated with it. This is another expression of Frame 4.

The group saw this meeting as a turning point and they went on to renegotiate the outcomes of the project with their sponsor and stakeholders. They likened their issues of working their way through adversity to the famous film, Cool Running (Turteltaub 1993), about a Jamaican Bob Sled team who competed in the Winter Olympics despite all the odds stacked against them. They commented that like the film, the adversity bonded them further as a group and in retrospect; they would not change what happened.

The AR project – What is Feedsmoore's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for the Future?

The EVP is effectively the deal or contract you make with your employees as an employer.

The OD manager, my sponsor, was part of the AR team. The one overriding signature theme for this set was that they executed their plan from the start. They also had a passion for the topic and a strong belief in what they were doing. At their second meeting they chose to rotate the leadership role and allocated a role to look after team dynamics. They adopted a formal meeting structure, created a database to collect their research and sought external input from one of the big global consulting firms in the area to help them with their research.

They were totally enamored with their topic and expressed that they wanted to get to the outcome and the conclusion. I got caught up in their enthusiasm, as this was an area of interest of mine at work. At this stage the key words used in business were 'The War for Talent', (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod 2001). (Hewitt 2002) found that 71% of employers in their survey saw a direct link between improving their employee branding and improved business results, and that a strong employer brand attracts high calibre job candidates, thereby increasing the competitiveness of business (Hieronimus 2005).

I challenged this group on various occasions about the perceived cohesiveness of the group, as there didn't appear to be any adversity or hiccups. They needed to look at taking responsibility and accountability for building a critical community, and be willing to challenge and support each other, not just cognitively but emotionally and relationally.

The AR set in their drive for the outcome-valued harmony over dissent; they devalued the storming and worked hard at preventing it from functioning (Tuckman & Jensen 1977). They grudgingly agreed that in their drive for the outcome they were missing the opportunity to learn from the journey as it unfolded. The learning

in this case was relational and process oriented as opposed to only progressing their cognitive understanding of the project topic. They were looking at the external representation of the horse rather than seeing the Trojan within. In other words, the project (Horse) was the container and the Trojans were the learning within. They modified their approach, though I was still left with the feeling that they could have done better.

During this time, one of the members of this set volunteered to make comments about the LTP when we opened Program 2 and, as discussed earlier, was instrumental in getting the LTP 2 participants to commit to the program. This demonstrated that they had acted on some of my suggestions.

The insight that adversity is important for learning parallels the whole of my doctoral journey. For example, understanding how my desire for perfection and getting it right was preventing me from completing writing for months on end was a revelation. I worked at understanding the deeper threads and underlying fears associated with perfection and getting it wrong, rather than constantly berating myself for procrastinating.

The AR Project - "Embedding of Metrics and Measures – The Cascading of OGSM"

Feedsmoore follows the OGSM framework, which stands for Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures. OGSM is a strategic planning tool developed in Japan in the 1950s to align the direction of multinational corporations around the globe. At the same time as helping the OGSM AR set, I was also beginning to work with other strategic frameworks that applied a more emergent and relational lens, including the Resource Based View (RBV) by Collis & Montgomery (2008) and Complexity and Complex Adaptive Systems (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000).

OGSM was identified as a project because of issues associated with embedding the methodology within the business. One of the problems with the OGSM methodology, to me, lay in its definition of what constituted an Objective and a Goal. This was the inverse order to what I knew as the convention, where 'Goals' establish where you

want to go and 'Objectives' are the specific steps you need to take to achieve your goals (Peterson, Jaret & Schenck 2012). This is not semantics, as Feedsmoore itself, in its Performance Development Processes (PDP), claims that a good objective must comply with the 'SMART' acronym, which stands for specific, measurable, achievable realistic and time bound. In the case of the OGSM an Objective is more of a broad Goal statement, in direct contradiction to the PDP process.

I spent some time attempting to understand this, hoping to reconcile the problems that I was observing. The OGSM AR team could not help me with this process. They accepted the convention and did not see the need to question the underlying assumptions. Given my own evolving understanding and advancing to a more non-rational viewpoint I decided that challenging the OGSM was a battle I did not want to enter, as the methodology was embedded globally within the organisation. Whilst I had a better understanding of the theoretical models and underpinning frameworks associated with planning and strategy, I was not privy to the thinking of the global executive who was calling the shots.

Research by Dress (1987), Mintzberg (1994) and Thomas, Litschert and Ramaswamy (1991) also highlighted that success hinged on organisations getting the buy in of managers below the Executive suite for it to work, and unless managers actively endorsed it, the strategy was unlikely to be implemented in practice.

This change is in alignment with my earlier discussions in Chapter 2 about Modernism's expressed need to contain and place boundaries around organisation and life's ambiguous situations (Willmont 1992) as opposed to postmodernism's openness and tolerance for diversity and the blurring or disappearance of boundaries (Rouleau & Clegg 1992).

Postmodernism's blurring of boundaries now included customers and suppliers being involved in the cocreation of organizational strategy. Research by (Collis & Montgomery 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Stacey 2000), validated this cocreative process along with strategy being enabled by conversations. Given this, I

came to the realisation that what mattered most was the conversation, engagement, and thinking associated with strategy. The literature was highlighting that this encouraged alignment and direction and perhaps compensated for the limitations inherent in the methodology.

I reconsidered the nature of my influence with this group. I had to refrain from wearing the expert consultant hat and reminded myself that it was the process hat that I primarily needed to focus on. I introduced discussions that lifted the frame to a broader perspective as part of my session on Performance Management. On the program we discussed Ralph Stacey's (Stacey 2000) view that strategic plans 'don't work', as they do not factor in the conditions of complexity and the impact of the emergence of unpredictability. I propose that organisations instead could be viewed as 'complex adaptive systems' that respond contingently to changing conditions (Bovaird 2008/05; Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000). To help deal with complexity; I proposed that it was imperative that leaders enable strategic conversations throughout the organisation.

To help the OGSM AR team see the limitations of focusing only on the methodology, I seized on a passing comment made by an AR team member about hardware and software and suggested that this was a valuable metaphor, proposing that the methodology could be considered as hardware and needs software (in effect the meetings, process, conversations, alignment) for it to work. This was an ahaa!! moment for the group. I suggested that the teams' learning associated with the OGSM might also be of benefit to the rest of the business and encouraged them to use the LTP cohort to trial their thoughts.

I encouraged the AR set and the LTP participants generally to understand that concepts of story and conversation are important ingredients in helping people engage with strategy. As the OGSM AR Set had agreed to facilitate part of the next module, I took the opportunity to commence that session on the OGSM and Performance Management with a story. I wasn't sure about how it would be

received and was tentative at first in its delivery. The story, titled, 'The Two Flags' is included in Appendix A 6.3, p.18

The story and the process worked well, enabling deeper insights about conceptual frameworks and the group was able to relate with real life stories about their workplace. They also saw that sometimes what may initially appear as oppositional views would be found to have common ground. (Belenky & Stanton 2000) comment that as learners see other peoples perspectives and issues from their perspectives, it disrupts their existing habits of mind. They call this 'connected knowing'.

The above example demonstrated the usefulness of using story to enhance the learning. The OGSM learning set session had now become part of a richer narrative. The story would percolate and help to transform their understanding. I could now introduce the concept that Goals, Objectives and Strategies do not operate on a linear, rational and deterministic form but are better understood as having a chaotic, nuanced and emergent frame.

I later realized that the story provided a useful metaphor about Leaders navigating through turbulence, complexity and change, by working together. This was contrasted with the 'games' metaphor in use within previous leadership programs in Feedsmoore "First Break all the Rules" (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). This metaphor implied a culture that challenged existing norms and practices. In reality Feedsmoore's current culture was transactionary and rule bound.

The OGSM project and process highlighted to me how managers and leaders worked at making sense of their reality despite cumbersome and complex frameworks that hindered them. Following the LTP, I continued my research and application on strategy and strategic thinking, applying my learning to client projects.

I learnt to become more conscious about how my desire to demonstrate my newfound expertise was used to influence this group. There was a danger of taking advantage of my Leadership role to influence the group. I thought deeply about my

motives and arrived at a place where I felt that enabling the group to understand the benefit of a supporting process to the methodology was congruent with the hat of the set advisor.

LTP Conditions and reactions

This section focuses on items of particularly significant learning that occurred for me during the life of the two LTPs. The topics do not follow a time sequence, but were selected because they impacted significantly on the program and have progressed my understanding and learning.

Specifically, I look at how the LTPs' different structure and longer term focus inevitably brought up unsettling reactions, and how structural and change-related issues at Feedsmoore impacted on the LTP. I also elaborate on my attempts to manage this and the learning gleaned from doing so.

The LTPs focus on what I came to later call Frame 4, with its emphasis on big 'Q' questioning by challenging established norms and deep myths generated big 'R' resistance, through a range of emotional responses from participants and the Executive. During the contracting phase, I had emphasised that there could be a big dip in energy and an increase in negative emotions as work pressures increased alongside the urgency to complete the AR project.

I had gained agreement to include 'Change and Adversity' as a component in the Lominger Competency chart, although it wasn't part of it. The steering committee began to experience push back from the participants, who complained that the program was not structured enough, that there was too much work and not enough time, and not everyone was pulling their weight. I had to remind the steering committee that this was a consequence I had predicted and asked them to refrain

from taking action and to simply listen with attention and ask the complainants what action they intended to take to improve their own situation.

I had briefed the GMs to expect such complaints and relied on the steering committee to take responsibility for monitoring the GMs responses. I had, in effect, arranged that participants would not be 'rescued' and therefore would need to make their own decisions and tradeoffs for getting the work done - including challenging and supporting each other through the journey.

This was where the real impact of the intervention was felt; I had to maintain a strong and focused stance. If Feedsmoore blinked, there was a risk that the deck of cards would collapse and would likely track back to a big 'P' program - effectively Frame 2 or 3. There was also a further risk, as senior management at EEBS had limited at best to no understanding of the methodology, they would have requested to narrow the risk and track the program back to a Frame 2 and 3. Looking back, this was a tense time for me, though few would have picked that I was working very hard to maintain the integrity of the LTP.

The Energy Worm

I regularly checked in with participants and the AR sets, asking questions to gain insights into how they were coping, monitoring their energy, mood and general feelings.

The Energy Worm (Figure 6.4) emerged from initial monitoring of energy levels midway through LTP 1. It represents what I sensed was happening to the cohort and is not comprehensive, nor does it account for all variances. As a highly subjective interpretation of what I was recording, it helped to highlight patterns of behaviours and responses and led me to closely monitor the mood, levels of stress and perceived commitment of both individuals and the group. I did this through holding brief conversations with sponsors, steering committee members, coaches and the participants during the duration of the program. The behavioural evaluations at the end of each module also provided good data.

Figure 6.4 The Energy Worm LTP 1

A larger foldout diagram is at the back in Appendix 6.4. The thin blue line moves between high, medium and low over the duration of the LTP. The left hand axis names the major activities of the program. Scanning the chart from August 2005, the LTP Participants were highly energetic as they entered the program; as a result of preprogram publicity and the normal expectations that a residential learning program can generate. Energy dipped during the first module as they were confronted by a learning approach so different to familiar norms. Generally the energy was higher during and after each module, and then picked up again after AR set meetings. The dips roughly approximate the phases of the team functioning model developed by Gersick (1988) See Figure 6.5, which tracked members' energy in line with awareness of time and deadlines.
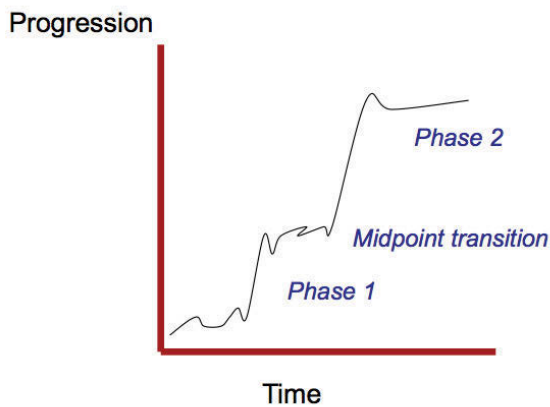
Figure 6 5 Gersik's Mid-Point Transition Model

This image highlights that the groups worked in fits and starts. Phase 1 in Gersik's model corresponds to half of the allotted time available to the group, which is usually set early in the meeting's schedule. This leads to a midpoint transition, a process of refocusing and reorienting direction set during the first phase. My observations highlight the drop in energy prior to, and during, this midpoint transition. In the second phase of Gersick's model, the implicit framework for solving a group's problems is challenged and revised and energy increases as the group works hard at completing the task.

This is important as project leaders need to factor in the reality of how most teams function. Energy goes up and down and I have learnt that this forms part of a normal process much like the tides in the ocean.

I had many opportunities to observe the AR sets and monitor their emotional state, and progress towards their goal. The ups and downs leading into January 2006 had a familiar pattern similar to other AR based programs I had led. When the dip started to occur, I consoled myself that this was familiar territory. However as it continued into February, I was becoming concerned, and I realised that though the group and the journey were familiar it was traversing unfamiliar territory. Given my tenuous situation within the school looking for paid 'billable hours' to maintain my contract, I could ill afford the LTP to collapse or to exert any more pressure on my already stretched time. I occasionally caught the elusive fingerprint of fear as it brushed my amygdala and recognised the need to look at my predicament and the opportunity it posed for me to learn once again about the 'Art of my practice'. Could I continue to willingly embrace the tenuousness of the situation and practise what I was preaching, regarding the nature of the emergent journey? Herein lay my learning about demonstrating Leadership; this was exactly where it counted and I, though at first reluctantly, rose to the occasion.

Module 3 of LTP 1 in March 2006, brought confirmation that the group as a whole had grappled with the dip in energy and were recommitting to the journey. I celebrated the beginning of Module 3 by inviting a GM, who was highly regarded

within the business as an effective Leader, to present a session on his personal leadership journey. This was a masterstroke. He drew on examples from life showing his perseverance through immense adversity whilst holding true to his values. This session melded seamlessly with a session by a two time Gold medal Olympian who spoke about challenging himself to stretch beyond what he thought was possible and to do this within the context of a team. His messages on resilience, and focus on the end goal were a powerful elixir for the group. I too was caught up in the sheer excitement of that session. The worm could not help but be propelled upwards. Following Module 3 in May 2006, LTP 1 continued on an upward trajectory.

I learnt that I had to demonstrate the courage of my beliefs and convictions by holding the course. The messages from their GM and the Olympian reinforced what both the group and I were going through and that a key trait of Leadership was about dealing with adversity, through perseverance, resilience and belief.

Leading Talent Program 2

LTP 2 commenced in May 2006, and while it had many similarities to LTP 1, it followed a trajectory that was vastly different. There were a number of structural changes within Feedsmoore, discussed elsewhere, that impacted on the energy of the program, and changes at EEBS were starting to negatively impact on my role and outlook. At this stage I was busy juggling my time to ensure that Program 1 ended on a positive note and I was energised for the long journey ahead with Program 2.

Structural changes at Feedsmoore impacted on the selection of LTP 2 participants. I was frustrated by having to chase the OD manager and the TM on many occasions. Participants were only informed about their selection just before the program began which was not an ideal introduction to a lengthy program. In retrospect, this was a warning sign, and while I noted it at the time, I had to focus my energies on the immediate needs of the program. I learnt that despite my best efforts, I had to learn to let go and leave it to fate.

Prior to LTP 1, I had facilitated a session for the executives to select the AR projects. We developed a list called the Project Bank where six projects were put forward for the participants of LTP 1 to select from. Given things were now happening at the last moment in LTP 2, I was informed that the executive, along with HR, had met and decided to select the projects themselves. The projects provided were presented as a '*fait accompli*' There was no bank of projects from which to choose. While experience suggested that availability of choice encourages ownership, involvement and dialogue, it also demonstrated that participants wanted to work on real projects that they felt would have real impact on the business.

All three projects focused on the theme of Innovation under three different lenses: Consumer, External Collaboration, Culture and Organisational Capability. I voiced my concerns to the OD manager; however there was not much we could do. Given the changes in the organisation and the complex business issues the executive had to deal with, the criteria around AR projects would have resided in the remote recesses of their mind and they did what was expedient, given the time. In any case, I decided to offer a choice by offering participants the choice of the project that they wanted. This notion of choice is congruent with the underpinning philosophy of Frame 4 whereby participants learn about the underlying and subjective meaning associated with actions (Bryman 2008) and learn to apply a critical lens challenging these discourses, world views and metaphors (Inayatullah 2007, 2008). My learning involved doing the best I could, given the situation had already happened, and I looked at ways to still work with the principle of choice and seeing the circumstances in a positive light. None of the LTP participants were any wiser about the lack of a Project Bank, though I knew that the process was diminished.

I noticed that participants came to LTP 2 with both excitement for the journey ahead and also far more trepidation than those in LTP 1. Word had spread that this was a challenging program. They commented that Program 1 participants did not disclose much about the program, wanting them to go through the process, and further commenting that it felt like a secret society, which made them both intrigued and worried. The President did open the program and Alex, a participant from LTP 1,

challenged participants to take a risk and to be part of the journey, and the energy picked up and sustained a high for the rest of Module 1.
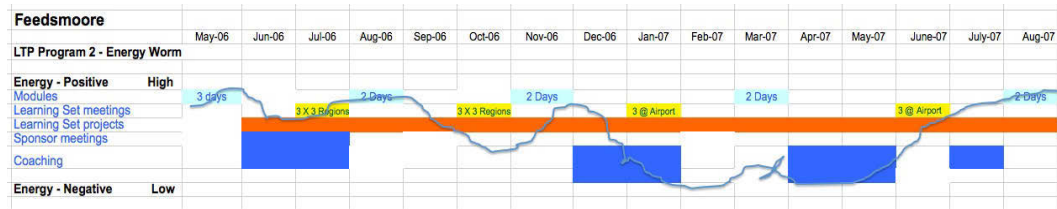
Figure 6 6 The Energy Worm LTP 2

A similar sequence to LTP 1 unfolded, (see Figure 6.6 and a larger diagram in Appendix 6.4) whereby energy was higher during and after the modules and picked up again after AR set meeting. Interestingly the energy dip around the mid-point transition was more protracted and lasted close to five months. This was partly because many of the key stakeholders in the LTP process had left Feedsmoore and their understanding of its value left with them. I tried to engender a deeper understanding with the new Training Manager and his team about the program, however, time constraints and their perception of priorities no longer worked in my favour. Coordinating Module 3 became a logistical nightmare. The AR sets were requesting an extension of time. Following discussions with the participants and the Training Manager, an extra, module (4) was introduced and I contracted an expert on Innovation to spend a day with the cohort. The final module (5) was deferred a further 3 months.

LTP Program 1 finished in August 2006 with resounding success, although critical issues emerged. Around October 2006 I was receiving news that cohort 1 felt that they had been on a journey that had fundamentally changed their views about Leadership, and were challenging the executive to role model the desired behaviours that they had worked so hard to achieve. Many felt disillusioned that their expectations were not being met. While I had identified this as a potential issue with the steering committee during the contract phase, I was concerned about the potential impact, given the changes at Feedsmoore.

To address the need to improve the skills of the executive, the steering committee had agreed to a program on mentoring for sponsors, which could have provided additional skills. The program was to be developed and facilitated by Feedsmoore's training unit, but it did not eventuate. This had ramifications for the program in that the Executives were not operating at a skill level that matched the expectations of the LTP cohort, who also reported to them.

Research data highlights that many executives felt that Leadership development was for others rather than themselves (Argyris 1983; Chatterjee & Hambrick 2007; Diamond 1987; Galinsky et al. 2006). Similarly, (Stacey 2000) looked at power relationships and political processes in organizations when leaders engaged in double-loop learning and exposed relevant negative feelings and the cover-ups and games they and others were playing. To me, such learning is bound to upset people and can arouse fear of losing control, leading to increased obstruction, increasing control, which then reduces commitment to complex learning.

This was occurring midway through LTP 2. Executives who had not been fully briefed on the nature of this learning journey found it hard to understand the deep learning-taking place in the program. To their credit, they asked me to provide them with an abridged version of the LTP so that they could get up to speed and learn the frameworks. I provided this, with the comment that the real learning happened at a level that wasn't necessarily embedded in the content of the modules, but in the journey as a whole with its inherent complexity and adversity. An overview of the condensed program is attached as Appendix A 6.5.

Structural Changes at Feedsmoore and Impact on the LTP

Mintzberg (2004) says, Leaders need to get down into the trenches and get their hands dirty. In my experience it is in the trenches that we get to to prise apart and understand the underlying needs and motivations and to experience the full impact and brunt of human emotions. Having worked in the area of social and organisational change, I was reasonably adept at studying the politics and subtext of situations and maneuvering my way through them; invariably it involved

challenging established practices and the hierarchy. This inevitably took its toll and I left to work as a consultant, enjoying the advisory and external change agent role. The role at EEBS thrust me back into the viper's den.

I found that a decade of working for myself had affirmed my disdain for politicking and left me with a deficit in the arts of subterfuge, manipulation and political rhetoric. However, I was slowly re-engaging with others and learning to work in a hierarchy. The structural changes at Feedsmoore and EEBS and the resultant dramas associated with all this were challenging me to re-engage with these aspects of human behaviour.

The structural changes in the organisation critically impacted on the LTP in a number of ways. Just prior to LTP 1 there had been a round of redundancies, which I only learned about after the contract was signed. At the second steering committee meeting, I was told informally that another restructure was about to happen, with a second round of redundancies being offered. During this time, the BDE and I spent considerable time Gantt charting the proposed 10 programs, with dates, sessions and critical issues. Given the changes in the organisation and the complexity of the program, we realised that the proposed number and frequency of programs could not be sustained within the time frame planned. We recommended a maximum of two additional LTPs per year, following LTP 1. This was a pragmatic recommendation, which I knew meant less revenue for EEBS and therefore would not be seen as a good decision.

This was a decision that had to be made given the facts. At this stage I was mitigating any possible risks that would impinge on the quality outcome of the program. My assumption was that following a successful pilot, we would gradually build momentum and run all ten programs, eventually generating revenue between 1.1 to 1.3 million Australian dollars. The 10 programs would take a few more years to complete than originally suggested. The BDE agreed and we proceeded. Looking back, apart from programming fewer programs per year, there was no further thought given by either Feedsmoore's representatives or me as to how a complex

program such as the LTP could be sustained over time, given the inevitable changes organizations go through.

On rereading our grand plans for the ten LTPs, I realise the illusory aspect associated with Gantt charting and the subsequent time spent on the planning process. This was false comfort, wanting to isolate and quantify all of the variables, when in fact I was deeply mired in disorder and randomness at the time. In effect we were all dealing with a highly emergent and chaotic process, what (Massarik 1990) calls ultimate chaos, where it is unclear about what we are dealing with. *'…There being no information regarding the nature of the stuff that is before us, which in turn has no structure, no predication is possible*'.

As part of the restructuring process, I learned that Feedsmoore's HR function and staffing was being reviewed, which had both immediate and long-term consequences for the LTP.

Towards the end of LTP 1, the OD manager took on an overseas posting and handed the reigns to a Training Manager, now part-time. The President also left not long after the end of the first module of LTP 2.

Then a new Permanent Training Manager arrived after Module 2 of Program 2 was completed. The people involved in the design of the program were leaving and the organisation no longer had a structural need to look at synergistically managing separate businesses. The President's departure effectively signaled less of a centralist approach and the four businesses became segment focused, though the executive espoused the need to work together.

The new Training Manager did not have time to understand the framework and methodology of the LTP program, though he genuinely did try to understand it. He was promoted from within the business and had a sales training background. This had consequences for the LTP. I was concerned for both our tacit and contractual

agreements. There was little capacity in Feedsmoore to coordinate and drive the process.

The discretionary time that I had expended over five months in the lead up to the program had been critical for achieving sign off and establishing common understanding. This had failed to factor in the continuous and evolving nature of change. I can now recognize my guilt of enacting, and seeing, change as a 'step' process of movement from one steady state, followed by a brief period of uncertainty to a new steady state (Kirkbride, Durcan & Obeng 1994). However, given the 'busyness' inherent in my role and my enthusiasm to implement the Program I failed to anticipate the longer-term ramifications of the loss of key stakeholders, assuming that it was in Feedsmoore's best interest to ensure that the right handover occurred. In hindsight I see this rational lens blinded me to such vast change. I had had no conversations with either individuals or the steering committee about how to sustain tacit and contractual understandings associated with the program. My learning here is to factor in potential downstream consequences of any future intervention as part of a possible future.

Issues within LTP 2 were heating up and building towards the expected dip of the midpoint transition. A key difference was that there was far more change in the organisation. The reorganization was starting to gain momentum and people with a tacit understanding of the LTP were no longer available (for support). Without these advocates, the Executive was becoming increasingly concerned. I wasn't aware of the depth of this concern until the now new Training Manager contacted me with the news that the executive had commissioned a review of the LTP. The LTP Review findings and my insights are contained within Appendix A 6.5.

Evaluation of the two LTPs

I was concerned that the standard evaluation process used by EEBS and Feedsmoore would not do justice to the depth and breadth of learning associated with the LTP. I understood I needed to link assessment processes for the purpose of accreditation, and Feedsmoore wanted to evaluate the program and the change in behavior associated with the Lominger competencies and Gallup results. EEBS also had a format of 'Reactionary' level evaluations that needed to be complied with. I worked at accommodating all of these needs, though I knew that capturing all of the rational and didactic elements was the easy part. I also knew that many aspects of the learning that occurred on the program would remain tacit and inarticulate.

The LTP within its emergent Frame 4 lens attempted to shift and create a new discourse about leadership, by encouraging participants to challenge the assumed norms and frames of reference held by them and the business. The fact that most LTP participants did significantly change their behaviours is evident in such things as the way they challenged the behaviours of their superiors. While the outcome was positive for them, it did create dissonance and led ultimately to the third program being deffered and the cancellation of future programs.

Detailed below is the process I adopted for the evaluation of the program. As this was an extensive process with a lot of data with, I only touch on key points. The LTP applied all four levels of Kirkpatrick's Model of evaluating training outcomes. These move from reaction (1), to learning (2), to behaviour (3) and to results (4) (Kirkpatrick 1996; Smidt et al. 2009).

The LTP incorporated evaluation stages at:

- 'Reaction' (Level 1) through initial evaluation sheets.
- 'Learning' (Level 2) through role-plays, case study, skits, discussions, hypotheticals and questions framed around the Lominger competencies.

- 'Behavioural' (Level 3) involved the application of learning gained via the LTP to their functional team contexts and applying it within the AR sets as part of the projects and feedback about this.
- 'Results' (Level 4) measured by business outcomes on delivery of AR projects and improvement in line manager skills as measured by the Gallup results and pre and post program assessment of Lominger competencies. The additional LTP Review provided feedback on the continued application of learning within functional areas and the significantly improved results on their Gallup scores, six months after the program finished.

Because of the complex nature of the program and the need to challenge behaviours, I understood that the reactionary level evaluations or the 'happy sheets' might not be that happy, particularly early in the program. This was balanced with my understanding that the big information-based experts providing cognitively focused, lower risk Frame 1 and 2 materials would provide a boost to the evaluation scores preventing them from being too low. Figure 6.7 shows the quantitative evaluations for each of the 3 modules for both programs. Scores are out of 100%.

Evaluation Feedsmoore LTP 1 and 2						
Program	LTP 1			LTP 2		
	Work Applicability	*Value*	*Learning*	*Work Applicability*	*Value*	*Learning*
Module						
Module 1	77	75	70	84	84	78
Module 2	80	74	72	77	77	76
Module 3	87	84	78	79	80	82

Figure 6 7 Quantitative Evaluation Scores for LTP 1 and 2 Modules 1 to 3

The quantitative scores in Figure 6.7 are representative of level 1 'Reactionary level' Evaluations. It provides the percentage scores for Modules 1 to 3 for LTP 1 & 2 under the headings Work Applicability, Value and Learning. The scores reflect my earlier concerns about low scores. Module 1 of the LTP with 77% fell in the bottom

10% of EEBS's evaluations and Module 2 was marginally better. I consciously ignored the scores and the implications of the monthly tracking.

Program	LTP 1		LTP 2	
	Quality of Learning	*Work Applicability*	*Quality of Learning*	*Work Applicability*
Module 4	83	91	80	88
Module 5			81	86

Figure 6 8 Quantitative Evaluation Scores for LTP 1 and 2 Last Modules 4 and 5

The final Module 4 in LTP 1 and Module 5 in LTP 2 assessed the whole program, focusing on percentage scores covering two areas; Quality of Learning Achieved and Work Applicability. I comment on the qualitative elements later in this section. These modules achieved average to above average scores in terms of EEBS's evaluations.

	LTP 1	LTP 2
Overall Program	88	85

Figure 6.9 Overall Quantitative Evaluation Scores for LTP1 and LTP 2

The overall program scores above achieved average to above average scores in terms of EEBS evaluations. Given the complexity of the intervention, I was more than happy that it achieved this basic and crude measure.

As part of the evaluation for the overall program, participants completed a comprehensive assessment based on the Lominger competencies which measured both pre and post program changes.

Leading talent participant perceptions of their lominger competency capability
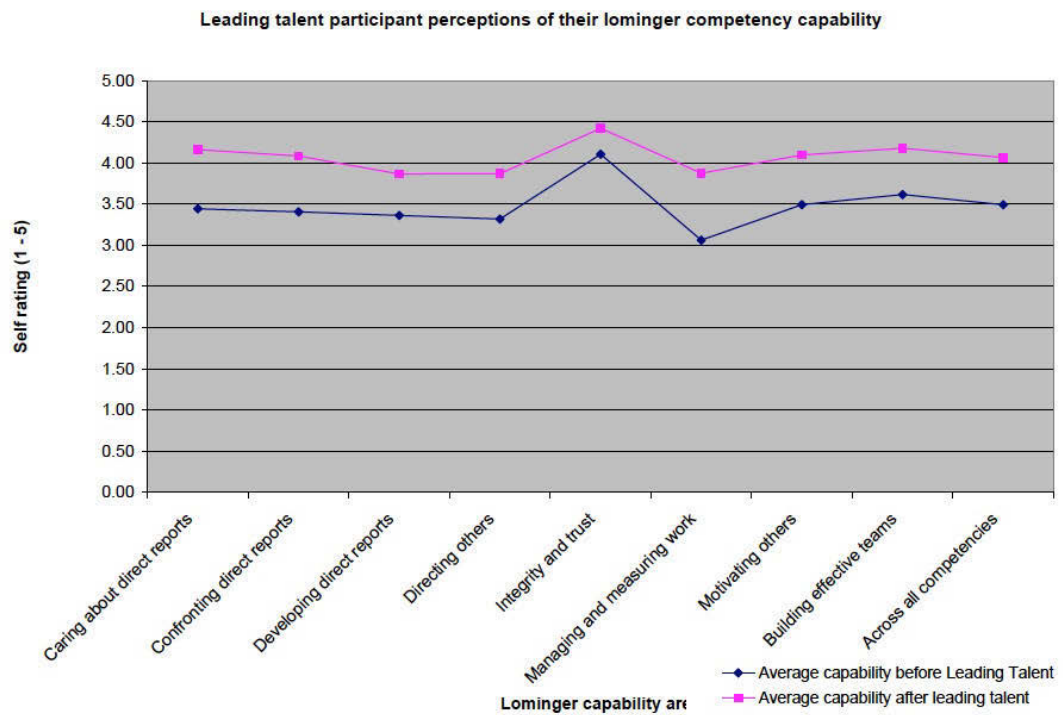
Figure 6.10 Lominger Competencies Pre and Post Scores for LTP 1

Given that Feedsmoore had tried various other approaches with little to no change in behaviour, there was an average capability increase of between .32 for Integrity and trust to .72 for Caring about direct reports, which was significant for the business.
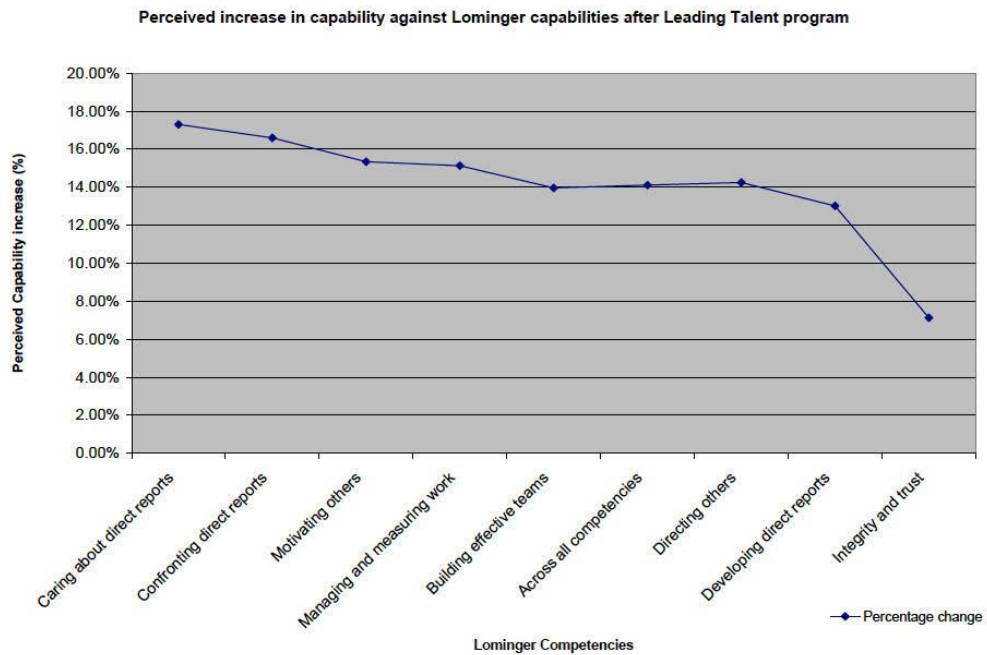
Figure 6.11 Lominger Competencies increase by Percentage for LTP 1

The data is also represented as a percentage with Caring for direct reports achieving an overall increase in capability of 17.30% and Integrity and trust, which was already high, achieving an increase of 7%. This chart was another way to represent the data and provides a good visual representation about the perceived increase in capability for each of the competencies.
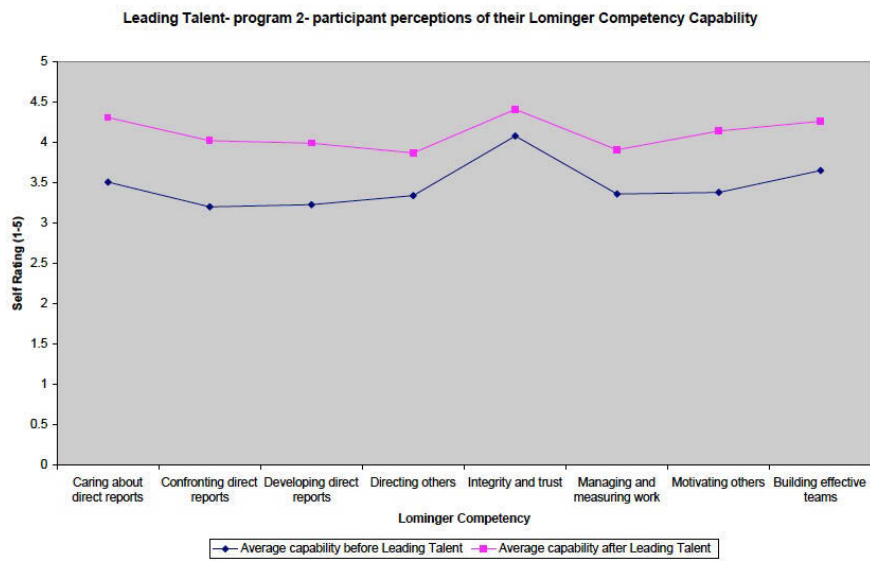
Figure 6.12 Lominger Competencies Pre and Post Scores for LTP 2

The results follow a similar pattern to LTP 1; there was an average capability increase of between .33 for Integrity and trust to .82 for confronting direct reports.
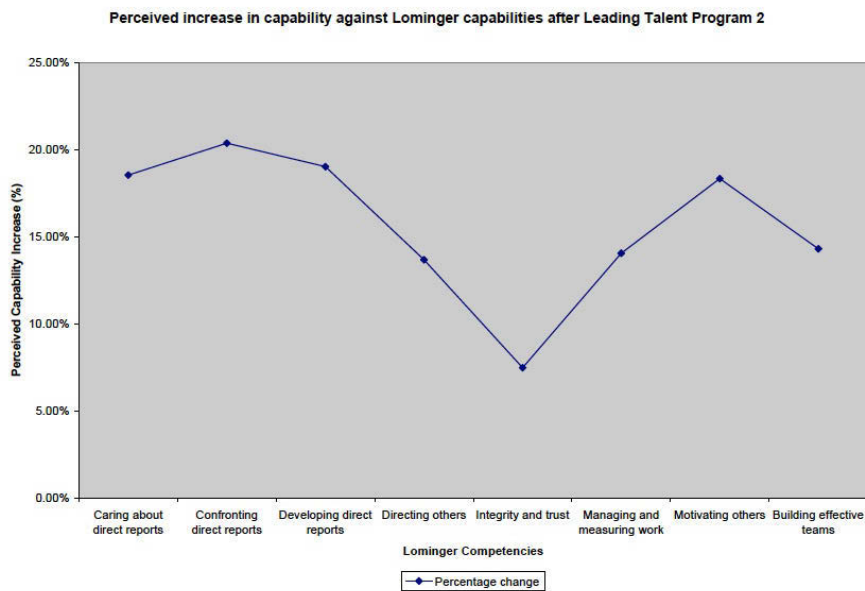
Figure 6.13 Lominger Competencies Increase by Percentage for LTP 2

The percentage increase in capability ranged from 20.40% for confronting direct reports to 7.5% for Integrity and trust.

Qualitative Evaluation

Qualitative comments were extensive and provided a richer picture about how participants felt about the various aspects of the journey. The selected comments are clustered using Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation.

Reactionary (Level 1)

Comments about the training modules and their contribution to their learning include:

> *Lots of variety, different models, theories, tools, practices that provided something for all during the program*

> *Great content superbly put together and very applicable. Loved the models, theory and teaching style*

When asked about the presenters, comments include:

> *Some very high calibre people that gave some great insights and XXX, XXX were the standouts with pragmatic application*

> *Personally, I found the presenters with real life examples more engaging than more academically based but understand the need for both*

In summary, qualitative feedback indicated that the flow of the modules and the duration worked well. There was room for minor tweaking, and the steering committee, using an iterative process of Observing and Reflecting, made modifications as the program progressed. Much of the feedback confirmed that the mix of presenters worked effectively. As is usually the case each participant had his or her preferences for style and material. Overall it was clear that all of the learning styles were targeted and catered for.

Demonstration of Learning (Level 2) and Behavioural Evaluation (level 3).

One comment illustrative of many, noted the benefits and challenges of AR sets:

> *Quality group of peers who I have grown to fully respect and admire*

Revans (1980) phrase about working together as 'Comrades in Adversity' came to mind. This group of senior managers supported and challenged each other through some tough times in the organisation and it was good to hear them express what this lived experience meant for them.

An example of level 2 and 3 was the implementation of learning within the LTP participants' functional teams. Comments included:

> *This was the key opportunity that the course provided – given the twelve-month timeframe – the ability to test and trial what you have learnt shortly after each session while it is fresh in your mind*

> *Was able to apply many small learnings to (1) build trust with new team (2) to be more decisive about people's decisions, be fair and transparent*

When asked would you recommend this program to others:

> *I am glad I went and grateful I got the opportunity. An experience I will treasure for the future and would recommend to everyone! It helped me with understanding myself and others and will benefit the organisation through my application of models in the teams I lead. Great! Loved it!*

> *It's taken months of discomfort and often me challenging why the course was structured in such a different learning style to the ... action paced style to realise that I've learnt so much more taking the time to reflect and gain the input via drip feed and constant top-ups*

This is the measure of Frame 4 learning; that it impacts the 'real' environment, when Leaders, with support from peers, willingly experiment and play with new and novel ways of knowing, doing and being.

'Results' (Level 4) the measure of business outcomes

As part of the external review a number of Program 1 participants provided feedback on the application of learning and the outcomes gained six months after the program. These comments represent the tenor of their comments.

> *The formation of a high-performing team delivering more business value than we ever have before (direct feedback from my client groups). Contribution to future success of the business by developing credible and talented current and future business managers*

> *My team results were the best on record in terms of beating all assigned metrics for the channel, including beating the plan, and better than agreed overheads. Able to make change management decisions more successfully and swifter, and make them stick, with attention to the hard issues, and the emotional issues with such changes*

> *For me, there are two outcomes from the AR project: 1) The presentation on the day and actual business recommendations and 2) all of the lessons over the 12 months amongst the dynamics and interactions amongst the project teams. Area 2) is where I see a majority of the benefits for the business. The lessons from this project team re. organising meetings between people located at multiple sites, rescheduling, working with all of the different characters, running the XXX profiles on the team members, discussing our ways of working, who should be the creative inputs? who should organise, minute, drive, conclude, produce etc? There are so many learnings here that I have been able to apply back to my team every day. That is the real value*

These comments were obviously a cause for celebration.

When asked about notable weaknesses, the following was provided:

> *The offering is counter cultural to traditional Feedsmoore, which comes as a 'shock' to participants: need to be smarter at smoothing the transitional pathways*

> *We are lacking rigour in holding participants to account for improvement following investment*
>
> *Having my director on the program now. He has far greater appreciation of what I was going through when on the journey. I think this is missed, if no connections are made from the outset*

Final Act

The project presentations for both programs were a resounding success. My GM was a guest at the formal dinner for Program 2, which was a celebratory affair. Figure 6.14, the dinner invitation, included one of my paintings and pictoem, which had resonance for the participants. It was used along with other pictoems as part of a photo-language process I facilitated with the AR sets.

Within the dinner invitation, reference is drawn to the beginning of the program where the President as the chief of the tribes in the opening skit was tipped upside down as part of the initiation process. The chaotic nature of AR is commented on with the notion of supporting and being there for each other. The reference to 'counsel sought and sparingly given' referred to how far they had come as a group and an organisation from a reliance on the expert and authority figure to one where they co-jointly grappled with true chaos and adversity and came through.

The pictoem was also a reference to how different this program was; it enabled a conversation about the need to discover ourselves - that no matter how advanced we become materially/technologically, the inner journey and quest continues.

I also received an email from the Training Manager on the afternoon of the last day of Program 2 following the presentations. To say that I had a big grin on my face is an understatement. See his comments in Figure 6.15

LEADING TALENT
August 29-30

August 29-30 - 2007
Aitken Hill
Leading Talent Program
Feedsmoore

The group assembled one last time together at Aitken Hill to present their Action Research Projects and to celebrate the finale of the Leading Talent program.

The program was opened at Weribee in a mansion, next to the zoo by AWB There were three teams that quickly formed into tribes, chanting in unison to a rhythmic pulsating beat.....they hoisted the chief (AWB) upside down so that he may see the world as it really was- down under.

The program was a real journey that spanned over a year with many ups and downs.

Action Research was the frame and true to its nature it was chaotic and frustrating. Many sought and longed for external counsel which was sparingly given.

Many discovered that riches lay within the depths of their own oceans and within the hearts and minds of their 'Associates'.......

Schedule for Celebratory Dinner- 29th August 2007
7.00pm - Drinks
Entree
Speech - PW
Main Meal
Speech - MA
Dessert
Thank you - Eugene Fernandez Thank you - Participants

Figure 6.14 Dinner Invitation Pictoem

To: e.fernandez@

Subject: Thank you

Eugene, firstly l was thrilled to hear associates recount such powerful messages during the presentation yesterday.

The key themes of self-discovery, style flexibility, leadership, the imperative of people skills, emotional intelligence, alignment, etc was both powerful and persuasive.

l wanted to thank you for your support of a successful Program 2 conclusion. Your patience, professionalism and sheer will led to a great outcome for all. The similarity of the journey to program one was somewhat frightening!

Figure 6.15 Concluding Email from Feedsmoore's Training Manager

Observations and Reflections

Chapter 6 addressed the nub of the research question about the learning that occurs when - as a leader - I shift my focus from <u>A</u>ction to <u>O</u>bservation and <u>R</u>eflection. The chapter explored a number of major issues, which helped me to reflect on my behaviour and to implement actions to change them.

 I learnt the importance of building better relationships with my senior managers. In this case, exploring options to influence the Dean to open the LTP might have worked better as opposed to following the established protocols. This important lesson has influenced much of my subsequent work influencing senior management. I now engage them earlier in the intervention by selling the benefits of their involvement and consistently following up.

I learnt more about the application of Covey's (1988) first three habits; Be proactive, Begin with the End in Mind and Put First Things First. I now design skits and simulations in my programs that integrate key messages within the process much like the opening ceremony I used at Feedsmoore in Module 1.

The program allowed me to reflect on the interrelationship between P, Q and R and its application in complex and emergent programs. As a consequence of my observations and reflections of the LTP, the 4 Frames of learning emerged and the thinking associated with the model progressed through the life of the Doctorate.

The Multiple Hats linked to my role as Program Director Leadership, enabled me to discern the different perceptions and interdependencies involved in my engagement with Feedsmoore. Each of the hats provided insights and learning at a far more granular level than if I had reflected on my role at its generic level. This learning identifies the need for leaders to get down into the trenches and dig for nuggets as much as observe from the top of the control centre.

My role as a Facilitator and Leader has been enriched as a consequence of the work with Feedsmoore. I have fine-tuned my radar around identifying and naming unconscious processes within groups, immersing myself fully with the beat and tempo of the group whilst simultaneously having the capacity to see what is happening from third position. I have greater comfort and expertise at facilitating open sessions that respond in-situ to group and individual needs and to respond spontaneously to emergent issues.

My understanding of action research is richer and my role of Set Advisor within AR interventions has improved as a direct result of my observations and reflections of the LTP. I now use the energy worm as a monitoring tool within many of my programs. Participants and AR teams now use it to self-monitor.

I learnt that story, narrative and conversations are important ingredients in helping people engage with strategy and leadership. As a consequence of the LTP and the Doctoral journey, I have improved my skills in this area and now help senior teams within organizations to accommodate a more emergent process in keeping with some of the principles of Frame 4.

I discovered my resilience and strength to lead in the face of adversity and to move beyond it despite personal setbacks, giving me confidence to continue my work as a Leader designing and implementing interventions in the area of organisational change.

As a consequence of writing the dissertation and as an example of my continued use of observation and reflection, I utilise Snowden & Boone (2007) Cynefin Framework, in Fig 6.16, as another means to gain an insight into the Feedsmoore intervention and the Frames of learning.

Moving from Frame 1 Simplicity to Frame 4 Complexity
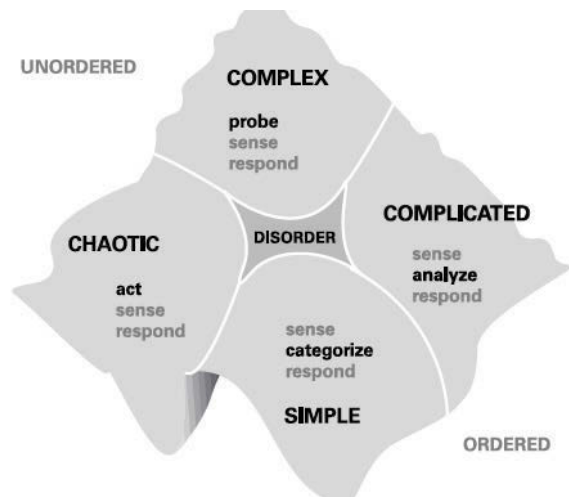
Figure 6.16 Cynefin Framework

Using the framework above, the Feedsmoore Frame 4 intervention resided in the Complex Domain. Feedsmoore's ultimate intent could be expressed as a desire to immerse their managers in the complex domain – although this image may not have been useful at the beginning. To achieve this shift involved starting in the Simple Domain, then moving to the Complicated Domain and finally over to the Complex one. During the time frame of LTP 1, there was a review by a consulting firm, which resulted in a restructure and redundancies.

This immersed the program participants into the Chaotic Domain of the Cynefin framework as many of the assumptions about the employee contract and the business model were now being challenged at a fundamental level. In hindsight - given the actual chaos within the organisation - it is possible to see how the added complexity imposed by participation in the LTP and its different methodology added to the stress, which the participants had to manage. Both my experience and research indicates organizations often implement Leadership based development programs during times of transition and turmoil (Petriglieri & Petriglieri 2010).

Other research by Bain (1998) highlights that many of these programs provide a surrogate for the social systems that are being dismantled by the restructuring, and as a result, business schools become co-opted into providing a place wherein these difficult experiences can be expressed. The LTP became one of these places – a safety zone wherein deep concerns could be expressed safely. The added workload with regards to time and adversity imposed by the LTP was balanced by the safe haven that was created for the program participants.

Through this period I reflected on the irony of my own position in EEBS, which was also being restructured and where I was feeling isolated on many levels. It was both contradictory and poignant that Feedsmoore was paying large fees to the business school to run Leadership programs while the school was unable to implement its own advice for itself. (The business school also provided advice on Mergers and Acquisitions as part of its offerings).

My understanding of designing and implementing deeper interventions within organizations now encompasses a much richer landscape where my consciousness, development and values are intricately linked to the tapestry being weaved.

Chapter 7 expands on my personal learning and growth.

Chapter 7

DOOR to SELF

The three preceding chapters focused on the Feedsmoore case study, providing a factual account of my interpretations and insights about my role in designing and operating the Leading Talent Programs. Chapter 7 exposes my dilemmas, and key insights around my personal journey, during that period. A critical view of the self unfolds through the use of different lenses and psychodynamic processes.

Design of DOOR to Self

The focus of this chapter looks at the 'auto' in autoethnography, i.e. it explores the personal and inner side of my journey that has culminated in the writing of this dissertation. This is akin to a process combining confession (Judeo-Christian tradition) with discovery (journey of spiritual discovery). Marcus (in Foley 2002) calls this 'confessional reflexivity', (see also Kondo 1990; Ellis 1995 and Behar 1996).

- The <u>D</u>esign of this chapter will focus on the theme of who am I?
- The <u>O</u>perating element of the DOOR model will be explored under the theme of – How have I come to understand myself?
- The <u>O</u>bservation and <u>R</u>eflection elements of the DOOR model will be explored under the themes of - What did the Leading Talent Program bring to me, and Where am I now?

Who am I?

I heard myself eating in silence. The porridge became an object of fascination, influenced by the morning's session on Kria Yoga, which is a combination of

meditation and yoga – with your senses both relaxed and heightened, time slows down. I watched fascinated as the early rays of the sun flashed on the grains of brown sugar mid flight, into the bowl giving them a surreal quality. They disappeared into the creamy porridge becoming part of a swirling vortex reminding me of the arms of the milky way. I heard a gentle Indian hymn strike up and then gain in volume as people from adjoining tables joined in. I listened and was inspired by the heartfelt devotion. My thoughts went back to my own childhood where prayers before meals had became ritualized and imposed losing both their purpose and their intent, with a strong Catholic upbringing in a small country town in India where the western side of my mixed heritage was valued more than the eastern, I was a child both of the colonizer and the colonized.

I drifted back again to the room as I listened with heightened awareness to a language whose words I did not understand but whose tempo and intonation were familiar, drawing on embedded memories, sounds from childhood, perhaps with a deeper primal resonation, below awareness, harmonising within the ancient architecture of the Indian side of my heritage. I asked myself the question. Who am I?

I am both many and one. I can say I am father, partner, son, brother, friend, facilitator, director, student and so on, which are all aspects of the self or parts of a whole. These are important but changeable aspects of the self and underlying all of this is a deeper, wiser aspect of the self that permeates, and influences all of the others.

Many psychologists and philosophers have for example categorised and commented on different aspects of the self. Neissur (1988) saw distinctions between five aspects of the self, which he labeled: Ecological, interpersonal, extended, private and conceptual. More recently, Gallagher (2000) focused on drawing together these various aspects of the self under two categories: the minimal self and the narrative self. The minimal self phenomenologically is related to how one sees oneself as the subject of experience embedded ecologically within the body. That is, I have a sense

of agency such that when I refer to myself in the first person, I know the 'I' that I am referring to is 'me'. In contrast, some people develop neuropsychological conditions where this may not be comprehensibly true for them.

This is an important concept for me to keep in mind as I make use of a range of psychometric instruments to understand myself and learn about various aspects of my personality and preferences, and the way these influence both my cognitive understanding of the world and the impact of my behaviour on my role as a Leader. Most of these instruments are validated and administered to those people who fall within the healthy range of adult functioning. In this context, my concept of the minimal self meets what Shoemaker (1984) calls the 'Immunity Principle' i.e. I cannot mistake that the 'I' is me.

The sense of 'I' was once thought to reside in one place, however current thinking in neuroscience sees the distribution of brain activity across all brain regions without an identified real neurological center of experience (Dennett 1991; Levine 2002; Siegel 2007). The 'I' is illusive and distributed and there appears to be no such thing as one identity from a neurological perspective across time. However, our capacity for language allows us to make our experiences coherent over an extended period of time, introducing the notion of the narrative self.

The narrative self is an abstract metaphor and the brain develops its own abstraction of reality; it has an exceptional ability to distort and deceive. Our self-concept or 'Who am I?', according to psychologists, conveniently shifts with the data and circumstances (Markus & Wurf 1987). Fine (2007, P12.) In her book 'A Mind of Its Own' comments that:

> *"If the self concept you are wearing no longer suits your motives, the brain simply slips into something more comfortable. The willing assistance in this process is memory. It has a knack of pulling out personal memories that better fit the new circumstances".*

Fine devotes each of the eight chapters of her book to aspects of the delusionary and deceptive brain, based on a vast body of research.

Skomorowska (2013), an educational philosopher, sees self as a construction and a narrative and proposes that we are a product of a multitude of these emergent processes. She comments that the eminent philosopher John Locke argued that we are the sum of our memories and that our sense of identity is dependent on both autobiographical or episodic memories.

This fragmentation of the self is seen as an artificial construct influenced by a rational reductionist frame with its aim to dissect and atomise. Self, like the notion of space, is indivisible and at the quantum and cellular levels, self-melds within boundless space (Rayner 2011).

Pillay (2007) Elaborates on this from a non-dual perspective, commenting that:

> *"…nondualism postulates the dissolution of the subject-object matrix, that any description of who we really are is bound to be fraught with logical difficulties; because a description, a concept, immediately becomes an object related to by a pseudo-subject".*

Pillay quotes, Krishnamurti (1992) who commented that self-knowledge is something to be discovered from moment to moment through watchfulness, without choice, rather than read about or speculated. Tolle (2004) concurs, elaborating on the benefit of living in the present moment, as many of our emotional problems are rooted in a false identification with our mind, and that both the future and past are constructs of 'thought' taking us away from fully being conscious and present. Harrison (2005) asks, 'What's next after now?' Notions of 'the now' have become a quest for meaning under two rubrics of being present and the new spirituality.

Rayner (2011), Pillay (2007) and Harrison (2005) portray a prospective Frame 4 and integral notion of the self. I arrived at this understanding based on the long journey of the intervention and the dissertation. This is both the end state and the arrival point.

Another key aspect in answering the question, Who am I? Is my mixed cultural heritage, which gave me an inclination to see myself as 'an outsider'? I related strongly to Camus's character 'The Stranger' also known as 'The Outsider' (Camus & Ward 1989) and especially resonated with Camus' later definition of the 'Stranger' as 'he who doesn't play the game' quoted in (Berlins 2006).

This inclination to see myself as an outsider was reinforced after migrating to Australia as a teen in the 1970s not long after the White Australia Policy was abolished. My complexion stood out in school and my neighborhood. Already being aware of myself as a mestizo (a person of mixed heritage), I did not feel overly bound or constrained by either direct or indirect discrimination that was aimed at people who were different. It did, though, continue to affirm my separateness, and enabled me to see the value of not playing the game of the majority. I empathized and related more easily to ideas that were edgy. I also connected to and became an advocate of social justice issues, challenging established practices within organizations. I came to see institutions as semi permanent structures; aggregations of people with relatively similar needs and wants. Having a limited interest in, and feeling unconstrained by 'what is', I revel in the freedom of the new. Caplan (2001), an author on postcolonial transformations, argues that a mixed creolized perspective allows for, even implies, the idea of change.

Who am I with Regards to Work

The journey associated with the dissertation provided another key aspect of addressing the question; Who am I? With regards to work, I could say that I am a consultant, facilitator, occasional academic lecturer and organisational change agent. One of the intentions associated with completing the Doctorate was to see if I could extend my work-self to include a more permanent part-time academic role. I played

around with terms such as 'Practitioner Scholar', 'Pracademic' and 'Practitioner Researcher'. I briefly firmed up on the term Pracademic (Prosner 2009), another representation of a hybridised entity. However, this term has been captured by academics and is institutionalised as "someone who is both an academic and an active practitioner in their subject area" (Walker 2010). I had assumed 'Practitioner' took primacy, however it is subsumed and is an adjunct of, and secondary to, being 'academic'.

The term 'academic' could be applied in my case if it pertains to the mindset or ways of thinking associated with researching and teaching a topic, driven by an interest in the theory, and towards furthering that theory through a rigorous process of observation and practice. Taking account of the above I have more affinity to the term coined by Leigh (2003) of Practitioner Researcher who combines some of the attributes of both a practitioner and researcher. Some of the key attributes include generating and creating new knowledge that emanates from practice, and developing theory that explains why practice works.

The term Practitioner Researcher in large part speaks to the actions of what people, such as I, am. To me it implies: a practitioner first and one who is interested in observing and learning from their practice; one who is ambivalent about the models and frameworks that they draw on to inform their practice and bears no allegiance to a fraternity or academic specialization; and scholarly but not belonging to an institution.

'Operating' on the Self

How have I come to understand myself?

In terms of exploring how I 'now' come to understand myself, I concur with Seigel's (2009) concept of the 'Life Narrative', whose notion of self is as constructed as the 'Reality' we hold as solid. Self is forever evolving and changing and I know that my understanding of the self in the 'now' will change in the future. The question is how

do my various understandings of the self that span time and space, coalesce in the present and what is the now of my understanding of the self.

The Australian Social Researcher Hugh Mackay (Mackay 1998), comments that we view the world through the bars of our cage, which filters our perceptions, and therefore what we 'see'. Each bar within the cage constitutes a filter including our age, sex, education, and culture through which we view the world. Many of these filters inform our beliefs. These beliefs, based on our filters, help us to add meaning and form conclusions about the world.

We look out into a familiar world where our conclusions and assumptions are inferred from what we observe and our observations are, as stated earlier, molded and conditioned by our filters. I am fortunate in that both my profession and natural preferences have predisposed me to search for this evolving understanding of the self, and has involved sustained work looking at the filters and bars that contribute to forming my views of the world.

As discussed earlier, my Masters dissertation provided me with a rigorous platform to explore the nature of change, leadership and the self. My profession as an Organisational Development and Change practitioner keeps me at the cutting edge of information from various disciplines allowing me both the opportunity to learn and to directly apply various models, methods and frameworks to practise while furthering my understanding of the self. In my case the adage "we teach what we can learn from the most" (Bach 1977) is entirely true. My job of developing others and enabling change is a motivator to apply these understandings to myself.

In the next section I comment on two areas that have helped me to better understand myself in the present.

- The DOOR model and autoethnography
- Use of instruments and psychometrics

The DOOR Model and Autoethnography

I discussed the DOOR model at length in Chapter 3 and then its application in Chapters 4 to 6. Autoethnography as a research methodology was discussed in Chapter 2. In this section I briefly comment on the DOOR and Autoethnography as interconnected processes, which helped me to discover aspects of the self.

From its gestation at the beginning of the research process to the present day, the DOOR model has been an important enabler, furthering my understanding of my own practice as a Leader. At a very fundamental level it allows me to congruently practice the art of being a reflective practitioner whilst enabling it for others. The model's inherent simplicity has assisited me to insightfully balance '<u>DO</u>'ing with '<u>OR</u>' else thinking. This fundamental dichotomy highlighted by the model elicited 'ah ha' moments for the leaders with whom I work. The visual and literal metaphor of the DOOR opened Doorways to new understandings and journeys.

I was able to use the DOOR as a key framework within Organisational Development, Leadership and Change Management interventions. The work with Feedsmoore allowed me to develop and grow my understanding of the DOOR model. I have since been able to apply this learning to other projects and to my life generally. One key application is to use the DOOR framework as a scaffold for the dissertation. The DOOR is also woven into pictoems, pictures, stories and a number of published articles; examples are located Figure 7.1 and Appendix A.

The DOOR and the Activist Learning Style

Activist, Reflector, Pragmatist and Theorist are four learning style preferences outlined in Honey & Mumford's (2006) model. I have a strong preference for the Activist learning style, which reinforces my strong preference for <u>DO</u>ing in the DOOR model. I have a moderately strong preference for 'Reflector', a moderate preference for 'Theorist' and a very low preference for the 'Pragmatist' learning styles (Honey & Mumford 2006).

An 'Activist' orientation is primarily interested in the present; to think on their feet and solve problems and issues in the here and now. The DOOR model, and in particular the <u>O</u>bservation and <u>R</u>eflection elements, have been instrumental in improving my 'Reflector' abilities, since this is focused on observing, listening, researching, evaluating and thinking. The <u>D</u>esign element in the DOOR framework has been instrumental in enhancing my ability to operate as a 'Theorist', which has a focus on concepts, models, the big picture and developing a logical presentation of ideas.

Writing this dissertation has been a learning journey. I have had to overcome my high Activist preference with its need for 'focusing on activities in the present' for excitement, ideas, drama, people and interruptions. I have had to learn to slow down, to be content with spending time alone, thinking, probing, investigating, exploring and intellectualizing. This lonely individual pursuit was further amplified by the fact that the subject of study was me.

I comment in Chapter 2 that the nature of the research questions intentionally positions me as the object of my own ruminations, whose very subjectivity offers insightful opportunities for me to examine the implied and implicit meanings imbued in perceived reality. Autoethnography inherently licenses the opportunity to unfurl the lotus petals, with each petal constituting different aspects of the self. I came to appreciate more and more the gift that autoethnography offered me as its methods took me deeper into the exploration of the research question and provided a means of validating a more intuitive, experiential way of knowing.

Pictoems

The very act of writing becomes a way of being and knowing (Foley 2002), and introspection and reflection are ways in which we come to know ourselves better (Montebello cited in (Boufoy-Bastick 2004). Also recent research from Neuroscience highlights how writing triggers the reticular activating system (RAS), which is the filter for processing information (Lacy 2013). The act of writing triggers the brain to pay close attention and is, in and of itself, a reflective and creative journey.

Pictoems became a means for me to convey my deeper reflections and insights. They are combinations of my photos or paintings, set as a background to one of my short poems. Pictoems became another means to convey complex messages to the participants at Feedsmoore. Pictures speak to us emotionally and can cut though the verbal noise to communicate complicated ideas more clearly (Wai 2013).

In my website I define Pictoems as:

> *"Pictoems are pictures that capture frozen (a second or two) moments in time. They offer an opportunity to reflect metaphorically and symbolically on life's essence. Each line in the Pictoem has a message, and is linked to the whole. There are on average 4 to 5 lines with a maximum of 10. I have themed the 'Pictoems' into galleries, there are many sub-themes which go beyond the gallery title, you will also no-doubt add your own interpretation and perceptual filters" (Fernandez 2007b).*

Some of these pictoems were developed and used within the Feedsmoore case study, see Figure 6.1. The Pictoem 7.1 on the next page was included in my article on DOOR to Deep Learning (Fernandez 2009).

At a recent workshop I asked people for their interpretations of the pictoem. One of the participants stated that:

> *"It kind of says to me about awareness and its fragility at its early stages of growth before it becomes robust. I can relate to awareness at that early stage and how it can easily be snubbed out in my own self. It is about bringing awareness to your awareness and allowing it to grow a bit".*

Figure 7.1 Awareness and awakening

I was particularly struck by the heartfelt nature of this explanation and in particular the notion of bringing awareness to your awareness.

I contend that many leaders are locked in an unconscious mode of operation. The awakening of myself to the present moment fits into a broader context of the self that has been conditioned sociologically. It is the individualised 'I' and the socialised 'me' sitting with other the 'we', embarking on the sharing of meaning and the unfolding of our practice. Much like my task focusing on the Doctoral journey with participants at Feedsmoore.

The Pictoem 7.1 also implies that there is no specific gene that transmutes awareness and consciousness from us to our offspring; there is no automatic genetic download of our insights and learning. Each one of us has to discover and grow into our awareness and the environment, via the socialisation process, which can help to promote this internal development.

The pictoems, writing journal articles, short stories, a video skit and the dissertation became important vehicles for me to grow into my ability to balance Action and Activity with Observation and Reflection. Allocating time to sit down and write is not easy and I have to work hard at keeping the preferences of the strong Activist at bay. However, I have gradually grown into my writing. Ultimately this has also enabled me to become a better Professional and Leader.

The articles included below are a direct outcome of the Doctoral journey. They include:

- **Is your DOOR open to Innovation?** This was a short article that I coauthored with a colleague, published in Business Review Weekly. (Fernandez & Floris 2007) Appendix B 6.3.
- **Link Up for Success?** How HR can help the CEO create value through alignment of people, strategy and operations. Business Review Weekly. (Fernandez 2007a) Appendix B 6.8.
- **DOOR to Action Learning** (Fernandez 2008a) Appendix B 6.5.
- **DOOR to Deep Learning** (Fernandez 2009c) – Published in the Society for Organisational Learning, Deep Learning Conference, Lesbos, Greece. Appendix B 6.6.
- **DOOR to Reflection** (Fernandez 2013) – Published in the Australian Institute of Training and Development Journal. Appendix B 6.7.
- **Door to the Sentient Tree** – This is a short story that helped me to explore my research question further. It illustrates my learning at weaving metaphors to expand on the various aspects of the DOOR model.

A doorway. Pausing reflectively on the threshold, you enter and take tentative steps along a pathway warmly caressed by the dappled glow of lamplight. You notice that the pathway skirts around an immense circular courtyard. To the right of the pathway you vaguely see the outline of doors revealed by the flickering of lamplight located above the evenly spaced doors.

You recognize the shape of the whole enclosure as an octahedron, which is a three dimensional representation of an octagon. You count eight doors, including the doorway through which you have just entered. Interestingly there is no door there, you muse to yourself. You contemplate going back, but something compels you to stay.

Taking a deep breath of the heavily scented air, you immediately feel invigorated and alive – the aroma, though familiar, eludes you but carries faint hints of jasmine or perhaps ylang ylang. You are momentarily transported back to a time in your childhood, playing with your siblings in a garden laden with jasmine, whose sweet aroma hung in the warm air, languid, long glorious sun filled days filled with the sounds of joyous and rapturous laughter.

The sound of running water awakens you out of the dream-like state and hauntingly beckons you across the pathway, towards the circular courtyard.

You stop and momentarily gasp at the ethereal scene that unfolds.

The courtyard is circled by a mound of wispy grass, which you climb. Stepping down, you find yourself standing on a huge disk, or at least what appears to be a disk, broken up into two tadpole like shapes circling each others tails. A faint glow seems to emanate from the tadpoles - your feet also sense subtle vibrations and you hear a gentle hum whose pitch you now realise waxes and wanes with the faint light and the vibrations. There are also colours in spiral bands pulsing their way around the two tadpole disks.

Near the top of each tadpole you see a pool, from whose bubbling surface comes the sound of water as if running down a funnel.

You walk slowly towards what appears to be the centre of the disk, the pulsing bands of light are now brighter and you feel them rhythmically moving to the beat of your own heart whose synapses flood you with indescribable inner warmth. Perfumed mist slowly envelops you whilst you keep walking slowly, tense with anticipation, though not the sort of anticipation fired by the synaptic, in the gut, urging you to flee. This is an anticipation tinged with excitement; it feels as if your heart, brain and gut are in unison.

You emerge in silence. At the edge of one of the disks there is a wide chasm between the two tadpoles stitched and bound together by what appears to be great bands of gnarled ropes. You innately sense the strength and tension; it appears like the ropes are preventing something from spilling out or pushing the tadpoles apart. What could this be, you ponder? You notice the mist abating as you look upwards and behold a giant.

A tree whose size, scale and beauty holds you transfixed, bound with awe and wonder. Strange feelings course through you, a sudden affinity for all that is around you, a sense that you transcend time, words are meaningless in defining the knowing that envelopes your whole being, you feel part of what was and ever was and is and ever will be, every particle resonates with the ancient primordial cosmos. In a fleeting moment you are made aware of the breath of Brahma exhaling the Universe and time and space, into existence. You see in a flash all four and half billion years of Gaia's[31] life.

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[31] Gaia: The name popularized by James Lovelock. Sees Earth as an interconnected self-regulating organism, which constitutes all of its life forms and systems.

> *You suddenly feel the ground stirring under you and move quickly back. The sheer force and energy knocks you to the ground. You are covered in dust, soil and a strange sulphuric smelling material. As you lift yourself on one arm, you see the giant tree lean back, drawing all of its strength as it propels the energy via its huge cable like arms to once again seal the chasm which was being prised apart, though the process has made one of the tadpoles disproportionately larger than the other further tightening and stretching the arm, like roots of the tree to near snapping point.*

> *A sudden sense of urgency drives you. You now know what needs to be done, your consciousness has been awakened, there is no time, your realize that your work, your dharma, your reason for being, is to guide others to discover and reach this supreme realisation, a tipping point is being reached with universal ramifications.*

The story draws together a number of themes and ideas that I explore in the thesis including:

Using the eight doorways within the octahedron constituting the eight chapters of the thesis and the ancient yin yang symbol within each DOOR to demonstrate the tension inherent in the prevailing dualistic view of the world, which is at a tenuous stage and on the cusp of cataclysmic events. The Yin and Yang disk alluded to in the story represents the world out of balance.

Assimilating recent research on neuroscience which affirms ancient wisdom about how we learn and interact with reality, based on the synaptic connections residing within the three brains Head, Heart and Gut (Hadhazy 2010; Siegel 2009).

Helping us to start within ourselves and explore the present through all of our eight senses. Seeing, hearing (listening) smelling, touching, the inner domain of feeling, tasting and our sixth sense intuition (much maligned by the supreme rationalists) and balance, the least known of our senses.

Assisting us to view the world from different vantage points including the past, present and future. The present is important in leadership as many leaders are seen as being locked in their headspace, disconnected from their bodies and thus their feelings and emotions.

The story is also about change, cycles and systems. It alludes to the interrelatedness of time and space. It spells out the immediacy confronting us to mend (ropes as metaphor) Gaia, mother Earth (Lovelock 1995) before she is torn apart and, by inference, through the theory of non-locality (Brunner 2013), rupturing the fabric of time and space.

Use of Instruments and psychometrics

The Doctoral journey was the catalyst to enable personal change. For example, having used the Johari window (Luft & Ingham 1955) in many management programs, I now used it as a framework to study myself. Other psychometric and 360 degree instruments, coupled with genuine and deep reflective practice and enquiry, helped me to:

- understand the nature of "the façade" my externalised socialised self
- discover some of my blind spots, and accept that there are more to be found and
- explore some of the deeper aspects about myself.

I also began to re-affirm and recognize my strengths and to utilise them to further develop other aspects of myself.

I am accredited in the use of over 20 instruments and unfurling the insights associated with learning about and application of these instruments would occupy another thesis. My intent here is to draw on those which have had the most impact on me and elicited the most profound learning for me and that have furthered the learning associated with my research question.

I recognize that the underlying premise of the instruments relies on a rational, compartmentalized, didactic and formulaic view of reality, using a psychologised view of the individual, independent of context. Understanding these limitations, and adopting both a critical and constructivist lens there is still much that can be gleaned in the pursuit of personal insight and learning. Adopting a Frame 4 approach accommodates this.

The Gallup Strengths Finder

The Gallup Strengths Finder (Gallup 2001) instrument identifies and ranks 34 strengths. My top five strengths were:

- Learner - strong desire to learn and want to continuously improve
- Connectedness - have faith in the links between all things
- Ideation - fascinated by ideas and making connections between disparate phenomena
- Maximiser - focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence and transforming something strong into something excellent
- Strategic – interested in creating alternative ways to proceed and can quickly spot patterns and issues.

All five strengths came into play during my construction of this thesis. The thesis formed an important part of the Doctoral journey and became a driver that progressed my skills associated with observation and reflection. For example I am now a better practitioner and researcher, my understanding of the different epistemologies that inform practice has grown. My research and my evolving understanding have enabled me to see that there are so many differing ways to interpret and view the world.

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

I have used the MBTI (Briggs Myers et al. 2003; Kirby 1999) for over 15 years and have consistently been identified as an ENFP, indicating my preference respectively for Extroversion, Intuition, Feeling and Perceiving. I agreed with the preferences

though increasingly found myself questioning the strength of my Extroversion. As part of the Feedsmoore intervention I had an opportunity to be accredited in the advanced Step 2 Instrument (Quenk & Kummerow 1996). This instrument indicated that I have only a moderate preference for Extraversion.

Figure 7.2 shows this moderate preference along with a clear preference for Feeling and strong preferences for Perceiving and Intuition. Also included is a brief definition of the ENFP type, which quite aptly describes many of my behaviours and inclinations.
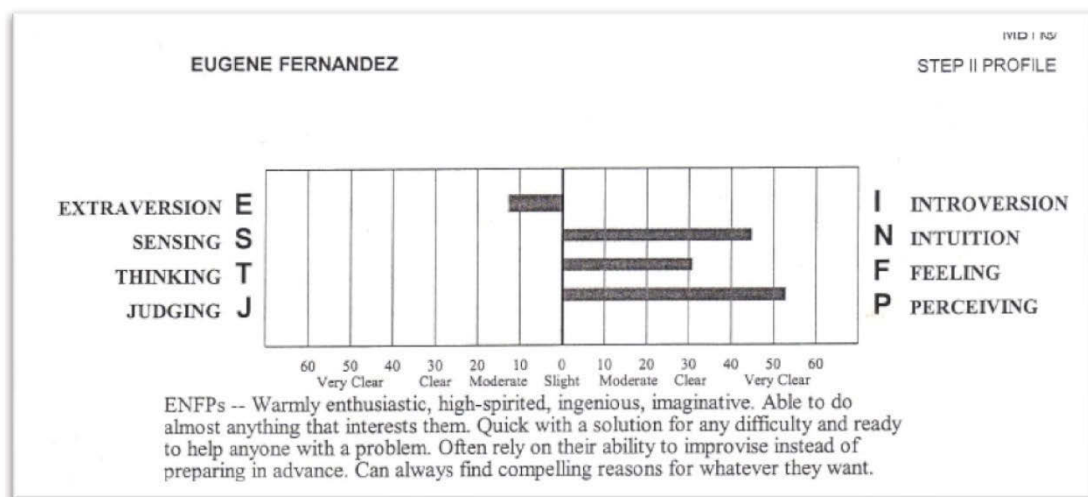
Figure 7.2 MBTI Preferences

One of the outcomes, after careful analysis of the data, has been to understand how to influence and work with people whose preferences differ from mine. Individuals with a preference for Introversion, Sensing, Thinking and judging often make up many of the important stakeholders in organizations and will not readily grasp how to respond to my outgoing energy and enthusiasm.

Organizations also generally reward Sensing, Thinking and Judging behaviours rather than those of my preference for Feeling and Perceiving (Briggs Myers et al. 2003).

My role as a Program Director within EEBS forced me to adapt my behaviour to suit its accepted preferences. This was quite tough, as I had spent 15 years running my own business where I could work to my preference for ingenuity, imagination, creativity and improvisation.

Where I had become used to selecting my own work, I now had to fit in with policy, politics, procedure and billable hours based decision making, which challenged my ENFP preferences.

The MBTI Step 2 instrument provided more granular data, called 'facets'. There are five facets linked to each of the preference dimensions.
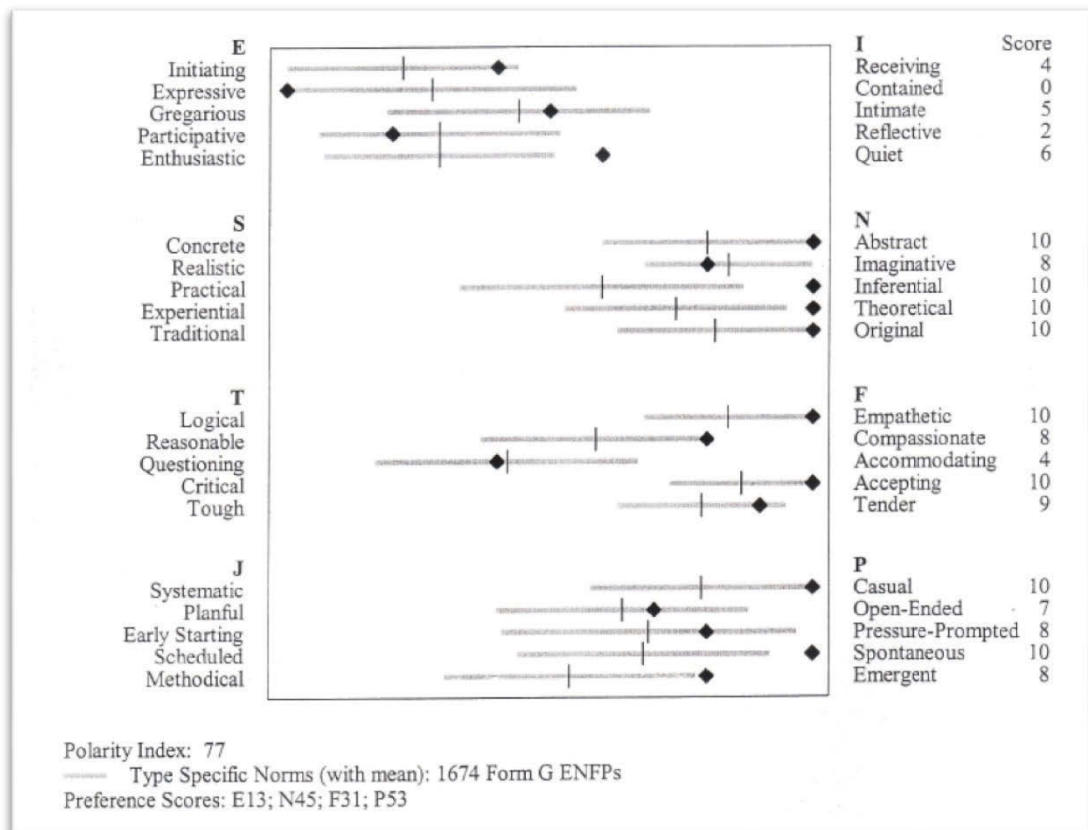
Figure 7.3 MBTI Facets

In the first preference dimension, I have a moderate preference for Extraversion as opposed to Introversion. The first facet identifies my approach to connecting with others. I initiate (Score of 6 out of 10) conversations with people that I know and tend to want the other person to initiate the conversation if I don't know them; in this case I am waiting to 'Receive' (Score of 4 out of 10).

I therefore have a mixed preference in this facet. The grey line within this facet represents the range where all the people in the norm group for Extraversion (Initiating) are located. The diamond falls within the extreme part of the range. In the facet 'Enthusiastic' versus 'Quiet', I have an out of preference score. I prefer Quiet, which falls within the Introvert preference.

The results validated my earlier thoughts about Extraversion. My preference for Receiving, Intimate and Quiet enabled me to work well in a one on one setting and with small groups of people. This was invaluable when wearing my counseling and set advisor hats as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The facilitation hat when working with each LTP cohort certainly suited my Expressive and Participative preferences.

Working with the business development executives and academics at EEBS and the Feedsmoore stakeholders encouraged me to adopt sensate, thinking preference – oriented strategies to set up and run the LTP. This tension was discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 in relation to the program's intention to ultimately shift the frame for the participants from an entirely 'STJ' orientation to more of an 'NFP' one.

The program aimed to encourage big picture, imaginative, inferential, theoretical and original thinking using the metaphor of a journey and promoting the value of being more open-ended and emergent. My own learning from this tension between polar opposites concerned becoming more able to adjust my arguments to suit the context and sustain a focus on P+Q/R as discussed in Chapter 5.

The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI)

My MBTI Intuitive scores were reinforced with the Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (Hermann 1990). See Figure 7.4. My highest preferences were in the upper right hand 'D' quadrant and Lower Right Hand 'C' quadrant. Quadrant 'D' has a focus on Holistic, Intuitive, Integrating and Synthesizing. My preference for 'Feeling' in the MBTI is reinforced by a strong preference in the HBDI 'C' quadrant, which has a focus on Interpersonal, Feeling-Based, Emotional and Kinesthetic.
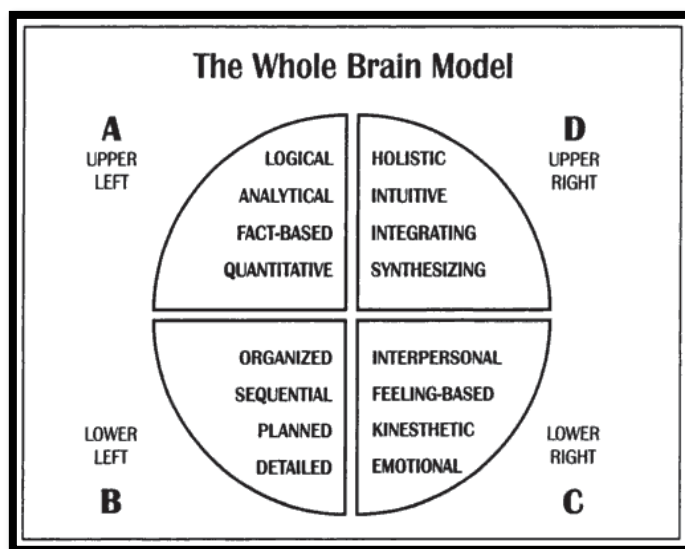
Figure 7.4 The HBDI Model

The Change Style Indicator

Another Instrument, the Change Style Indicator (Musselwhite & Ingram 2000a, 2000b) captures preferences in approaching and dealing with change and maps individual preferences along a continuum from 'Conserver' at one end (with a preference for structure and incremental change), to an 'Originator' at the other end (with a preference to challenge existing structures and instigate expansive and transformational change). My preferences fall at the extreme end of the originator scale with a score of 65 out of 66. This preference is reinforced by both the (Belbin

1997) and (Margerison & McCann 1990) instruments, which identify team tasks and individual preferences towards or away from these tasks. These both indicate my preference for big picture, creative tasks with an interest in new ideas and the exploration of new opportunities.

The Firo B Instrument

The Firo B instrument used by Waterman & Rogers (2004) was developed by renowned psychotherapist Schutz (1989, 2005) and identifies three critical areas of interpersonal needs.

- Inclusion – how much you include others in your life and how much contact and recognition you want from others.
- Control - how much influence and responsibility you want and how much you want others to lead and influence you.
- Affection - how close and warm you are with others and how close and warm you want others to be to you.

The Firo B added another layer of insight about my interpersonal needs. I have a low score for Inclusion and Control and a medium score for Affection. My first reaction to the analysis was to reject it, as it appeared to contradict my ENF type as scored by the MBTI. I saw myself as a 'people person', yet the Firo B's Low Inclusion scores indicate a low preference for being with others. Thus I did not originally take much notice of what it had to offer. Then six months later I had an opportunity to redo the instrument, and while the scores had marginally changed, the results forced me to reconsider my initial reaction and review my assumptions.

The transition from working for myself as a consultant to working as a Program Director for EEBS was requiring me to interact far more with a whole range of people. While I am a 'people person', it is on my terms, as I am selective about who I choose to be close to. Schutz (2005) sees Inclusion as a concern about prominence, the desire to be given attention, to belong, and to be unique. Primarily the question is: do I want to belong to this group 'Am I In the group or Out of the group?'

The low Inclusion score worked in my favor while I was a private consultant and could engage with people on my terms and selectively work with groups I was comfortable with. Working within an organisation like EEBS exposed a number of my antipathies about working in a team and was causing me to adopt and relearn for myself what I had facilitated for others.

The Sydney regional office location worked to my advantage, as distance was a convenient excuse to avoid interaction. I had to willfully and intentionally work to reach out and deal with people, and while I did this consciously, knowing my preference, I could not sustain the strain in the long term. Also, as the Feedsmoore journey progressed and the complexity and stress increased, I rediscovered my need for the 'cave' to recuperate, after each increasingly exhausting interaction.

Eventually I was looking back on my previous role, with my office in the backyard of my home, as halcyon days. I began to discount many of the negative aspects of that context which had driven me to reengage with organisational life. In effect being too long in the cave had generated loneliness and I lacked comrades to discuss and learn with.

I agreed with my Low scores on 'Control', which helped to answer my reticence about wanting to be in charge. My preference is for Advising, Coaching, Facilitating and Partnering with Leaders. However a Low Control score also has implications when working in a hierarchy, as I do not like others telling me what to do, particularly when others impose structure or rules or responsibilities.

Earlier reflections as a consequence of working towards my Masters degree had highlighted my strong opposition to authority figures. I react strongly against any imposed or apparently unreasonable demands made by authority figures. The sometimes conflict–ridden journey with my Masters Supervisor had helped me to learn to temper my responses, and to overlook weaknesses and focus on the strengths and positive characteristics in others.

Working for EEBS challenged this hard won awareness, particularly given my view of the dysfunctional nature of the organisation and the increasingly complex nature of the Feedsmoore intervention. Schutz (2005) sees 'Control' as referring to power, influence and authority between people and notes that it concerns dominance. The question was: did I want to be on top or at the bottom? My low compliance and high need for independence worked well when I ran my own business. However, it was perceived as rebellious when I had to report to a manager with a very different type profile. Deviating from an organization's norms and ways of working can be costly, particularly when these patterns are highly institutionalized (Lawrence, Winn & Jennings 2001). Institutions develop mechanisms to deal with nonconformity including:

> *"economically (it increases risk), cognitively (it requires more thought), and socially (it reduces legitimacy and the access to resources that accompany legitimacy)" (Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy 2004).*

The California Psychological Inventory 260 (CPI 260)

My need for independence was well suited to working with open and fluid situations allowing for work that demanded initiative and independent thinking. This was confirmed by a 75 against the norm of 50 in the Californian Psychological Inventory (CPI 260) (Gough 1996; Gough & Bradley 2005). The CPI is a personality assessment, which measures work-related characteristics; motivations and thinking styles using 26 individually researched measures. Items on which I scored highly are:

- Insightfulness 70 out of 100 i.e. having analytic insight into people and their motivations.
- Flexibility 79 i.e. likes change, variety is quick thinking and clever.
- Creative temperament 80 i.e. likes what's new and different, thinks in unconventional ways, outside the box.

All of this reinforced the findings of the MBTI and TMI. My preferences for independence, creativity, fluidity, flexibility and my desire to work on more complex interventions meant that working for an institution such as EEBS would not be sustainable in the long run. The benefits that originally attracted me - camaraderie and learning from a group of senior cohorts could be achieved, but at a cost.

A turn in events meant that the Business Development unit was now running the organisation and senior Program Directors were reporting to junior, more profit driven, Business Development Executives with a preference for formulaic, highly repeatable, low risk work, and senior staff, myself amongst them, began to see the benefits of leaving. I decided that I had achieved all that I could in four years at EEBS. I decided to go back to running my own consulting practice again.

Observation and Reflection

In this chapter I have expanded on the subjects of 'Who am I?' and 'How have I come to understand myself?' In this last section my Observations and Reflections focus on two key subjects – What did the Leading Talent program bring to me? and where am I now?

What did the Leading Talent Program bring to me?

The LTP brought me many insights and learnings of which the key ones are elaborated under three headings:

Understanding and Working with Organisations

- Progressed my understanding of the levers needed to introduce a complex intervention within a global business.

- Increased my understanding on how to better integrate learning and leadership development frameworks and strategies with key drivers and enablers of the business.
- Improved my marketing and influencing skills related to encouraging key executives to support a complex and emergent intervention.
- Furthered my understanding of the benefits and limitations of applying a complex intervention whilst working as an employee of a business school.
- Refined my understanding and skills on contracting with global organisations.

Designing and Implementing Learning Solutions

- Progressed my learning associated with action research and other blended learning solutions.
- Introduced and developed a methodology within a business school which despite the barriers and constraints, was used as a template for other interventions, including being applied as a framework within another business school for many years by the BDE I had trained.
- Continued my journey of enabling learning and reflective practice for busy senior managers.
- Developed and progressed my thinking associated with the DOOR model, which I continued to apply and learn from within other organizations.
- Improved my practice as a reflective practitioner.
- Developed my understanding of the nature and application of organisational interventions linked to an organization's readiness, thus enabling me to develop the 'Frames of Learning' framework.

Personal Leadership

- Increased my knowledge of organisational leadership and relevant diagnostic and psychometric instruments.
- Improved my understanding of my own strengths and areas for development as a leader.

- Role modeled Leadership behaviours so that others can witness a living example and therefore apply and use them as part of their practice.

- Affirmed my strength to persevere against all odds to complete complex organisational interventions.

- Affirmed that I did not need a branded institution behind me to help organisations work with Frame 4 interventions and highlighted the limitation of business schools to deal with complex organisational change interventions.

- Affirmed my skills and experience, thereby going back to work for myself as a Managing Partner of my own consulting business.

Where am I Now?

A video and two instruments elaborate on my understanding of where I am now.

Video - On Creating a Better World

On Creating A Better World

Figure 7.5 Video On Creating a Better World

This video, located on YouTube at: http://youtu.be/k3hQ4Yv9q0I formed part of a presentation at the Action Learning and Action Research Association Conference in Brisbane on 22 and 23 September 2013. The conference theme was 'Creating a Better World'. The video was part of a presentation with a colleague; we used the model of the DOOR to help the audience explore key issues impacting on the world through two lenses. My colleague focused on the 'big issues', that is, impacting humanity and the planet, and I approached it from the opposite direction ' A vignette on life', demonstrating that everyday events could be used as a means to observe and reflect on our lives. Within this context, the video illuminates my inner thoughts and reflections whilst on a routine train trip to see a client.

My brief description of the video on You-tube includes:

> *"A brief moment in time provides a lived experience to explore the 'Present' of our understanding and embodiment in creating a better world".*

For the purpose of my Doctoral journey, the video demonstrates my practice of being mindful - reflecting on my inner thoughts 'On' Action and 'Prior' to Action.

The video draws on a thin slice of life, a brief vignette that offers an opportunity to both, be in the moment (1st person) and removed from it (3rd person).

The narrative in the video is detailed below, interspersed with comments that are relevant to my Doctoral journey.

> *Surely it is the rail and the track, the familiar buildings and terrain that glide past, sometimes bathed in sunshine and at others dappled in shade.*
>
> *A panoramic movie, though set on a stage with vistas as familiar props, interposed by people animals and things.*

> *Brief vignettes - words uttered though not completed, pathways walked but disappearing, fragments of dreams, meanderings...*

Drawing on visual imagery, metaphors and sound as a means to communicate with the audience is a key aspect of autoethnography. Participants at the conference commented that the sound of the train, imagery and language drew them in. It was subliminal and below awareness.

> *Ah yes, Creating a better world... My iPad beeps a message... present reality calls. Remember the meeting/s - Um...pondering...They no longer have the grip or concern they once had, many, many train journeys ago. No longer the show or the expert, no longer the grasping or the anxiety, no need for proof, nor right nor wrong. A chat, open ended, trusting in what emerges... be present to the process... whatever happens, happens.*

These thoughts highlight my growth as a practitioner. I was willing to let go of the Expert tag, which was a key finding of the Doctoral journey and my work with Feedsmoore. It also refers to my growing comfort for dealing with situations emergently, by trusting my intuition, experience and the letting go of the need for a predetermined outcome.

> *The train enters a tunnel... darkness outside.... a reflection.... cocooned now in a bubble of light...*

> *It's me in the window and others, life, conversations...*

> *Mandarin, to my right four middle aged women and a young person coaching them to use their mobile phone. Much laughter...*

Being present to what is happening around me, whilst being cognizant of what is, happening within me, also draws on other narratives including cross-cultural understandings, generational differences and learning from day-to-day. The video

was also shot on my iPhone and edited by my 13-year-old daughter, serendipitously paralleling the coaching between the Mandarin speakers.

> *An announcement.... Redfern station.... Next stop Central.*

> *Redfern- Aboriginal communities, marginalised, victimised, berated, torn, wrenched. Now set amidst suburban gentrification. Place, whose Place was my Place is your Place.*

> *Old aboriginal lady sits observing me... I acknowledge her... she smiles.*

Our brief connection built a bridge beyond words. It was recognition of the 'other' and contrasts with the narrative.

> *Silence*

> *The Mandarin speakers leave.*

> *Announcement - Doors closing stand clear. Next stop Town Hall...*

> *Yes my stop, all systems ON. 'A Better world'*

The Leadership Circle Profile

The Leadership Circle (Anderson 2006; Dalal, Lin & Smith 2008), a 360 degree psychometric instrument, provides a snapshot of my leadership strengths and areas for development. See Figure 7.6. The top of the circle highlights the Creative dimension of leadership. A score of 66 percentile and above is a high score. The bottom of the circle highlights the Reactive dimension associated with leadership. A score below 33 percentile is a low score. The red line is my self-score and the green shaded area, the other raters' scores.

Results showed I had high strengths in Relating, Systems Awareness, Self-Awareness and Authenticity. My Achieving score highlighted a mixed result with high in Strategic Focus, Purposeful, Visionary and low in Achieving Results and Decisiveness; the low score for Decisiveness paralleled previous 360 degree feedback from my EEBS GM. This was important feedback, as the perception was I was slow to make decisions and had a tendency to overanalyse problems from various angles. My high Perceiving score on the MBTI with a focus on Casual, Open-

ended, Spontaneous and Emergent preferences reinforced this perception for slower decision making. This perception was certainly true, though it did not factor in the complex nature of my work.
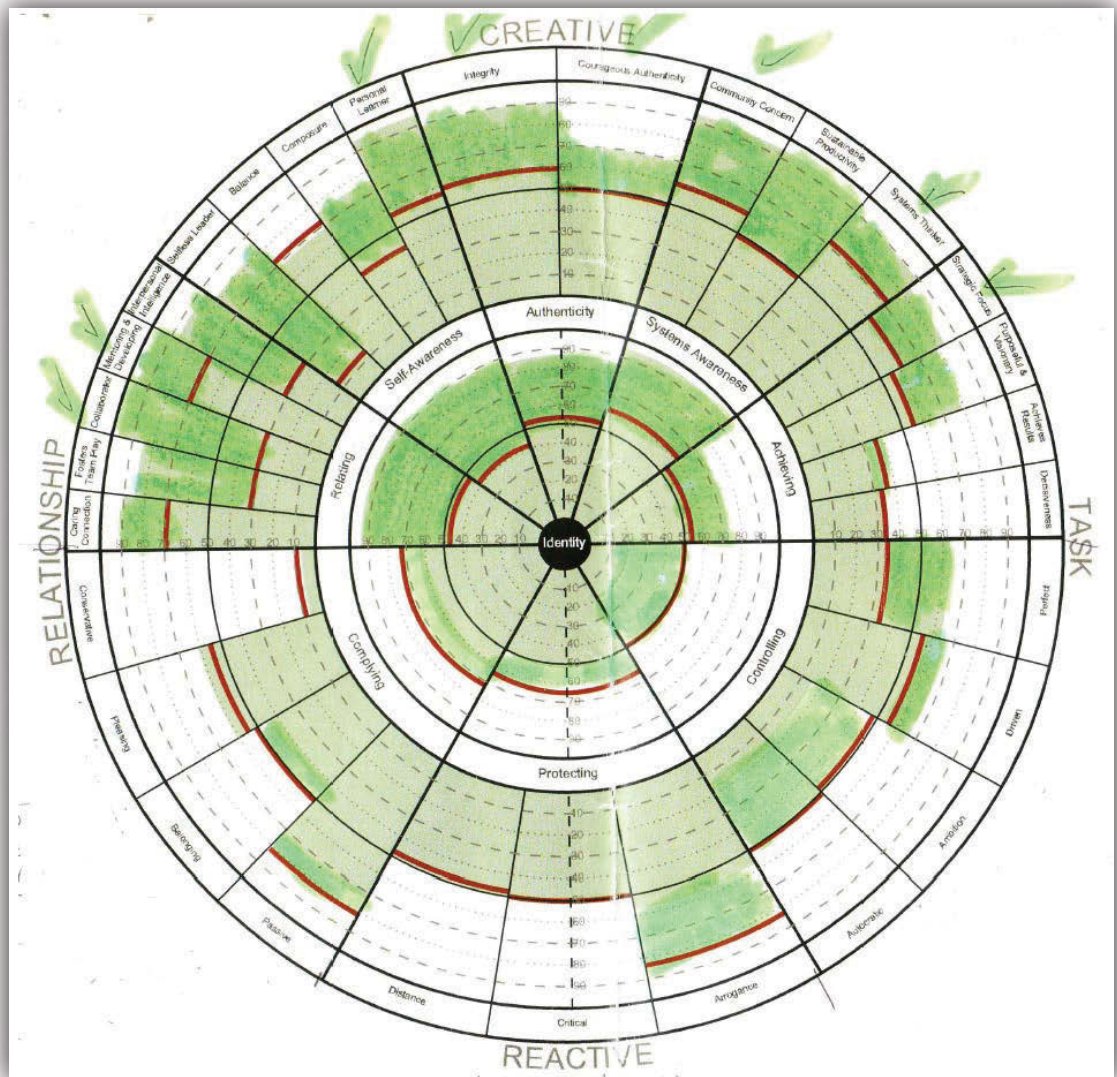
Figure 7.6 Eugene's Leadership Circle Profile

When contrasted with many of the PDs who had formulaic public programs, I certainly appeared slower. Nevertheless, this was an issue that I worked on by developing strategies to help me be more timely and systematic.

The red line in the instrument showed that I appeared to be a harder marker on myself as opposed to the other reviewer's perceptions. On reflection, I tend to, downplay my strengths, which is not a good strategy when one operates in a competitive environment. The high scores for Pleasing and Passive in the Reactive dimension had an unconscious influence on my interactions with other people. My need to please operated at a very subtle level; I was fortunate that the LCP now brought this to my awareness. I realized that I spent a great deal of time working at pleasing others and being the eldest within a large immigrant family where the pressures of settling into a new country resulted in family breakup, I took on many responsibilities which weighed on me. This was necessary at the time, and I now realize that I continued to shoulder these responsibilities for a decade beyond what was necessary.

My need for Perfection in the Reactive dimension has been a slow work in progress. The thesis, and in particular writing, has challenged me with bouts of anxiety, resulting in months of avoidance and procrastination. This angst, in retrospect, was useful as it encouraged me to explore some of the deeper needs that were driving the need for 'Perfection'. I have been able to reframe the need for perfection, resulting in increased work of more complexity with senior teams.

A Values Inventory

The AVI – 'A Values Inventory' (Chippendale 2013) highlighted and affirmed my world-views and values. It extended insights I had gained five years earlier through my accreditation of another instrument, 'Spiral Dynamics', which located me within the 'Green meme' associated with change (Beck 2002; Cowan & Todorovic 2007). The aggregate of my values in the AVI, spread along the eight clusters in Figure 7.7, locates my 'World-View' as Collaborative Project where I associate the 'Future as subject to Creation'. Through this future, I choose to influence organisations to align with the values for humaneness and democracy.

Whilst many of my deep values only shifted marginally (to the right, see balance point in the diagram) what shifted substantially is my capacity to engage with others

and to implement more collaborative complex projects. As far as Leadership, the AVI locates me between a Charismatic Leader (project manager, strategist and advocate) and Servant Leader (Greenleaf 1977) in collegial participation.
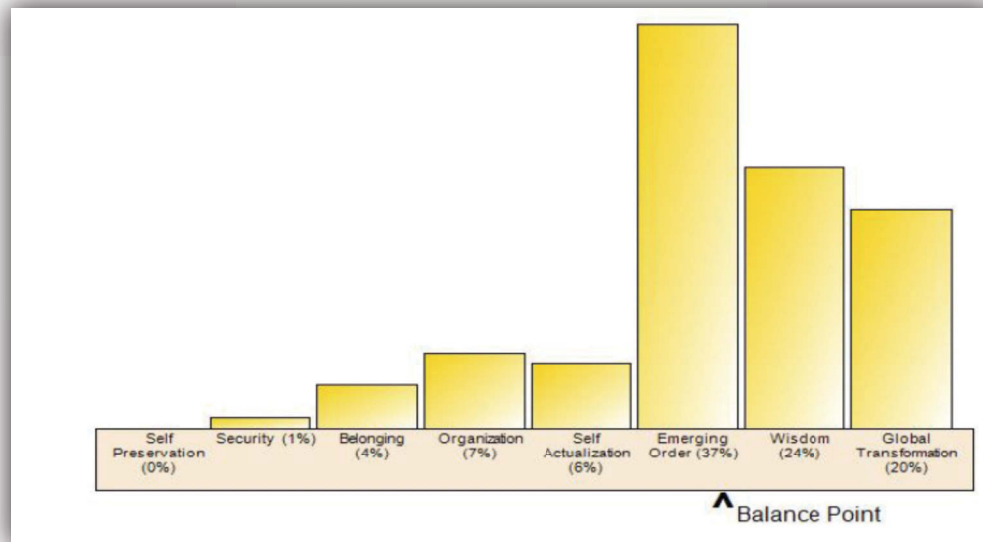
Figure 7.7 World Views

This combination worked effectively in my work with Feedsmoore and I aim to extend my work under the umbrella of Servant Leadership.

The values map in Figure 7.8 highlights both my focus values, which are associated with my current worldviews and my vision values, which are associated with my current vision of the future.
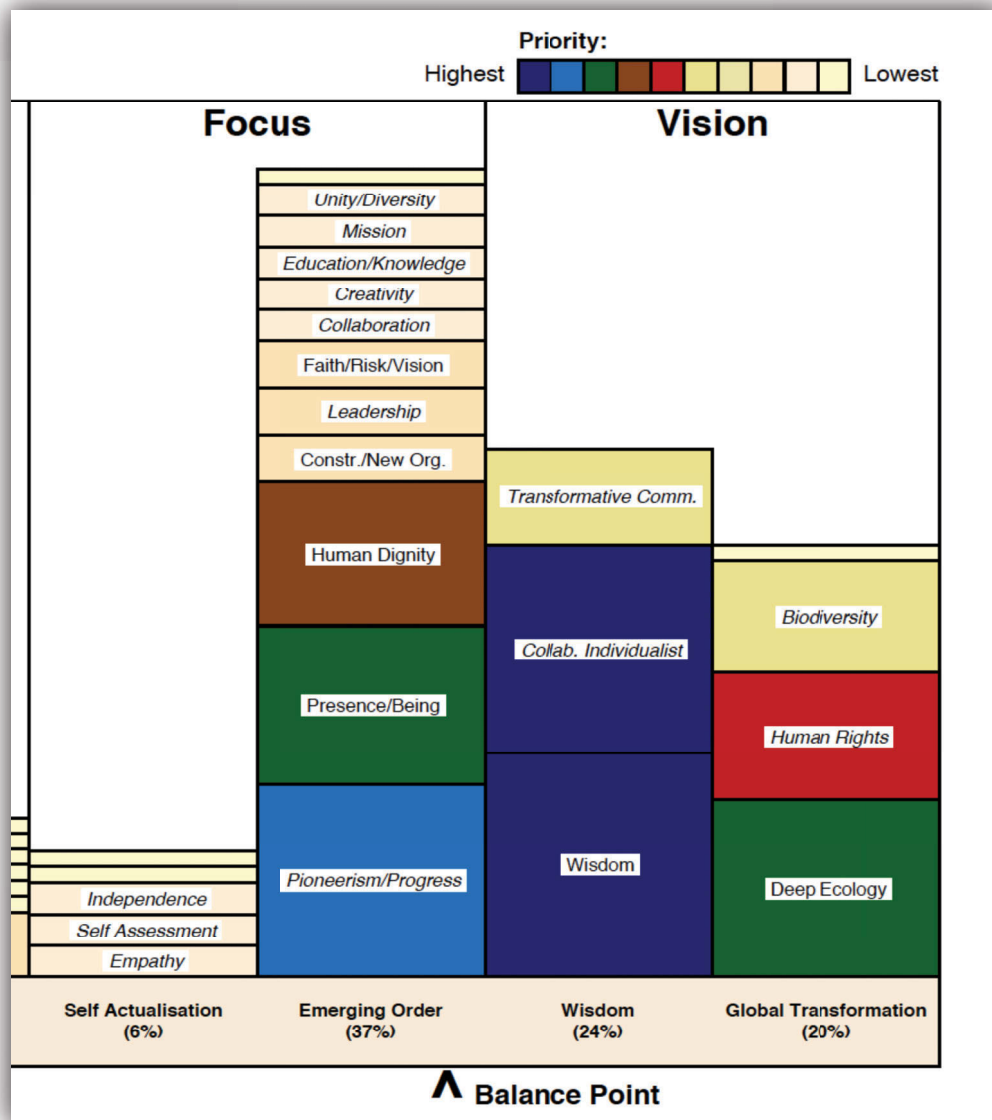
Figure 7.8 Values Map

My vision values, with a focus on Wisdom, Human Rights and Biodiversity, continue the work I have been doing for over two decades, helping to enable change for individuals and organisations. As the Doctoral journey concludes another DOOR opens to the future. I see the point of balance in Figure 7.7 shifting more to the right.

The work I have been doing within organizations with a focus on leadership effectiveness, organisational development and organisational change will evolve to a

more systemic, industry wide, macro approach, working on issues of Social Change and Deep Ecology and facilitating processes that enable positive change for humanity and the planet. I have already commenced this in a small way, designing and running processes for an industry Board, helping them to identify and develop the leadership talent of the whole industry. This has involved influencing at the Board level, networking with key industry participants and instigating dialogue which marries the needs of each of their specific organizations with the Industry at large.

Chapter 8

DOOR to The Future

Design of the DOOR to The Future

> The green path (Figure 1.1) leads me to the final Door within the octagon. I pause at the threshhold; looking back at the journey through the seven Doors and reflecting on the impact this journey has had on me as a Leader and on the people and organizations with whom I worked. I look through the open door at the journey ahead and end the chapter by exploring some of the possible and preferred futures.

The journey explored the research questions: 'How can I as a Leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?' As the research unfolded I found myself also addressing a third question—'How do I undertake to become a role model as I represent what I encourage others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners?' My learning is summarized under each of the eight DOOR chapters.

Operating on the DOOR to The Future

The Doctoral journey has enabled me to learn to take personal accountability and responsibility in my role as a leader. I have come to understand that by learning to do this, I offer a congruent role model for the theories and behaviours I introduce to others. This has included exploring some of the endless inner dimensions of the self, along with improving my understanding of others' behaviours.

Impact of the DOOR to Enquiry

I have enacted my understanding of a deeply reflective leader through influencing stakeholders at Feedsmoore to engage in the co-creation of the design of a complex

and emergent leadership development process. Through out this process I focused on applying and modeling 'Leaderful Practice' (Raelin 2004) and 'Servant Leadership' (Greenleaf 1977).

This Doctoral journey is a chronicle of the iterative journey of myself as a practitioner, simultaneously modeling and learning from the application of reflection on my leadership role whilst introducing the process to other leaders.

In Chapter 1, I wrote about how leaders in todays busy and complex world, can become mired in action and activity driven by a strong desire to achieve. Increasingly, this drive for action and achievement, coupled with the pace of life, precludes or limits time for reflection. This absence of reflection can impact negatively on the quality of decisions and on the lives of everyone at work. I first had to recognize how this drive for action was true for me and was being compounded by my strong Activist learning style (Honey & Mumford 2006).

Formulating my research questions provided a guide and a focus for improving my skills in reflection. They led me to adopt Langer's (1989) notion of being conscious of the beliefs that drive my behaviour, and I became increasingly able to apply Sinclair's (2007) mindful and purposeful awareness to my actions. Applying Reynolds (1998) critical reflection on practice also helped me as a leader to explore issues around powerlessness, and about the source and types of knowledge which constructed my worldviews. Reflexivity also played a key role towards facilitating my deep reflection (Bourdieu 2004; Colombo 2003; Popper & Eccles 1990).

The enquiry process highlighted that there needs to be a valid and compelling reason for a person to embark on a journey of self-reflection. In my case, the compelling reason was the emerging awareness of the importance of modelling what I was teaching others. My discovery of the disparity between what I said, and what I did in practice, was becoming uncomfortable. The Doctoral task provided a valid, legitimate and rigorous process to help me bridge this gap between what I was teaching and what I practised. It involved a significant commitment of time and

effort to explore the nature of deep reflection and learning. I discovered that the ontological nature of the topic, provided a framework that fostered and promoted an open, reflexive and critical way of understanding myself and my interaction with the world. Autoethnography proved to be an appropriate epistemology for accessing the superficial and the deeper critical nature of reflection.

My observations and reflections find their expression in my preference for building models and visually representing them and, as a direct consequence of the Doctoral journey, I came to realise how important this was to the way I think and to the way I make meaning out of experiences. I now recognize that I immerse myself in as much of the data or experience as I can find; a behaviour which aligns with my 'perceiving preference' in MBTI terms. For me, this immersion usually takes more time than a person whose behaviour aligns with a 'judging preference' in MBTI terms. This is followed by a period of confusion wherein I bury myself in data to work at ways (a large part of it tacit) to make sense of it. I start to better see connections and relationships, which result in a diagram or model and examples of this include: Figure 1.1, the eight chapters of the thesis mapped onto the octagonal diagram; Figure 3.1, the DOOR model; and Figure 4.2, the cereal box.

Impact of the DOOR to Research Methodologies

I was initially surprised by the enjoyment I found in exploring research methodologies. I saw that it connected with many of my strengths and preferences and in particular, the need to understand the big picture and discover the interrelationship among things. My understandings of the changing nature of the research question unfolded in parallel with my investigation and understanding of research methodologies. When I began this Doctoral study, my initial research questions were: 'What does it take to shift a leader's focus from action to deep reflection? What are the impacts and outcomes of such a shift?'

However, the focus implied by these questions would have caused me to concentrate on the continuation of the journey of facilitating reflective processes in, and for, others, and I was becoming more interested in understanding the cognitive?

processes involved in such an application of reflection. Hence, the questions shifted to: 'How can I as a Leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?'

The journey lengthened to accommodate a third question concerning how I embody reflection. Do I actually practise what I preach? By embodying such reflective practice, am I better equipped to help others use the same technique? 'We teach what we most need to learn' (Bach 1977) is a common expression in which there is some truth. I found myself coming to the conclusion that a teacher should embody what he or she is presenting as 'good practice'.

In keeping with the strictly qualitative nature of the enquiry, I drew on various epistemologies to make sense of my practice, as illustrated in the mind maps and Figures 2.2 and 2.3. The boundaries delineating each epistemology and methodology are merely constructs. The same feature was given a different name and each research community labeled its experience as if discovering it for the first time, when in fact, another community of researchers had already traversed this territory and created its own map and language of the process and feature.

I became aware that I was coming to an understanding of where my approach fitted in the panoply of research methodologies, and each aspect of this was a process of self-discovery.. My ability to put things in context, and reaffirm my methods, increased. I could understand and accommodate the fact that different communities viewed leadership, change, organisation, and reflection differently. And as I gained understanding, I began to define the 4 Frames of Learning.

I learnt about autoethnography and applied its methods to analyzing the Feedsmoore case study. I discovered that both autoethnography and action research are highly dependent on reflection. The act of writing this dissertation sharpened my view of Critical Reflection (Reynolds 1988) causing me to re-examine the personal, social and political factors I was taking for granted within EEBS and at Feedsmoore.

I discovered that autoethnography could affirm my own voice and help me lay claim to the authoring of my own acts. Maguire (2006) and Foley (2002) state that autoethnographers are openly subjective and in writing my dissertation I assert my choice not to speak in a rational, value free, objective, omnipresent? Voice, but rather one that accepts that I am a living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving multiple self, who speaks in a partial, subjective, culture bound voice.

Writing my journals and reviewing them to write this dissertation was at times frustrating and anxiety provoking. As I was reliving those stressful processes, I discovered that the act of writing was part of the process of healing and illustrated the autoethnographic emic and etic method as discussed in Chapter 2. It offered me an opportunity to shift my 'stance from the ethnographic emic gaze of the participant observer to an etic gaze of my own subjectivity' Boufoy-Bastick (2004, p.4). Learning associated with these emic perspectives provided the opportunity to examine my beliefs and worldviews.

Researchers using autoethnography adopt a post-structuralist (subjective, constructivist and critical) view of the self, and reject a constructed view of a rational self (Bruni 2002). Autoethnography embodies life with its inherent complexity, ambiguity, contradictions and multiple meanings, which I inherently manifest through the process of living my life. Autoethnography has increased my self-understanding and allowed me to focus on my own experiences in developing reflective practice for leaders, while reflexively contemplating myself.

The study of research methodologies, and application of them to my thesis, helped me to recognize and honour that I was both a researcher and a practitioner.

Impact of DOOR to DOOR

One consequence of improving my skills in reflection was the emergence of the DOOR model. It became a tool for framing both action and reflection within a broader, more holistic cosmology. This dissertation is partly a record of my growing understanding and application of the DOOR model.

As I worked with managers, I became increasingly aware of the difficulty of persuading them to engage with an iterative cycle to balance their heavy emphasis on 'Doing'. The Design and Operate part in the DOOR model suited their mode of operation and I thought that they needed to value and improve their skills in Observation and Reflection. My personal efforts to reflect on my own experiences revealed how much my actions paralleled the behaviour of those managers and leaders with whom I was working. I realized I was no different to them as I was constantly caught up in activity, and creating an imbalance in my own life which impacted on the quality of my work and my relationships.

The DOOR model became a tool and strategy for me to help busy leaders to make changes to their lives. Weaving the model within stories such as: the straight road across the Nullarbor; the DOOR to reflection, using my family holiday in Fiji; and the DOOR to the sentient tree, helped leaders to understand the model and to reflect on their life's circumstances at a deeper level. Researching and writing the stories helped me to reflect deeply on the interconnections with my own life and the writing became a process for introspection and reflection. These stories gained a life and energy of their own once they were shared with others and as each person added their own meaning and drew from their own experiences in interpreting them. As Stacey (2003) notes, individual experience and judgments are constructed and shared within an already shared world, and it is through mutual recognition that we can sustain our entitlements and commitments to each other.

Working with emerging awareness allowed me to recognize that the elements of D.O.O.R. could each provide a starting point. My experience of working with managers indicated that they were usually good at the Operating element but resisted the prospect of assigning time to Observe the results of their actions. They were even more reluctant to Reflect on or analyse the outcomes of all their effort. It therefore seemed logical in practice to start either with an Observation of what happened during the doing of a task or activity, or the enactment of behaviour which could be shown to provide real data for Reflection.

I gradually learned to map the DOOR model to other key learning frameworks and these in turn highlighted gaps in the area of <u>D</u>esign and Deep reflection within those models I researched. Deep reflection goes beyond the notion of personal reflection and reflexivity. My analysis suggests that Frame 4 accommodates reflection at the level of the group, what Romme & Witteloostuijn (1999) call 'Collective Mindfulness'. Deep Reflection also encompasses triple loop learning (Flood & Romme 1996; Snell & Man-Kuen Chak 1998) which explores the notion of increasing the depth of learning about complex issues, by creating links to all local issues of learning in an overall learning infrastructure, and developing the skills to use this infrastructure, much like the complex and blended learning framework created for Feedsmoore.

There is more work to be done in mapping other models to the DOOR and to further investigate the gaps in <u>D</u>esign and Deep Reflection and the likely implications for practice.

Impact of the DOOR model

Although I am no longer able to assess the continuing impact of my work at Feedsmoore, I am now applying the DOOR model in my work with other large and complex organizations, including:

- BHP Billiton, a global mining company, in their 2-year graduate program, where each graduate designs three development objectives and follows the DOOR model's iterative process, simultaneously documenting the outcomes.
- Senior Leadership Development programs for Guild Group, an insurance and financial services firm.
- Middle Management programs for facilities managers.
- Americold, a global logistics company, which included reflective practice within modules of 2 Senior Leadership Programs. The DOOR's iterative cycle was applied to eight Business Improvement Projects.
- Bunnings, a large retail firm, used it to iteratively improve their HR effectiveness within the business.

- Parramatta City Council (the second largest CBD in Sydney), for team and individual based coaching for senior managers.
- TransGrid, a high voltage transmission corporation for improving executive team effectiveness.
- Sessions facilitated for Masters' students at the University of Technology, Sydney, utilising the DOOR model to help improve their practice of reflection and reflexivity.

Along with the examples detailed above, the DOOR model was also:

- Presented at the Deep Learning conference, Greece, SOL 2009 (Fernandez 2009c) .
- Presented at the 8th World Congress, 2010 conference—Participatory Action Research and Action Learning. ALARA (Fernandez 2010) .
- Co-presented at the Creating A Better World, ALARA conference 2013 (Fernandez & O'Neill 2013) .
- Part of a short video outlining a reflexive reflective process for the Creating A Better World conference. The video was narrated by me and produced and edited by my 14-year-old daughter Gabriella.
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3hQ4Yv9q0I&feature=youtu.be#!
  (Fernandez & Fernandez 2013)
- Included in the Metanoa URL.
  http://www.metanoa.com.au/methodology/DOOR%20Model/DOORModel. html
- Used as an acronym for my curated? insights on topics related to Leadership and Change. These can be found at: http://www.scoop.it/t/doors-to-leadership-and-change and http://www.scoop.it/t/frame-4-door-to-learning-and-change
- Referenced as part of an integrated 'Digital Roadmap' that speaks to 'Enterprise 3' and the Semantic web which explores the future of the digital workplace (Stevens 2013).

My published articles (Chapter 7 lists them) on the DOOR have been read by a broad cross section of people. I have also received feedback from a number of trainers and OD practitioners as a result of my article in the AITD training journal (Fernandez 2013).

Impact of Four Frames of Learning

The Four Frames of Learning, which I titled the Gatekeepers, Technical Rationalists, Developers and Integrators, evolved over the period of the research work. I observed that my preference for introducing action research based programs within organizations met strong resistance from some organizations, while it was more easily negotiated within others. I became much more aware of the distinctions between different types of interventions used in organizations. Some prefer short training programs while others accept deeper Organisational Development influenced programs, which could become part of a broader change process. Eventually I became alert to the subtleties between expert led programs, action learning, project based learning and what I have called 'critical action research' and what would or would not be acceptable in specific contexts within organizations. For example, in Chapter 5, I expand on how the concept of Frame 1's Gatekeepers is modeled by Business Schools, which considers learners as blank slates.

What I came to call 'Frame 4 learning' encouraged me to research and study various models, which accommodated the complex and interrelated nature of organizations. Some of these models included: Spiral Dynamics (Beck 2002); Levels of Mental Capacity (Kegan & Lahey 2009); Post-Structuralism and Integral Theory (Wilber 2007); and Cynefin domains (Snowden & Boone 2007; Stacey 2005).

My emergent awareness of my preference for working with complex and critical action research interventions also helped me understand the need to be more discriminating in offering Frame 4 as an organisational intervention. I began to recognize the clues, indicating that an organisation was ready and willing enough to try a Frame 4 methodology such as the capacity to adopt an integrated systems perspective and to understand the limitations of formulaic quick fix processes. A

willingness to work in partnership and co-create the journey ahead, and a willingness to explore and challenge deep metaphors and myths within the organisation.

Feedsmoore provided an excellent, though short-lived, example of an organisation with the readiness and willingness to work with a Frame 4 intervention. I have documented how changing circumstances and staff movements altered this readiness to continue using a Frame 4 intervention.

The insight from this included customizing Frame 4 to an organization's life cycle, which I need to further test, though early indications include that it is unlikely to be adopted during the early to mid maintenance stage. It is more likely during the late maintenance and early decline stage when the organisation perceives a need to accelerate and kick start a new sigmoid curve (Handy 1993). Frame 4 would also ideally suit an organisation at the early growth stage as opposed to the start-up phase.

I presented my initial thoughts on the 'Frames of Learning' in a short article linking Epigenetics to Frame 4 (Fernandez 2008c), and at:

- National Convention for HR and People Managers—Australian Human Resource Institute 21 and 22 May 2008, Melbourne Convention Centre.
- Talkpoint —Senior HR Forum, Camberwell, Melbourne 31 July 2008.
- EEBS—Two presentations to the Program Director community.

Impact of DOOR to Work—Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Learning about working in a leadership capacity within Business schools

Significant learning was associated with taking on a full time senior role within EEBS whilst navigating a complex intervention within Feedsmoores.

I learnt to navigate my way between research-oriented academic staff at AABS, with their expert driven individualistic framework, and the populist and practitioner

focus of EBBS's Program Directors. I gradually built alliances within the two groups. At first I found that I was taking an oppositional stance like many other PDs, but I saw strengths on each side and the benefits that could be reaped by collaborating. The opportunity to analyse and reflect on these circumstances enabled me to study the landscape of the two business schools, and to develop relationships with both the academics and PDs. As a consequence of this understanding, I continue to work with both communities across a number of institutions.

I have gained further insights into the drivers and constraints of business schools from working with them as a consultant. This has enabled me to build improved and sustainable relationships with key stakeholders. I better understand their motivations and cost structures and the need and desire to minimize risk. Understanding the limitations of business schools in working with complex and deep interventions has enabled me to segment my business strategy and offerings. In this context, the frames of learning have been useful as I am able to offer my services to business schools based on Frames 2 and 3 and reserving Frame 4 interventions for privately contracted clients.

The pedigree and status of having worked with four business schools, and continuing to be an associate of two, offers me the best of both worlds. Clients immediately assume you are an expert and are good at your game; and invariably there is always someone in the organisation who has undertaken a program or who is an alumnus of a school where I have taught. Seeing a familiar face in a new program helps introductory conversation flow easily. A negative aspect is the labeling culture, which accompanies the business school's pedigree of being too academic, too theoretical, or being too far removed from pragmatic reality. Fortunately, 25 years of consulting experience has enabled me to speak the language of pragmatism.

Influencing and managing from a regional office has helped me to empathise with, and offer pragmatic strategies to, those clients who either work from a regional location or who are part of a country division of large multinational companies.

Learning and Impact on working with the LTP at Feedsmoore

Chapter 7 expanded on my personal learning under the heading, 'What did the leading talent program bring to me?' The section below identifies further learning associated with the research questions. The learning and impact are summarized under two headings:

- Designing, Observing and Reflecting
- Role modeling leadership in action (Operating).

Learning associated with <u>D</u>esigning, <u>O</u>bserving and <u>R</u>eflecting

- In keeping with my learning to 'start with where the organisation is at', I gave close attention to providing frameworks and processes that fitted with Frame 1 and Frame 2 thinking, in order to satisfy concerns expressed by Feedsmoore and EEBS. I chose materials and concepts intended to lead towards a Frame 4 perspective, as implementation involved moving metaphorically and literally towards the edge of chaos. I applied the P+Q/R formula and learnt about juggling the proportions and the interplay between them. This process was dynamic and contingent on what was occurring at any particular time. Leaders similarly need to look at the dependence on the expert model, work at encouraging insightful questions, and work with resistance.
- The LTP encouraged participants to practice reflection. Various strategies were adopted including formal time set aside for journaling their insights following a session. Observation and Reflection practices were integrated within sessions to enable seamless integration between action and reflection. The Action research project was the major vehicle to enable both individual and team-based reflections. I also role modeled reflection in the middle of action, by commenting on my embryonic and evolving thoughts as I facilitated a session. I role modeled reflection on action by revealing some of my insights, quandaries and learning gained during the program. This role modeling happened mostly within each of the AR team's meetings

drawing on work from (Boud 1998; Brown & Ryan 2003; Bunning 1995; Day 1999; Dick & Bish 1992; Mezirow 2000; Schon 1983; Smith 1991).

- The LTP added to my learning about designing the beginning of interventions. I applied Covey's (1989) first three habits from 'The seven habits of highly effective people' namely—be proactive, begin with the end in mind and put first things first. The opening slide show and the tribal ceremony served as icebreakers and as a way to instill deeper symbolic messages.

- I learnt the benefit of creating discontinuity within the design and implementation of the LTP by layering dilemmas and getting the learners to look at the contradictions between what they 'Think' and 'Do' and between how they 'Feel' and 'Act', drawing on the work of Mezirow (1991, 2000) and elaborated on by other educational theorists (Cranton 1992; Saavedra 1996; Sokol & Cranton 1998).

- I encouraged the AR teams to seize every opportunity to learn from what was happening within the group. For example, at the start of the program, since I was aware that the groups were still fluid and forming, I sought to engage them in the opportunity thus available, to 'turn the lens within' by looking at the dilemmas and tensions that they were experiencing and were inherent in the group forming process.

- Schein (1999) commented that most process consultants focus on the 'How things are done' rather than 'What is done'. I became more adept at getting the participants to focus on the 'How', thus setting up a useful practice-based framework to focus on Mezirow's (1999) third frame of reflection—'Premise-based reflection'. The three-pronged approach of focusing on assessing the content, process, and premise enabled the reflection element within the DOOR framework to address deeper and more generative issues regarding personal, team and organisational leadership.

- Practising the skills associated with observation and reflection enabled me to see coherent links that integrated Gallup Q12, Lominger, and the requirements of AABS and EEBS. The cereal box concept was a direct result

of this insight, which visually represented these interconnections. It ended up being an appropriate visual metaphor for Feedsmoore.

- The Multiple Hats concept linked to my role as Program Director Leadership and enabled me to discern the different perceptions and interdependencies involved in my engagement with Feedsmoore. Each of the hats provided insights and learning at a far more granular level than if I had reflected on my role at its generic level. This learning identifies the need for leaders to get down into the mines and dig for nuggets as much as observing from the control center.

Summarising my role modeling leadership in action (Operating)

- My role as a Facilitator and Leader has been enriched as a consequence of the work with Feedsmoore. I have fine-tuned my intuition to identify and name unconscious processes within groups, immersing myself fully with the beat and tempo of the group whilst simultaneously having the capacity to see what is happening from a third person's perspective. I have greater comfort with, and expertise at, facilitating open sessions that respond *in-situ* to group and individual needs and to responding spontaneously to emergent issues.

- I was mindful of, and worked at, putting into practice Schein's (1999) advice that an effective process consultant needs to develop a trusting relationship that re-establishes the participants' sense of self-esteem, by 'equilibrating' the status, thereby reducing dependency and counter-dependency.

- I became more aware of holding the container stable, until it intuitively felt right to help the LTPs' participants unfold their understanding through the process of consciously analysing their unconscious processes. (Hunter 2007) metaphorically represents this as an artful dance requiring discipline from the facilitator, much like balancing on the edge of a sword and (Taylor 1987) describes it as an intuitively-guided exploration of what is emerging.

- I refined my use of a number of different methods and tools to encourage learning and insight, including: story, guided reflection, visualisation,

mindfulness practices, chi-gong, silence, music, role plays, real plays, skits, pictoems, and photo-language. My own learning arose not from the use of the tool or method as such, but from within my moment-by-moment awareness, remaining alert to the environment and drawing on different items as the moment dictated. I did not preselect many of these, apart from allocating time during the sessions to allow the program to be flexible enough to allow me to respond spontaneously to emergent issues. Whether they were aware of it or not, the participants were co-creators in a generative and emergent process in a way which is similar to how a jazz musician improvises.

- I intentionally immersed myself in Frame 4. Many of my sessions had little structure and usually did not rely on prescribed content as I responded to group generated issues and generated learning in the moment. This was intentional, while not without some risk, since it could generate a mixture of anxiety, fear and excitement about what lay ahead in the session. I was excited by the freshness and the unknown nature of the path we were stepping onto. There was an implied contradiction here, as I was embracing the practice of what the Zen Buddhists call 'beginners' mind'. I was also holding at bay the expert facilitator and observed that the more I did so, the more I felt connected to the group. I was not facilitating in the sense of conducting as a conductor would conduct music, but was consciously positioning myself as part of a Jazz ensemble and in sync with the rhythm, tempo, beat and harmony of the group. I found that all anxieties about the program disappeared when I was with the group and were replaced by a wonderful sense of being in a fully present state.

- In doing so, I was role modeling a different way of knowing and being to the group. I occasionally revealed my fledgling thoughts about the process and where we were headed. There were occasions when I did not know what to do next. I spoke about this honestly; I offered choices sometimes and none at others. I was role modeling what (Bohm 1996) calls 'Proprioception of thought' which is self awareness at the level of our thought. Bohm, refers to thought as becoming aware of its own movements (Capowski 2014). (Issacs

1999) comments that 'it seems to us that our thoughts just appear. I am suggesting that this is not so. Suspension can give us access, enabling us to perceive the impulses that lie behind everyday thought'.

- Given the various hats I wore, and the number of discussions I had with various parts of the hierarchy at Feedsmoore, I took great care to adhere to a key principle of maintaining individual confidentiality and, as a consequence, I spoke less and listened more. This awareness gradually started to expand to the whole program. I also began to see every interaction I had with the client as the intervention.

- The Facilitator's hat was a key enabler towards progressing my understanding of the research questions, helping me to use the actions associated with facilitation to mindfully look at the 'art of my practice'. The outcomes still resonate.

- By helping the LTP's participants to understand the results from the instruments, I gained insights into the deeper motivations, drivers and barriers linked to reflecting and acting on practice. The instruments provided a platform for my counseling hat, helping me to provide insights and thus enabling deeper conversations.

- Structural and personal changes impacted heavily on many of the LTP's participants. I positioned myself as someone who could absorb—without reacting to them—the pent up frustrations, anger, and bitterness expressed. (Menzies 1970) notes that organisations have an unconscious, shadow side to their functioning. Staff members learn to act defensively and support the organisation's development of socially structured defence mechanisms. As participants voiced their frustrations, the whole group eventually moved to a position of trust wherein sensitive issues were brought up and dealt with.

- I learnt that I had to demonstrate the courage of my beliefs and convictions by holding true to the stated intentions of the course during the LTP. I discovered my resilience and strength to lead in the face of adversity and to move beyond it despite personal setbacks, giving me confidence to continue my work as a Leader designing and implementing interventions in the area of organisational change.

- The insight that adversity is important for learning to take place?, parallels the whole of my Doctoral journey. For example, understanding how my desire for perfection, and getting everything right, was preventing me from completing writing for months on end was a revelation. I worked at understanding the deeper threads and underlying fears associated with perfection and getting things wrong, rather than constantly berating myself for procrastinating.

- The discretionary time that I had expended over five months in the lead-up to the program had been critical for achieving sign-off and establishing common understanding. This had failed to factor in the continuous and evolving nature of change. I can now recognize my guilt of enacting, and seeing, change as a step process of movement from one steady state, followed by a brief period of uncertainty to a new steady state (Kirkbride, Durcan & Obeng 1994). However given the busyness inherent in my role and my enthusiasm to implement the program, I failed to anticipate the longer-term ramifications of the loss of key stakeholders, assuming that it was in Feedsmoore's best interest to ensure that the right handover occurred.

- My learning here is to better consider the potential downstream consequences of any future intervention I am involved in, while realising at the same time that a Frame 4 intervention, which deals with a highly emergent and chaotic process, will consistently challenge any possible foresight.

Qualitative comments from my peers and clients from The Leadership Circle 360 report (Anderson 2012), reviewed in Chapter 7, support my continued enquiry and practice in regard to reflective analysis of my practice of Leadership. For example:

- 'Eugene lives his life with integrity and a clear sense of what difference he wants to make. His values and ideals radiate though his being. He is a role model in principle-based leadership. He will not compromise his values in making a positive contribution to the world.'

- 'Depth of understanding of organisational objectives, with the ability to empower individuals within the group to effectively contribute their ideas, and make their own what is achieved collectively.'
- 'I think that Eugene can sometimes be very demanding and hard on himself; he is an absolutely outstanding performer in his chosen line of work, who avoids superficial and short-term impressions but focuses on meaningful, genuine and lasting impact.'

In Conclusion

The extended journey of the Doctorate has enabled and resourced me to continue to insightfully answer my questions around 'How can I as a Leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?' and 'What are the impacts and outcomes of my endeavors to make such a shift?' In pursuit of these fundamental questions I also intentionally undertook to role model and represent what I encouraged others to do as leaders and reflective practitioners.

There was a tremendous amount of learning for me, when I engaged at the ground/grass-roots level as I learnt to navigate my way through the web of networks and relationships at Feedsmoore, and to listen to what was said, and most importantly, not said. My Personal preferences at dealing relationally with people helped me to build rapport quickly. My background within organizations of advocating issues about social and cultural change at a policy level and counseling helped me to understand individuals and the broader social landscape, wherein the kaleidoscope of human needs, wants, likes, dislikes, passions, beliefs and values become obvious. This experience came into play at Feedsmoore.

I worked hard at influencing others about the benefits of deeper interventions, whilst at the same time maintaining my independence of thought and action and the conviction to follow through despite setbacks. Many in the school subsequently utilized the model and framework with other clients. A few months prior to writing this part of my thesis I met with the BDE I had spent time coaching through the

Feedsmoore intervention. Around the same time I had left EEBS, he had taken up a position within another business school where he introduced similar interventions to the one in Feedsmoore. He commented that though he had included a combination of modules, coaching and AR projects, he noticed that the programs at the business schools lacked the deeper impact of the Feedsmoore intervention.

Our discussions highlighted that the program directors who managed the process intervened and took control whenever there was a deviation or when they felt threatened. I briefly discussed the skills required of a Frame 4 facilitator, including a willingness to sit mindfully with uncertainty and chaos, whilst adjusting minutely the levers of P, Q and R. These levers were not an afterthought but were built into the very fabric of the intervention. A practitioner adopting a Frame 4 approach needed to immerse him or herself fully within the frame with all of its risk and uncertainty. Relying purely on a cognitive understanding of the frame and pulling the levers of control too early nullifies and defeats the intent.

My learning is that Frame 4 facilitates a broader Organisational Development and systemic lens. It accommodates richer conversations and the meshing of complex needs within the intervention. I could safely assert Feedsmoore would not have received this richer meshing from any of the other three frames alone, as each of these frames has a narrow atomized focus. Frame 4's meta lens accommodated the pragmatic need for more conventional, incremental and evidentiary documentation required by Feedsmoore and EEBS without losing its essence.

Krishnamurti in Pillay (1992) commented that self-knowledge is something to be discovered from moment to moment through watchfulness without choice rather than read about or speculated upon. I arrived at this understanding based on the long journey of the intervention and the dissertation. This is both the end state and the arrival point.

The DOOR model has been an important enabler, furthering my understanding of my own practice as a Leader. At a very fundamental level it has allowed me to

congruently practice the art of being a reflective practitioner whilst enabling it for others. The visual and literal metaphor of the DOOR opened Doorways to new understandings and journeys. I now find myself layering the learning (Doing and Or else thinking) to everything I do as a Leader and Facilitator of Leadership and Organiaational Development programs.

Writing this dissertation provided the impetus and the vehicle to apply a rigorous framework for unearthing key insights relevant to deepening my understanding of the application of my Research Questions. It would have been much harder for me to embark on this level and intensity of enquiry without the strictures and support built into the Doctoral program. This is one of my key findings, namely that there needs to be a valid and compelling reason to propel a person to embark on a journey of self-reflection. This needs to be supported by a significant commitment of time and effort to explore the nature of deep reflection and learning. In addition, the very nature of the topic, the ontology, requires a framework that fosters and promotes an open, reflexive and critical way of understanding the self and its interaction within the world at large.

In an earlier era TS Eliott wrote, 'We had the experience but missed the meaning' (Gosling & Mintzberg 2004). Observing and reflecting on action encourages the process of making meaning out of those actions and experiences. I now look back on the journey of the Doctorate, knowing more and having lived more. In effect I am operating from a wiser, more knowing position. The implications directly impact on my current practice.

Most Doctoral theses discuss how the work can be used in the future. In my case I can say, 'here is what is happening', as I have been doing the work. Thankfully, the very nature of my work acts as an enabler for both Doing, and Learning from the Doing.

Working in my own consulting practice has helped me to more willfully and intentionally engage with clients and projects. My work now encompasses a number

of Frame 4 interventions. I continue to work for business schools mainly in Frames 2 and 3. I now work with senior and executive teams within organizations, helping them both individually and in teams to deal with their internal business functions, and partnering with them to resolve critical business questions. These questions require an open, emergent, flexible and fluid process—something which I can do naturally.

This work on leadership effectiveness, organisational development and organisational change will evolve to encompass a more systemic, industry wide, macro approach, working on issues of Social Change and Deep Ecology and facilitating processes that enable positive change for humanity and the planet. I have already commenced this in a small way, by designing and running processes for an industry Board, to help them identify and develop the leadership talent of the whole industry, and this has involved having influence with that Board.

Leaders and managers will continue to benefit from my application of the DOOR model by applying the iterative cycle to their professional practice. I have made the DOOR model available to my peers and some of them have started to use it within their practice. This model is freely available under a Creative Commons license[32] and I would like other practitioners to take up its application. My research and application on the frames of learning continues.

Our world is at a critical cross road. Our very future, and the existence of life, depend upon us transcending our limitations by evolving solutions which are a step above the thinking which created our problems. Learning and change interventions drawing on Frame 4 and the iterative cycle of the DOOR are an interwoven and interconnected activity operating with and within a community of others.

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As the Doctoral journey concludes, I can echo Kahlil's profound statement: 'Say not that, I have found the truth, but rather, I have found a truth'. The pathway continues as DOORs, like a lotus of countless petals, open to the future.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix A 2 1

Positivism and Paradigm Shifts

> *So far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain. So far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality. (Einstein in Koso 1993, p.3).*

For over three centuries, scientific enquiry has been dominated by the positivistic paradigm, where the subject under investigation is treated as an isolated, purely quantitative entity, having no relationship with the observer, who remains a dispassionate entity. Science has been said to be positivically true.

In the 17th century Isaac Newton sought to explain all physical phenomena by a few generalised laws and Francis Bacon in 1620 wrote "Without dissecting and anatomising the world most diligently, we cannot found a real model of the world in the understanding" (Brown 1988). This way of thinking to take things apart and into pieces was illustrative of the classical scientific approach, which I will henceforth call 'old science'.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte first expressed the three principal doctrines of Positivism. Firstly that empirical science was the only source of positive knowledge in the world, Second, to clean men's minds of mysticism, superstition, and other forms of pseudo-scientific knowledge and thirdly to extend scientific knowledge to encompass all of humanity, including the political and moral. (Schon 1983)

(Crotty 1998) sees positivism as a theoretical perspective whose epistemelogical foundation is 'Objectivism' whereby things exist of their own accord independent of consciousness. Objects have truth and meaning and proper scientific research can

uncover that meaning and truth. Objective truth, expunged from (Compte's) mysticism, and truth as an object in itself, independent of our interpretation. 'Truth' whose essense and purity can be revealed through research in a values free objective way (Bryman 2008).

The quest for objective scientific truth affirms a dualistic and restrictive cosmology. Some of the deepest divisions of our world have their philosophical roots in dualistic thinking. Examples that stand out are the polarised views and positions of quality versus quantity, science or the arts, short term versus long term, positive knowledge versus metaphysics, organisational growth or decline, leader or manager, people either good or bad, and people either for you or against you.

Dualism has its roots in Aristotle's binary logic: A OR not A. Either this or not this. The sky is blue or not blue. It cannot be A AND not A. The Buddha lived in India almost two centuries before Aristotle. The first step in his belief system was to break through the bivalent veil and see the world, as it is, see it filled with "contradictions".

So dualism helped old science to atomise, differentiate and discriminate. A primary vehicle to help this way of thinking of the world was aided by a process of deductive reasoning. Hume, an eminent scientist argued that meaning could only be derived from our observations of the world or from deductive systems such as mathematics. He also rejected questions concerning the purpose or meaning of the universe, or mankind's place within it, because he believed that none of these concepts could be intelligibly related to things we can actually observe.

This view is contrasted by that of philosopher of science, Popper (Popper & Eccles 1990) whose view is, that all scientific theories cannot claim to be certainly true; all that they can legitimately claim is that they are consistent with existing observations. In other words scientific theories can never be proved to be certainly true, until they are proved to be certainly untrue; they are working hypotheses.

According to the philosopher (Griffiths 1994) Karl Popper 'has tried to go beyond the materialism of Western science'. However he believes that Popper 'still remains imprisoned in the world of reason and can conceive no knowledge, which is ultimately not due to "conjecture" and "hypothesis". George Soros (Soros 1998) an investor and philanthropist who absorbed Poppers views about critical thinking and the scientific method disagreed with Poppers conjecture that the same methods that applied to the natural sciences could be applied to the social sciences.

Because of the limitations posed by deductive schemas, according to (Davis 1992) an imminent cosmological scientist, scientists work backward to construct hypotheses consistent with their discovery, and then go on to deduce other consequences of those hypotheses that can in turn be experimentally tested. If any one of these predictions turns out to be false, the theory has to be modified or abandoned. The emphasis is thus on falsification, not verification. However, when scientists are caught doing this there is usually a public flogging.

The Philosopher Ayer goes further by stating.

> *To begin with, it is surely obvious that there is something amiss with the attempt to incorporate the world in a deductive system, in which everything follows logically from a set of self-evident first principles… The more factual content a deductive system appears to have, the greater the likelihood that factual assumptions are concealed in the axioms or the definitions. (Ayer 1973, p.11).*

My view here is not to deride or ridicule old science but to put it in perspective. Science has made life for humans an attractive proposition. It has succeeded in analysing matter to its minutest particles, in exploring the far reaches of space and time. In unifying the human world and improving the standard of living, but all this at the cost of polluting the land, water and air, destroying large numbers of species and using up the resources of the earth on which life depends. I have also focused on this because an overly rational and reductionist approach pervades organisations,

which is both the focus of my study and the area of my professional practice. I deal specifically with the implications of an old science approach to planning and strategy in chapter 4.

Also an overly rational, reductionist view of human behaviour had tipped the world to the brink of financial collapse with the Global Financial Crisis (GFC, 2008). With no less than the highly venerated guru of capitalism the Federal Reserve board chairman Alan Greenspan stating that "capitalism was built on a fundamental flaw". The failure of leaders in the financial sector to pursue their self-interests in an enlightened, rational manner, as they were supposed to do. Instead, their common sense was allowed to be overwhelmed by greed, infecting the whole system that is designed to run on the basis of rational deliberation.

The "mistake" the former Chairman says he made was his failure to notice signs of infection early enough to inoculate the system, Sadly, when you are entrenched in the system it is hard to see it from outside its boundaries, The hot water and the boiling frog example comes to mind here. Ayer's criticism also applies here; the system was inherently built on a set of false and naive assumptions that disregarded the totality of human behaviour, focusing on a rather narrow rational lens. (Soros 1998) commented that "market fundamentalism," a term he coined had rendered the capitalist system unsound, it was based on the dogma that markets work better for the heavy hitters to the extent that they are unregulated and for the great unwashed to the extent that heavy hitters' capital gains trickle down to them.

He argues that there is a widespread belief that markets are self-correcting and operate like a pendulum, tending towards equilibrium. He states this belief is false.

> *"Financial markets are given to excesses and if a boom/bust sequence progresses beyond a certain point, it will never revert to where it came from….[instead], financial markets act like a wrecking ball, knocking over one economy over another". (Soros, 1998,pXvi)*

Sadly, close to a decade later the 2008 GFC proved Soros correct.

Positivism foothold in the natural sciences was viewed as the paradigm of human knowledge and by extension its suppositions applied to the social sciences, the social scientist as observer of social reality and their analysis expressed in law- like generalizations as is the natural sciences. Social scientists were viewed as analysts or interpreters of subjects they studied. In the area of organizations and society Positivism impacted modernism, which has influenced the arts, literature, social sciences and the field of organizations and leadership, with a focus on an overtly rational paradigm and the need for control and boundaries. I will expand on this later in the chapter.

As I will illustrate Positivisms toehold on the natural sciences was being challenged let alone its extension into the realm of social sciences.

Paradigm shifts

> *At each turn it is not the echo of a demise, a bell tolling for a passing away that is heard, but the voice of rebirth and beginning, ever afresh, of mankind and materiality, fixed for an instant in their ephemeral permanence. That is why the great discoveries are not revealed on a deathbed like that of Copernicus, but offered like Kepler's on the road of dreams and passion. (Prigone & Stengers 1984, p.306).*

The old scientific structures had started to demonstrate limitations: by the end of the nineteenth century it seemed like there were only a few more areas to explore, the whole world had been itemised.

As scientists probed these remaining areas, they noticed puzzling things happen, they saw light behaving like both waves and particles and electrons jumping from one orbit to another instantaneously. There were 'anomalies' which could not be fitted into the classical Newtonian picture of the world, this was bringing what (Kuhn 1970) calls a 'crisis' in the paradigm.

Kuhn noticed that during times of crisis new theories arise to explain anomalies, which are debated and questioned at length, before becoming the new paradigm. Prigogone & Stengers (1985) argue that different points of view, cultural differences and philosophical convictions play a decisive role in the discovery of a paradigm. Rival paradigms are put to the test until one wins out. Time takes over. With the appearance of a new generation of scientists, silence and unanimity take over again. New textbooks are written, and once again things go without saying.

Joel Barker in his famous video 'The Business of Paradigms' argues that most paradigms are written at the edge, and are usually discovered by people who had no investment in the old way of doing things and who generally was not part of the paradigm community.

Birch believes that

> *There is now a growing realisation that science, as such, does not require a mechanistic worldview. The reigning wisdom is under attack. Much evidence, especially from the new physics, suggests a less deterministic, more organic and subjective interpretation of nature. There is a 'within' of things, which is what things are in themselves and to themselves. The stuff of the world is 'feelings' or relations clothed in 'emotion'. Subjectivity is everywhere in nature. (Birch 1993, p.60).*

Apart from Molecular biology and most work in genetics, most scientists are looking at what (Wheatley 2006) calls living systems with a focus on holism, chaos and complexity. Quantum Mechanics exposes the subtle way in which observer and observed are interwoven. Chaos theory also reveals that the relationship between permanence and change is far from simple.

A living system is a network of processes in which every process contributes to the other processes. Each organism maintains its individual identity but is simultaneously part of the whole. A world where 'dissipative structures', a term

coined by Prigogine et al (1984) which contradicted the old science view of an entropic universe where dissipation of energy led to death, rather dissipation leads a system to self organise into a new form of order. In this way disorder can be a source of new order, and growth appears from disequilibrium.

In the work I do this is a process that organisations find hard to deal with, what is feared, is the unknown and chaos, organisations spend a great deal of time and energy attempting to create predictability and stability. When in fact allowing the process of dissipation, channels creativity and propels the emergence of new structures and ways of being. (Wadsworth 2010) looks at living systems and the process of human inquiry.

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Appendix A 3.1

Research on Cycles and their Relatedness to the DOOR model

In 1922, Friedman (1999) an obscure Russian meteorologist, put forward the idea that the universe progresses through a cycle of expansion and contraction. Physicists and cosmologists who began to explore this possibility and its implications, include Hawking (1988), Davis (1992) and Kaku (2009) much of it was work on the Big Bang theory, which postulates that the universe started off with a big bang, a singular event that propelled and expanded the universe to what it is today. Another accepted cyclical cosmology is also referenced as 'Brane cosmology', it explains a universe restricted to a Brane,[1] which then sits within hyperspace, which is also populated by other Brane's (Brax & Van De Bruk 2003).

The traditional view of the Universe as 'Uni' or a singularity has given way to the theory of a Multiverse in which our universe is but one of an infinite number of universes (Kaku 2004) with a myriad of realities at play each with its own unique sets of rules and preconditions (Hawking & Mlodinow 2010). In this thinking our universe is bubble swimming with a vast array of other bubbles in the multiverse or megaverse. Bubbles come into existence and when they collide with each other (the new explanation for the big bang) a new universe is born.

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[1] Brane - Brane cosmology refers to several theories in particle physics and cosmology related to string theory, superstring theory and M-theory.

We move increasingly from a static notion of a universe that exist in time to one that expands, contracts and comes in and out of existence, from an isolated universe to one that belongs relationally to other universes.

Stanley Jaki, a Hungarian-born Benedictine priest with doctorates in both physics and theology, did a detailed study of this cyclical view of time, in which he points out that the Chinese chronological datings restarted with each new dynasty and the flow of time was not linear, but cyclic. Similarly, the Hindu system consists of cycles within cycles, (Yugas) of immense duration (Yogananda 1995).

So what has this got to do with reflective practice and Leadership you may ask? Part of it is intended to lift the gaze beyond the myopia of the daily grind. Not to imply that daily existence is not important, but to focus on the microcosm without understanding the broader and ever-expanding causal interrelationships is to be condemned to a perpetually insular cycle of activity, potentially relegating existence to that of automatic responses. In my experience, leadership within organisation needs to accommodate a richer, broader, expansionary worldview that accommodates breadth as well as depth.

Though we may contemplate such expansively mind boggling topics as the megaverse, two of the world's leading cosmologists express a view that shifts the frame to a more deterministic paradigm as expressed in their latest book, Grand Design, (Hawking and Mlodinow 2010). They infer that human behaviour is ultimately predictable and determined by the laws of nature, the complexity is in observing all of the possible permutations, which if it could be plotted or determined, given a few million years and the computer capacity we could map all of this out. In their model God is ruled out of the equation, rather, they argue that all of the preconditions pre-exist for the universe/s to self create.

Whether there is a god or divine entity that created the preconditions for the existence of the universe/s is an interesting question. Paul Davis comments in his review of the Grand Design.

> *"The laws of physics can explain, he says, how a universe of space, time and matter could emerge spontaneously, without the need for God. And most cosmologists agree: we don't need god-of-the-gaps to make the big bang go bang. It can happen as part of a natural process. A much tougher problem now looms, however. What is the source of those ingenious laws that enable a universe to pop into being from nothing?" (Davies 2010, p.30).*

Cycles, whether one based on night or day or the creation of universes, that repeat themselves and follow a preordained design template, can be viewed as deterministic and prescriptive where there is no place for learning and evolution. This to me seems rather restrictive and pointless, a value laden statement no doubt. Laszlo however comments that:

> *'While the ancients discerned the universality of cosmic cycles, their worldviews saw these as eternally repeating. Our collective understanding now, however rather than cycles, perceives the creative spirals of evolutionary processes unfolding throughout the cosmos' (Laslow & Currivan 2008, p.161).*

Interestingly, referring to Chapter 2, one sees the interplay between the positivist/objectivist views and the interpretive and constructivist views. Old sciences empirical cloak has been refashioned for the 21st century, Hawkings (2010, p. 5) bold statements that 'scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge' diminishes the role of philosophy and other branches of enquiry, affirming Comte's principle doctrines, relegating all others but scientists and more narrowly physicists as the torchbearers of objective truth. On page 32, Hawking goes on to state, 'it is hard to imagine how free will can operate if our behaviours are determined by physical law, so it seems like we are no more than biological machines and that free will is just an illusion'.

Davis offers a critical view of Hawking's work and asks a meta question about the source of the ingenious laws and Laslow offers an interpretive and constructivist view, he imbues the universe with the potential to learn from previous cycles, when

a cycle is part of a spiral, the past informs and provides the preconditions for the next evolving process, but this evolution is not set out on commandment stone, it factors in emergence, and learning. This is certainly the case for the DOOR model, Observing and Reflecting on what we were/are 'Doing' provides the opportunity to learn. Opportunity plus Intention provides a frame to synthesise the learning, which allows us to design a new architecture that gets translated back to 'Doing' again.

DOOR and Interrelationship to the Yin/Yang.

In this section I link the DOOR methodology to the Yin Yang symbol and look successively at each aspect of the DOOR. I chose the ancient Yin/Yang symbol or the diagram of the 'Supreme Ultimate' (as depicted in figure 3.1 in chapter 3 of the thesis), as it is a universal and holistic representation of cyclical movement.

Yin is the name given to the force, which produces expansion, and is considered the feminine principle (Black in diagram). Yang is the name given to the force that tends to make things contract, and is the masculine element. (White in Diagram) 'The yin yang principle is simple. These two forces are always opposite and antagonistic, and yet at the same time they are complementary, for they are forever combining and cooperating. The principle of yin/yang is one of dualistic monism (Muramoto 1973), it is also a symbol of non dualism where all apparent opposites are complementary parts of a non-dual whole.

The Yin/Yang symbol is known as the 'Tao' or 'The Way'. "The word Tao has no English translation, but it relates most closely to the Western idea of wholeness and unity and how this unity divides into parts and manifests in the world. (Dechar 2005). Both Yin and Yang constitute the two poles and there is continuous movement between one pole to the other.

Examples of this movement include the endless cycles of inhalation and exhalation, night and dark, changing seasons, war becoming peace, birth moving into death, and so on in never ending cycles. Thus the oneness of any entity or process is comprised

of two antagonistic and yet complementary forces. One cannot exist without its opposite, each is defined by its opposite, each seeks its opposite for completion.

The Yin-Yang model elegantly describes the cyclical process of Design, Operate, Observe and Reflect. The table, shown below, is divided into two moieties:

Yang	Yin
Male	Female
Active	Passive
Dynamic	Receptive

Table 3.1 Yin – Yang Moieties

The strongest yang force corresponds to the most dynamic phase of the DOOR cycle: Action. At the opposite end is strong yin, the most passive phase: Reflection. There are two linking phases between these, where the Tao would argue that there is an inexorable movement away from extremes—resulting in a more balanced state. Observation is the natural progression from action, whilst planning evolves from Reflection.

Each phase contains both yin and yang in varying degrees and directions of movement. As each phase moves into the next, the previous one informs it:

Operate: Operating on action is carried out based on previous planning.

Observe: In order to learn from what has occurred, we must first know what has occurred. i.e. we must make observations about the action.

Reflect: Reflection takes these observations a step further. It extrapolates, and makes generalisations and connections. It is here that real learning takes place, metanoia's can occur, and wisdom is born. If this step is done well, the next round of the cycle will operate at a higher, much more informed level.

Design: Designing draws on the wisdom and insights generated by reflection, in order to determine the course of the next action and make it as effective as possible.

The Eastern belief is that whenever there is too much emphasis on either yin or yang, its counter force emerges from within it and moves us naturally towards its opposite, thus restoring balance. If this natural cycle is not allowed to proceed, imbalance occurs.

An overemphasis on, or indeed limited use of, action or reflection is unbalanced and can lead to discontinuity, producing results that lack fullness and hence have limited validity or applicability. The Western overreliance in the past on reductionist approaches is an example of this.

If the 'doers' do not put sufficient energy into thinking about their actions, they will be destined to repeat them over and over, with only minor, if any, improvements in efficiency and performance. On the other hand, thinkers can ponder ad infinitum, constructing wonderful mental models that nonetheless have no influence on the world (unless taken up by a doer, of course).

Any truly effective process draws on and values each phase.

The yin-yang model is a simple and elegant visual representation of the process of movement through these phases, as well as the importance of both action and thinking occurring in balance and appropriate order.

It could be argued that the most effective process is one where each phase is adequately visited. However, if a key phase were to be identified for dealing with the problems faced by today's society, it could be argued that the yin, or passive phase, would be the one. Indeed, contemporary authors referring to the Tao point to our overreliance on the yang process, which suggest that to achieve balance we need to make greater use of the more feminine, 'passive' processes.

If analysis of whatever action has been carried out is done cursorily, either through preference for the more active phases, or inexperience, then the next cycle will not be as advanced or well informed as it could be. Thus the degree of change between one cycle and the next will be incremental, rather than quantum.

The degree of this shift, between one round of learning and the next, hinges to a large degree on the wisdom gained through reflection based on careful observation. Such reflection can lead to generative and deep change.

Thus the key to effective Leadership could be considered to be reflection, it could be argued that this step is one that is traditionally undervalued or glossed over by the pressures of day-to-day business.

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Appendix A 3 2

Stream of Consciousness on the DOOR model using an iPod

Monologue after meeting with my academic supervisor on 8th of March 2008

I actually stated that I started with Observe; maybe I need to pull in some of Torbett and Argyris's material. Also talk about the mind map I came up with. Elyssebeth was insightful in seeing what I had done inadvertently drawing all the theorists and frameworks on the right hand side and looking at how I applied all of this within the left hand side of the mind map This was serendipity at play and it needed an outsider to provide this bit of wonderful insight which my unconscious was attempting to make sense off.

Maybe a way to do this is to ask myself a number of questions like why did you come up with this? Why the DOOR? What are the different manifestations of the DOOR? How is the DOOR useful? And for whom and why? How does the DOOR manifest itself in my life or others? How am I manifesting the DOOR? Getting caught up on the artifacts. I am so unconscious of my own tacit knowledge (a tautology) which is exactly what I need to do and what I am asking people to do with the reflection piece. I need to do this stream of consciousness material that Elyssebeth asked for. Why am I finding this hard? I am doing it in my creative writing course.

Monologue on 14th March 2008 whilst driving to work

Last time I spoke for a whole hour when I was driving and the iPod ran out of batteries without my realization. Let me try and recall what I said.

There is a lot going in my head at the moment 'let me position it- In many ways the door model (Design, Operate, Observe, Reflect) is a model that I came up with, it is unique and originally mine, though like life and the cosmos I cannot lay claim to exclusivity as it has evolved from a longer framework that goes back over 14 years when I was doing my Master of Philosophy researching the themes of Reflection and change. DOOR therefore has a very long and useful pedigree and history. It certainly draws on the PAOC model Plan, Act Observe and reflect model by Kolb and some of Lewin's work. (Write about Argyris and Torbett's work) DOOR is a useful metaphor and a handy acronym. There are DOOR ways to all areas of life, Doors open and close both literally and metaphorically in our lives. The notions of openings into life are so important and I can't help but quote Tennyson. 'Through the archway I glimpse a world whose margin fades forever and forever as I move. So that is nothing deterministic about there is the notion of constant movement and evolution likewise with life the doorway is a symbolic evolutionary motif. The juxtaposition of thinking about the interrelationship between doing and thinking got me to put this model together

I would like to start of by illustrating or drawing on two of Helen Langer's examples from her book on Mindfulness. Or rather, one of her examples. Picture yourself waking up late at night or in the wee hours of the morning with your door chime ringing in your ears- you rush downstairs with barely just enough time to put your gown around you, you open the door and low and behold there is a person out there wonderfully garbed with rings flashing al over the place bedazzled with jewelry, with a rolls Royce parked in your driveway. He looked glorious though an appeared a little bit harried. He said, look I am sorry to disturb you. I am in this special reality TV show and we have this game on and the winner gets 2 million dollars, I am willing to share with you at least a hundred thousand of those if you could do one thing for me, he panted and continued, incidentally my wife is also a competitor and I would dearly like to beat her at the very least in this round. What I need is a piece of wood that is about 7X3 foot in dimension, can you source that for me, he anxiously exclaimed -I need it as soon as possible, because time is of the essence.

You try to get your bearings mumble something and run out the backdoor looking for a piece of timber, you keep looking and searching and cant seem to find any, you feel befuddled and keep racking your brain trying to figure out where you could have this item, You then think about the timber yard down the road and ponder on whether they would be open at this time, you realize that it is late and unlikely, you also have a flash of the Rot wheeler on patrol and quickly discount the timber yard, you continue to look erratically. After a few more moments of looking you sigh turnaround to Mr. bejeweled and state that that you are sorry that you cannot find any timber of those dimensions. He turns around dejected and walks away.

The next morning as you were driving on the way to work you remembered the weird request and also noticed the amount of garbage placed out in the street (In Australia there are council cleanups usually once a quarter or so – people throw out their stuff which is then picked up by the council. Any way whilst driving around you see these bits of timber lying around and they happen it be in the shape of a door. You suddenly realized this and knocked yourself, you state, "I wished I had… for gods sake I wished I had taken my front Door of the hinges or any of the Doors and just handed to him and I would have got a hundred thousand bucks. That would have paid for all of the doors and all the windows quiet easily and I could have got the best of them.

Now isn't that an intriguing story- Helen Langer comments that there is a difference between mindfulness and mindlessness. In a sense in this example what happened was a mindlessness that included categorization so what e do is that we tend to take things bracket them, categorize them and place them and many times this categorization or classification prevents us from seeing things as they are (see also Buddhist view about seeing an object like a tree for what it is.) So what is the categorization in this case- that doors are doors and timber is timber the moment it becomes a door it gets declassified from the notion of Timber. Fascinating!

I saw the story and the metaphor of the DOOR as a useful analogy about our own DOORS to life. This is a useful example about how even though we may want to be mindful in the moment even when we are wanting insight to come to our aid (in this case offering the man the it of timber our own unique sense for order and categorization prevented us from seeing it. Now how often do we do that? I do this all the time because invariably what we do for most of the day or life is relegated to automatic pilot or the subconscious driving us .So we operate by categorization by bracketing by association there are many times were we need to go back and look at the associations we have formed.

That's an intriguing story … now why did I pick that I think the interesting part is about the DOOR itself. It is emblematic and symbolic of the model of the DOOR. The DOOR has two parts. We spend so much time in action and it is so hard to crimp to creep to think about the time that makes a significant difference to actually review and reflect and so the DOOR model is an elegant representation of life. The two interlocking facets of DOOR at the surface level appear dualistic but in fact are moniestically dualistic. The DO which is the doing part – we are certainly hell bent on doing and caught up in the doing paradigm, my Masters (quote authors research) for at least 80% of what we do we are doing and in most cases consciously unaware of the doing of the doing. That happens in business as well, there is so much doing, in fact we are rewarded for doing. So going back to the model the DO in door stands for Design and Operate, which is the first part and layer of the DOOR model. The second part is about 'Or else thinking' we need to ask questions about what we are doing, such as - Could it be that…? Or, why is this so? Or, why do this at all. The 'OR' else question leads you to explore other possibilities. You are either locked into a whole process of doing or you are hopefully reflecting and pondering and thinking about what you have done or what you are going to do.

The model allows us to focus on doing but to also sit outside the doing and to ask some fundamental questions about ourselves, our teams our organizations as you can see for the earlier example that we can get locked into categorizations or locked into our particular world views ort paradigms and if you really add to that we construct what we want to construct of the world, the is the poststructuralist view (quote authors) that in fact each of our perceptions is the world is one big construction.

Now I am not going to go that far however there is a lot to be said about our own perceptual filters about how we take in data and see what we want to see. These perceptual filters allow for the smooth operation of doing, for it to be constant and not to vary too much from what we are doing before in fact it allays and moves us away from a position of dissonance. So we are caught and locked in the doing paradigm, so the need for OR we all understand. For the life of me I am trying hard to think about Helen Langer's other great example it is a wonderful example but I have just lost it.

To Illustrate here am I driving and talking to my iPod there are times when I flash back to consciousness and say let me double check I know that I am talking to my iPod I could be distracted, there is a truck that has pulled up right next to me and it is making a hell of a lot of noise there are cars going past. Do I just trust that my automatic robotic self will guide me as it normally does and can I Therefore devote my thinking to this wonderful topic around the DOOR? At the same time I am trying to think about the other Example of Helen's. I can't seem to picture it. Most books are written in text with few visuals if any I am now casting my mind trying to see a visual representation of it. Now the DOOR was an easy one I could easily pick that, but there is another enlightening example that fits here maybe what I could do and what happens in practice is to let it go. It will eventually merge with my consciousness.

So let me put aside and feel safe in my subconscious's automatic responses to driving and know fully well that it will get me there safely. Let me focus on the DOOR and at the same time let my consciousness be aware that there might be a trigger that emanates from the action if any conditions change around me as I am driving So any way that was an interesting diversion though it has not made a difference to Helens example coming up.

Let me start explaining the Design element of the DOOR. I do see a distinction between the Kolb model of plan act and my design operate. The DO is a wonderful acronym or metaphor. Design has far more than planning; to me planning is a subset of design. Design sits within the creative end of the spectrum, there is a beauty and a simplicity to it, There is the notion of us designing our future, designing our life, there is intent behind it, there is a uniqueness, simplicity, flow there is I don't know…. What's the word… there is something special about design. Design has a practical component to it, as well as a refined cognitive overlay. Perhaps design has balance because we know when it is not there It is a statement about our lives perhaps design has a uniqueness. Design is divine as Gods design.

How does an architect design? What distinguishes a good architect from the average so what is it. Does it take into account more holistic views and concerns there is integration with a whole lot of other spheres for e.g. in town planning, i.e. in the last century the foresight and design around the suburb of Abbotsford in Sydney with its green spaces and Melbourne with its wide streets That idea about design and designing for the future, thinking about all of the possibilities, we can talk about current design that takes into account the environment, and the human need for a sense of place that is uniquely and personally badged and branded, something that is different and both visually and kinesthetically removed from the bland or mundane. There is something unique and different about 'my place' compared to others.

We need to view design in its broader context, what's the design for our lives, The ancient Hindus called it Dharma or what's our life's mission or purpose what is

important for me. Design is part of our instrument in life that moves us away from the automaton. Design is enfolded or comes to life in some sort of plan and planning therefore is a subset of design because planning enacts design.

I overlay the DOOR model with an ancient symbol. The ancient Toa, more popularly known as the Yin/Yang symbol. The interlocking semi spheres within the circle are colored one black, which to me is associated by Yang, and the whiter colored semi circle is Yin. Yang is extroverted energy, similar to Myers/Briggs version of extroverted energy, it is out there its pushing, making things happen in the external world, it is activity and action orientated and Yin is the internal, the breathing in. Yang is the breathing out. Yin is the feminine, the flow, and the night. A way that I can demonstrate yin is by telling a story about a matron delivering a child… *oops there was a car moving so fast and I responded. Thank you sub-conscious you have done well.* About a matron and a child (type all that in as well) the Matron is there gently guiding manipulating, steering gently, whilst the mother pushes, and eventually the baby comes out and the mother at the end of it says that "I did that' what an achievement a feeling of completeness the end of a process. Without the matrons gentle guiding and gentle pushing it would be a tougher gig. Yin is therefore the receptive, the background. In some ways Yin is representative of the servant leader the person that enables others.

I correspond Design and operate with the externalized out there world pushing, full engagement, and full immersion with the Yang, black in diagram. Also note that there is a tail like that of a tadpole which then evolves and fills out the semi circular space in the circle. The circle in the middle is another Yin/Yang, which is similar to the meaning of life, similar to fractals, which can be viewed as the footprints of life, and so you keep having Yin emerging in Yang and vice Versa. I need to illustrate this with a diagram

The tail part is design. Design starts of with reflection and observation. So design is effectively an outcome of another phase. It is an outcome that emerges from some stillness; design happens through and after an initial gestation phase this is where

you pull the threads together. Einstein famously said that he visually saw the formula e=mc2 - this though occurred after a fair bit of genuflection and thinking, usually floating in a boat whilst he was fishing.

For design that makes a difference that challenges the established paradigm and changes the frame you need to think about what preceded it. So my point is that design is the end result of a deeper process. The quality of the design what emanates what is translated to the real world hinges on what preceded it.

Now operate, which is the other cousin of DO. The reason why I chose the concept of Operate is because it fits with the notion of doing. It makes the conceptual the pragmatic real. So we take the design, we enact a plan and then we operationalise it.

There is something unique about us, we are on automatic pilot we are usually operating on something, we are doing something we are making it happen and we are in the thick of it and in the middle of it. We are in the blissful prison our subconscious we are locked in flow. 'Don't ask me any questions' because there is a part of operating that has a wonderful buzz to it, which is the sheer exuberance of actually being in the middle of doing something without having to think. You could argue that this is a deep meditative state itself. That the subconscious is at play doing what it does it is fulfilling its role and that's the beautiful pat of operating *and isn't it interesting here comes Helen Langer's other example. It has come at the right time at operating I was trying to force it before. I think it is a unique example about the wonderful nature of the unconscious its strengths and its limitations.*

> So the story commences with you at a checkout counter in a department store in our case in Australia we will use Bunning's or Coles, you happened to have bought a few things and you come to the checkout counter after waiting in line. You are there. You pull your card out whist thinking about that cup of coffee you would like to have and noting that you have to pick your kids up soon and so on. The checkout operator brings you back to current reality by saying " I am sorry sir but you haven't signed your credit

card' and you say oops sorry about that and she says do you mind signing it sir and so you sign your credit card, she then takes out a store voucher gets you to sign it, she then checks the signature from your credit card to the signed voucher and she says thank you very much sir.

When reading this monologue out to my partner she could not help comment that she would not have ended up in this scenario because she would have made sure her credit card was signed she though pictured me in this scenario because of the vagueness of my general demeanor particularly my surreal disposition when shopping.

Here in lies the up and down side of operating What's the Down Side well there was a certain mindlessness to it wasn't there getting to sign the credit card before and the form afterwards certainly fulfills her criteria it was checked off and ticked off against the credit card and that's OK because that's what I needed to do she thinks, she also did a public service by getting you to fill in the credit card but there was something missing here. What was the deeper paradigm-busting question that she needed to address?

So operating served a purpose here, it fulfilled the regulatory/obligatory criteria around what the store wanted and she did a great job she was efficient she made it happen fast and with a smile, but what was fundamentally different was asking the deeper question and challenge her assumption.

This is the inherent danger to operating if we leave life to only operating and doing, then we are going to keep repeating our mistakes. Doing the same thing over and over again. So somewhere here in operating in the middle of this fluidity, we need to discover or crimp some time to get us to look at what we are doing in the middle of action. That is tough a very tough thing to do. It is like positioning (explain this later). In the middle of operate I am so immersed in my worldview I only see the world through my eyes. I scan and

filter and look and I see the world through my eyes and that's the way I view it and there is nothing else that comes in-between.

In the middle of operating I want to move into second position in other words how do others see it, how do you see it, you know the proverbial spiritual ethic of understanding the world from the others position or wearing their shoes. So that is second position and that's what we need to learn in the middle of operating and to do this in the m moment. We have elaborated on the Helen Langer example now.

Let me give you an example from one of my participants where there was a car accident. He was running late and was thinking about what he had to do in the office when he got in and forgot to notice that the car in front of him had stopped, he slammed his brakes though he still bumped the car in front of him. He got out irritated that this would slow down his trip back to work, he was wanting to get the whole procedure over and done with and went to the car in front and gestured to the lady in the car that he was wanting to deal with the issue quickly, The lady saw this big man in what appeared to be in a manic way gesturing at her, she was already in a state of panic, she nevertheless got out of the Car and started to talk to him, she was getting agitated as all he wanted to do was to get her details so that he could move on. After a while, she turned around to him and said "and the sorry part was" she left it hanging got in her car and drove off. He was left dumbfounded by his behavior, He was so locked into the moment that he forget to recognize another human being who had been affected, If only he had second positioned it and looked at the interaction from her point of view.

In my coaching session with the participant, I employed the empty chair technique to get him to move between the positions including third positioning - Looking now at the scenario from an objective fly on the wall position of what was happening between the two individuals. I guess what needed to occur was him to say " I am sorry to have inconvenienced you and I do hope you are ok, it appears that the car is ok, how are you" All these traits as defined are now leading us into the second or Yin side of the DOOR model I guess we are starting to look at the Observing part. The

third positioning comes with observing and reflecting but you can attempt to do this third position in the middle of action you can actually try to be that fly on the wall and objectify yourself. Ah isn't it interesting what's going on between these two people. Because that gives you a big picture overlay. And looking at the overlay later gets you to look at the patterns. As stated earlier we are now moving to observing. We early alluded to the fact that we need to look at our own mental constructs and perceptual filters; there is a whole lot of material about emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and self-regard.

How attuned are you to understanding your own mental constructs that make up your world view? As a leader this is important. So to help with observing we need to understand that we see the world based on our perceptual filters. How do we generate opportunities for observation can we do it in teams Can we enroll a process like observing the nature of our meetings getting other people to triangulate and giving us some input about how they observe us acting or doing things or interacting with people. So observing is important can I observe myself in the middle of action can I capture my inner fleeting thoughts can I register why I am thinking what I am thinking.

There are a whole lot of other pragmatic skills about observing life. It is such a powerful phenomena. The moment I say I want to look at this meeting I want to spend some time really being conscious. Saying that to myself steals me some real observation time (Neuroscientists call this attention density) in fact we need to be conscious of stealing observation time to negate the automatic subconscious and the danger posed by the example of the checkout operator. We need to consciously say that I want to really buy some time or to consciously observe and pay attention to the next two minutes - take a deep breath, sniff the air smell the roses look at the water the birds the blending of sky and water. That starts us to engage in the present.

Appendix A 5.1

Why Feedsmoore used AR/AL and not Case Study

A case study as Adelman (1980) points out 'is a study of an instance in action' (Adelman, Kemmis & Jenkins 1980) this instance is dissected to peel away the dynamic and complex nature of events and the parts people play in it. Cohen et al, (2000) argue that one of the unique strengths of case studies is that they 'observe effects in real contexts' so we are able to see the direct relationship between cause and effect, and Corey (1996) states that 'cases are useful for developing sets of principles and concepts that can be applied in practice'.

The case study approach was heavily criticized when it was first used; its interpretative and qualitative nature challenged the old science hypothetico model, which relied on hard evidence driven by the numbers. Senior corporate managers including those managers at Feedsmoore are heavily influenced by the Harvard Case methodology. Although this method is more participant centered than a lecture, it nevertheless positions the instructor as expert and focuses on the experiences of others or other organizations. Thus adhering to Frame one and Frame two knowledge in these ways:

> Frame One–The Gatekeepers use the practice setting as a source for deliberating theory and practitioners (students) hold their experience as inferior and subordinate to the rational scientific one. The instructor uses the case study to orchestrate a performance within defined boundaries, usually a cognitive debate and discussion followed by the application of analysis and logic to deduce conclusions.

Frame Two–Technical rationality, Case studies are cloaked in an old world scientific paradigm, venerating the expert outsider and the scientific evidence-based model at the expense of practitioners working *in situ.*

Whilst the Case Study is far removed from the hypthetico reductionist model, in practice it is the participant/researcher either standing as a distant observer doing it to others (participant observation) or in the background collecting the evidence (non participant observation), in this way it emulates an old science model. The researcher as a dispassionate unconnected entity has been challenged in lieu of a more dynamic model that looks at the interconnectivity of it all. Learning from the new physics informs us of the nature of observation where the researcher influences and becomes part of the experiment, this has implications for the reporting of observed phenomena and for the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Action research and in particular critical, emancipatory AR is more in tune with this approach. In the case study approach the researcher is viewed in isolation rather than part of a community of learners or in AR parlance 'the learning set' The researcher is also viewed within the scientific deterministic prism of 'doing it to others'.

Walker in Cohen (2000) addresses a number of points on 'The case study and problems of selection'. Point ten asks, "At what points do you show your subjects what you are doing?" This typifies the difference with Action research –This question cannot arise, for AR is a collaborative process of enquiry, the question could be reframed as – What is the question that we need to enquire about? How do we go about co-creating the question for the purpose of conducting our enquiry? What is the central question that we need to explore as a group?

The open and collaborative processes outlined where congruent with Feedsmoore's intent to improve their employee engagement and participatory leadership practice. Point eleven in Cohen asks- 'at what points do we give them control over who sees what?' An AR frame would ask the question before it arises, i.e. who needs to see what? How do we go about sharing our understandings along the way? What is the nature of the AR Set and how do we collaborate to enable a shift and growth in understanding and learning? Once

again I stressed to the steering committee the congruence of an open process to Feedsmoore's values and business drivers.

Point twelve asks - who sees the report first? In AR the question is- who is going to contribute to what part of the report? And what is the best way for us to structure this to broadcast our insights and learning's to the wider community?

A key insight for me was that a case study promotes the notion of the researcher as "I" standing removed from the action and AR promotes the notion of "We" standing within the action. This fundamental difference strikes at the core of how we engage with the research question. So there is much more of a notion of being part of the community of learners in co-creating the journey.

Sanberg (1985) sees the relationship between researchers and the organisational participants in AR as dialogical, and Kemmis (2001) sees this as "bringing people together around shared topical concerns, problems and issues"… to achieve mutual understanding and consensus.

In some ways action research incorporates some of the notions of case studies in that there is an account of the action and an account of the researchers interpretation of the action, however a case study can only provide a snapshot of the action at any given time, it discounts the evolving nature of enquiry and by its very nature is voyeuristic, static and context bound- commenting on the action as opposed to co-creating and being immersed in the real action which Action Research focuses on. Case studies also lack critical AR's advocacy role in changing the conditions of the system for the betterment of people.

Whilst I write this here, I was mindful of the terms I used with my academic colleagues who advocated the case study methodology- I did not use the word Voyeuristic. After trying many times to hold a discussion, I was either ignored or as earlier expressed, treated as one of those serfs clamoring for their attention. After all who was I to have the temerity to critique the well-respected 'Case Study', a method deified by Harvard, a school they all aspired to work in.

The Steering committee if not swayed by some of the arguments, must have at least felt assured that they offered a point of difference to what they had previously experienced. The participants were more fortunate in that they had the experience of living the AR journey as the insights evolved, as did their understanding.

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Appendix A 6.1

Program 2, Setting the Scene - Feedback from Colleague

Program 2 started nine months after Program 1 commenced, and three months before it concluded. In addition to the President, I had invited a participant (Alex) from program 1 to provide his thoughts and insights about the program. I had also invited a recently appointed Program Director (PD) from the Sydney office, to observe the opening (with the purpose of providing me feedback). The PD had expressed interested in knowing more about Action Research and the LTP, and I had seen this as an excellent means to triangulate data and insights.

My colleague's observations are in italic and my thoughts are in normal text:

Observations

> *Excellent ice breaker with 3 tribes (teams) offering their 'strengths' to the Chief (President), with lots of tribal music & imagery etc.*

Turning the president upside down occurred here. There were three AR teams as opposed to four in Program 1. This occurred because we needed to factor in people leaving mid- way through the program, having a larger team mitigated this risk and helped to ensure the success of the AR projects. Larger teams also meant the load could be spread and we could focus more on the learning from the program and the interaction of the AR set.

> *President's presentation was high energy and right on message to align with Eugene's.*

> *Initial 'feeling words' offered by the participants included: important,*
> *intrigued, curious, uncertain, some doubts, academic, postponing judgment*
> *('hung'), feeling responsible, anxious, lots of questions, fun, not sure how to fit*
> *in a 12 month commitment to project.*

Most program 1 participants took it on themselves not to say too much about the
program itself, wanting the others to 'feel' the impact of the program. Nevertheless,
the general impression was that it was highly challenging in terms of commitment
and personal learning.

> *Eugene stayed far away from the edutainer role[1], and forced people to take*
> *ownership. That was very clear when groups needed to be formed for the 3*
> *projects and he only said that they needed to decide how they wanted to do*
> *that, and then do it.*
>
> *There was a clear sense of discomfort: the projects are not narrowly defined*
> *(that is up to the teams); the Action Research approach was new and won't be*
> *clear until they start doing it; and the role they expected Eugene to take as*
> *organizer he did not take. It took a minute or so before people really got going*
> *on the process.*

I was very clear from the start that they owned their own learning, including making
decisions about the composition of the project team, as long as, it met the condition of
maximizing diversity in all its forms. Each team member needed to negotiate with each
other. In the case of LTP 1, the participants selected a project from a bank of projects

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[1] Edutainer role - A derogatory term coined by a faction of the PD community who were interested
in deeper interventions and that applied to trainers and consultants who entertained people at the
expense of learning.

that I had spent some time with the Executive in selecting. For LTP 2, the theme was narrower and revolved around innovation within Feedsmoore.

> *By lunchtime probably 75% still sat on the fence about their confidence in the program. Mid afternoon Alex gathered his peers around for a 'chat' (rather than presentation!) about his experience. He sat on a chair, and asked people to pull up chairs around him. Alex fundamentally kicked his peers off the fence with a brutal frankness!!*

Following my request Alex volunteered to attend the first day. I provided him with no brief apart from asking him to inform them about his insights both positive and negative about the program. I had also seen Alex go through the lows and highs of the journey and he had developed a very open and reflexive quality to his insights and learning. He also had a way with words that were both colorful and direct without the rudeness. The group warmed to his frankness.

> *President mentioned how he had introduced reflection points in the middle of the Feedsmoore extortion and product recall crisis. That period was the most stressful period the President had ever gone through. The first time he had the executive team take time-out to reflect on what they were doing and how they were impacting others, they were confused: how could they afford to do it in the middle of a crises? The President felt that exactly because it was a crisis, they could not afford NOT to do it. There is a lot of macho stuff going on in these sorts of situation, making it all-the-more critical. The result had been that after the time-out the next morning there was an immediate improvement of what people were doing, and further time-outs for reflection have been held since.*

This was excellent reinforcement of the value placed on reflective practice. A theme that was consistently reinforced as a value added benefit during the design phase of the LTP and a theme that permeated both programs. This also felt good because I

could take some credit for this hard won statement, though high praise must go the President, who handled the extortion crisis in an outstanding manner.

> *I would consider the day very successful. Alex played an extremely important role, possibly more so than the President – The President is very supportive of a reflective approach. The impact of Alex was that the participants now seemed willing to put their trust in the journey they were about to embark on, even though it felt uncomfortable and there was no exact route map.*

This was an excellent outcome for Day 1. Alex had challenged them to take the risk and to be part of the journey. I had also cemented a better working relationship with the President and through my PD colleague, now had another advocate for Action Research and deeper based interventions.

Appendix A 6.2

Psychometric Instruments and the Counseling Hat

EEBS programs use a combination of action learning, experiential activities and psychometric and 360 instruments, providing multiple sources of data to help identify and explore behaviours and traits of individuals, (Frame 2 and 3 in action). I had a number of philosophical concerns about this approach, particularly in regard to the manner in which it focuses an overtly psychological lens, with an ever-present danger of typing or labeling individuals. I saw the benefit of having some data to provide individuals with insight into their behaviours; as long as I could also provide a parallel message about the complexity of human behaviour and the certainty that no instrument could neatly compartmentalize their behaviour. I always discussed the validity of challenging the findings of an instrument, while at the same time being open to considering what the results might suggest about their present and future behaviour.

While accepting the benefits of gaining accreditation, I began privately rebelling against doing the accreditation courses. My philosophical, big picture, holistic, relational bent was protesting against being too deeply immersed in the detail of such things as 'factor analysis', 'inconsistency indexes', 'validity', 'reliability' and 'standard deviation'. However I persevered, and acceptance became easier as I realized that Frame 4 could accommodate the other frames within it and thus its holistic nature could accommodate such highly rational frameworks based on psychometrics as they were merely part of a broader system.

The BarOnEqi Model

To demonstrate the learning associated with gaining accreditation and then applying this knowledge within the LTP, I will draw on my experience with one of the instruments – The BarOnEqi (Bar-On 2004, 2005; BarOn & Handley 2003). In this case, accreditation involved completing a three-day workshop and a written test prior to applying the knowledge to debriefing one of the LTP participants. This was an additional commitment added to what was already an intensive schedule.

I recommended the use of the BarOnEqi instrument following research I had done on Emotional Intelligence (EI). The instrument was supported by extensive cross-cultural research based on normative data from 15 countries, I felt that this would meet Feedsmoore global footprint, given that the LTP was being piloted with a view to running it globally.

The steering committee considered the 360 component of the instrument as a useful means to provide the LTP participants with timely and relevant information about their own emotional and social functioning, and the impact they were having on others. Since the 360 reports were likely to be confronting for some participants, it was agreed to administer it in session 2, allowing time for the group to develop some norms for openness and support. There was no budget allocated for debriefing the instrument and I took it on as an additional discretionary activity, conducting many of the debriefing sessions during the breaks, and after the end of sessions during the residential module. This issue of taking on extra tasks in my discretionary time was highlighted in Chapter four.

The BarOnEQi is the industry gold standard [1] (Spies & Plake 2005) comprising 133 items and providing results on five key areas of Emotional Intelligence. The LTP

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[1] The BarOnEQ-i remains by far the most extensively validated and researched measure of emotional intelligence and is the only instrument consistently reviewed by the scientific communities 'gold standard,' the Buros Mental - Measurement Year Book.

participants received a 'personal preference report' analysing their own preferences and a 360 report providing feedback from their manager, peers, staff and other stakeholders.
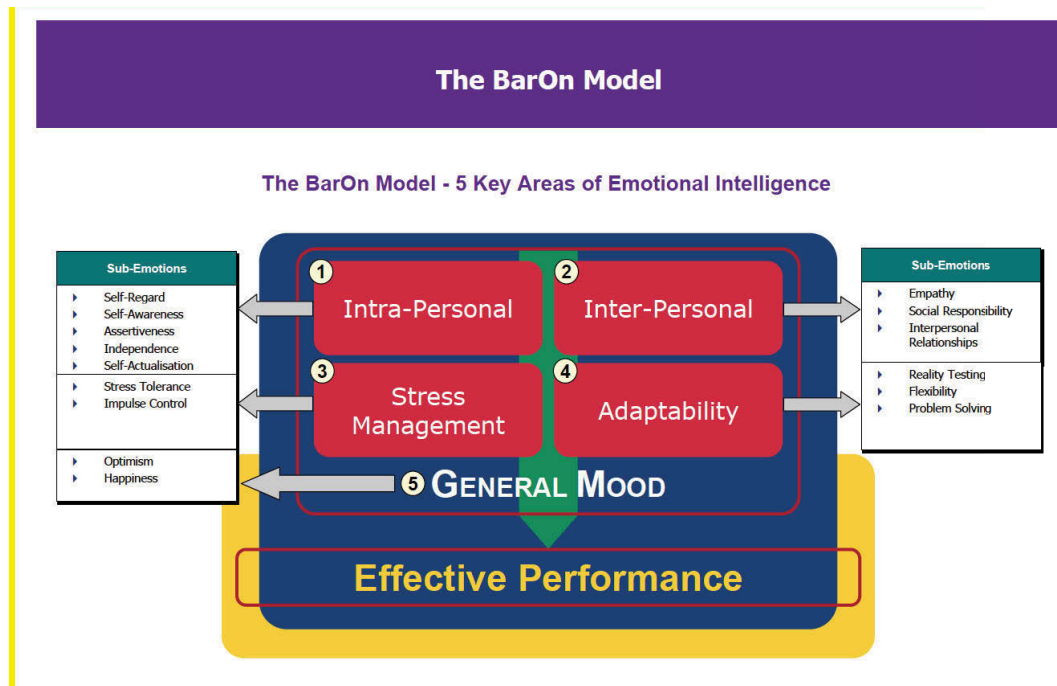
Figure A 6.1 BarOnEqi Model

To prepare for a counseling session I would firstly check the validity of the report by looking at various processes of analysis based on the manual. This is essentially a mechanistic process and then I would review the factors, sub-scales and overall pattern and outline a hypothesis to account for my observations. In the case of one participant whom I'll call John Doe I wrote:

> *'John has a total BarOn Adjusted Score of 104, which is within the average range. All 5 Composite Scales fall within the Effective Functioning range. John has high scores for Independence, Self Actualisation, Problem-Solving and Stress Tolerance.*

> *In his Intrapersonal skills his assertiveness score is very low (73) and his independence and self-actualisation are high. John finds it hard to say no to people and to let people know that he disagrees with them (subscales 67, 82 and 96). John though has a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment from what he does and relies on himself to make and take decisions.*

> *His Impulse control scores, in particular item 117 and 13 to do with anger management coupled with his strong independence and wanting to go it alone with making decisions could alienate him from some people. John is seldom happy with the way he looks (114), perhaps a poor body image - though this is balanced with being happy with the type of person he is (85).*

> *John could take on a more proactive role in reaching out to people and explaining his reasoning about how he came up with a decision.'*

Having prepared this briefing note for myself, I used this approach to giving feedback to John:

> *"I followed the BarOn interpretation sequence checklist and discussed informed consent, followed by discussing the purpose of the assessment and what he wanted to do with the results. I then provided an overview of the instrument and addressed issues around validity and reliability.*

> *I commenced by focusing on his strengths of Adaptability (particularly Problem Solving), Independence and Self-Actualization and Stress Tolerance. I enabled him to see this process of feedback and the BarOn as an effective problem solving exercise and relied on his independent judgment to draw themes and conclusions from it.*

> *I then delicately opened up a general conversation around the themes of decision-making, he commented on his views on leadership and some of the issue he had with engaging people particularly when he disagreed with them.*

This happened because I was patient, built trust, asked the right questions and let him do most of the talking.

Using his improved understanding we explored issues around aspects and situations that made him angry and explored ways of dealing assertively with the situation. We then looked at an upcoming issue and problem-solved different ways of dealing with the situation.

This built additional trust and we were able to discuss issues about his physical self-image and its connection to anger and other feelings he held.

We then spent some time validating his other positive attributes such as his high stress tolerance and his overall good mood. We spent some time exploring some more of his other strengths including information from the Strengths Finder Instrument. We discussed ways and means to use his strengths to leverage the action plan for development.

I encouraged John to see this as part of the iterative journey of the LTP and to use his coach and or mentor to help him to practice the skill.

I signaled to John that a substantive part of the change journey had already been completed and that his positive contribution to this current discussion was testament to that."

The BarOn provided a useful platform for my counseling hat. It enabled deeper conversations based on the insights provided by the instrument. Data from the instrument also helped me in the manner and way that I approached individuals. For example a few participants had low scores in 'Optimism' and 'Happiness' and I was particularly sensitive and empathetic to their circumstances and issues. I worked at ways and means to provide them with resources to see them through the change. The restructure underway was having a big impact on some of the LTP participants. One individual also had low scores for 'Stress Tolerance' and 'Assertiveness' and

following a number of discussions this individual sought additional help around depression.

A complicated and yet rewarding moment in the journey came while I was counselling a participant with low scores in 'Self Regard' and 'Reality Testing'. We had a number of conversations with him over the length of the LTP program and I helped him to look at some of the deeper issues impacting on his self-perception. (Bar-On 2004) connects 'Self-Regard' with self-acceptance and associates it with general feelings of security, inner strength, self-assuredness, self-confidence and feelings of self-adequacy. He had been dealing with this issue since childhood. Of special concern were his lower scores in 'Reality Testing', which involves having a balanced perspective and clarity around current reality – in simple terms, the ability to accurately size up a situation. Through the BarOn he had received critical feedback that further eroded his self-acceptance whilst at the same time providing important data to help him deal with the real situation. He sought external help from a psychologist for his deeper-seated issues and combined with the support from his coach and me, became a far more positive and happy person. He had turned his situation around and his team and peers made many positive comments about the change.

The Conflict Dynamic Profile

Whilst the BarOn provided valuable insights about the deeper issues impacting on each of the LTP participants. My study and application of The Conflict Dynamic Profile (CDP) added another layer of analysis, providing useful insights and strategies for managing conflict within each of the AR sets.

The CDP (Capobianco, Davis & Kraus 2004), included a 22-page report with detailed information on how a person responds to workplace conflict. It includes data from an individual, their boss, peers and direct reports on constructive and destructive behavioural responses. It explores the individuals "hot buttons" and the circumstances that triggered them. I found that this instrument assisted participants with either low assertiveness (from the Eqi) or who had a preference to work with

harmony to better manage and deal with conflict. The instrument also provided useful insights for those participants with low self-awareness scores, by helping them to see the impact of their behaviour on others.

The Team Management Profile

Along with the CDP, The Team Management Profile (TMP) (Margerison & McCann 1990), provided an added layer of analysis about the work preferences that people have within a team. The inference is that we tend to practice what we prefer and thereby become more proficient at it. Since I have been accredited in the TMP since 1990 I will focus on my key insights relative to Feedsmoore.

The chart below identifies eight major work preferences, defined by the lower word in the diagram e.g. 'Innovation' and eight roles defined by the top word e.g. 'Creator'. Participants receive a report that aggregates their results into one major role preference [shown in 'red' numerals], and two related role preferences [shown in 'blue and yellow' numerals], which are secondary to the major role.

The collective results are highlighted below.

- Red – major role
- Blue – secondary role
- Yellow – secondary role
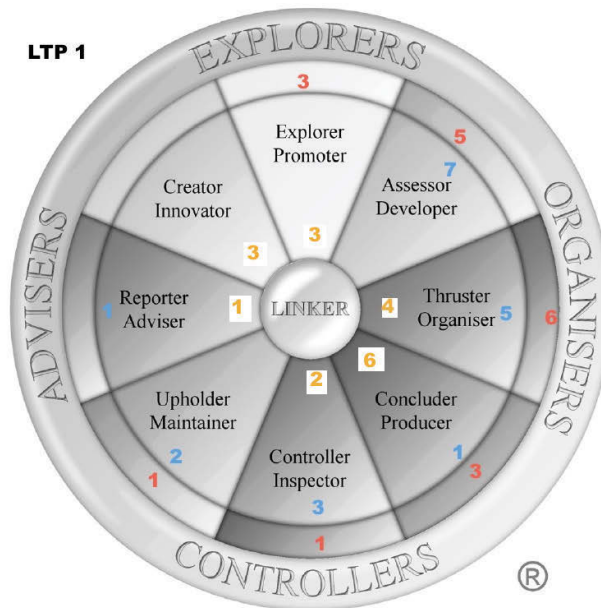
Figure A 6.2 Team Management Profile Preferences LTP 1
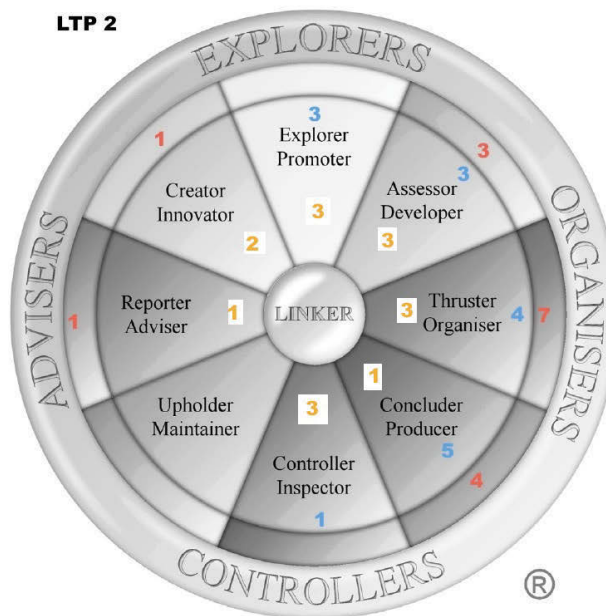
Figure A 6.3 Team Management Profile Preferences LTP 2

I tend to place most focus on the major role and these diagrams clearly show that the team preferences are heavily skewed to the right for both groups towards the 'Organising' segment of work preferences. LTP 2 have none in the 'Exploring and Controlling' area and both groups had a bare minimum in the 'Advisor' segment. Even if we factor in secondary preferences the left hand side is still deficient. Implications for the LTP 2 and the learning sets included:

The three roles of Thruster Organisor, Assessor Developer and Concluder Producer for LTP 1 was 74% and LTP 2 was 87% of the total first order preference. This gave a heavily skewed focus on the 'Doing' part of the DOOR model. The LTP programs focus on balancing Doing with OR else thinking which was exactly what they needed, as they were not wired naturally to accommodate it. The strong Assessor Developer preference meant that the group quickly selected an idea for focus, followed by the Thruster Organiser whose preference is to get things done at all costs. This drove the outcomes and pushed people to meet deadlines. This was further compounded by a focus on Concluder Producer, which included a strong preference for establishing systematic procedures towards finishing tasks. This meant they preferred to utilise their existing skills or processes rather than try out new ones. This analysis reinforces my earlier comments about being focused on transactional elements of management. LTP 1 fortunately had 16% of first preferences for the Explorer Promoter role whose strength it is to take an idea and engage and promote their stakeholders with it. LTP 2 did not have this luxury.

This strong drive for 'Doing' can be compulsive given that both the 'Reporter Advisor', whose interest is gathering information and researching different ways of doing things, and the 'Creator Innovator' whose interest is ideas and challenging the current norms, only made up 6% each of the total in LTP 2 and none in LTP 1. There is a 5% preference for LTP 1 and 0% for LTP 2 for the 'Upholder Maintainer' who provides support and help to team members and are the conscience of the group. There is a 6% LTP 1 and 0% LTP 2 for the 'Controller Inspector' who enjoys detailed work, they make sure all facts and figures are correct and have a keen interest in ensuring quality and accuracy.

I refrained from providing this analysis initially as it appeared rather harsh. I waited a few weeks after they had time to digest their own profiles and introduced the analysis within the learning sets, rather than the whole cohort, this focused the discussions within a small group. Each group recognised the need to attach equal weighting to the work preferences and allocated people to take on multiple roles to ensure they where covering the Reporter, Creator, Upholder and Controller roles. I followed up on how and when they were holding each other accountable. This was a challenge for each of the sets at different times. I monitored this process and on occasions, held the mirror up to the group and on other occasions questioned and confronted them with my observations.

My personal preference is to use fewer instruments in a program. I was influenced by (Montagu 1999) book citing extensive research debunking the link between Race and IQ. The research also challenged the notion of scientific validity and innate characteristics. I had also earlier in my career; found the whole notion of 'Eugenics' and its implications around racial purity particularly repugnant, despite its one positive contribution, the link to the meaning of my name 'Eugene' – of noble birth. More recently I had read the book 'The Cult of Personality' by (Paul 2004) which scrutinizes the research and background of psychological categorizations and testing, claiming that personality tests lead us to mismanage companies and misunderstand ourselves.

I had to temper my intellectual and philosophical position understanding that both EEBS and the client had a preference for utilising a number of instruments. I was at the same time, seeing the practical benefits associated with utilising instruments. The opportunity to test assumptions and insights about the preferences and proclivities of individuals, and the opportunity for individuals to gain insight and feedback from others about their perceptions and insights. In reality, I became a willing guinea pig, participating and accrediting myself in many of them. I expand on this further in chapter Seven.

Bar-On, R. 2004, *BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory - Technical Manual*, Multi Health Systems, Toronto.

Bar-On, R. 2005, *BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory*, Multi Health Systems, Toronto.

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Appendix A 6.3

Learning from AR projects

Each of the AR projects included substantial learning for the AR team members and myself. As expected, each team developed its own way of working and relating and each had its own unique issues and adversity to overcome. There were 7 AR projects in total, I briefly comment on three of the AR projects.

Project - How does Feedsmoore build a culture of effective follow through and commitment'

The AR set in this project were having difficulties in getting commitment from their sponsor, the General Manager I had observed earlier who did not to be as committed as others. They were also experiencing difficulties with their line managers who failed to give the program the priority agreed to by the executive.

This AR set carried on despite these setbacks. They designed a questionnaire and interviewed 30 managers around the theme of culture and follow through. By the second module their research was starting to highlight deficiencies in Leadership, Reward, Selection, Planning and Measurement systems as being key areas to focus on.

Just after Module 2, two of the five-team members resigned from the organisation. I observed from a distance and chose not to step in, unless invited. I held my concerns privately hoping that they would find a way through this adversity. To make matters worse, the team relied on the energy and enthusiasm of one of the individuals who had resigned, his preference in the TMP was the Explorer/ Promoter a vital role that added balance to the team and was effectively the 'go to' person with stakeholders. Each of the three managers were now also experiencing pressure from the business through more workload because of the corporate wide implementation of SAP,

which is an enterprise wide software to automate their business processes, through one complete integrated platform. A big undertaking for any business.

The team was starting to fragment, with set meetings being postponed. I was worried, though I purposely continued to hold back, as I felt that they were senior managers and needed to deal with the issue. I also had a belief that they would persevere and get through. I waited for a few additional weeks for our planned set meeting. The atmosphere was somber and despondent and they looked beaten and worried. They were concerned about the volume of work needed to get the project through, given the diminished resources. They were significantly concerned about how it would look within the business if they did not successfully complete the project. They commented "We are Stuffed".

I sat back and allowed them to talk about their frustrations. I did agree that the situation was tough and offered no other comment. I had on a previous occasion explored Transactional Analysis and the Drama Triangle with them (Karpman 1968) and consciously refrained from 'Rescuing' them. I asked a number of rhetorical questions, more to produce an effect than to summon an answer'.

- What's happening to the team?
- What does this say about teams?
- If we looked at the Drama triangle, what's happening right now for you and the team?
- Where do you think you are in the Situational Leadership Model (Clawson 2006; Hersey 1992)

The above questions had the effect of focusing them on the issues through third positioning. Bandler & Grinder (1982) and Wilber (2007) call this third-person approach as 'Looking or Distancing' to provide a dispassionate objective lens. I could only employ it because I had previously allowed them to vent. I then forced them to look at their present reality, by asking:

- What are we doing with each other, now?

And some time later I asked:

- What would you do when confronted with a similar issue within your functional area at work?

We then future paced (NLP term) and adopted a Solution-Focused approach to the rest of the meeting.

I entered the meeting understanding that there were serious issues and that I needed to above all demonstrate that I was listening to them holistically - that is listening to not only what they said but empathically listening and acknowledging their emotions. I learnt to let go of my fear for control and the need to overly direct the group and to trust in the process. I also used the meeting to help them to reflect on some of the models and methods that were taught in the modules. Their questions and quandaries developed links to "P" – The theory associated with it. This is another expression of frame 4.

The group saw this meeting as a turning point and they went on to renegotiate the outcomes of the project with their sponsor and stakeholders. They likened their issues of working their way through adversity to the famous film, Cool Running (Turteltaub 1993) about a Jamaican Bob Sled team who competed in the Winter Olympics despite all the odds stacked against them. They commented that like the film, the adversity bonded them further as a group and in retrospect; they would not change what happened.

The AR project – What is Feedsmoore's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for the Future. The EVP is effectively the deal or contract you make with your employees as an employer.

This AR set had the OD manager as part of the team. The one overriding signature theme for this set was that they executed their plan from the start. They commented that they 'had a passion for the topic and a strong belief in what they were doing'. At their second meeting they spent a great deal of time getting to understand each other. They chose to rotate the leadership role and allocated a role to look after team dynamics. They adopted a formal meeting structure, created a database to collect their research and sought external input from one of the big global consulting firms in the area to help them with their research.

They were totally enamored with their topic and said they wanted to get to the outcome and the conclusion, I got caught up in their enthusiasm, as this was an area of interest of mine at work. At this stage the key word used in business was 'The War for Talent' (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod 2001) with Hewitt (2002) finding that 71% of employers in their survey saw a direct link between improving their employee branding and improved business results and that strong employer brand attracts high caliber job candidates thereby increasing the competitiveness of business (Hieronimus 2005).

The AR set identified that the EVP is not for everyone, as Feedsmoore wanted only those people whose values aligned with the organisations. Potential employees also needed to be turned on by what Feedsmoore stood for. Any EVP should intrinsically be aligned to the company value proposition, along with the customer, shareholder and community value propositions as shown in Figure 6 .3.1.

Figure A 6.3.1 EVP and Company Value Proposition

Feedsmoore wanted to avoid what they termed a vanilla EVP where the company was all things to all people, as many companies try to emulate. They needed to find out what was unique. The AR set felt that though this could be polarizing, they wanted to attract the right people to work for them. Their project in the end was a quantum leap in thinking to what the global business had done in this area and they went on to refine and influence the global strategy.

I challenged this group on various occasions around the perceived cohesiveness of the group, as there didn't appear to be any adversity or hiccups. They had taken on board some of my session material on autonomous and self-managed teams, they leapt to the autonomous and self-managed model by rotating the leadership role as previously discussed. They overlooked some of the research in my article on Action Research - Team Learning (Fernandez 2005), particularly around accountability slipping through the cracks when the going got tough - In their case, they needed to look at who was taking responsibility and accountability for building a critical community that were willing to challenge and support each other, not just cognitively but emotionally and relationally.

In my article on Action Research – Team Learning, the following extracts deal with the issue highlighted above.

"Self-managed teams are a wonderful democratic principle, in practice it fails to work for a number of reasons, including lack of training. Fusing together a group of people whose societal values reward individuality and competition (add to this organisational reward and recognition systems which target individuals) into a group 'team' setting with little support is doomed to failure.

All usually goes well when things are operating smoothly, however invariably when confronted with irrational behaviour, accountability and responsibility fall through the cracks. Leaderless groups are an ideal to strive for, as long as there is an investment in time support and resources to make it happen. Meanwhile there is a need to reinforce participatory management practices through leadership.

Ricardo (Semler 1994) has a counter view, his organisation 'Semco' was driven by approaching financial crisis, and—albeit gradually—turned to 'self-directed work teams' (SDWT's). He took an unorthodox approach from the beginning, one of his underlying tenets being "We wanted our workers to act like adults, so we stopped treating them like adolescents".

He flattened the organisational hierarchy, and abolished rules and regulations, preferring to risk occasional abuses rather than perpetuate the patronising stance of before. When we introduced flexible hours, we decided to hold regular meetings to track problems and decide how to deal with abuses and production interruptions. That was years ago, and we haven't yet held the first meeting.

Semler did not appoint team managers. He believed that the right person for each role in the team would naturally emerge. Staff determine their own salaries and take part in profit sharing. The organisation has an open book

policy, whereby monthly figures are distributed to all staff. There are no secrets such as management salaries...

However (Huston 1995) from the Levinson Institute in the US claim that:

"In relation to permanent self-directing work teams, the Institute dismisses [SDWT"s] as largely imaginary, saying that every time they have checked out a claim of an extremely effective [SDWT], they have always found that there is an accountable manager involved".

Similarly, Alexandar (Mikalachki 1994) Professor at the Western Business School, USA, argues that a 'winning team' needs strong leadership - he uses a number of sports teams as an analogy to demonstrate this point".

I had also spent time with the LTP cohort discussing the evolutionary process involved in moving from what I termed the CIA style, which stood for Controller, Inspector, and Authority to a Self Managed style within teams in general and by inference the AR team.

I commented and referred to Fig A 6 3 2 in the Action Research – Team Learning article that:

"It may be that the choice is not clear-cut, but rather a process of evolution. Moving to a self-managed team takes concerted time and effort with an intention to get there. The process involves the freeing up of control and emancipating individuals to take on accountability and responsibility for the proper functioning of the group.

Your AR team needs to define the key variables required to shift between these styles, and anchor behavioural statements next to each style".
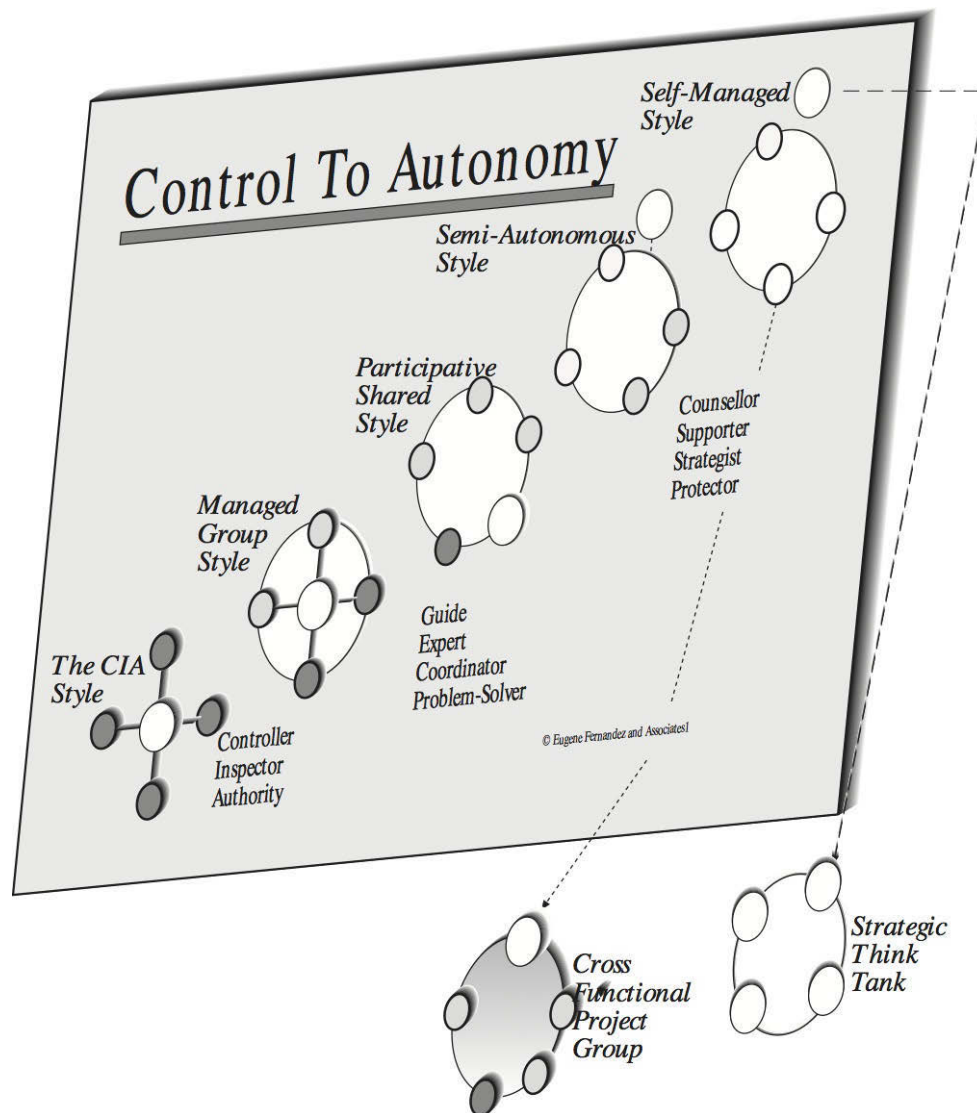
Figure A 6.3.2 Five Team Styles

"*The major difference between all of these terms is the difference in autonomy and responsibility that the group operates under. Healthy teams gradually expand and challenge their boundaries. Usually a major obstacle is senior managers' fear of losing control, out of which they end up constraining the group.*

So what is your intent, how far do you want to go, how far will the organisation allow you to go. There are some organisational mandates, for example, because of compliance issues, where the manager's role will not be sanctioned beyond the Managed Group Style.

An AR team's minimum aspiration should be the Participative shared style".

The AR set in their drive for the outcome-valued harmony over dissent, they devalued and worked hard at preventing the 'Storming' part of team functioning (Tuckman & Jensen 1977). They grudgingly agreed that in their drive for the outcome they were missing the opportunity to learn from the journey as it unfolded. The learning in this case was relational and process oriented as opposed to only progressing their cognitive understanding of the project topic. They were looking at the external representation of the horse rather than seeing the Trojan within. In other words the project (Horse) was the container and the Trojans' were the learning's within. They modified their approach, though I was still left with the feeling that they could have done better.

I encouraged them to read the notes and work through the two exercises within the team booklet, that would help them to look at the transition between the 5 styles see Below:

Exercise 1 – Focused on three questions.

- *What style would you like to achieve within your AR team / your functional team?*
- *Where are you currently?*
- *What could be the transition steps?*

Exercise 2

For each style, what would you need to do under each of the following headings?

Style_____

Communication

Delegation

Leadership

Roles

Control/Authority

Monitoring

Task allocation

During this time, one of the members of this set volunteered to make comments about the LTP when we opened Program 2 and as discussed earlier was instrumental in getting the LTP 2 participants to commit to the program. This demonstrated that they had taken some of my suggestions on board.

The AR Project- "Embedding of Metrics and Measures – The Cascading of OGSM."

Feedsmoore follows the OGSM framework, which stands for Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures. OGSM is a strategic planning tool developed in Japan in the '50s to align the direction of multinational corporations around the globe. Many Fortune 500 companies have since adopted the tool.

As a consultant I had previously helped senior teams with developing and applying strategic, operational and performance planning processes and the integration of these three approaches within organizations. I had also previously lectured on the topic of Performance Management. This OGSM project was another area of interest of mine and I had also recently completed intensive programs on 'Futures thinking' and Complexity. My experience suggested that this area was cluttered with different approaches and methodologies, all of which are complex and sophisticated, while many approaches do not work as the model builders predicted they should. (Mintzberg 1994; Parnell 2006; Quinn 1981).

I have a good working knowledge of some of the Rational models of planning, including Management by Objectives (Drucker 1955, 2007), Porters Five Forces (Porter 1985, 2008) and (Kaplan & Norton 2007) the Balanced Scorecard and Strategic Maps. The cascading of OGSM as part of the AR Project arrived at a time when I was personally researching, designing and facilitating workshops that were beginning to challenge the limitations associated with an overly rational approach. I was also beginning to work with other frameworks that applied a more emergent and relational lens including the Resource Based View (RBV) by (Collis & Montgomery 2008) and Complexity and Complex Adaptive Systems (Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000).

OGSM primarily adopts a rational lens to planning in contrast to the other work I was now doing in this area; it was identified as a project because of issues associated with embedding the methodology within the business. The AR set members were all located within the same region and reported to the one General Manager, unlike the

others that had mixed groups. The AR project therefore hoped to address their specific business issues about direction and alignment.

The problem with the OGSM methodology to me lay in its definition of what constituted an Objective and a Goal. Figure 6.3.3 illustrates the relationship and sequence of the OGSM - Objectives come first, it is expressed in words and focuses on 'What we need to achieve'. Goals follow from Objectives and they focus on the financials and operational performance measures expressed in numbers (ArchPoint 2013).

Figure A 6.3.3 OGSM Example

This was the inverse order to what I knew as the convention, where 'Goals' establish where you want to go and 'Objectives' are the specific steps you need to take to achieve your goals (Peterson, Jaret & Schenck 2012). This is not semantics, as Feedsmoore itself in its Performance Development Processes (PDP) claims that a good objective must comply with the 'SMART' acronym, which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable Realistic and Time- Bound. In the case of the OGSM an Objective is more of a broad Goal statement, in direct contradiction to the PDP process.

In my experience planning frameworks rarely align broader strategic/corporate planning process to branch plans and to team and Individual performance plans and agreements, this is one reason for its undoing - as the individual finds it hard to see their contribution to the bigger picture or to coin a common phrase 'There is no direct line of sight between what I do and my contribution to the organisation'. Authors such as Morrisey (1989) contend that this is where an integrated and well thought out methodology that incorporates a common clearly articulated language wins out. In this case Feedsmoore's planning process is not aligned to its PDP process.

One of the other benefits of a SMART Objective is that the measure is inherent or implied within the Objective. Figure 6.3.4 outlines an example I used within module 3 of the LTP. It illustrates how a good objective has measurable criteria as part of its construction and it can also be subject to the SMART acronym test. In my example the Objective is Specific - 'To Reduce Overtime'. Measurable – Quantity, time and cost. Achievable – Based on agreement of reduction of 20% by 6/95. Realistic – Based on discussions with the people involved. Is 20% realistic? If not change the percentage to reflect what is achievable and finally Time-Bound – by 6/95.

Measurable Objectives

There are four major elements that can be used to measure objective achievement:
time, cost, quality and quantity, time and at least one of the three others should be incorporated into the objective.

Compare these two objective statements:

"To reduce the amount of overtime in the finance section."

Quantity

"To reduce the amount of weekend overtime in the finance section by 20% while still maintaining a 90% processing rate for invoices.
To be achieved by December 6/95."

Time   Quality

Figure A 6.3.4 Measurable Objective

I spent some time attempting to understand this hoping to reconcile the problems that I was experiencing/observing. The OGSM AR team could not help me with this process, they accepted the convention and did not see the need to question the underlying assumptions. I had spent over a decade helping managers to better understand these linkages and had developed a sophisticated process based on my own research. As a result of this my business had designed and implemented a number of integrated planning processes within many large government and corporate organizations. Though during this time of reviewing the OGSM I was also challenging the rational lens and constructs of my own model.

I did not altogether agree with the underlying premise associated with the quest for perfect alignment and the well-honed objective. In practice, as Feedsmoore's example was highlighting the myth of alignment fractures under the emergent and chaotic nature of reality for its epistemology is buried within a positivist and objectivist frame, holding the organisation and its mental models within Modernisms embrace.

In a comprehensive literature survey (Hart 1992) summarises what he sees as the main categories that organizations strategy-making processes fall into. This is summarized in Table below.

Descriptors	*Command*	*Symbolic*	*Rational*	*Transactive*	*Generative*
Style	(Imperial) Strategy driven by leader or small top team	(Cultural) Strategy driven by mission and a vision of the future	(Analytical) Strategy driven by formal structure and planning systems	(Procedural) Strategy driven by internal process and mutual adjustments	(Generative) Strategy drivenby organisational actors' initiative
Role of Top Management	(Commander) Provide direction	(Coach) Motivate and inspire	(Boss) Evaluate and control	(Facilitator) Empower and enable	(Sponsor) Endorse and support
Role of Organisational Members	(Soldier) Obey orders	(Player) Respond to challenge	(Subordinate) Follow the system	(Participant) Learn and improve	(Entrepreneur) Experiment and take risks

Table 6 3 1 An Integrative Framework for Strategy- Making Processes

Hart is not prescriptive, but observes, "In practice, organizations may combine two or more models into distinctive combinations..." He personally believes that the two end styles, Command and Generative, involve under-utilisation of organisational skills and capabilities, and so are not as effective in their pure forms. The middle modes, however, include a greater balance between the contributions of management and other staff, which is likely to be reflected in higher performance of the organisation. From my discussions with the AR set it appeared that Feedsmoore's approach was a mixture of Command and Rational, which is also reinforced by my earlier comments about a transactional style of Leadership.

The OGSM framework and the processes reinforced Hart's Command and Rational styles. Fortunately the OGSM AR team began to explore the benefit of adopting a 'Generative' approach to encourage more Symbolic and Transactive styles to planning.

Given my own evolving understanding and shifting to a more non-rational lens I decided that challenging the OGSM was a battle I did not want to enter into as the methodology was embedded globally within the organisation. Whilst I had a better understanding of the theoretical models and underpinning frameworks associated with planning and strategy. I was not privy to the thinking of the global executive who were calling the shots. My reading during this time helped me to make this decision. Organisational strategy and thinking was evolving from an externalized view that industry factors (such as Porters Five Forces) were most instrumental in determining a firm's performance to one that now also emphasised organizational factors such as the capability of individuals within the organisation (Parnell 2006; Ray, Barney & Muhanna 2004). This view of enhancing capabilities fell under the heading of the 'Resource Based View' (RBV).

Research by (Dress 1987; Mintzberg 1994; Thomas, Litschert & Ramaswamy 1991) also highlighted that success hinged on Organisations getting the buy in of managers below the Executive suite for it to work and unless managers actively endorsed it, the strategy is unlikely to be implemented in practice.

This change is in alignment with my earlier discussions in chapter 2 about Modernism's expressed need to contain and place boundaries around organisation and life's ambiguous situations (Willmont 1992) as opposed to postmodernism's openness and tolerance for diversity and the blurring or disappearance of boundaries (Rouleau & Clegg 1992).

 Postmodernism's blurring of boundaries now included customers and suppliers being involved in the co creation of organizational strategy. Research by (Collis & Montgomery 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004; Stacey 2000), validated this co creative process along with strategy being enabled by conversations. Given this, I came to the realisation that what mattered most was the conversation, engagement and thinking associated with strategy. The literature was highlighting that this encouraged alignment and direction and perhaps compensated for the limitations inherent in the methodology.

I reconsidered the nature of my influence with this group. I had to refrain from wearing the expert consultant hat and reminded myself that it was the process hat that I primarily needed to focus on. I introduced discussions that lifted the frame to a broader perspective as part of my session on Performance Management. On the program we discussed Stacey's (2000) view that strategic plans 'don't work', as they do not factor in the conditions of complexity and the impact of the emergence of unpredictability. I propose that organisations instead could be viewed as 'complex adaptive systems' that respond contingently to changing conditions (Bovaird 2008/05; Stacey, Griffin & Shaw 2000). To help deal with complexity I proposed that it was imperative that leaders enable strategic conversations throughout the organisation.

To help the OGSM AR team see the limitations of focusing only on the methodology, I seized on a passing comment made by an AR team member about hardware and software and suggested that this was a valuable metaphor proposing that the methodology could be considered as hardware and needs software (in effect the meetings, process, conversations, alignment) for it to work. This was an ahha moment for the group. I suggested that the teams learning associated with the OGSM might also be of benefit to the rest of the business and encouraged them to use the LTP cohort to trial their thoughts.

I encouraged the AR set and the LTP participants generally to understand that concepts of story, narrative and conversations are important ingredients in helping people engage with strategy. As the OGSM AR Set had agreed to facilitate part of the next module, I took the opportunity to commence that session on the OGSM and Performance Management with a story. I wasn't sure about how it would be received and was tentative at first in its delivery.

Story of the Two Flags

The story of the 'Two Flags' evolved over time, I can't recall the original source or inspiration for it.

The Story	**My Observations**
Flag 1 – Flag on the mountain	I used Mount Panorama, Australia's famous annual motorsport event. It happens to also be located near one of Feedsmoore's major regional centers
The Narrative	Stepping across to the left side of the training room – I state that I am a Leader
As the Leader I point to the flag high up on the mountain and say:	
There it is	
That is what we are aiming for	
I know how to get there	
I know what it takes to reach that flag.	
I want you to come along with me for the ride.	
There it is, we can see it,	
We can make it, we can take it.	I look at the room - monitoring the participants, they are all listening. I feel relieved, my animation increases as my stage persona takes over.
	I walk to the other side of the room (Right Side) and comment
This flag is in the middle of the bobbing ocean, and the tides consistently change	

its position.

We are on a yacht and we need to tack and change to get to the flag, Sometimes, the waves are so high that we can't see the flag.	
We are fortunate that we have each other as a resource (assume now a number of yachts).	Pointing to different participants at different locations in the training room
I need Jim and Mary and John - To let us know the position, help us to triangulate. To learn collectively	
We will take and make whatever corrective actions are required to reach that flag.	The group is engaged with the story and I am conscious that I now need to involve them. I am conscious that I have also now anchored the two flags in different locations within the room
We call this approach - highly deterministic	I go back to the Anchored position of flag 1 and state
We call this approach highly emergent.	Walking to Anchored flag position 2, I state
	I now move to the middle of the room, establishing another anchor - implying we are now ready to reflect on the meaning implied in the story.
	Discussions now unfold around the themes of Strategy and the nature of determinism and emergence and its implications for leadership styles, communication, organisational culture, pace of change, nature of chaos etc.

Following the end of the story and in the moment, I asked participants to stand in line and place themselves where they felt their business was at - Either the Flag on the mountain, symbolizing- We know where we are going, or Flag on the bobbing ocean, symbolising chaos, uncertainty and change.

This was a spur of the moment activity that I felt would ground the discussions in their reality. " I was, 'in the moment' exercising my capability as a facilitator to embed concepts that were emerging from the discussion (I recognize that good facilitators adopt these parallel activities, it is a representation of facilitating emergence in action). The ensuing discussion was a rich and meaningful dialogue about each of the positions and perceptions held in the room.

The story and this emergent process worked well, enabling deeper insights about conceptual frameworks and the group was able to relate with real life stories about their workplace. They also saw that sometimes what might initially appear, as oppositional views would be found to have common ground. (Belenky & Stanton 2000) comment that as learners see other peoples perspectives and issues from their perspectives, it disrupts their existing habits of mind. They call this connected knowing.

The above example demonstrated the usefulness of using story to enhance the learning. The OGSM learning set session had now become part of a richer narrative. The story would percolate and help to transform their understanding. I could now introduce the concept that Goals, Objectives and Strategies do not operate on a linear, rational and deterministic form but are better understood as having a chaotic, nuanced and emergent frame. I later realized that the story provided a useful metaphor about Leaders navigating through turbulence, complexity and change by working together. This was contrasted with the 'games' metaphor in use within previous leadership programs in Feedsmoore "First Break all the Rules" (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). This metaphor implied a culture that challenged existing norms and practices. In reality the culture was transactionary and rule bound.

The OGSM process highlighted to me how managers and leaders worked at making sense of their reality despite cumbersome and complex frameworks that hindered them. Following the LTP, I continued my research and application as a consultant on strategy and strategic thinking.

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Appendix A 6.4

Executive Team Condensed Program

Executive Team Condensed Program Recommendation

The BDE and I put together a proposal that combined program 2 and the soon to commence program 3 for the executive to be trained in a condensed version of the modules.

Key skills and behaviours could then be applied within the 'Strategic Business Unit (SBU) meetings'. The SBU was the senior strategic decision making body within Feedsmoore and comprised the most senior staff in the organisation, some of who attended LTP 1 & now 2 and soon to be program 3.

This proposal provided the executive and SBU members another means to practice fundamental skills involved with the LTP. The BDE and I were not content for the executive to just sit through a condensed version of the modules, this would only reinforce frame 1 & 2, which they were familiar with. I wanted them to experience some of it through applying it within the Strategic Business Unit. We submitted the proposal in September and suggested November as the start date.
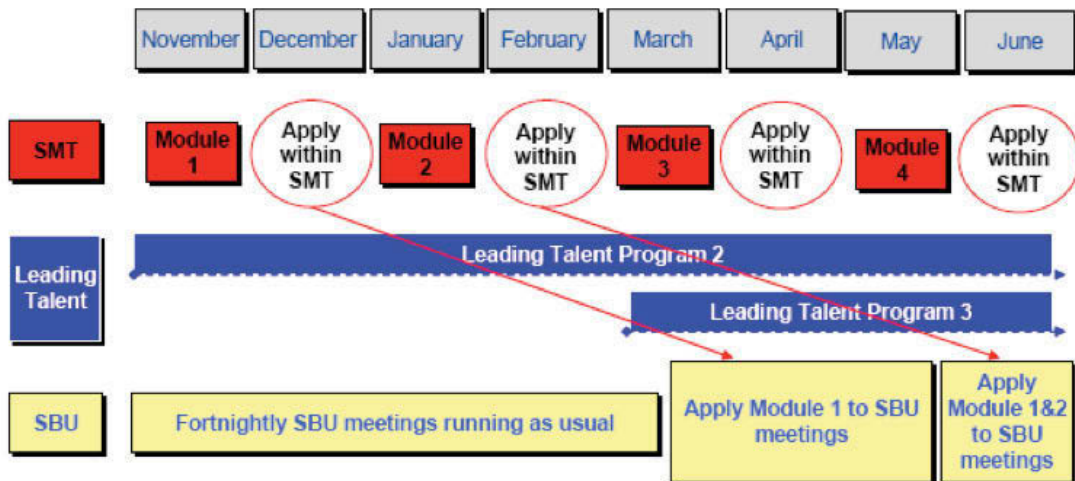
Figure A 6.4.1 Integration of Executive Team Condensed Program with LTP

The intent of this condensed version are aimed to:

- to provide the Executive Team (ET) with new language, models and frameworks that they can use in their own team and also with their direct reports

- to increase the capability of ET members to act as sponsors and mentors of the Leading Talent program, via a more comprehensive knowledge of the program content and methodology

- to help ET members understand how they can utilise 'reflective practice' to increase their capability as individual leaders and as a self managed team at Feedsmoore

Application to the SBU and benefits are highlighted below.

As soon as all SBU members have completed module 1 of the Leading Talent program (expected to be early March 2007), EEBS proposes that the content from the ET modules and principles of action research be introduced in the SBU teams.

The objectives of this application are:

- developing a way of using action research that can be replicated across the organisation

- improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way the SBU's function.

- providing a vehicle for the ET members to utilise the skills that they have developed (ET modules, Application within ET, Leading Talent Sponsor/Mentor) for the maximum business outcome

- demonstrating the effectiveness of these frameworks and providing experiences for the SBU members that can cascade down to their direct reports

- role modeling the behaviour that that ET wants to see from their direct reports

EEBS propose that a framework is set up for a facilitator to work with each   of the SBU teams that allows the ET member or the SBU team itself to call   upon the services of that facilitator or other inputs as needed.

This proposal conveyed the bare facts and I looked forward to the potential for dialogue around the deeper frames. I was also anxious about how they would receive some of the frames associated with a postmodern and critical view of organisations and leadership given the short time available and their expressed need to obtain it through formulaic infusion.

Appendix A 6.5

The LTP Review

I had a brief conversation with the training manager and the consultant contracted by Feedsmoore prior to them engaging with the LTP participants. Over coffee, I explained as best I could the original intention of the program and spoke about the nature and complexity of the program. I explained that the dip and the resistance being expressed were positive signs and that if all parties held firm we would emerge on the other side, as the first program had demonstrated.

I voiced my concern that the review would potentially disable the delicate balance and tension around encouraging managers to seize the leadership mantle and make courageous decisions. I however recognized that the horse had already bolted, I therefore listened, offered my support and influenced the design of the questions. I then resigned myself to awaiting the findings. In the meanwhile I had to continue, as there were learning set meetings to facilitate the very next week.

Back at the business school, the General Manager of Business Development who was a political antagonist of my General Manager seized this opportunity to stir trouble. I subsequently had a number of conversations with both General Managers about the situation and did my best to allay any fears that they had around the potentiality to corrupt the brand and the good name of the business school.

My General Manager who was vying for the Director of Executive Education job could ill afford any controversy. The business development person, I had spent time inculcating and training was focusing his energy elsewhere on other projects, I assumed that he was also experiencing the resultant discord generated by the poor relationship between the two GM's we reported to. For all due purposes I was left to deal with the situation by myself.

Review Findings

This is an independent review though I had a hand in co-constructing many of the questions. It provided excellent data about the strengths and weaknesses of the LTP program and the complexities involved. As this was an extensive review with over 50 pages of data, I will only touch on some of the main aspects. The review was conducted in February March 07 – Seven months after the completion of LTP 1 and 11 months into the 16 month LTP 2 and during the protracted 5 month dip I spoke about earlier.

The review highlighted the need for the executives to role model the leadership behaviours they expected others to follow. This was the issue I earlier highlighted. Unfortunately the executive did not make a decision on the Executive program. Here was additional data confirming the need for them to do so.

This data should have affirmed the need for them to now grab the mantle of change, unfortunately it elicited dissonance confirming Ralph (Stacey 2000) earlier comments that the deep learning and subsequent challenge by the LTP participants brought up the executive's fear of losing control, which leads to increased obstruction, increasing the practice of control, which then reduces commitment to complex learning.

This also highlighted the limitation in my earlier strategy to preempt these changes by building other avenues to influence and network with the executive. In retrospect I was still operating as an individual consultant. I needed to have spent more time developing strategies to connect the two institutions Feedsmoore and EEBS despite the limitations.

Other data highlighted that over 80% of line managers supported the involvement and commitment of people in the program what they lacked was a deeper insight of the program, which they would gain by being on the program. In the review participants recommend that all line managers (Zone 4 & 5) attend the program and

that there needed to be mandatory briefing sessions about the program followed by regular briefings through the life of the program.

A fairly consistent view was expressed that relevant "business owners" should decide if/ what from the AR projects should be implemented and then to resource the process appropriately. This is a consistent theme in all organisations that I have been involved in implementing AR/AL or Business improvement projects, people want the project to have relevance, they also want the time and effort they expend on the project to make a difference to the business. My experience suggests that AR based project participants go a step further by challenging and acting on messages that are not congruent. This is because the program inherently challenges established norms and sacred cows.

Reg Revans theme of 'Comrades in Adversity' comes through loud and clear with their comments. The strong belief in the value of the program and the depth of change and commitment also comes through. There was also affirmation for my belief and conviction in the AR process and that the LTP 2 participants would persevere and come through.

The review affirmed that the program was achieving significant outcomes. It highlighted key areas that needed to be refocused including: the need for better marketing and selling; more line manager and sponsor involvement and to continue to stick to frame 4 by focusing on the framework and process.

I also took away the need to contain the program to a 12-month timeframe, which was our original intent and the need to get more involved in the internal marketing of the program. The report unfortunately did not address the fundamental issue of resourcing the program internally given the changes that were happening at Feedsmoore. I had a debriefing session with the Consultant and the Training Manager and heard nothing more about the report.

Interestingly, there was little discussion within EEBS about the findings. My GM was now caught up in applying for the Dean's position and the GM of Business Development had gone overseas to recruit a candidate for that position. I took a deep breadth and

focused on ensuring that the program continued to lift from the dip by supporting and encouraging people at my last AR set meeting. I also commenced making plans for program 3. By now unknown to the participants the LTP and the job was exacting a heavy toll on me.

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The Eight DOORS

E/S

CHAPTER 4
DOOR TO WORK
(EXTERNAL OF EXTERNAL)

CHAPTER 5
DOOR TO WORK
(INTERNAL OF EXTERNAL)

E/S

CHAPTER 6
DOOR TO WORK
(EXTERNAL OF INTERNAL)

I/S

CHAPTER 3
DOOR TO DOORS

I/S

OPERATE

OBSERVE

Yang

Yin

I/S

CHAPTER 7
DOOR TO SELF

DESIGN

REFLECT

I/S

DOOR TO METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER 2

E/S

CHAPTER 1
DOOR TO ENQUIRY

EUGENE FERNANDEZ

I/S

CHAPTER 8
DOOR TO FUTURE

E/S

E/S: External to Self
I/S: Internal to Self

DOOR Circumplex
Comparative Analysis

Appendix B 3.1

Boud & Walker
Kolb
Honey & Mumford
Argyris & Schon
Mezirow
Brookfield
Revans
Fernandez

Noticing Reflection In Action
Experience Prior Experience Abstract Conceptualisation
Concrete Experience Reflective Observation
Experience
Experience
Interaction
Action
Action
Action

Anticipatory Reflection
Active Experimentation
Plan
Experimentation
Actions

Operate
Observe
Reflect
Design
Yang Yin

Reflective
Critical Reflection
Critical Reflective Analysis
Reflection Exspoused & Theory In Use
Review Conclude
Analysis
Reflection On Action
Reevaluation Of Experience

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Zone of Design

Zone of Deep Reflection

L M X

Directions

Essentials

Induction

Leading Talent Program

Module 1
Perspectives on LMX

Module 2
Managing High Performing Teams

Module 3
Managing Individuals For Performance

Module 4
Leading People Through Change

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Gallup Q 12
Expectations
Materials & equipment
Opportunity to do best
Recognition (Last 7 days)
Cares about me
Encourages my development
My opinion counts
Mission/purpose
Committed to quality work
Best friend
Talked about my progress
Opportunities to learn and grow

Graduate Certificate
Accreditation
2 Credits

Leadership and
Team Building

Strategic
Change
Management

Legend:
- **Integrity & trust**
- **Motivating others**
- **Building effective teams**
- **Caring about direct reports**
- **Developing direct reports**
- **Managing and measuring work**
- **Conflict management**
- **Directing others**
- **Change & adversity**

Leading Talent — Lominger Competency Integration Chart	Integrity & trust	Motivating others	Building effective teams	Caring about direct reports	Developing direct reports	Managing and measuring work	Conflict management	Directing others	Change & adversity
Module 1	∎	∎	∎						∎
Module 2	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎
Module 3	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎			∎
Module 4	∎	∎		∎			∎	∎	∎
Coaching	∎		∎	∎			∎		
Action Research Project	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎	∎

Timeline LTP 1 and LTP 2

Feedsmoore Leadership Development Program - Eugene Fernandez

Program 1

	Feb- June 05	Jul-05	Aug-05	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06
Exploration & Dialogue																
Verbal approval	April															
Dialogue President	June															
Meetings VP & Site Visits																
Participants																
Modules			3 days			2 days						2 days				2 Days
Learning Set meetings					3 X 3 Regions				3 X 3 Regions			3 X 3 Regions				
Learning Set projects																
Sponsor meetings																
Coaching																
Post program assignments																By L Set
Sponsors																
Module attendance			I day													1 day
Meetings with learning sets																
Meetings with MBS																
Evaluations																
Steering Committee																
Meetings																
Evaluations																
Projects																
Participant selections																

Feedsmoore Leadership Development Program - Eugene Fernandez

Program 2

	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	May-07	June-07	July-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07
Modules					3 days			2 Days			2 Days				2 Days					2 Days			
Learning Set meetings							3 X 3 Regions			3 X 3 Regions			3 @ Airport					3 @ Airport					
Learning Set projects																							
Sponsor meetings																							
Coaching																							
Post program assignments																			By L Set	Due			
Sponsors																							
Module attendance					I day																		
Meetings with learning sets																							
Meetings with MBS																							
Evaluations																							
Steering Committee																							
Meetings																							
Evaluations																							
Program Review																							
Projects																							
Participant selections																							

Appendix B 5.1

Gold Standards

Overview of 'Gold Standard' stakeholders

The purpose of defining what 'Gold Standard' stakeholders look like for the Leading talent program is to provide the stakeholders at…….with a framework that they can use to guide their participation in the program. As such we have defined 'Gold Standards' for the following groups:

Line managers of 'Leading Talent' participants
Will **role-model** good line management practice

Will **understand** the process driving the leading talent program, including the program framework and its benefits. The understanding of 'leading talent' by line managers will be an important indicator to participants

Will **allocate** 5% of the participant's role responsibility to the completion of the leading talent program for the duration of the period that they are completing it. This will signal the priority of the program for participants

Will be **proactive** in offering assistance to participants for the completion of their action research projects.

Will **encourage** an environment in which leading talent participants have the opportunity to apply new skills and frameworks in their functional team.

Will have **consistent** involvement with participants as they complete their journey in the leading talent program

Will **acknowledge** the effort and achievements participants in the leading talent program in three areas:

- personal development
- action research project outcomes
- Impact of application of leading talent learning on the functional team

Will **promote** the way(s) that their functional team has been able to improve and benefit as a result of the leading talent program

Will **Identify** specific areas of self-development in conjunction with participants in the leading talent program, as part of the programs coaching process.

Sponsors / mentors for Leading talent projects
Will **role-model** good line management practice

Will be able to **identify** the best-suited participants for each project and allocate them accordingly

Will ensure that the **commitment** of time and resources takes place from the participants and their line managers

Will develop agreed **standards** with action research sets, for how they will work and communicate with one another over the course of the leading talent program

Will ensure that there is an equal **focus** placed on both the project outcomes and the learning process that the participants are going through to achieve those outcomes.

Will be open to **dialogue** around changes to the nature and scope of projects from the action research set. The learning process that the participants are going through may assist them in revealing a more meaningful direction that the project may be able to take, but the support and involvement of the sponsor/mentor will still be critical.

Will provide **observations** and support to the action research team, without directing the team in their completion of the project

Will **challenge** action research teams to look at their established practices and barriers, which may work against open communication and teamwork

Will **encourage** an environment in which leading talent participants have the opportunity to apply new skills and frameworks in their functional team.

Leading talent participants

Will **role model** good line management practice

Will be actively **involved** in the leading talent residential modules, action research sets, coaching sessions and application of learning to their functional teams

Will **complete** all of the leading talent program requirements, including the 2 x post program assignments.

Will be consistently **willing** to challenge their self-perceptions and views, with the intent of learning new ways of being.

Will **contribute** openly and honestly to the learning of others

Will proactively **develop** their relationships with their own line manager and action research project sponsor/mentor

Will continuously look for opportunities to **transfe**r their learning from leading talent back to their functional team

Will **promote** the way(s) that their functional team has been able to improve and benefit as a result of the leading talent program

Will provide constructive **feedback** around incremental improvement that can be made to the leading talent program for future participants

Will **demonstrate** a commitment to continuous learning, with the view to their improvement as a line manager

Author: Eugene Fernandez

Research Methodologies

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams the untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

— Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Ulysses'

2.1   Introduction

This article is part of a series on Organisational Change and Reflective practice, it illustrates and draws on over 12 months work as an action learning practitioner and has been condensed and summarised from the authors thesis- Titled- 'The value of reflective practise in the process of change'. Additional information can be sourced from the web. www.metanoa.com.au.

This article gives a broad overview on research methodologies and reviews the literature on action research/action learning. Attempt is also made to integrate the 'Tao' with action research, based on the authors understanding.

2.2   What Is Research?

Research is a method of inquiry. One method of inquiry favoured by many in science is often referred to as *logical-positivism or the 'hypothetico-deductive approach'.* I have discussed some of the limitations of this approach in the previous chapter on Philosophy and Science.

Another major method of inquiry is *phenomenological*—this adopts a more qualitative and naturalistic approach to understanding the contextual settings of human behaviour (Patton, 1991).

Whilst logical-positivism relies on a deductive schema based on hypothesis testing—and as some would argue, manipulation of the research context—phenomenological inquiry encourages researchers to be part of the process, and to immerse themselves within the complexity of the intervention. Consequently, it is more suited to research dealing with social contexts, and where the outcome is change, rather than purely data.

More meaningful results can be expected to be gained by adopting the phenomenological inquiry approach, and in particular action research when dealing with organisational change.

2.3 Phenomenological Research Methodologies

There are many research methodologies. Patton (1990) outlines five of them:

1. basic research to contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory;
2. applied research to illuminate a social concern;
3. summative evaluation to determine program effectiveness;
4. formative evaluation to improve a program; and
5. action research to solve a specific problem

(Patton, 1991:150)

Elden outlines three approaches to phenomenological research and their relationship to employee involvement.

Table 2.1- Approaches to Research

	Basic Research	Applied Research	Participative Research
Research goal	Abstract general knowledge (context-free knowledge)	Solutions to workplace problems (context-bound knowledge)	Local theory-actionable & generalisable (context bound knowledge)
Who learns from the research in the first instance	The social science community (usually but not exclusively other researchers)	The client (usually but not exclusively management)	Participants (usually not exclusively workers and researchers)
Likelihood that those who supply the data will use the results	Very low	Low	High
Relation between researcher and Researchers	Theoretician Object	Expert Client	Colleague Colleague
Researcher role	Producer of distant learning	Producer of organisational change	Co-producer of learning

Elden (1981:263)

The preferred approach for an action learning intervention is the *participative* research methodology. It provides more applicable and relevant context—bound knowledge with the added benefit of high involvement, promoting ownership by all those involved.

Whilst the *participative* approach was the attempted ideal in the fieldwork, in reality, (applying Elden's model) the approach fluctuated between *applied* and *participative* research. For reasons explained in later articles there was tension between the tendency of the client to view the author as an expert and 'oracle' and the authors preference for being a co-researcher and colleague. As an external consultant to the organisation the 'expert' tag unfortunately came with the territory.

A camel is stronger than a man; an elephant is larger; a lion has greater valour; cattle can eat more than man; birds are more virile. Man was made for the purpose of learning.

—El Ghazali in Shah, 1968: 62

2.4 Action Research

There are many differing approaches to action research and as such there is no one definitive description. Following is an attempt to give an overview of some of the various definitions and approaches

The idea of action research first appeared in the writings of Collier (1945). The term was then conceptualised by Lewin (1952) and Corey (1953) and was further developed by Kolb (1984) and Carr and Kemmis (1986). Other more recent proponents include Winter (1987), Zuber-Skerrit (1992), McTaggart (1991), Bunning (1992) and Dick (1993).

One of the simplest but most elegant descriptions comes from Dick:

> Action research is a methodology which has the dual aims of action and research...
> **action** ~ to bring about change in some community or organisation or program
> **research** ~ to increase understanding on the part of the researcher or the client, or both (and often some wider community)
> (Dick, 1992:2)

Action Research draws on a more holistic paradigm than traditional research methods. There is a spiral of cycles incorporating four major interrelated phases: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (as outlined in Figure 2.1). This makes the process cyclical, unlike traditional scientific enquiry which is linear.

Figure 2.1- Action Research Cycle
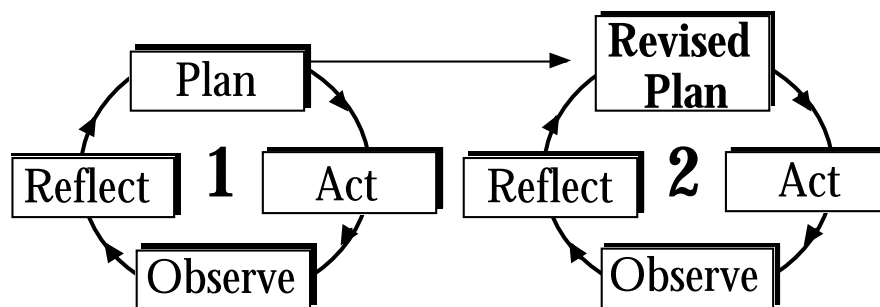
Source: (Zuber-Skerritt, 1993:47)

According to McTaggart:

> Participatory action research starts small and develops through the self-reflective spiral: a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, (implementing plans), observing (systematically), reflecting and then re-planning, further implementation, observing and reflecting. The collective plays an important role in deciding where the group and individuals may exert their efforts most effectively. In turn, the collective reflects on observations made about action taken so far and uses this reflective activity to inform decisions about future action steps of the group and of individuals.
>
> (McTaggart, 1991:175)

There are many descriptions of the attributes of action research. In 1991 Altrichter *et al.* outlined what has since become a standard definition of this form of research:

> If yours is a situation in which
>> People reflect and improve (or develop) their own work and their own situations
>> By tightly interlinking their reflection and action
>> and also making their experience public not only to other participants but also to other persons interested in and concerned about the work and the situation *i.e.* their (public) theories and practices of the work and the situation

and if yours is a situation in which there is increasingly

> Data-gathering by participants themselves (or with the help of others) in relation to their own questions
>
> Participation (in problem-posing and in answering question) in decision-making
>
> Power-sharing and the relative suspension of hierarchical ways of working towards industrial democracy
>
> Collaboration among members of the group as a 'critical community"
>
> Self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-management by autonomous and responsible persons and groups
>
> Learning progressively (and publicly) by doing and by making mistakes in a 'self-reflective spiral' of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, replanning, *etc.*
>
> Reflection which supports the idea of the '(self)-reflective practitioner'

then yours is a situation in which ACTION RESEARCH is occurring.

> Altricher *et al.* (1991:8)

In more general terms Zuber-Skerritt writes:

> Action research has been defined in many different ways. I have described it as collaborative, critical (and self-critical) enquiry by reflective practitioners who are accountable and make the results of their enquiry public. They evaluate their own practice and engage in participative problem-solving and continuing professional development.
>
> (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992:47)

The key factors here are that the process be documented, that those involved work together to explore and attempt to solve the problem, and that they collectively reflect on and examine the process on an ongoing basis. There is no formula to follow—the path is defined *in situ.* In fact, a key factor of action research is that it involves the people experiencing the process. McTaggart describes it as:

> …the way groups of people can organise the conditions under which they can learn from their own experiences and make this experience accessible to others.
>
> (McTaggart, 1991:170)

And Carr and Kemmis:

> Action research is a process of experiential learning where knowledge
> is created through the transformation of experience.
>
> (Carr and Kemmis in Harker, 1991:111)

Given that the action research process is an evolving one, working as it does with real life situations, it does not start with a clear question. As Zuber-Skerritt explains, action research:

> ...differs from traditional experimental research in that it is intended
> to yield not only information, but also action and practical
> improvement. It does not begin with a clear question or hypothesis
> which requires a yes/no answer and must be replicable, as is the case
> in experimental research; instead, action research begins with a vague
> question which is only gradually clarified and requires a complex answer
> depending on the situation and the people involved.
>
> (Zuber-Skerritt, 1993:55)

In fact, the inexactness of the basic or central question is one of the defining characteristics of action research—as well as being the aspect that traditional researchers have the most difficulty with.

The changing nature of the central question, and its evolution from its early forms, are described by Dick:

> Conventional research works best when you can start with a very precise
> research question. You can then design a study to answer that question,
> also with precision.
> In action research your initial research question is likely to be fuzzy.
> This is mainly because of the nature of social systems. It is also because
> you are more likely to achieve your action outcomes if you take the
> needs and wishes of your clients into account. Your methodology will
> be fuzzy too. After all, it derives from the research question, which is
> fuzzy, and the situation, which is partly unknown.
> ...Provided that the fuzzy answer allows you to refine both question
> and methods, you eventually converge towards precision. It is the spiral
> process which allows both responsiveness and rigour at the same time.
>
> (Dick, 1993:12)

However, given the apparent looseness of this approach, Dick emphasises the need for rigour:

> At all times collect and interpret your data in defensible ways. In particular, know your overall methodology before you begin. At least, know how you intend to start, and check that it is defensible. You will change your mind about your methodology in the light of your experience.
>
> (Dick, 1993:9)

Nonetheless, 'rigour' does not mean 'rigor mortis'. The action researchers must remain flexible and responsive. Dick again:

> If you are to be adequately responsive to the situation, you can't begin the exercise with a precise question. The question arises from the study. …As it happens, one of the key principles of action research is: let the data decide.
>
> (Dick, 1993:13)

However, as this is still research, there must be some theory that is being tested, even if its precise definition evolves over time. This is the basic premise, or central question, which is explored, evaluated, revised where necessary, and put to the test again.

Once again, Dick is a valuable source of advice in terms of testing a theory:

> There are many ways in which you can use the similarities and differences between data sources to increase the accuracy of your information.
> …This might be called dialectic. It is similar to what is often called triangulation in research.
> …Any two or more sources of information can serve your purpose of creating a dialectic. Here are a few examples. You may use …
> • different informants, or different but equivalent samples of informants;
> • different research settings (as a bonus, this increases the generalisability of your results);
> • the same informant responding to different questions which address the same topic from somewhat different directions;
> • information collected at different times;
> • different researchers;
> • or, as in triangulation, different methods.
>
> (Dick, 1992:13)

Data collection in action research is not entirely straightforward, as very little of the data may be quantitative. Documentation is more likely to be based on interpretation of records and observations, or a reporting of feedback. Thus the variety of methods recommended by Dick, where 'data' is sourced in more than one way, and hence likely to be more reliable. The goal is to be objectively subjective.

Based on a review of the literature, the benefits of using Action Research are summarised below. These points are taken from the authors Winter (1989); Zuber-Skerritt (1993; Bennett (1988); Jain (1991), Schon (1983)' Dick (1992); and Bunning (1993).

> Action research has the potential to be the most effective way of managing change within an organisation:
> The learning process has longer term and wider application in that self-limiting patterns can be broken through (double-loop or generative learning).
> Action research is more suited to the soft system of management and organisations.
> The social context and conditions in which the research takes place can improve.
> Action research provides practical, applicable solutions.
> The solutions are generated from within, not imposed from without.
> The people needing change are the ones that are involved in making it happen and so own the process and outcome more completely.
> The process is emancipatory, where all can contribute on a fairly equal basis.
> Action research is highly flexible, adapting itself to the specific (even changing) needs of the specific organisation.
> Because the research is grounded in practice, the process can more usefully be taken up and applied by others (real contribution to public knowledge).
> The practitioner has the potential for increasing conscious learning that has wider application.

The outcomes expected of action research are defined more precisely by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988):

> In action research we look for changes in three different aspects in individual work and the culture of groups: changes in the use of language and discourses—the actual ways that people identify and

> describe their world and work; changes in activities and practices—
> what people are actually doing in their work and learning and changes
> in social relationships and organisation—the ways people interrelate
> and the ways their relationships are structured and organised within
> the organisation.
>
> <div align="right">(Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988:16)</div>

This again shows a clear difference between traditional research and the action research approach: results occur along the way and are immediately applied or incorporated—they are not merely documented for some future use or indeed for filing.

However, in the process of carrying out the research to attain these results, it must be borne in mind that the researcher is dealing with a real life situation. He or she must gain rapport with the group and/or organisation being worked with, and maintain an ethical standard, both in carrying out the research, and in writing it up for public scrutiny.

> Action researchers may pay attention to the ethical principles that
> guide their work. Their actions are deeply embedded in an existing
> social organisation, and the failure to work within the general
> procedures of that organisation may not only jeopardise the process
> of improvement but also existing valuable work.
>
> <div align="right">(Winter, 1987:87)</div>

2.5   Characteristics of Action Research

Aside from the general understanding of what is meant by action research, some authors have attempted to break down the process and evaluate it in terms of its different modes of application or manifestation. Peters and Robinson (1984) utilise the terms 'strong and weak', where both have the characteristics of:

1. Involvement in change (problem focused with a social improvement agenda)
2. Organic processes (cyclical or iterative stages of fact finding, reflection and planning, strategic action and evaluation)
3. Collaboration (research is carried out as a joint, co-operative endeavour amongst participants)

<div align="right">(Peters and Robinson, 1984:532)</div>

The strong form is distinguished by focusing on a more emancipatory process through working with individuals' and groups' values and beliefs. The strong form can lead to double loop learning and challenges the current constructs and paradigms that individuals hold.

The weak form on the other hand is more focused on solving problems and usually only exerts change within the construct of the same paradigm. Israel (1992) argues that this form is used often in Organisational Development.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) split action research into *technical, practical* and *emancipatory* (see Table 2.2) Within this context *technical* and *practical* fall within the weak form and *emancipatory* within the strong form. They argue that the only true form of action research is *emancipatory.*

Table 2.2   Types of Action Research

Action Research Type	Aims	Role	Role Relationship
1. Technical	• Effectiveness/Efficiency of educational practise • Professional practise	outside expert	co-option (of participants who depend on facilitator)
2. Practical	• as (1) above • practictioners understanding • transformation of their consciousness	Socratic role, encouraging participation and self-reflection	co-operation (process-consultancy)
3. Emancipatory	• as (2) above • particpants's emancipation from the dictates of self-deception, coercion • their critique of bureaucratic systematisation • transformation of the organisation and of the educational system	process moderator (responsibility shared equally by participants)	collaboration

Carr and Kemmis (1986:87)

2.6   Reflective Practice

An integral part of action research is the process of reflection, which is not a readily quantifiable parameter—occurring as an ongoing part of the overall process, rather than as an isolated and testable event.

> Initially, the learner needs to understand what reflection is, probably via explanations and examples provided by the promoter of learning. Next step is for the learner to identify reflection processes within her or himself, at the same time that content is being dealt with. This involves a second level, or meta-process. Verbalisation and discussion of reflection processes as they are identified will help to clarify them, and may lead to suggestions for improvement. Conscious practice and skill development can then follow, until reflection is an automatic activity, consciously controlled and directed towards purposes chosen by the learner.
>
> (Smith, 1991:17)

> Reflection can also be facilitated via dyadic or small group interaction. Processes of particular use here include:
> * highly developed listening to the ideas and feelings of others
> * open rather than closed responses to the ideas and feelings of others
> * willingness to share ideas and feelings with others
> * constructive confrontation of differences in ideas and feelings
> * creative idea generation (*e.g.* brainstorming)
>
> (Smith, 1991:17)

Mezirow (1991) describes reflection as:

> … the process of critically assessing:
>   * the content
>   * the process
>   * the premise(s)
> of our efforts to interpret and give menmaing to an experience.
>
> (Bunning, 1995:1)

It is less frequently necessary for us to re-examine and challenge our presuppositions and our premises than to critique content or our process strategies. But it is premise reflection that opens the possiblity for perspective transformation.

2.7   Action Learning

'Action learning' is a term often confused with 'action research'. Although action learning is incorporated in the process of action research, action research goes further:

> Action research focuses on a workgroup, all of whom are involved in the plan/act/observe/reflect cycle. In contrast, action learning emphasises individuals' learning... Action research involves action learning, but not vice versa, because action research is more deliberate, systematic, critical, emancipatory, rigorous and public-that is, documented in a publication.
>
> (Perry and Zuber-Skerritt, 1992:198)

Action learning is related to action research. Action research is more deliberate and is based on collaborative group processes focused on published outcomes, while action learning focuses on the learning of the individual within a team set, and is based on the relationship between reflection and action. For instance in my fieldwork, whilst I was a co-researcher with the group, I was also an action learner.

Action learning integrates Revan's (1982) learning equation:

$$L = P + Q$$

where L is learning which is the accumulation of knowledge, P = programmed knowledge, and Q = knowledge gained by questioning self or others in conditions of chaos and in the absence of a definitive answer.

'P' or programmed knowledge, has often been peddled for its own sake—it is espoused by text books, experts, university/TAFE programs, *etc.* However, by itself, and contrary to popular belief, it does not necessarily equate to learning. Using established theory or another's insights as a basis for continued learning can be a powerful starting point, however there is inherent danger in taking on P at face value and not testing its relevance to your own situation at an appropriate time.

'P' may have been valued because it fits neatly within the logico-positivistic paradigm—it tends to be quantified and available, and is determinate and output–focused. It also comfortably moves learning incrementally within the same paradigm. It survives because it fosters single loop learning which satisfies our preference for exploring from a base of safety. It is generally not until 'Q' is incorporated into the equation that learning becomes double-loop.

'Q' is questioning insight, a vital commodity in these times of exponential change. Nonetheless, it is all too frequently overlooked by individuals and organisations, mainly due to pressure to produce, be busy, protect one's back, and the focus on immediate tasks in the short term. The time and 'safe space' to be open, non-defensive, take risks, and challenge views or actions, is just not there.

> *Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare.*
> *But if you seek safety, it is on the shore.*
> *Saadi of Shiraz in Shah, 1968: 97*
> (Kolb, 1984:36)

For us to understand action learning we need to view it in the context of experiential learning. The approach to experiential learning as outlined by Kolb (1971, 1984) describes learning "…as a process whereby concepts are derived from and continuously modified by experience."

According to Kolb, there are four basic phases in the learning process (Figure 2.2). Once an experience has occurred, the person reflects on the message of that event, translates his or her reflections into general concepts which can be applied to future situations, then begins to actively experiment with these concepts.

Figure 2.2 Kolb's phases of learning
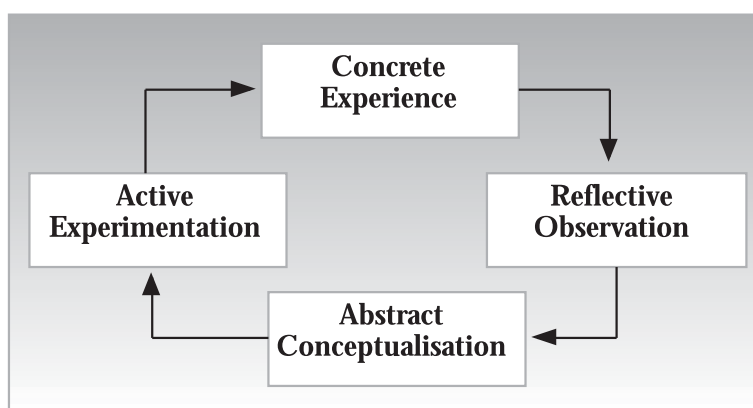
(Sleigh, 1993:31)

Walter and Marks (1981) argue that experiential learning is operative only when participants are fully involved, when the lessons are clearly relevant to the participants, when individuals develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning, and when the learning environment is flexible and responsive to the participants' immediate needs.

Sleigh (1993) suggests that there is a fifth element to Kolb's model, which is an extension of the other four: Confirmatory Coaching—the best way to learn anything is to show someone else. Learning by Confirmatory Coaching relies on having gained the information first, in the other four modes. (See Figure 2.3)

Figure 2.3 Sleigh's extension of Kolb's learning model
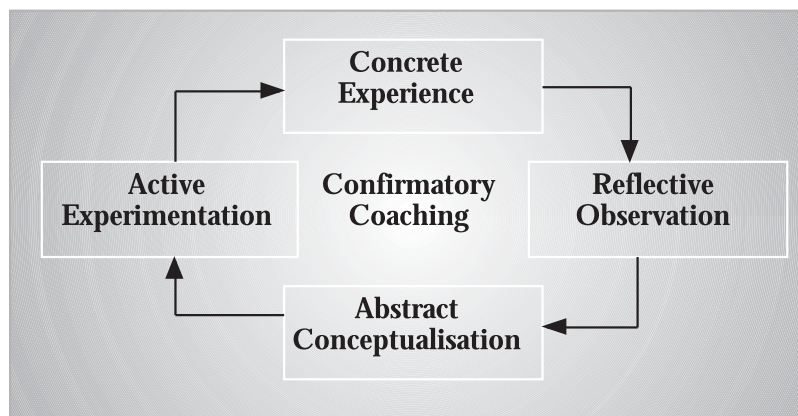
Action learning asks the action takers to focus on their own live experiences rather than dissecting contrived issues. According to Bunning:

> Action learning is an activity by which people learn with and from each other as they attempt to identify and then implement solutions to their problems or development issues.
>
> (Bunning, 1991:2)

Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done. Through action learning individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences. The process helps us to take an active stance towards life and helps to overcome the tendency to think, feel and be passive towards the pressures of life.

> Action learning is based on the relationship between reflection and action. We all learn through experience by thinking through past events, seeking ideas that make sense of the event and help us to find new ways of behaving in similar situations in the future.
>
> (McGill and Beaty, 1992:71)

Another way of looking at the overall model of the action learning process is:
1. the action taker (who in this project is me)
2. the focus of action (as a co-researcher in the activities)
3. the action context (my reflections and learnings)

Action learning differs from the kind of group discussion which occurs on management training courses, where even if real problems are discussed, they are discussed only because the program exists—not because the problems have brought about the program. It is also different from experiential processes like business games and outdoor training, which focus on issues through simulation rather than real time reality. Action learning requires that the action takers deal with their own real life experiences, rather than dissecting contrived ones.

Any process that does this is likely to be more effective and have wider reaching effects.

> My perception of action learning is that it is a process which enables individuals to make connections—connections within themselves; connections between themselves and their groups; connections between themselves and their homes and working communities; connections between themselves and the world.
>
> Because the connections are personal, learning is always personally relevant as opposed to didactic learning which is often personally irrelevant. Relevant learning is quality learning.

Figure 2.4 Parallels between the Taoist and Action research models

> An understanding of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all things is associated with the holistic way of viewing the world. The holistic view is an ecological view which leads to an understanding of people as a part of (as opposed to apart from) the environment.
>
> (Shirley Ali Khan in McGill and Beaty, 1992:225)

2.8   Action Research and the Tao

Action research and the Tao have clear parallels. Both emphasise cyclical processes, and both value the role of the individual—so we are not neutral bystanders in the scheme of life, but rather every action we embark on influences the outcome, and we ourselves are influenced as well.

Action research and Yin-Yang are ongoing, living processes. An arbitrary end point may be described, but the experiences of the past will evolve into and continue to influence the future.

The Yin-Yang model elegantly describes the cyclical process of plan-act-observe-reflect. The symbol, shown below, is divided into two moieties:

YANG	YIN
male	female
active	passive
dynamic	receptive

Act Observe

Yang

Yin

Plan Reflect

© 1996 Eugene Fernandez
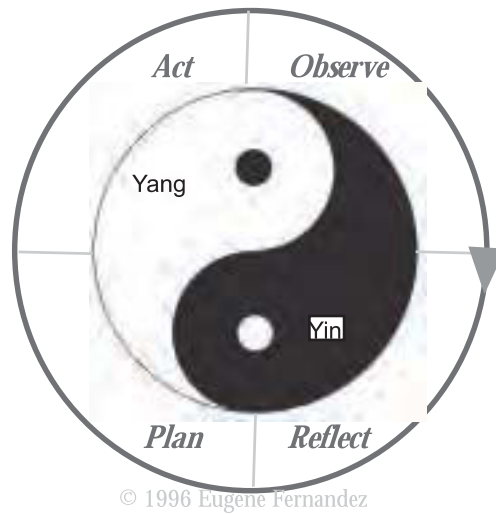
The strongest yang force corresponds to the most dynamic phase of the Action Research cycle: *action*. At the opposite end is strong yin, the most passive phase: *reflection.* There are two linking phases between these, where the Tao would argue that there is an inexorable movement away from extremes—resulting in a more balanced state. *Observation* is the natural progression from action, whilst *planning* evolves from reflection.

Each phase contains both yin and yang in varying degrees and directions of movement. As each phase moves into the next, it is informed by the previous one:
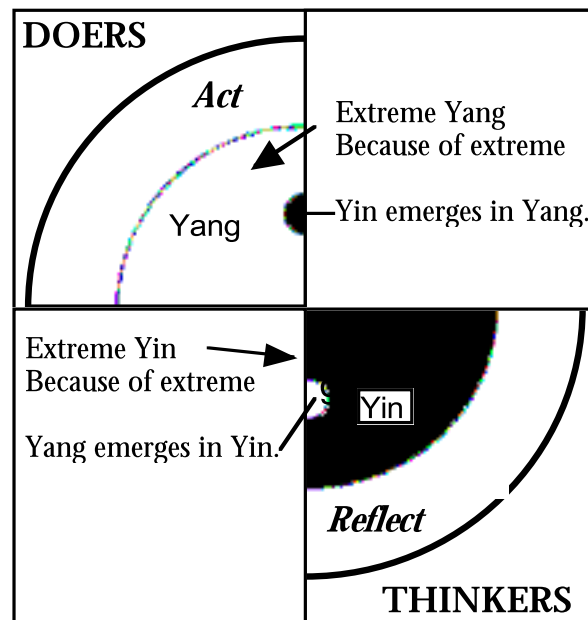
Action: Action is carried out based on previous planning.

Observation: In order to learn from what has occurred, we must first *know* what has occurred. *i.e.* we must make *observations* about the action.

Reflection: Reflection takes these observations a step further. It extrapolates, and makes generalisations and connections. It is here that real learning takes place, metanaos can occur, and wisdom is born. If this step is done well, the next round of the cycle will operate at a higher, much more informed level.

Planning: Planning draws on the wisdom and insights generated by reflection, in order to determine the course of the next action and make it as effective as possible.

The Eastern belief is that whenever there is too much emphasis on either yin or yang, its counter force emerges from within it and moves us naturally towards its opposite, thus restoring balance. If this natural cycle is not allowed to proceed, imbalance occurs.

An overemphasis on, or indeed limited use of, action or reflection is unbalanced and can lead to discontinuity, producing results that lack fullness and hence have limited validity or applicability. The Western overreliance in the past on reductionist approaches is an example of this.

For example, two extreme situations are shown below:

Figure 2.5 Dichotomy between yang 'doers' and yin 'thinkers'

DOERS

Act

Yang

Extreme Yang
Because of extreme

Yin emerges in Yang.

Extreme Yin
Because of extreme

Yang emerges in Yin.

Yin

Reflect

THINKERS

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If the 'doers' do not put sufficient energy into thinking about their actions, they will be destined to repeat them over and over, with only minor, if any, improvements in efficiency and performance.

On the other hand, thinkers can ponder *ad infinitum*, constructing wonderful mental models that nonetheless have no influence on the world (unless taken up by a doer, of course).

Any truly effective process draws on and values each phase.

The yin-yang model is a simple and elegant visual representation of the process of movement through these phases, as well as the importance of both action and thinking occurring in balance and appropriate order.

It could be argued that the most effective action research process is one where each phase is adequately visited. However, if a key phase were to be identified for dealing with the problems faced by today's industrial society, it could be argued that the yin, or passive phase, would be the one. Indeed, contemporary authors referring to the Tao point to our overreliance on the yang process, which suggest that to achieve balance we need to make greater use of the more feminine, 'passive' processes.

If analysis of whatever action has been carried out is done cursorily, either through preference for the more active phases, or inexperience, then the next cycle will not be as advanced or well-informed as it could be. Thus the degree of change between one cycle and the next will be incremental, rather than quantum.

The degree of this shift, between one round of learning and the next, hinges to a large degree on the wisdom gained through reflection based on careful observation. Such reflection can lead to generative and deep change.

Thus the key to successful action research could be considered to be reflection so if the research is not progressing as well as its facilitator might have hoped, the solution may well lie in placing greater emphasis on this step.

It could be argued that this step is one that is traditionally undervalued or glossed over by the pressures of day to day business. The authors action research thesis however would argue that more reflective practice could be a key factor in effective organisational change.

> *However much you study, you cannot know without action.*
> *A donkey laden with books is neither an intellectual nor a wise*
> *man.*
> *Empty of essence, what learning has he—*
> *Whether upon him is firewood or book?*
> > *Saadi of Shiraz in Shah, 1968:96*

2.9   Reflections (First person)

On a personal level, I am a strong 'activist' (according to Mumford's Learning Styles). Accordingly, I realised that both action research and the Tao's teachings had great significance for me. Over the course of this thesis, I have recognised a need to practise more reflection in both my personal and working lives.

The Tao would argue that this personal shift is inevitable—I would have embarked on a process of self discovery eventually anyway. However, I suspect I would have remained largely within the same paradigm. Action research and the Tao, whilst challenging, validated every process I was presently in. My steps were at first incremental, then quantum, in my journey of reflection and inner growth.

Although I may have been a vehicle for introducing emancipation within the client organisation, I perhaps grew far more than the client organisation

A momentary yearning for the prescriptiveness of the logico-positivistic research method: the fieldwork would have been so much easier and my intervention more directed if I had only known then what I now know about action research and other research methodologies.

In hindsight—and from my current wiser position—knowing little and entering into a fuzzy contract with the client has benefited the both of us; it has allowed us to explore and to be emergent. In my case it has certainly encouraged double loop learning and a metanoa about me and life. I understand now that all this is in keeping with the ethos of action research.

Synchronicity struck again. Whilst completing this section I was asked by the Director of the Institute of Administration, University of NSW, to conduct a short session on internal consulting skills for senior managers from Korea. The Tao is incorporated within the Korean national flag, and I was able to use this as a metaphor for looking at internal consulting practices and in particular in developing reflective practice. As I discovered in my discussion with these managers, there is also a need to value yin processes more in Korea. They remarked that there was adequate *observation*, but not enough deep *reflection* and *planning*. This was an interesting insight for both of us.

> *True end is not in the reaching of the limit,*
> *but in a completion which is limitless*
> *—Rabindranath Tagore in Chin-Ning Chu, 1992:131*

Eugene Fernandez - Biography

MPhil (Dist), Dip Bus, Dip T& A (Dist), FIMC MAICD, MAHRI

Following various management roles (over 10years) in human resources and organisational development, including 4 years as a Human Resource Development/Diversity Manager, Eugene set up his own business 'Metanoa' in 1991 specialising in, Leadership/ Management development, organisational change and Organisational Development.

He has consulted to various industries in Australia and overseas. Participants from over 3000 organisations have also participated in his public management and leadership programs.

He has special interest and skills in developing and implementing integrated business planning, performance management, leadership development and change management processes. He is also involved in designing frameworks to critically link and mine organsiational development and knowledge management strategies to the creation of corporate universities. He has designed and facilitated leadership programs for both senior and middle managers in numerous organisations. Blending current theory with practice through his continued learning and understanding of the field of Action Science.

Eugene has lectured at the Australian Graduate school of Management, The Sydney Institute of Technology, The International Management Centers Association (UK), The Institute of Administration (Sydney) The Royal Institute of Public Administration and The Australian Institute of Management.

He holds a Master of Philosophy majoring in Organisational Change & Strategy with distinction and various other qualifications in Human resources and business.

Topic

Science

Philosophy

and

Leadership

By

Eugene Fernandez

Introduction

We are now as some would label it in the 'Systems Age', which challenges the old world scientific paradigm of a machine like universe. We arrived here following the pathways of many revolutions .

The agrarian revolution increased our access to food thus freeing us from the toil of the hunter gatherer.

The spiritual revolution that spawned major moments and life styles embodied on the principles and practices of Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and the Muslim faith.

"When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset."
Whitehead

The scientific revolution increased our understanding and knowledge of the world.

The industrial revolution multiplied our productive capacity and

The technological revolution which increased our inter connectivity and intelligence.

The 'Systems Age' draws on the themes of post-modernism, existentialism and complexity. It has confronted us with our limitations and has propelled us to look at the complex process of life and the universe and how we impact on the world and the world impacts on us. We are discovering that life and the universe are imbued with human meaning.

As leaders we need to lift ourselves from a myopic narrow perspective to a more holistic and emergent one. We need to enable organisations and our social systems to deal with complexity, change and the long view, our very existence now depends on it .

The 'Systems Age' is then an enabler to the 'Wisdom Age', we are at a nexus and will need to undergo a 'metanoia' a change of mind, which will assist us to recover our ancient wisdom, the perennial philosophy on which human nature actually depends.

Let us now explore some of the factors that both limit and propel us towards the 'Wisdom Age'

Positivism and Philosophy

Leaders can miss the big qualitative picture or the deep structure when they place a heavy emphasis on numbers and rationale processes. Rationality is a deeply embedded paradigm in organisations. However a large part of our existence lies beyond rational understanding, such as anger, joy, fear etc., they need to be lived and experienced to understand them. Leaders need to accommodate more qualitative, experiential, intuitive and philosophical processes to help them deal with their understanding the world.

Organisations and leaders have focused narrowly on the idea that the best way to understand things is to take it apart. Francis Bacon in 1620 wrote- "Without dissecting and anatomizing the world most diligently, we cannot found a real model of the world in the understanding".

Positivism- This old science approach to observing reality is deeply embedded within the psyche of individuals and the frameworks of organisations. Although diminishing it has held sway for over three centuries.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte first expressed the three principal doctrines of Positivism:

The conviction that science was the only source of positive knowledge of the world. To eradicate mysticism, superstition, and any forms of pseudo-scientific knowledge. To extend scientific knowledge and technical control to human society, to make technology no longer exclusively geometrical, mechanical or chemical, but also and primarily political and moral.

"Positivism- A theory of the nature, omnicompetence and unity of science. Its most extreme form stipulates (a) the only valid kind of (non-analytic) knowledge is scientific; (b) such knowledge consists in the description of the invariant patterns in space and time of observable phenomena: (c) philosophy's task is the analysis and summary of such scientific knowledge."
Oxford Dictionary

The Role of Philosophy

The role and definition of philosophy is rather narrow within the context of the definition. It sits uncomfortably within the paradigm of science, and its role is relegated to analysis and summary, as opposed to Whitehead's definition, (see next page) which is far more dynamic, philosophy is the "critic of cosmologies".

The author Koso, provides the metaphor that positivism demands evidence factual or mathematical evidence as a security guard demands positive ID, not just on your say-so. He suggests that positivism works out well for scientists and mathematicians since it allows only them to speak.

"What is Philosophy?".
The word derives
from the Greek
'lover of wisdom'.

philosophy n. 1. The study or science of the truths or principles underlying all knowledge and being (or reality). 2. any one of the three branches (natural philosophy, moral philosophy and metaphysical philosophy) accepted as composing this science.

The distinguished English philosopher Ayer, writes that "Philosophy aims at yielding knowledge; or, if this be thought to go too far, at least it comprises propositions which their authors wish us to accept as true". He goes on to add that "Philosophy has not one but many objects of study - metaphysics investigates the structure of reality, ethics the rules of human conduct and logic the canons of valid reasoning"

So, Philosophy asks leaders to take a metaview of the whole process, to play, dabble, construct, deconstruct and to go beyond the current operating norms and ways of knowing.

Philosophy builds cathedrals before the workmen have moved a stone, and it destroys them before the elements have worn down their arches. It is the architect of the building of the spirit, and it is also their solvent:ąand the spiritual precedes the material.

Whitehead

Effective leaders co-design the organisational architecture that houses the human spirit, they work with the whole person, they engender trust and welcome dialogue and free thinking.

Dualism

Dualistic thinking has caused some of the deepest divisions in this world. Examples that stand out are the polarised arguments of quality versus quantity, short term versus long term, organisational growth or decline, leader or manager, people either good or bad, and people either for you or against you.

Dualism has its roots in Aristotle's binary logic:

A OR not A. Either this or not this. The sky is blue or not blue. It cannot be A AND not A. The Buddha lived in India almost two centuries before Aristotle. The first step in his belief system was to break through the bivalent veil and see the world as it is, see it filled with "contradictions".

Leaders and managers deal with complex processes and reality, dualistic thinking offers simplistic insights and strategies that address the symptoms of an issue. To address issues that deal with the core cause, leaders and managers need to become more comfortable working with the grey, and to build processes to work through complexity.

A key skill is to ask two questions folded into one e.g.. How can we increase the number of widgets by X and at the same time maintain quality Y, how can we achieve business growth whilst at the same time doing it sustainably around people and resources, and what is the best way to increase the efficiency of the team and improve morale.

Deductive Reasoning

Called the top-down approach, it works from the general to the specific. Essentially it moves from theory to formulating a hypothesis, then gathering the evidence though observation to test the hypothesis, thereby confirming the theory. Deductive reasoning is a useful skill, however it tends to be narrow in focus as opposed to Inductive Reasoning which is more open-ended and exploratory.

Many leaders and managers dismiss any concepts that are unobservable like intuition, gut and feel because they lie beyond our observable senses. Many who hold this view argue that meaning can only be derived from our observations of the world or from deductive systems such as quantitative data or mathematics. There is an often held phrase that If it can't be measured then it can't be real. This position is known as "empiricism," because it treats the facts of experience as the foundation for all we can know.

Leaders and managers like some scientists hold on to an old science view of the world, their reasoning is driven by a 'hypothetico-deductive' system. This model has allowed us to reap the benefits of science which has made life for humans an attractive proposition. It has succeeded in analysing matter to its minutest particles, in exploring the far reaches of space and time, in unifying the human world and improving the standard of living. All this at the cost of polluting the land, water and air, destroying large numbers of species and animals and using up the resources of the earth on which life depends.

As the philosopher of science Popper has told us, all scientific theories cannot claim to be certainly true; all that they can legitimately claim is that they are consistent with existing observations. In other words scientific theories can never be proved to be certainly true, until they are proved to be certainly untrue; they are working hypotheses.

Because of the limitations posed by deductive systems, according to Davies scientists work backward to construct hypotheses consistent with their discovery, and then go on to deduce other consequences of those hypotheses that can in turn be experimentally tested. If any one of these predictions turns out to be false, the theory has to be modified or abandoned.

As problems become more complex in the world, Leaders need to understand the limitations imposed by deductive and reductionist reasoning and learn to embrace Inductive reasoning along with the deductive.

Determinism

Another school of thought that has influenced scientific reasoning is determinism: 'God is reduced to a mere archivist turning the pages of a cosmic history book already written' (Davies)

Determinism is based on the assumption that events are entirely determined by other earlier events. It carries the implication that the state of the world at one moment suffices to fix its state at a later moment. The conclusion is drawn that everything which will happen in the future of the universe is completely determined by its present state. There are millions of people in the world who will not step outside their door without consulting their star sign, which presupposes that most events are preordained.

Sadly there are a number of leaders and managers who follow processes and strategy with a blind faith and resolve that because it worked in the past it will continue to do so. Many organisational processes are also disconnected from the reasoning and thinking that set them up in the first place.

There are a plethora of psychometric instruments and methodologies that are used to box and type cast people in organisations. Effective Leaders understand the benefit of using this information as a starting point to understanding what drives people. Good Leaders also challenge the premise of these rudimentary frames, knowing that people are far more complex, dynamic and a bundle of contradictions.

If the world is strictly deterministic, then all events are locked in a matrix of cause and effect.
The past and future are contained in the present, in the sense that the information needed to construct the past and future states of the world are folded into its present state.'
Davies

Specialisation

Whitehead argues that because of the complexity in our world, people are trained in specialisations of particular regions of thought 'thereby progressively add to the sum of knowledge within their respective limitations of subject'. He goes on to argue that effective knowledge is professionalised knowledge, supported by a limited acquaintance with useful subjects subservient to it.

Science is founded on the hope that the world is rational in all its observable aspects.
Davies

Professionalised knowledge 'produces minds in a groove. Each profession makes progress, but it is progress in its own groove'.

To work in the groove of a Doctor, Lawyer, Chemist, Educator is to work in contemplating a given set of abstractions. The groove prevents us from seeing other world views, it locks us within the paradigm of the profession.

Davies argues that the key to major scientific advances often rests with 'free-ranging imaginative leaps or inspiration'; which must include spanning the grooves.

Up to our current day there has been an overriding drive for formulas prescriptive step-by-step processes that inform people about how to live and act. Formulae are as if inscribed in biblical commandment stone, edicts of expert authorities, and are often blindly followed without question.

There is no groove of abstractions which is adequate for the comprehension of human life.
The directive force of reason is weakened.
The leading intellects lack balance.
They see this set of circumstances, or that set: but not both sets together.
Whitehead

Business is increasingly valuing generalisation, and so there is an increased need and drive to span the grooves. A term often quoted is "we are interested in transfer" *i.e.*, what can we apply from another profession, system or field within our own. There is an increased awareness to find out about individual and professional paradigms and the matrix of thought and behaviour that locks people in.

Leaders and managers are required to span the grooves to move from the playing field of an old LP with deep entrenched grooves to that of a DVD - like its functionality to be able to jump and span the grooves when required.

Paradigm Shifts

The old scientific structures have started to demonstrate limitations: by the end of the nineteenth century it seemed like there were only a few more areas to explore, the whole world had been itemised.

Briggs observed that as they probed these remaining areas:

The puzzle-solving map-makers of normal science began to experience disturbing difficulties. They saw light behaving like both waves and particles and electrons jumping from one orbit to another instantaneously. The appearance of 'anomalies' which could not be fitted into the classical Newtonian picture of the world was bringing on what Thomas Kuhn calls a 'crisis' in the paradigm.

Kuhn noticed that during times of crisis new theories arise to explain anomalies, which are debated and questioned at length, before becoming the new paradigm.

At each turn it is not the echo of a demise, a bell tolling for a passing away that is heard, but the voice of rebirth and beginning, ever afresh, of mankind and materiality, fixed for an instant in their ephemeral permanence.

That is why the great discoveries are not revealed on a deathbed like that of Copernicus, but offered like Kepler's on the road of dreams and passion.
Prigogine and Stengers

Prigogine & Stengers argue that different points of view, cultural differences and philosophical convictions play a decisive role in the discovery of a paradigm. Rival paradigms are put to the test until one wins out.

Time takes over. With the appearance of a new generation of scientists, silence and unanimity take over again. New textbooks are written, and once again things go without saying.

Joel Barker in his famous video 'The Business of Paradigms', argues that most paradigms are written at the edge, and are usually discovered by people who had no investment in the old way of doing things and who generally were not part of the paradigm community.

The old prescriptive, reductionist model of Science has been challenged, the very foundations, premises and assumptions are questioned. Quantum Mechanics demonstrated the subtle way in which observer and observed are interwoven. Chaos theory revealed that the relationship between permanence and change was far from simple.

It is clear from this brief review of the development of the scientific approach over recent centuries that what we are experiencing now is equivalent to a backlash to the purely objective, reductionist, rationalist approach of the recent past.

The new tinge of modern minds is a vehement and passionate interest in the relation of general principles to irreducible and stubborn facts. All the world over and at times there have been practical men, absorbed in "irreducible and stubborn facts"; all the world over and at all times there have been men of philosophic temperament who have been absorbed in the weaving of general principles. It is this union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract generalisation which forms the novelty in our present society.
Whitehead

There is now a growing realisation that science, as such, does not require a mechanistic world view. The reigning wisdom is under attack.Much evidence, especially from the new physics, suggests a less deterministic, more organic and subjective interpretation of nature. There is a 'within' of things which is what things are in themselves and to themselves. The stuff of the world is 'feelings' or relations clothed in 'emotion'. Subjectivity is everywhere in nature.
Birch

The new consciousness cuts across dualisms. It sees every dualistic concept as a gross abstraction from reality. The emphasis is on internal relations which constitute the inner aspect of all individual entities.
It is an experiential view of reality, as contrasted with the image of reality consisting of objects only. It finds the world a much more feeling place.
Birch

In Conclusion

We no longer find all our answers by dissecting, reducing and atomising things. Instead, we are beginning to witness the interrelatedness of things, knowing that the more we explore, the more complexity and richness we find and the more we isolate a given phenomena the more we see that it forms part of a complex interrelated web, filled with energy.

Our role here is not to get overwhelmed by this complexity but to look at the patterns and themes that are there. Look for the simplicity that emerges from complexity. There is an inherent pattern here of moving from simplicity to complexity to simplicity. Our very lives replicate this pattern from the simple but important needs of birth and early childhood to the complexity of our middle years with the fulfillment of complex needs and desires and finally to old age where there is a move towards rationalisation and simplification.

A further example illustrates this point. The Japanese tea ceremony or 'Wabachua' at first glance is a simple and stylised form of drinking tea. However hidden behind this surface level observation, is a rich and complex tapestry of cultural meaning and significance with complex rules that apply to the design of the Raku pot and cup and the method and timing of the ceremony.

Finally after immersing ourselves in this complexity, we come back to the elegant simplicity of the ceremony, this simplicity though is different it has been immersed through complexity it is a richer crystallised and more informed 'simplicity'- it is simplicity at the meta level.

As Leaders, we need to challenge our assumptions and operant paradigms, we need to move from a linear myopic, cause and effect view to a more holistic and cyclical view that extends to a longer time horizon. We also need to engage with a philosophical view of the world as much as we do the pragmatic.

We can utilise our creation, science to work with the tidal flow of human nature, we can achieve both, an understanding about the sun, the earth and the cosmos whilst enjoying the radiance of the sunset and the essence of humanity.

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About the Author:

Eugene is a Managing partner of Metanoa who specialize in the areas of Integrative Strategies, Facilitating Senior Teams, Leadership Development and Oganisational Change. He has also designed and facilitated programs for leading business schools. He has over 25 years experience facilitating dynamic processes in organizations and has trained and educated over 4000 Leaders globally. He lives in Sydney Australia.

Eugene Fernandez and Maurizio Floris' article on innovation featured in Business Review Weekly, Apr 2007.

Establishing a culture of innovation is not only about doing things differently. It also requires a change to the way we observe and make sense of the world.

When it comes to innovation a deceptively simple and useful device to help such change is to think of innovation as a **DOOR**.*

The **'D'** in DOOR stands for Design. An innovative design needs to offer something different and of real value to be meaningful. Critically, the 'D' also refers to the intentional design of an environment that allows innovation to emerge.

A good place to start is the office environment itself. Design collaborative spaces and spaces for reflection. Replace the bland and the drab with settings that promote the spirit and spark interest. Also, design variety and change in jobs. Design time for creativity. Above all design out convention and mediocrity from all aspects of the environment.

Is your DOOR open to innovation?

The **'O'** stands for Operate. An innovative organisation must be good at both design and translating the design into its operations. Find a way to stop doing what the organisation cannot be good at. If it is poor in design then buy it from somewhere else. Build the organisation's identity around its strengths and weave these strengths into the fabric of its operations. That means aligning organisational structure, processes, behaviour, systems, and performance indicators with this identity.

Together the letters **'DO'** in DOOR represent 'doing' and many people and businesses are overdosed on 'doing'. An overdose of 'doing' can keep us on a treadmill and hinder innovation.

To break away from the treadmill, try to Observe (the second **'O'** in DOOR) some of the current practices in your business with fresh eyes. As Marcel Proust says 'The real act of discovery consists not in finding the new lands, but in seeing with new eyes'. For example, to look at your country with new eyes, take a foreigner on a tour and see it through their eyes. Likewise, regularly take an 'outsider' on a tour of your business and take note of their observations.

The **'R'** in DOOR stands for Reflection, usually the most neglected and vital ingredient. Reflection incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges the current mental models and can change the game altogether. It is uncomfortable, but without it innovation is likely to offer no more than trivial change.

Reflection needs to happen at an individual and group level. At the individual level it requires going for a walk, a jog or taking a bath like Archimedes. Anything that breaks the conscious routine will do. Also, allow time for unstructured exploration for creativity to flourish. At the group level practise dialogue skills so that the best idea and not the strongest advocate wins.

The **'OR'** in DOOR is a useful counterbalance to 'DO'. It encourages to ask 'OR else' questions, a simple but key ingredient to open up our thinking. If your good intentions include the establishment of a more innovative culture, make sure you leave no door unopened.

Eugene Fernandez is Program Director, Leadership and Maurizio Floris, Program Director, Strategy at Melbourne Business School's Mt Eliza Center for Executive Education.

*DOOR is an evolving cycle developed by Eugene Fernandez. This cycle has been applied by innovation teams within a number of businesses. Eugene can be contacted via email: eugene.metanoa@bigpond.com

Energy Worm LTP 1 and LTP 2

Feedsmoore

	Aug-05	Sep-05	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06

LTP Program 1 - Energy Worm

Energy - Positive   High
Modules
Learning Set meetings
Learning Set projects
Sponsor meetings
Coaching
Energy - Negative   Low

Feedsmoore

	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	May-07	June-07	July-07	Aug-07

LTP Program 2 - Energy Worm

Energy - Positive   High
Modules
Learning Set meetings
Learning Set projects
Sponsor meetings
Coaching
Energy - Negative   Low

DOOR To Action Learning

Introduction

This article outlines some of the principles of learning that will be used in Leadership In Action through Coaching Program. You will be required to understand this process. Please read through this workbook and write down any questions or issues you need to clarify or explore. It is not the intent or expectation that you understand all that you read here as we will be covering it in more detail during the workshop.

One of the key ways we learn is by taking action in the world. The term Action learning (AL) is used to illustrate this more holistic way of learning.

Action Learning

AL will help you to look at your work and to critically review and reflect on what you do. This review will allow you to apply new ways of doing things that you can use on the job the next time around.

AL is a very practical way to learn as it enables you to work on real issues of concern and to share your insights and learnings with a group of other participants. Through action learning you will learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on your own experiences. The process helps you to take a proactive stance towards life and helps to overcome the tendency to think, feel and be passive towards the pressures of life.

Essentially you follow a cycle with four stages. You Design, Operate, Observe and Reflect. A convenient way to remember the cycle is to use the image of a DOOR. This is covered in detail in the next section.

Action Learning has a simple equation underlying the framework

$$L = \frac{P + Q}{R} \quad (1)$$

Generally **L** = learning which is the accumulation of knowledge, **P** = programmed knowledge, **Q** = knowledge gained by questioning self or others in conditions of risk, and in the absence of a definitive answer and **R** our own resistance to try something new or different.

'P' or programmed knowledge, has often been peddled for its own sake—it is written up in text books, it is in the heads of experts, it is in university/college programs, its in manuals and procedures at work etc. However, by itself, it does not necessarily equate to learning. Just by reading a manual does not mean that you understand or can apply what is there. Also, using established theory or another's insights as a basis for continued

learning can be a powerful starting point, however there is inherent danger in taking on 'P' at face value and not testing its relevance to your own situation at an appropriate time.

'P' may have been valued because it fits neatly within a rational paradigm—it tends to be quantifiable and available, and is determinate and output–focused. It also comfortably moves learning incrementally within the same paradigm. It survives because it fosters single loop learning i.e. learning that does not get you to challenge the underlying principles. Learning more about a technical area and increasing your knowledge could be classified as single loop learning.

Single loop learning is usually safe. It is generally not until 'Q' is incorporated into the equation that learning becomes double-loop.

'Q' is questioning insight, a vital commodity in these times of rapid change. Nonetheless, individuals and organisations, mainly due to pressure to produce, be busy, and the focus on immediate tasks in the short term, all too frequently overlook it.

The time and 'safe space' to be open, non-defensive, take risks, and challenge views or actions, is usually just not there. 'Q' allows you to achieve deeper learning, which we call 'Double Loop learning' – This is learning that asks you to explore the deeper patterns and the ways and means in which you look at the world and engage in it. 'Q' will also enable the analysis and surfacing of deeper patterns and 'ways of doing things' that are unchallenged at work.

'R' is Resistance and we all exhibit a bit of resistance to try something new or different, it is generally more comfortable to try to do things the same way we have always done before.

This is why it is so hard when we are trying to change our behaviour or response to a particular situation.

'R' is also inherent in teams, institutions and organizations. 'R' could also stand for blindly following rules and not questioning their relevance and or purpose.

'R' asks us to look at our own resistance as an obstacle to change.

The DOOR Cycle and AL

You will be applying this cycle over the course of the program.

You will apply the DOOR cycle to each of the learning objectives you identified. We will explain how to do this effectively in the program.

The DOOR cycle is a simple way to enable Action Learning. Like real doors we can open them and wander in and check out what lies within.
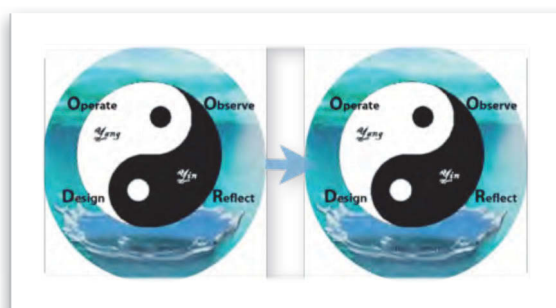
DOOR elegantly describes the cyclical process of design-operate-observe-reflect. These are the 4 stages in the DOOR cycle, when all 4 stages are covered you have completed one cycle, this then informs the next cycle.

The **'D'** in DOOR stands for Design it draws on the wisdom and insights generated by reflection.

Design needs to offer something different and of real value to be meaningful.Design also includes thinking creatively, innovatively and unfolding this into a meaningful plan.

The **'O'** stands for Operate. This is about translating the design and the plan into its operations. This is the action part that most of us are so good at. It brings to life what we have designed.
Together the letters 'DO' in DOOR represent 'doing' and many people and businesses are overdosed on 'doing'. An overdose of 'doing' can keep us on a treadmill and hinder new insights or different ways of relating with people.

The **'DO'** is about us doing something, most 'doing' actions are usually focused on the external world (as opposed to our inner world). Much of what we do over a period of time becomes unconscious and we unconsciously do it, like driving a car.

Likewise much of our 'doing' behaviours or how we relate to others have been learnt in the past and critically, we may be unaware of the impact of this behaviour on others.

To break away from the doing treadmill, try to Observe (the second **"O"** in DOOR) some of what we do and our current practices. In order to learn from what has occurred, we must first *know* what has occurred. *i.e.* we must make *observations* about the action.

As Marcel Proust (2) says 'The real act of discovery consists not in finding the new lands, but in seeing with new eyes'. Regularly ask others how they see the situation, how they respond to you and what they suggest you do to achieve the desired outcome. Also observe the impact you have on others at work or in life.

The **"R'** in DOOR stands for Reflection, usually the most neglected ingredient. Reflection is the vital ingredient that incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges your current mental models or world-views and can change the game altogether. It is uncomfortable, but without it we are likely to achieve no more than trivial change.

Reflection needs to happen at an individual and group level. At the individual level it requires going for a walk, a jog or taking a bath like Archimedes. Anything that breaks the conscious routine will do. Also, allow time for unstructured exploration for creativity to flourish. At the group level practice dialogue skills so that the best idea and not the strongest advocate wins.

The 'OR' in DOOR is a useful counterbalance to 'DO'. It encourages asking 'OR else' questions, a simple but key ingredient to open up our thinking.

To summarise. Action Learning is not about just 'knowing things' the 'P', it's about learning from 'doing things' and its about challenging ourselves to go beyond what we already know and do.

Questions for Review

What do I fundamentally need to Question and Challenge 'Q'?

What are my own patterns of resistance 'R' ?

What are the consequences to me of 'DOing' at the expense of 'OR' else thinking?

How Can I better enable and balance 'DOing with OR else thinking?

Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare.
But if you seek safety, it is on the shore.
Saadi of Shiraz in Shah

(1) *Reg Revans was one of the founding practitioners of Action Learning and his formula is P+ Q = L.*
I have added R to the equation as my work and research highlights that working with resistance lies at the heart of personal and systemic learning and change.
(2) *Marcel Proust was a French novelist, critic, and essayist best known for his monumental In Search of Lost Time.*

DOOR to Deep Learning

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Abstract

This brief paper draws from my current Doctoral research which aims to address the question - *How can I as a leader shift my focus from action to deep reflection?* The research journey is crystalising a framework called the 'DOOR' which integrates action and reflection and through iterative cycles progressively deepen the learning of the self and our understanding of the world at large.

Introduction

The benefits of reflective practice, and the nexus between doing and reflection, are widely explored in academic literature with a strong community of educational researchers and scholars addressing various aspects of the benefits and difficulties of such practice.

Learning from my Masters thesis provided me with a focus for over a decade on designing and facilitating programs that helped Leaders to reflect on their practice. My current Doctoral research focuses on how I embody reflection within myself- in short do I practice what I preach and by emulating it for myself can I better enable it for others.

This present research is a continuation of my personal application of reflective practice personified by the frameworks of (Argyris et al., 1985) and (Schon, 1987). This continued thread allows me to now focus on the concept and practice of 'deep' reflection, the notion of 'deep' is my umbrella term that attempts to cover various other frameworks around Critical reflection (Fook and Gardner, 2007) including reflexivity (Steier, 1991), postmodernism and deconstruction particularly in relation to power within organisations (Brookfield, 2001) and

Critical Social Theory (Mezirow and Associates, 2000).

Also reflection as viewed from other traditions such as Neuroscience (Pockett et al., 2006), (Siegel, 2007), Inner spirituality (Krishnamurti, 1995), (Sinclair, 2007), (Lama, 2006) and Integration Theorists (Wilber, 2007).

My research methodology is primarily Auto-ethnography and Action research supported by relevant literature and interspersed with a genre that I have created and titled, called 'Pictoems', which are pictures combined with poems that capture moments in time. They offer an opportunity to reflect metaphorically and symbolically on the issues explored within the central Question and upon life's' essence.

The DOOR Framework

The research also expands on a model I have created and titled 'DOOR'. This is used as a mnemonic, and also metaphorically and literally as a means to 'open' doorways to understanding. The 'D' in DOOR stands for 'Design', The First 'O' stands for 'Operate', The second 'O" stands for 'Observe' and the

'R" stands for "Reflect". This then forms the first iterative cycle.

At its elementary level the 'DO' stands for 'doing' and like most Leaders I am immersed well in truly in the Doing paradigm, and for me 'doing' at its most   robotically unconscious level. The 'OR' stands for 'or else' which includes divergent thinking, creativity, play, Questioning, challenging, meta reflection and being present in the moment.

Both 'Doing' and 'Or else' thinking can be linked to a cyclic cosmology, including the ancient yin-yang symbol. The diagram of the 'Supreme Ultimate' consists of the Yin and Yang. Yin is the name given to the force which produces expansion, and is considered the feminine principle (Black in diagram) which I correspond to 'OR' . Yang is the name given

to the force which tends to make things contract, and is the masculine element. (White in Diagram) Which I correspond to 'DO'.

'The yin yang principle is simple. These two forces are always opposite and antagonistic, and yet at the same time they are

complementary, for they are forever combining and co-operating. The   principle is one of "dualistic monism". This is quite different from dualism in the western context, which describes opposites without an integrating harmony.

My research documents my own learning gained from designing and facilitating (Action Research based) Leadership Development programs (that utilise the iterative application of the DOOR) with senior managers within a number of organisations, including a global food business, a global mining company, One of Australia's largest retail hardware chain and a mid-tier insurance and financial services business.

The research includes a comparative analysis of the DOOR framework (utilising a circumplex) with key theoretical frameworks in the field including (Revans, 1980), (Kolb, 1984), Boud & Walker, 1998) and (Mezirow, 2000). This analysis highlighted a gap in what I have titled the Zones of Deep Reflection and Design as it corresponds to the DOOR model.

See Appendix for a diagram of the circumplex.

This short paper does not allow me the scope to elaborate on the circumplex or the gaps apart from commenting that both deep reflection and design are integral steps towards the unfoldment of practice.

Organisational and leadership practices pay scant attention to reflection. Review is compensated for reflection and even this is done in a cursory fashion. Also, review like the post Implementation review in project management framework fits comfortably within established business practices, it rarely challenges the status quo or the deeper underlying issues. It survives because it upholds the current paradigm. Learning in this

context is single loop, incremental and fragmented from the context.

Reflection on the other hand is the vital ingredient that incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges current mental models or world-views and can change the game altogether. It
is uncomfortable, but without it we are likely to achieve no more than trivial change.

Design plays a key part in transforming our lives. Leaders who spend time designing and planning the future, intentionally create better outcomes. Recent research on the brain also highlight the critical need to engage the forebrain in designing and creating the future and to do this collectively, if we don't, this part atrophies and we get locked into the daily grind.

Observation and reflection are linked to our world views and the meta models we hold in our head. Leaders with myopic self centered world views who are unaware and non-reflexive impact disproportionately on the lives of individuals.

The current global financial crisis highlights how blatant disregard for proper corporate governance and leaders fixated with greed and maximising profits created the crisis with dire consequences for people with the least ability to deal with it. More importantly, the impact of a myopic, self-centred approach to the consumption of resources is having an impact on our future survival as a species.

Deep reflection does not occur by happenstance, given the pace and demands of life it needs to be designed, fostered and embedded systemically in organisations. I have found that The DOOR framework encased in Action Research Leadership programs provides the fabric for deep learning and generative change.

Autoethnography

In this segment I discuss how Autoethnography and other situated processes have helped me in my journey to 'Deep learning' and better understanding of the self.

'Auto-ethnography is a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing the self within a social context (Reed- Danahay, 1997), These texts are usually written in the first person and feature dialogue, emotion and self-consciousness as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social culture and culture (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Reed-Danahay explained that auto-ethnographers may vary in their emphasis of graphy (i.e., the research process), ethnos (i.e., culture), or auto (i.e., self). Whatever the specific focus, authors use their own experiences in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at self-other interactions' Holt (2003, p2)

Autoethnography promotes the notion of the researcher as "I" standing immersed within the action and action research promotes the notion of "We" standing within the action. This fundamental difference strikes at the core of how we engage with the research question. In my case there is both, the notion of the unfoldment of my understanding and being part of a community of learners in co-creating the journey.
Ellis sees important interconnections between auto-ethnography and social practice. She states that, "Increased self-understanding may provide a quicker and more successful route to social change than changing laws or other

macro-political structures". Ellis (2002, p.402). This is an important statement as it deals effectively with one of the paradoxes of leadership, in Hegel's terms the notion of 'dialogical logic' i.e. my latent evolving understanding about my practice influences

whilst at the same time is being influenced by the system in which I operate in, likewise, my contradictions are also inherent in the contradictions and conflicting ideas within the macro- political structures and systems in organizations and in society at large.

Self and society are intertwined. Auto-ethnography validates a more intuitive, experiential way of knowing and challenges the rational positivistic interpretation of events. Auto-ethnography relies more on the literary language of metaphor, irony and meaning. Foley states that, "Using a much more robust, embodied, situated language allows auto-ethnographic interpreters to engage more fully the intractability of life. It allows them to evoke the richness and complexity of everyday life through complex symbolic language and dramatic, personal stories. As various auto-ethnographers have explained, the act of writing itself becomes a way of being and knowing". (Foley, 2002).   Also, we come to know ourselves through Introspection and reflection.

Be the Change

As Gandhi has expressed "be the Change you want to see in the world".
We teach what we most need to learn has a lot of resonance for me. The hardest journey is to practice what you preach and more so when you have been fortunate enough to have access to all that knowledge. I along with most within my profession sit at the top of the pyramid relative to the rest of humanity. I have access to the knowledge and the wealth of

kings. If I take into account the whole of human existence, my way of life in terms of Quality of existence and utilisation of resources surpasses over 95% of all those before me. [1]

My opportunity stems from a decision by my parents to migrate to Australia. Their whole life's savings going on airfares and a vague offer of a job at the other end. If this was a game of poker then I was dealt a royal flush.

The opportunity was there for me to study both the external and internal landscape. The Latin origin of the word reflection is; flect, that is 'fold' and reflect is to re-fold, when refolded the surface faces itself, likewise my research has an external face wherein I am assisting others to improve their capacity for reflection on their practice and it has an inner face, where I am reflecting and turning my attention to the activities of my own mind.

To take this metaphor further, in seeking to work on both sides of the fold, I need to probe beyond this dualism and look at the conversation between myself as a participant and as an observer and at a Meta level to observe the conversation and interaction between the participant, the observer and the whole environment.

Deep reflection and Learning challenges many notions in organisations, including power, authoritarianism, the notion of economic growth and the economic engine that drives it. It also concerns itself with inequality in all its guises and it peers behind the mask and peels away the layers to surface core issues.

To illustrate this with an example from my journal- Working with a group of senior managers on an action research program, comprised of four action research sets. This was a meeting half way through the program.

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1 Based On earning a salary of over 50 thousand Australian Dollars per year.

I noted and commented to the group about ' The thoughtful and insightful manner in which the group were able to surface uncomfortable issues about diversity in the workplace and the effective process of dialogue they adopted in problem solving the issue.

The insight for me included the affirmation, that by letting go of control (managing my fear of derailment) and letting the group manage the process of disagreement, allowed individuals and the group to reflexively look at their behaviour and manage their state. This was a visible demonstration of an emancipated and empowered learning set and a sign that the group had moved to living the values that they previously only espoused. It was also a continued demonstration to me to have faith in the group processes and to validate my now unconscious and tacit way of working with groups.

So the idea here of deep reflection has a criticality to it, it challenges some of the operating norms and sacred cows and peels away surface layers to reveal some of the core issues or operant paradigms. It is an activity not done in isolation but gestates and blossoms within a community of learners.

Reflexivity plays a key role in deep reflection. Being reflexive is linked to how aware we are of the source and types of knowledge we use and how we go about creating our knowledge and world views.

Pictoems

Stories, metaphors narratives, poems and writing are embodied in Auto-ethnography and are important means to enable deep reflection.

For e.g. I append the following dialogue to this pictoem.

Caress gently
Lightbuds of awareness
Reclaim the cycle
Of awakening

At a recent workshop I asked people for their interpretations of the pictoem above. One of the participants stated that- " It kind of says to me about awareness and its fragility at its early stages of growth before it becomes robust. I can relate to awareness at that early stage and how it can easily be snubbed out in my own self. It is about bringing awareness to your awareness and allowing it to grow a bit"

I was particularly thrilled by this explanation and in particular the notion of bringing awareness to your awareness. I thanked the audience and added to the comments, which included stating that to me it was about a reawakening and a reclamation of conscious awareness.

I like many leaders are locked in an unconscious mode of operation and it is the notion of awakening ourselves to the moment. The awakening of the self fits into the broader context of the sociological self. It is the individualised 'I' and the socialised 'me' sitting

with others the 'we', embarking on the sharing of meaning and the unfolding of our practice. There is emergence and interconnectivity reflected in living in the present moment.

This Pictoem also demonstrates that there is no specific gene that transmutes awareness and consciousness from us to our offspring, there is no genetic download of our insights and learnings.

There is however the hard yards, as part of the socialisation process, through the development and enhancement of the environment for individuals to grow into their awareness.

See appendix for a pictoem on the DOOR.

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Observation- What did you notice? What did you pay attention to?

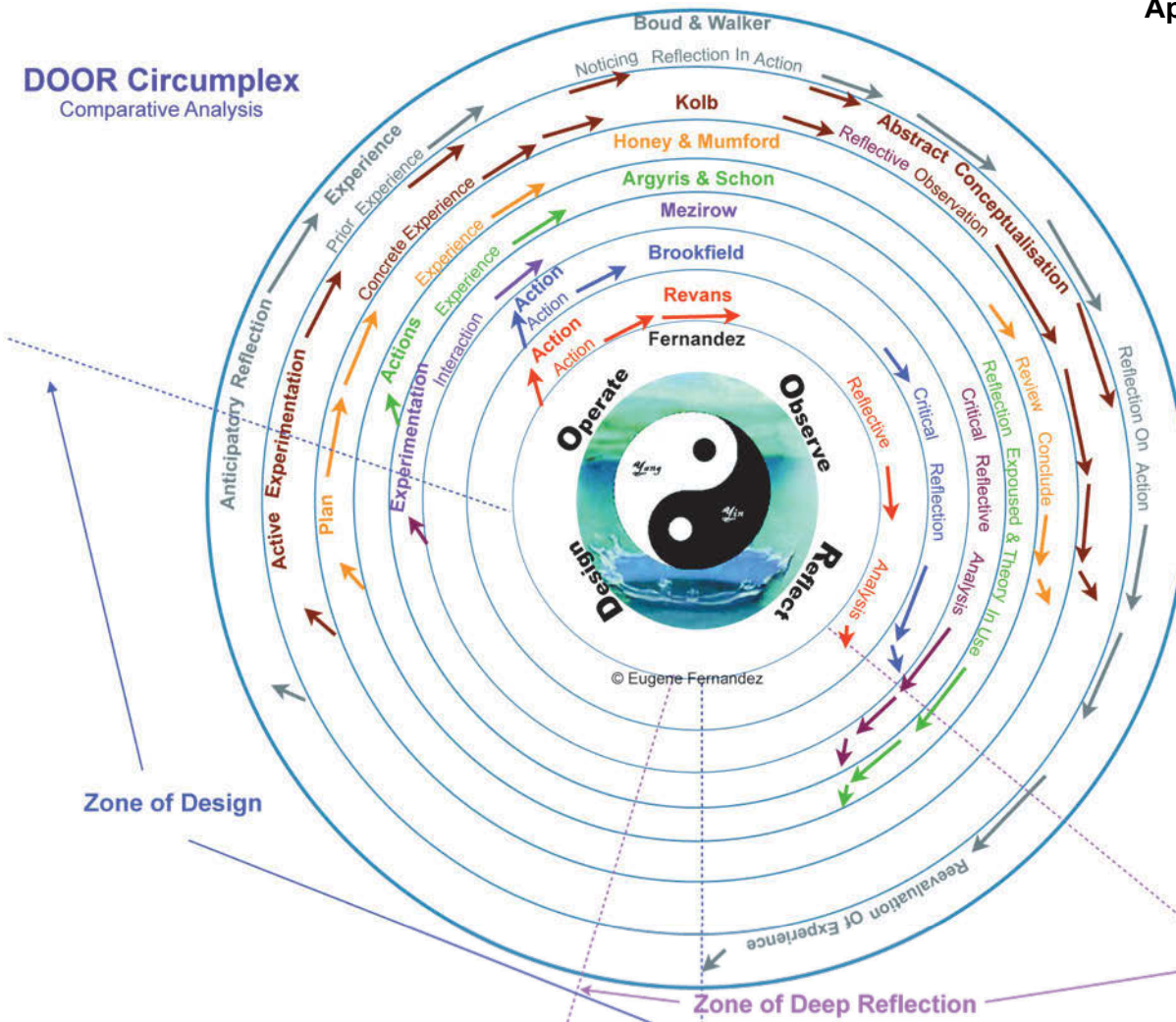Reflection- What connection do you make between what you notice and what you feel?

Design- What would you like to do?

Operate- What are your action steps?

DOOR Circumplex
Comparative Analysis

Boud & Walker

Noticing   Reflection In Action

Kolb

Honey & Mumford

Argyris & Schon

Mezirow

Brookfield

Revans

Fernandez

Experience

Prior Experience

Concrete Experience

Experience

Experience

Interaction

Action

Action

Action

Action

Anticipatory Reflection

Active Experimentation

Experimentation

Actions

Experimentation

Plan

Operate

Observe

Yang

Yin

Design

Reflect

© Eugene Fernandez

Abstract Conceptualisation

Reflective Observation

Reflection On Action

Review   Conclude

Reflection Exposured & Theory In Use

Critical Reflective Analysis

Critical Reflection

Reflective

Analysis

Reevaluation Of Experience

Zone of Design

Zone of Deep Reflection

DOOR Pictoem

D O O

O R

The flow in and within
Consciousness awakened
The DOOR
Ancient, familiar, etched with time
In the flow
Know the key
Enter deeper into your awakening

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DOOR to Reflection

Eugene Fernandez

Trainers, facilitators and OD practitioners are critical agents in helping to challenge people's view of the world by encouraging deeper thinking and reflective processes within the organisation. The DOOR framework emerged as a result of helping managers and leaders to think and reflect on what they do, and can lead to deep learning and generative change when utlised with Action Learning.

DOOR is used as a mnemonic, and also metaphorically and literally as a means to 'open' doorways to understanding. This article was written while on a family holiday in Fiji. It was an opportunity to use my holiday journey as a metaphor to illustrate and elaborate on the framework.

The 'D' in DOOR stands for 'Design', the first 'O' stands for 'Operate', the second 'O' stands for 'Observe' and the 'R' stands for 'Reflect'. This then forms the first iterative cycle.

Figure DOOR Cycle

At its elementary level the 'DO' stands for 'doing'. Like most organsational development and training practitioners, I am immersed well in truly in the Doing paradigm. For me 'doing' is at a most robotic and unconscious level. The 'OR' stands for 'or else' and includes divergent thinking, creativity, play, questioning, challenging, meta reflection and being present in the moment.

The open Door of the 737 aircraft was an invitation to leave behind the treadmill of Doing. Stepping inside I was met with a sun-blessed cheery face and a warm 'bula' (hello) which I followed with 'vinaka' which means thank you. Those of you that have been to Fiji know that this is an invitation to slow down and to take on board what the Fijians call 'Fiji Time'—essentially chill out and go with the flow. A Fijian bitter (beer) eased me as I settled back into the seat and reflected on the year that was.

Observe

I have found that 'Observation' is usually a good place to start with the DOOR cycle. We are so busy bombarded with action that we rarely get the time to stand back and observe. As a trainer and facilitator of Leadership programs, I design processes to help busy executives understand more about themselves. I'm also a conduit in enabling deeper more reflective processes to emerge, thereby helping to transform the lives of many leaders. I did this for over a decade (Fernandez 1997) though found that while I enabled this for others, I rarely engaged with these processes myself. My Doctoral journey changed this through addressing the question —how can I as a leader (add facilitator and consultant to this) shift my focus from Action to Deep Reflection?

The lens that was externally focused was now firmly focused on me and the internal frame. Interestingly the old adage, "We teach what we most need to learn", was true

in my case. It helped me to see that what I encouraged in others, I needed to embody and emulate for myself.

As Trainers and Facilitators we influence people and processes at different levels. Our whole persona is integrally linked to the processes that we enable. We are influenced by every interaction and in many ways our role becomes one of co-enabling and co-creating processes with people. The old science model of the distant disconnected observer and expert plying their trade to others has had its day in the sun (Hawking & Mlodinow 2010; Kaku 2009; Laszlo 2008). If I was to enable deep change for others then I needed to observe and recognise my own mental models and filters that constructed my view of reality. I needed to work at growing and developing further as a person. Pragmatically speaking–as a Trainer/ Facilitator–through self-observation I needed to understand what my own mental models and filters of the world are. How do these models and filters reinforce my view of the world? What is the breadth and depth of my worldview? What are the deeper metaphors and stories that inform my world-view? How accommodative of others' world-views am I? Observation is essential as it provides the data for reflection.

Reflect

Breathing with excitement I snorkeled at the edge of a reef en-route to stepping ashore for a barbecue lunch at a secluded Sandy Cay. I reflected momentarily on a Sufi quote I often use

in my programs. "Deep in the Sea are riches beyond compare but if you seek safety it is on the shore". By Shiraz. The person's name not the wine, though I did indulge in a glass at the Cay!

To keep the metaphor going, there are many species of reflection. Some allow you to explore the shore, close to the surface and others enable the exploration of the depths. Like the coral reef, there are layers of interrelated, symbiotic connections: rich, colorful and imbued with meaning and purpose.

Time for 'Reflection' is scant in our busy lives. Even when we do reflect, our primary means is to reflect in the middle of action or briefly on action. This surface level process reflects back the world that you know - much like the shallow pool of water at the Cay that reflected my face and the blue sky in the background. In business, 'Review' is compensated for Reflection and even this is done in a cursory fashion. Also, review–like the 'post implementation review' within project management frameworks–sits comfortably within established business practices. It rarely challenges the status quo or the deeper underlying issues. In this context review and surface level reflection are single loop, incremental and fragmented from the context. Deep reflection on the other hand is the vital ingredient that incubates and illuminates new ideas. Deep reflection challenges current mental models or world-views and can change the game altogether. It is uncomfortable, creates dissonance and without it we are likely to achieve no more than trivial change (Fernandez 2008; Fernandez 2009).

Deep reflection does not occur by happenstance. Given the pace and demands of life, it needs to be designed, fostered and embedded systemically in organisations. Deep reflection involves the individual as both the subject and object of reflection. Also, group/team reflection sessions are a powerful enabler of high performance. Critical skills in dialogue, inquiry, advocacy and empathic listening help in developing openness, trust and camaraderie (Issacs 1999).

Observation and reflection are linked to our worldviews and the Meta models we hold in our head. Leaders with myopic self centered worldviews who are non-reflexive impact disproportionately on the lives of individuals.

Design

Our Observations and Reflections provide the data and critical thinking that helps us in designing something new. Design incorporates a creative forward-looking process. It can be, intentional and unintentional, planned and emergent. Design plays a key part in transforming our lives and in developing solutions that go beyond what we currently do and know. Leaders, who spend time designing and planning for the future, intentionally create better outcomes. Recent research on the brain (Carr 2010; Fine 2007; Levine 2002; Siegel 2007) also highlights the critical need to engage the forebrain in designing and creating the future. If we don't, this part atrophies and we get locked into the daily grind.

Some time ago, I facilitated a leadership program for the Ratus (chiefs of Fiji). There were significant insights and learnings for me and I valued the cross-cultural immersion.

For my children, this was a holiday where I wanted them to have a similarly immersive cultural experience apart from the orchestrated one at our resort.

While waiting in the foyer, the valet David enquired about our trip. I briefly provided the highlights and commented that I was also hiring a car so my children could see the real Fiji. He open-heartedly invited us to his house for dinner in a village amongst small sugar cane plantations. We took up the offer, exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet at the car park of a local supermarket in town and then follow him in our car.

We decided to bring a bottle of Australian wine along with an envelope containing money as our gift. With David in tow we also bought some nibbles and chocolates for his son plus a couple of bottles of

Fiji bitter. David had two bags of ice, apologising that they had no light or fridge due to a recent cyclone. He asked us to follow him. I was glad that I had hired a large all terrain vehicle with plenty of clearance at the bottom as we had to take a longer route through boggy tracks due to the bridge being damaged by the cyclone.

We left the highway and entered a dirt road. After some time David left his car at a friends place and hopped in our car. He did this so that he could come back with us for the more dangerous part of the ride. It started to rain, the terrain was boggy and hilly, we forded two bridges, and one made of timber had my hair on edge. My rather limited driving in boggy terrain skills were also tested. A little later the rain had cleared and we entered lush green countryside. Farmers waved at us as we passed. David commented that due to the hilly terrain and the high cost of fuel most work was done by ox and spade. The mixed community (Fijian and Indian) helped each other out during the cutting season and for other communal activities.

We arrived at a small house tucked away amongst giant Neem, Mango and Tamarind trees. There were herbs, vegetables and flowers around it, and chickens and goats in separate pens. The house was clean and tidy; food was cooked in an annex kitchen that was fired with timber and charcoal. Water was drawn from a boar, though the pump was not working due to the electrical wires coming down. Dinner was served in the courtyard, as the house was too hot. We had a feast of crab and fish that David and his extended family had caught the day previously on his day off from work. He stated that we were lucky as the full moon meant fleshier and plump crabs.

We explored a range of environmental issues including global warming and its impact on his community. He commented that he was paid $3.90 per hour, as was most of the service staff at the resort. He said that this was not sustainable and equitable given the amount the resort charged their guests. His income was supplemented by what they grew. For example, he bartered some herbs for the lettuce in our salad. David and his wife saved $20 a fortnight for the

education of their son. We discussed the traits and strengths that their son was already demonstrating and we talked about their aspirations. David and his wife had hope for a better future for their son. They were realistic, optimistic and intentionally and purposefully made plans for a brighter future.

My children were privy to all that was said and done during this time. We had a great conversation on the trip back about our experiences, about the deeper pervading issues in society, about the future and its potentiality. I also had an opportunity to look up at the night sky; it appeared like every star was visible and twinkled.

The story captures many aspects of the design and planning process. My intention for a deeper cultural experience met the warmhearted opportunity offered by David. We are all designers of our life, making choices along the way that create and bring to life a future drawn from many other possible futures (Inayatullah 2008). Awareness of this is critical for if we are not willing to actively engage in this design, then we may be unconscious of the influences around us and have a future imposed on us.

Operate

'Operate' is the final frame of DOOR and many of us are very good at this. In fact our whole life is engineered for this to occur; our very cortical architecture primes us for pattern and predictability. Neuroscience recognises that this pattern making approximates 96% of what we do and this is mainly unconscious. The 4% is working memory and our window to consciousness (Langer 1989; Rock 2009). The DOOR's iterative process enables us to meaningfully and intentionally work with the 4% and to understand the patterns and processes that drive us. The beauty is that when you deeply think and reflect, your 'Doing' also becomes more present. I was present and enjoyed my time with David and was alive to the journey. I had trust in the future that was unfolding around us.

We are constantly experiencing something through our senses. It is when we place this 'DOing' through the filter of Observation and Reflection that we add meaning to it. Meaning which is individualised, constructed and context bound, gains significance

and power through a process of Dialogue with others. Trainers, Facilitators and OD practitioners who are reflexive practitioners can, with their whole being, 'Be the Change they want to see in the World'. ■

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Link up for success

HR can help a chief executive create value through alignment of people, strategy and operations. By **Eugene Fernandez**

Eugene Fernandez: HR practitioners need to understand the impact of HR strategies

HUMAN RESOURCES professionals need to be the conduits that link people, strategy and operations in a way that pushes business success. Up to 40 per cent of the world's leading global chief executives have been removed from their posts because they were unable to make a connection between company goals and how the companies actually operated in the marketplace. Many were removed because of a failure to "execute".

Good execution depends on the interrelationship between strategy, people and operations. However, chief executives encounter difficulties in attempting to align the processes involving people with strategy. Where should they go for help? Their HR professionals.

The war for talent and the battle for retention are having a severe impact on businesses. Line managers recognise this battle, but they see HR as a cost centre and overhead. This perception is a remnant of the 1990s, but since then many HR departments have gained important efficiencies through outsourcing and shared services, allowing time for a more strategic approach.

HR's move to the rational end of the spectrum has seen a proliferation of data with hundreds of ratios measuring virtually every aspect of HR. These ratios are benchmarked against other organisations. There are also HR audits and a myriad of surveys measuring employee satisfaction and engagement. All this data can cloud HR's real value and impact on the business.

HR practitioners need to place more effort on strategies for organisational effectiveness by trying to understand the impact of HR strategies on the business. Focusing on the impact shifts the gaze away from a focus on outputs such as turnover, training days completed, headcount, succession candidate numbers, performance interviews and the percentage of employee engagement reports submitted.

A question needs to be addressed. How does all of this affect organisational effectiveness and what are the outcomes? There are six strategies that HR professionals can apply to help chief executives execute for business success.

1 FOCUS ON EFFECTIVENESS STRATEGIES

HR can start where the business makes money then move to how HR can build the human capital to enable this.

2 LINK KNOWLEDGE TO HUMAN CAPITAL

HR can help chief executives to see how the knowledge and information that they need to assist in strategy implementation is tied intimately to human capital. They can also help chief executives keep an eye on the present while helping them to think about the potential of human capital. This can only be done if HR, in the short term, provides evidence that it is effective by demonstrating the impact of its strategies on the business.

3 BUILD CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

Advocate, enable and build the critical capabilities that add value to the business. These include innovative or creative risk-averse mindsets, a strategically focused culture, increased resilience and capacity for change, the integration of merger and acquisition activity with dynamic human capital strategies, and striving for peak performance.

4 ENABLE BUSINESS ALIGNMENT

Align people, values and behaviours to the performance of the business. Examples of alignment include the application of a performance management and feedback system that is linked to actions that support strategy and to demonstrable good leadership practice and behaviours.

5 CHALLENGE KEY PROCESSES

Business processes need to be challenged to test their effectiveness in executing business strategy. HR can achieve this by encouraging knowledge forums, assisting in the capture of intellectual capital, enabling deeper reflective thinking processes and working at building enquiry and dialogue.

6 BUILD EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

HR can help chief executives visualise leadership outcomes and disperse this within an organisation. They can engineer role modelling by senior management by being involved from conception to implementation, where they are co-opted to mentor and sponsor others. HR can connect leadership behaviour to cultural change and link this to increasing a capacity to survive and thrive.

Human capital is becoming more important for increasing value. It should be the domain of the HR professional, and requires both supporting and challenging peers at the executive table to champion and live the practices that sustain business success. •

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