

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 13th NOVEMBER 2002, GOTHENBURG SWEDEN

1. Present: Ray Mahoney (Chair), Theresa Barnett, Ian Hall, Alan Wenham-Prosser, Sean Cunningham (DSS Ireland), Stephan Schütze, Christer Ferm and Agneta Svenberg, (Action Learning Sweden).

In attendance: Pam Wright, IFAL Administrator

2. Apologies: J Bothams, Steven Moss, Roger Reissner (Treasurer), Moira McLaughlin, Craig Johnson (Bradford University), Harley Frank, Jean Lawrence, Kathryn Evans, John Sweet, David Swinden, Mike Pedler, David Barron, Günter Paier, Liz Wilson, Otmar Donnenberg, Tricia Lustig, Gordon Roberts, Julie Hay, Jane Watts, Richard Thorpe, Sharon Bartram.

3. Minutes of last AGM (November 2001) and matters arising

Subject to the addition of Sean Cunningham to those present at the 2001 AGM, and correcting the date of previous meeting to 2000, the minutes were approved. All matters arising were taken under the Agenda.

4. Treasurer's Report

This was presented in the absence of the Treasurer, showing a current balance of 3,000 GBP and a reserve of 3,500 GBP. Full audited accounts would be reported in January 2003 Newsletter when the books were returned from the Auditors. The delay being due to the need to correctly assess the level of Gift Aid. Pam Wright asked, on behalf of the Treasurer, that any UK tax-paying member not already subscribing to Gift Aid to please do so, as it was a valuable source of extra income to IFAL at no cost to members. She added that all those not yet subscribed would be sent a reminder.

5. Membership Report

Pam Wright advised, that following the retirement from the Executive committee of Tim Vidal-Hall she had taken over the role of membership administrator with the agreement of the executive and tabled the report to July 2002.

As ever, there were a number of members individual and corporate who had not paid their dues and these were being followed up. The agreement with the

Executive being that anyone not paying for two years would be given one last opportunity to bring their dues up to date and if not responding would be advised that they would be taken off the membership list.

6. Executive Report

This was tabled by the Chair, Ray Mahoney who outlined the main points as follows. He commented specifically on concerns expressed by several members on the use of the term 'action learning' for things which were not 'action learning' as understood and practiced by IFAL and associated Chapters. Ian Hall agreed that there were indeed different interpretations of the phrase 'action learning' Ray said that IFAL did not hold copyright and the words were just two words 'action' and 'learning' and people could use them in any way they wished. We could only educate people into the correct ways of action learning and introduce them to IFAL-UK or one of the overseas Chapters for them to see real action learning as intended by Reg Revans.

Ray then commented on the use of Yahoo chat to hold Executive meetings, and said, that whilst there had been some measure of disappointment, we would persist with this as it enabled a more flexible timetable, less loss of office time for those working and allowed the inclusion of overseas members which would not otherwise be possible.

Ray asked whether members felt it appropriate to write to Krystyna Weinstein who had stood down as editor of the Newsletter, but had been unable to attend the 2001 AGM when the official presentations had been made to retiring Executive officers, to ask her to attend the 2003 AGM to be formally presented with a gift for her contributions over many years. All present agreed that this was an excellent suggestion.

ACTION RM/PW

7. Administration Report

This was tabled by Pam Wright, who briefly went through the main points. She said that the major area of concern to her over the last year had been the lack of development on the web site due to David Hanner having to withdraw his services because of increased work-load. She advised that a new Company had

been approached, originally based in Manchester, and after an initial promising start there had been a delay with them due to a merger with another larger organisation. However, this has now been resolved and they have re-located to Accrington (still in the North West of England). She had visited their offices recently and the September Newsletter had been uploaded, the Notice board up-dated and other development work was now in hand, eg the section for members who wished to have their professional details posted to the web was being worked on. Ray said that in this regard, he believed it had been previously agreed by the Executive that this service would be free to members but that they would be encouraged to make a suitable donation to IFAL-UK if any work resulted from this. Pam said that this had indeed been agreed and recorded.

She was asked to add the Swedish Chapter website as a link.

ACTION PW

Ray formally thanked Pam for her continued hard work on behalf of all the Executive of IFAL-UK.

On the subject of the Newsletter, this was now edited by guest editors, following the retirement from this post by Krystyna Weinstein, and volunteers for this were welcomed. Ray Mahoney would edit the January 2003 issue since this would be mainly concerned with annual reports, and Action Learning Sweden would do the next issue. Ray added that, since the Newsletter was distributed electronically (in the main) there was no reason why this should not be more often, and if necessary shorter, more regular issues would be produced. Pam commented that there was no problem in doing this.

8. Election of Executive Officers

The current Executive members were: Ray Mahoney, Roger Reissner, Theresa Barnett, Alan Wenham-Prosser, Steve Moss, Harley Frank, Moira McLaughlin, Craig Johnson and there was currently one vacancy. Pam reported that she had duly circulated forms for nomination to Executive to all members but had not received any nominations. In accordance with the constitution Ray, Theresa and Alan stood down from the Executive, but offered themselves for re-election, all other Executive members had indicated that they were still willing to serve on the Executive Committee, although not present at the meeting.

Theresa Barnett was nominated by Alan Wenham-Prosser and seconded by Ian Hall; AWP was nominated by TB and seconded by Stephan Schütze; Ray Mahoney was nominated by IH and seconded by Sean Cunningham. The remaining vacancy was filled by Stephan Schütze who was nominated by RM and seconded by AWP.

9. ICAL Conference 2003

Ray reminded those present that this was the bi-annual Conference that began with Klippan 1999. It was agreed that the term ICAL (for International Community of Action Learners); a term coined for the Canada Conference; was not the most appropriate and it would henceforth be known as the World Conference on Action Learning; this all-inclusive term hopefully encouraging those not already in the 'community' to join.

The format was envisaged as two and half days, and would include all sectors using action learning eg Academic, Local Government, Consultants, Practitioners and newcomers.

Pam Wright suggested that it might be appropriate to hold the 2003 AGM sometime during this Conference as it was difficult to get members to give up their time to attend the AGM in isolation. This was felt to be an excellent suggestion and would be incorporated into the schedule.

The question of possible dates was discussed and Ray advised that the idea was to hold the Conference at University of East London (Docklands) in December 2003, and it would, therefore, need to be out of term time to allow the use of on-campus accommodation for those requiring it.

Pam Wright to check with David Swinden on the dates, and it was recommended that if it was the week before Xmas it would need to be the early part of the week (with overseas visitors having the option of staying the week-end before) or if it were a week earlier, then the latter part of the week might be suitable with the option to stay for the week-end following to allow people to sight-see and shop in London.

ACTION PW

Ian Hall asked if it would be a suitable forum for the sharing of ideas by practitioners and said that it would. He went on to say it might be possible to set aside a room for use by consultants to allow them to display their 'wares'.

Stephan Schütze said that the best practical demonstration by consultants of how effective they were would be for them to bring a client along to the Conference,

It was agreed that the sooner the dates and overall programme could be agreed and circulated the more successful the Conference would be as people's diaries filled up very quickly.

10. Partnerships with other Chapters.

RM said this was on the Agenda to clarify the position of other Chapters, for example Sweden. A suitable donation to IFAL-UK for the use of the Newsletter and membership list and links on the website would need to be agreed with the Treasurer. Christer Ferm said they were working with Finland and a group would be attending the Conference in 2003.

11. Any Other Business

The IFAL prize for an action learning MBA had been successfully introduced in 2001, with the presentation

and full report in 'Action Learning News' January 2001 issue. Craig Johnson of Bradford University, where the first prize-winner came from, had devised suitable judging criteria.

All business schools in the UK had been approached to ask if they were using action learning in MBA's or similar courses, and if they would like to participate. A number of responses had been received to date. RM said that all responses would be considered in January 2003 and, using the criteria set by Craig, a winner would be declared. It would then probably be necessary to arrange a visit to the winner's organisation to present the prize. Hopefully this exercise would also produce some more Corporate members of IFAL-UK.

Christer Ferm asked if a more general category of action learning practitioner world-wide could be devised and advertised at the 2003 Conference. RM agreed that this was an excellent suggestion.

The meeting was formally closed by the Chair and members thanked for their attendance.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS 2002/3

Raymond Mahoney (*Chair*)

Roger Reissner (*Treasurer*)

Stephan Schütze

Moira McLaughlin

Steven Moss

Theresa Barnett

Harley Frank

Craig Johnson

Alan Wenham-Prosser

**TREASURER'S REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST
JULY 2001**

I have spent some time disentangling the Gift Aid situation. Quite a number of people do not realise you only need to make a declaration once and it can be retrospective to April 6th 2000. The estimated tax rebate for 2000-2002 is about £1250.

The current Bank position in the most recent statement is circa £3000 with Reserves of about £3500. But this is before I make refunds to quite

a few people who have made over-payments. IFAL-UK is, therefore, far from rich.

I have yet to get any response from the Auditors so cannot give a final position for 2001-2002.



**Roger Reissner
Treasurer**

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S
REPORT FOR THE YEAR
2001/02**

At the end of the membership year in July we had 126 individual members plus 15 corporate members representing about 90 further members. This total of 216 is an increase on last year, although paid-up member were a little less at 104. Details are as follows with the figures for the previous year in brackets:

**(00-01) 01-02
Individual members**

Paid up: (108) 126 (104 paid)

New: (10) 6

Corporate members

Current: (15) 15

New: (1) 2

Gift aid forms have now been completed by 45 people, which still leaves some UK citizens who have not completed a form. These people will be approached individually in the near future to ask them if they will make a declaration.

**Pam Wright
Membership Administrator**

The next Newsletter will be published in May

**Please send contributions directly to Lancaster (preferably on e-mail) to:
*p.wright@lancaster.ac.uk***

**Pam Wright, IFAL Administrator
Dept of Management Learning
Management School
Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YT**

DATE FOR COPY 11th April

REPORT OF THE CHAIR, IFAL-UK

Action learning now seems to be appearing everywhere, it is in Education, Government, Business, and the Voluntary sector, almost everywhere you look. It speaks volumes for the pioneering work Reg Revans, Jean Lawrence and others did all those years ago, not to say what current members are doing, bringing it to the attention of the world.

This does not mean our work as action learners is over, far from it. As many members have told me not all programmes or consultants claiming to use action learning are doing anything of the sort. It is not action learning as we know it Jim. There is no copyright on the term 'action learning' and the role of IFAL-UK must be to promote good practice and challenge bad or misleading practice where possible. When the website is fully operational, we will be publishing a list of members who offer action learning services as our contribution to maintaining high standards.

It is also about keeping debate on the subject going as colleagues around the world are doing and the excellence that emanates from the Revans centre at Salford. We may never be able to keep track of the misuse of the term, but we can and have for many years, provided, a quality organisation for people to find out what action learning is.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

This year we have had all but one of our meetings via Yahoo conference. This has saved time and travelling and meant we can include people from other continents on the board. The technology has sometimes defeated us; not all being in the same conference room at the one time, but with perseverance it can work better. I would like to thank all members of the executive for their support and work, in particular Roger and Theresa who had dramatic changes to their personal situations.

We have successfully introduced an IFAL-UK prize, presented at last years AGM, thanks to the efforts of Craig at Bradford University. We are in the process of inviting organisations using action learning on MBA or MSc programmes to apply for inclusion in this year's award.

WEBSITE

This has been a disappointment after a very promising start. David Hanner created an excellent site for us, for which we are very appreciative. Alas his increased workload in other areas meant it was difficult for Pam to keep the site up to date. Therefore the executive agreed to move the site to another host provider. This has proved difficult, but is now completed and we will be keeping the site more updated on a regular basis.

ADMINISTRATION

Pam now, as you know, provides her own report so I will not duplicate here, only to thank her again for going the extra mile on many occasions and showing us all the value of having action learning in our hearts. I would also like to thank Lancaster University for providing a base for our operation and their continuing agreement to do so.

AGM / WORKSHOP

We were invited to hold a joint workshop with IFAL. Sweden and after discussion at the executive we thought it would provide an opportunity for European members to attend the AGM and combine it with the workshop. We will of course reflect on the wisdom of this decision for the future.

I.C.A.L. CONFERENCE DECEMBER 2003

At the Toronto conference I volunteered IFAL-UK as the host for this event. It will be held at the University of East London, Docklands and the organising group will be starting in December 2002 to arrange this event.

It has been a privilege and honour to serve as chair this year.

Ray Mahoney
Chair, IFAL-UK

IFAL Administration Report August 2001 - July 2002

As I have mentioned in previous reports, the Administration of IFAL is done by me on a part-time basis, based partly in my home and partly in my office at Lancaster University. However, IFAL remains, as ever, an independent organisation.

The main event of 2001/2 was, of course, the trip to Canada for the second international conference and I am most grateful for the opportunity to attend this exciting and worthwhile event. A full report and photographs were published in September 2001 issue of *'Action Learning News'*. If anyone missed this, copies can be obtained on request.

The use of electronic means of communication ie website and email, whilst in some ways making life easier and certainly speeding up communications, also brings its own problems. It is important that members notify me immediately of any change to their email addresses.

Some technical difficulties have been encountered this year with the web site, but I am happy to report that these have mainly been overcome and that work is on-going to further improve information available to members and visitors alike. It is hoped that the new section on members' interests will be up and running before the end of 2002 and I will be in touch again about this in the near future.

The action learning questions forum using 'Topica' has been launched and all members have been subscribed to this service automatically if anyone wants further details or a reminder of the procedure please contact me.

It is also expected that the membership list, previously only sent once yearly in hard copy by post will shortly be up-loaded to the website and be more readily available to paid-up members and more frequently up-dated to make this a valuable resource for members.

Other work on the web will include some of the more popular library articles - but this is still a little way off in the future.

I am also now responsible for the membership of IFAL, following the retirement after many years of valuable service of Tim Vidal-Hall. I also take the lead role in the preparation of the Newsletter, working with a guest Editor, following the retirement from the Editor's post of Krystyna Weinstein, also after many years of dedicated service. I join with members of IFAL's executive in thanking Tim and Krystyna for their valuable work and wish them well for the future.

Pam Wright
IFAL Administrator



I.F.A.L. Workshop 14th November 2002 Gothenburg, Sweden

Present: Ray Mahoney, Alan Wenham-Prosser, Hans Albinson, Janne Pehrson, Agneta Svenberg, Sean Cunningham, Lars Sandgren, Stephan Schütze, Celine Daumas-Richardson, Jim Miller, Jessica Tournier, Lisbeth Önnerskog, Tommy Korsell, Theresa Barnett, Kristoffer Skogholm, Håxan Blixt, Irene Addixe, Ian Hall, Christer Ferm, Barbro Nilsson, Ann Östman, Stephan Bergstrand.

In attendance: Pam Wright IFAL Administrator

The structure of the workshop was outlined by Alan Wenham-Prosser outlined the procedure as follows:

1. The main purpose of the workshop is to gain as much cross fertilisation of ideas for future action learning practise. To this end action learning was used to benefit action learning.

2. The first stage was to form action learning sets of those who use action learning either as (A) a consultant (i.e. from outside an organisation) or (B) as an employee (i.e. from inside an organisation).



Alan Wenham-Prosser explains the workshop procedure to the delegates
(photo Håxan Blixt)

3. The second stage was to mix the sets and raise a second issue.

4. The issues raised in the sets would focus on the particular difficulties experienced during the use of action learning in (A) or (B) type scenario. These were formulated from the application forms for the workshop.

5. No matter whose issue was considered in the first set, all participants were to make notes of those questions /answers which would bring in new ideas/solutions for each participant, since these would form the basis of the questioning in the second set. This way each participant could make a contribution to the overall learning process.

6. In the second set participants would try to introduce where appropriate questioning which might bring in the new ideas/solutions from the first set. This was the reason for writing them down (i.e. reminders)

7. Additionally all new ideas/solutions which participants discover would be formulated and written down in as generic a way as possible and given to Pam Wright for collation. These would form a paper to be written up on the conference so as to pass as much as possible on to those who were unable to attend.

8. The above was the theoretical approach to cross fertilisation of ideas.

9. Finally everyone would gather together for a single process plenary in two parts.

(1) To discuss the new ideas/solutions which have arisen.

(2) To discuss the efficacy of the method used to cross fertilise so that it may be improved for a future situation.

The delegates then broke into groups depending on whether they were consultants, or employees, those who did not fall into either category were invited to join either set.



Part of the complex of Tva Skyttlar* where the AGM and workshop were held and some of the delegates stayed in the very comfortable accommodation



Theresa Barnett (second from left) celebrated her birthday whilst in Sweden and there was no shortage of volunteers to help her!



Kristoffer Skogholm (far left, next to new Executive member Stephan Schutze) proves you are never too young for action learning and was a very



Janne Pehrson (standing, third from right) explains his point clearly to the delegates



** Tva Skyttlar – two shuttles, from a textile origin*

All photographs by Pam Wright



Delegates at the Action Learning Conference November 2002,
Två Skyttlar Marks kommun, Sweden (see list below)

Lars Sandgren
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Jessica Tournier
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Hans Albinsson
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Tommy Korsell
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Agneta Svenberg
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Håkan Blixt
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Christer Ferm
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Barbro Nilsson
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Stephan Schütze
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Janne Pehrson
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Pam Wright
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Reflections on the Sweden Workshop



I was initially nervous about this workshop, the executive having taken the bold step to arrange it with our Swedish colleagues. They did us and action learning proud by organising a venue that was superb for the event. I soon relaxed when delegates started arriving and the usual hubbub started. Alan Wenham-Prosser facilitated the day and as Christer Ferm remarked to me, he is what he talks. Alan was very relaxed and set just the right note for an excellent workshop. We started the day listening to a tape recording of Reg Revans addressing a conference in the City of London in his ninetieth year. The message he gave was perfect for what we were going on to explore at the workshop. The delegates being a mix of experienced action learners and those completely new to the concept, a rich mix indeed.

I gained a new perspective on the subject by listening to the stories of others and warmed to the fact that many colleagues clearly have action learning in their hearts as well as their minds. It was refreshing hearing the questions of those who were trying to understand what it is all about. It was a pleasure to be in such good company and to develop further relationships built in Bradford the year before.

A bonus I had not expected was a musical evening that was encouraged by Hans Albinson and Swedish colleagues. This was an informal and delightful event with talent for folk singing coming from all concerned.

The whole event was superbly organised by Albin and his colleagues and the Action Learning that IFAL Sweden are nurturing is truly magical. The efforts of Christer Ferm and Stephan Bergstrand have really born fruit with the quality of practitioners now developed in Sweden. The whole experience was enlightening and refreshing giving me new energies for 2003.

Ray Mahoney,
Chair IFAL UK



.....As a newcomer to an action learning seminar, I had the great advantage of being the object of inquiry regarding a very real and weighty problem pertaining to my work environment and the present lack of public money to make it better for myself and my many students. I was taken very seriously as the questions were posed to me. The questions were easy to answer at first, but as my questioners got warmed up and quickly had come to a good understanding of the nature of things, the questions got harder for me to answer. I was forced to really think about what I wanted and why, and to consider a reasonable time span for solving that which was bothering me. What was most interesting for me was to feel the growing awareness of my feelings by all those participating, most of all myself. I realized finally that my problem could better be looked upon as a possibility, and that I should present the issue to my superiors at work as a vision of positive progress to improve the whole school's image and working climate, rather than presenting it as a heavy problem. It was, to say the least, a very enlightening experience with a wonderful, friendly atmosphere. I hope to be a part of this type of experience again.

Jim Miller

Yet more thoughts
on the workshop.....

Since it was my first real action learning meeting, I just collected impressions and thoughts for my personal reflections and hopefully my future 'taste' of pleasure, respect, deep humanity and a feeling that the potential of the action learning way 'to be...(or not to....)' includes wider perspectives than were visible during the short time I have experienced action learning.

Håxan Blixt

Action learning experience in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Ireland

The Department of Social Affairs - profile

- We have approximately 4,700 staff (800 work-sharing)
- 140 offices throughout Ireland (Republic)
- approximately half of the staff are in Dublin with the rest outside Dublin
- 68% female/32% male
- 58% between 35 and 50
- Numbers of managers in the department
- Higher Executive Officers 689
- Assistant Principals 230
- Principal Officers 66
- How has Action Learning developed to date?
- A pilot programme was set up in the Department in 2000
- external consultants were brought in to advise on setting up the programme
- staff were trained as facilitators
- 9 groups of middle managers (total 66) took part in the sets - 6 meetings each
- Evaluation of Pilot
- Set members completed an evaluation at their last meeting - others also completed a form six months after the set concluded
- the evaluations were almost universally positive - higher than any other "training course"
- we then decided to offer another programme

2nd Programme

- Staff who had taken part in the original sets were given 4 days training as facilitators (2 with consultants & 2 with our own experts)
- 14 groups are now in operation with approximately 100 staff involved in sets
- a group of senior managers, facilitated by one of the original consultants, is in place
- What will happen next?
- complete the current programme and evaluate how staff have got on
- consider if we will offer the programme and if we do who will we offer it to others
- look at action learning in other countries and consider alternatives to the form we have used to date

How you can help us

- suggestions on what other forms of Action Learning we could use
- tell us more about the groups you have been involved in, do they meet more frequently, do they deal with issues given to them by senior managers?
- Have the educational forms of Action Learning relevance to the Public Sector?

Sean Cunningham, DSS Ireland (presented at the workshop, Sweden, November 2002)

Interesting web sites and links



<http://www.action-learning.org>

Action Learning Sweden - Officiell webbplats



Info
Aktuellt
Process
Medlem
Kontakt
Länkar

Tyvärr bygger mycket av vårt skolsystem på tanken att man kan "Lära först i teorin och göra sedan - många år efter" Detta vet vi av erfarenhet inte passar de flesta människor ändå håller vi på. Action Learning vill utmana detta sätt att tänka om lärande och inbjuder till ett annat sätt att tänka.

Är du intresserad av ett kraftfullt och effektivt lärande ? - [Läs vidare !](#)

Vad är egentligen Action Learning ?

Värdskapet för föreningen vandrar från olika ställen och efter Stockholm och Göteborg är det nu Borås tur.

Ordföranden Christer Ferm når du på mail :
christerferm@telia.com

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This latest development in the Learning Management Advantage Programme now combines several years of international application experiences that immediately and professionally deliver strategic new learning on time, every time.

You can now customise this comprehensive platform by business sector and/or preferred language to ensure learning outcomes that make strategic thinking and achievement become an everyday reality.

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to acquire your full update and enter the New Year with a renewed sense of direction and purpose

2003 Inter-Company Action Learning Programme!

Honda (UK) and QinetiQ to use Action Learning to drive change

Both Honda (UK) and QinetiQ will use Action Learning as a key part of new leadership development initiatives in 2003. Honda (UK)'s Employee Development Manager, Richard Day says, "Giving our managers the opportunity of working with people from other organisations through Transition Partnerships' Inter-Company Action Learning Programme is an exciting way of adding another dimension to our learning and development." QinetiQ's Director of Learning, Tim Bridgman added 'About two hundred of our managers were using Action Learning in 2002 and we intend to continue to expand this in 2003'

Is continual learning necessary for achieving your strategic aims?

Do you value learning from experience?

Would you value input from other major organisations?

What they say!

Reg Revans, the pioneer of Action Learning has said many wise things, including "...there can be no learning without action and no knowing without the effort to practise and implement what is claimed as knowledge"

And what do the people who have been doing it

"It achieved results in an extremely time-efficient way at a critical stage for the organisation."

"A year ago we would have been saying 'what are they going to do about it?', now we are saying 'what can we do?'"

"It was amazing how much energy it generated – and, it provides a way of channelling it"

Action Learning – the world's best-kept secret?

A new report from the Institute for Employment Studies, *New Directions in Management Development* (Report 387, 2002) makes interesting reading:

"There is a shift in the focus from teaching towards outcomes, and Action Learning has come of age."

"The demand for interpersonal and leadership skills has led to an explosion of interest in learning sets."

"Learning based on actual involvement in tasks or projects is seen as ... more relevant"

Action Learning quite literally means working and learning simultaneously.

Action Learning is a continuous process of 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 business problems and reflecting on their own experiences.

The process helps us to take an active stance and to overcome the tendency to think, feel and be passive towards the pressure of life.

2003...

We are now preparing for 2003 and, like Honda (UK) and QinetiQ, you also can use Action Learning as a powerful way of developing your managers and your business!

More Information?

If you would like to know more about our 2003 'Open' Action Learning programme or about Action Learning please contact Transition Partnerships by phoning Antony Aitken on tel.01189 883164 or Email info@transitionpartnerships.com

The Inter-Company Programme.

The TP Inter-Company (Open) Programme brings together the benefits of Action Learning with the advantages of sharing knowledge and experience between different businesses. Participants experience big learning gains in personal effectiveness.

Transition Partnerships started the Open programme in 1996 at the request of Hewlett Packard and it has been running ever since. As well as HP, companies that have taken part include:

Eli Lilly, Halifax, National Air Traffic Services, Jaguar Cars, Agilent Technologies, GlaxoSmithKline, Thames Water.

How it works...

5 people meet with a facilitator for 6 x 1 day sessions at monthly intervals, to help each other on work-based projects. Transition Partnerships provide meeting facilitation, preparatory support and materials, and unlimited 'between-meeting' coaching, as well as the programme administration.

The cost of the programme is £2750 per person.



Christmas Eve and The Lord Napier.

I have not been the best parent, nor have I been the worst parent, I am a parent. Well over the Christmas period my wife and I have been discussing the boundaries of parenthood. Have we been over-protective, have we interfered too much in their lives, have we this or that and so the discussion went? I must say at this point that our offspring are 27, 25 and 23 years of age. The youngest two of them are still living at the Mahoney household. The points we were going over and asking ourselves questions about ranged from the small to the global. Like, "When do we stop being a parent"? "When can we let go of the helpful reminders"? Some recent ones heard in the house. 'Have you got your keys dear?' 'Don't forget to feed the cats dear!' 'What time are you getting up today?'

I am sure those of you who are parents have been round this loop yourself. I am glad though that I found action learning, for I now reflect on my actions and intentions as both a partner and parent. I wish that I had known of it when I first became a parent. I am sure that it would have helped in many of my fatherly dilemmas. The development of our children into adulthood has made me reflect on being a set facilitator to a new action learning set, or even a long-standing one. The transition from being needed to being a welcome member of the group, or indeed not required by the group at all on occasions.

When first I was a facilitator, my ego had me believe that I was the most important asset to the group. I learned from many hours with groups and their most helpful feedback and sometimes brutal but honest feedback, that there is a transition period when the group can achieve on its own. This at first was painful to acknowledge and sit back to let the group achieve on its own. However having done it I feel there are links with parenting. It is hard to not interfere, not to make decisions for my offspring, but also rewarding too.

This Christmas we had not planned any real activities other than a dinner for who ever was around on Christmas day. So when we were separately invited by my daughter and our son to join them and their friends for the evening at the Lord Napier pub on Christmas Eve, I thought little of it at first.

At the beginning of the evening the pub was not too crowded and conversation was easy. It was also not the first time we had been in the company of their friends and partners. The bar we were in caters for the younger person, four pool tables, and eight televisions on the ceiling blasting out pop music. The lighting is very low and lots of conversations. Well as the pub began to fill up I realised there were not any other fifty something's in the place except us. Then I realised what a privilege it was to have been invited. So I told Barbara this and she said, "Well tell them".

It was a profound insight on her behalf to have suggested that and for me as a parent a magical moment when I told them how privileged I felt just being in their company. It had on reflection made my Christmas. However we decided by 10.30pm to make a discreet exit and leave them to party on.

Now on reflection perhaps the action learning groups I have made a discreet exit from may have 'partied on' and grown without my further help.

**Ray Mahoney,
Parent and Action Learner.**



Notice Board

Reading group - seeking new members

We are a small group of people who have been meeting for just over two years and who are looking to increase our numbers. We came together as a result of two of us circulating the following message:



"We are two independent consultants who are looking for new and creative ways of stimulating our thinking and developing our understanding and application of our current practice (i.e. challenging myopia and increasing motivation). As part of this process, we have come up with the idea of starting a reading group and wondered if there are any members (of IFAL - International Foundation for Action Learning and AMED - Association for Management Education and Development) out there (or other interested individuals) who may like to join us.

Whilst we feel that a discussion of the theory is an important starting point, our primary aim is to use the text as a springboard to explore its applications, rather than an intellectual/literary exercise in itself. Examples of texts that we might like included are *Images of organization* and *Emotional Intelligence*

So, we envisage the group would meet to discuss specific books/articles etc selected by the group. Discussion to include:

- authors ideas
- relationship between this theory and our practice/experience of working with organisations, groups and individuals
- reflections on own group process

Envisaged structure:

- 10-12 people to allow for not everyone being able to attend every session
- hold regular meetings on bi-monthly basis, (as opposed to being a virtual group)
- meet somewhere between or within easy reach of South Herts/North London
- The group to work out such matters as venue, what titles will be read, dates etc. "

Where we are now:

We have had a core of 6 regularly attending members and are looking for two or three more people to join us. Group members are based in Berkhamsted, Muswell Hill, Barnet, St Albans and Crouch End and rotate the meetings in each other's homes. Meetings run from 7.30pm to 10pm.

If this interests you, please contact any of the following group members:

Bill Braddick	01442 864257	Bill.braddick@btinternet.com
Jackie Draper	020 8442 0308	j.draper@dial.pipex.com
Linda Firsht	020 8958 7484	Lfirsht@aol.com
Moira McLaughlin	0208 348 4627	moira@mclaughlinassociates.co.uk
June Whetherly	01727 861934	june@junewhetherly.co.uk

Notice Board

Why not make 2003 the year when you invest more time in your own development? Action Learning is a hugely beneficial process which helps you address your own work and development challenges.

We are a self-facilitated Action Learning set made up of people based in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire who originally came together five or six years ago as a result of an AMED initiative.

Recently, one of our members has had to withdraw from the set due to other commitments and life changes. This means that we now have four members and we would like to increase our numbers up to a maximum of six.

Currently our monthly meetings alternate between Cranfield, Henlow and St. Albans. Would you be interested in joining us?

For further information please contact one of us:

Gerard Burke	01525 261259 or A.G.Burke@cranfield.ac.uk
John Robinson	01462 811500 or john@wensumlodge.demon.co.uk
June Whetherly	01727 861934 or june@junewhetherly.co.uk
Mike Gowlett	01635 253337 or mgowlett@aol.com

Management development modules for download

Management Unlimited have produced a complete suite of 17 modules which can be used to form the basis of Management Development Programmes. All resources are in Adobe Acrobat format and are provided with permission to reproduce within the purchasing organisation. The modules cover: Communication in Management, Culture and Change, Employee Relations, Financial Management, Health and Safety, Human Resource Management, Human Resource Development, Interpersonal processes, Management Context, Managing Information, Managing Quality, Motivation, Planning and Decision Making, Project Management, Stress, Teams, Time Management. You can download free sample documents. For the full breakdown of modules, see http://www.trainingzone.co.uk/doc/author/management_unlimited

Team Leadership Skills

If you need some ready-made materials, this pack is for you. A fully designed 1 day course, it includes tutor course notes, full colour overheads / PowerPoint slides, delegate manual, exercises and role plays. Course objectives cover action-centred leadership; the activities of an effective team leader; differences between a leader and a manager; pitfalls of being too task, team or individually focused; S.M.A.R.T. tasks/performance objectives; performance standards and how to communicate them to staff; influencing techniques including assertiveness. The course includes a set of role plays and case studies. More details are at <http://www.trainingzone.co.uk/doc/3000>

Or browse the full range of TrainingZone's management development resources: [Http://www.trainingzone.co.uk/doc/category/83](http://www.trainingzone.co.uk/doc/category/83)

Food for thought...food for thought...food for thought

If I knew

If I knew it would be the last time
that I'd see you fall asleep
I would tuck you in more tightly
and pray the Lord your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time
that I'd see you walk out the door
I would give you a hug and kiss
and call you back for one more.

If I knew it would be the last time
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise
I would video-tape each action and word
so I could play them back day after day.

If I knew it would be the last time
I would spare an extra minute
to stop and say 'I LOVE YOU'
instead of assuming you know I do.

If I knew it would be the last time
I would be there to share your day,
well I'm sure you'll have so many more,
so I can just let this one slip away.

For surely there's always tomorrow
to make up for an oversight,
and we always get a second chance
to make everything just right.

There will always be another day
to say 'I love you',
and certainly there's another chance to say 'anything I can do?'
but, just in case I might be wrong
and today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you
and I hope we never forget.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,
young or old alike,
and today may be the last chance
to get to hold your loved one tight.

So, if you're waiting for tomorrow,
why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes,
you'll surely regret the day
that you didn't take extra time
for a smile, a hug, or a kiss
and you were too busy to grant someone
what turned out to be their one last wish.

so, hold your loved ones close today
and whisper in their ear,
tell them how much you love them
and that you'll always hold them dear.
Take time to say 'I'm sorry'
'Please forgive me', 'Thank you' or
'It's OK'
and if tomorrow never comes
you'll have no regrets about today



**Written for the victims and families of the attacks on
September 11th 2001 (Anon)**

Books...Books...Books



Sankar Sankaran, Bob Dick, Ron Passfield and Pam Swepson eds., 2001, *Effective Change Management Using Action Learning and Action Research*, Southern Cross University Press, Lismore NSW Australia, 282 pp. A\$ 54.95 inc GST in Australia and A\$ 49.95 ex. Australia.

This book sets itself a fair task: 'in a practical and reasonably priced book' to combine action learning and action research in such a way that followers of each might be attracted to it. For good measure, the title suggests promise for change management. It is distributed in four parts: Concepts, Frameworks, Processes and Applications.

Action learning people can draw interest from three of five chapters in Part 1 Concepts; Ortrun Zuber-Skerrit's lucid comments on the theory overlap between action research and action learning; Ron Passfield's simple but potent exposition on action learning is worth a look; Michael Marquardt suggestions about the applicability of action learning in non-Western cultures are helpful except the reference to 'the questioning of Asians' implies some uniformity of behaviour amongst the many cultures of that diverse continent. Overall, Part 1 can leave you feeling that action learning and action research still move together clumsily at the theoretical level, as if looking down for the right dance steps outlined on the floor. This not the case in practice, as Part 4 shows.

Only one chapter of Part 2, Frameworks captures an action learning position. In extensive reported speech, Deborah Lange brings to life her idiosyncratic approach to action learning when describing her encounter with the Manager (sic) of a Management (sic) group. The use of Buddhist breathing techniques with action learning questions to quell mutinous behaviour

might be daunting for the run of the mill action learning adviser but there is no doubting Ms Lange's courage and tenacity. The rest of Part 1 rests heavily on action research and action evaluation, which makes you think that someone should quickly take out a patent on the word. Action, that is, not evaluation.

Pam Swepson's introduction to Part 3, Processes gives the game away when she writes that this part of the book will help those looking for a method to fit the action research framework they are using. Well, again one only chapter is helpful for action learning and that is the eminently practical one by Bob Williams and Bill Harris on the use of learning logs. You will never have an excuse not to use one after they very kindly supply half a dozen templates. Thin fare elsewhere, however, for action learners, with no other set based action learning reporting. I also question the demarcation between parts 2 and 3: for the practitioner, a framework is a kind of scaffolding on which you build your action learning experiences; the process is the device with which you bring something into being. Lange's breathing and Williams and Harris' logs can be both scaffolding and method and I can't see why they should appear in separate chapters.

The final Part is Applications, all nine of them, the majority in non-Western settings. After Marquardt's tantalising chapter on action learning applications in non-Western cultures, Be Bingfang's report of EFL teaching in China promised insights in to action learning. but the reality leaves us panting, as brief references to sets and no report of methods leaves us little the wiser of the Chinese applications of action learning.

Isabel Rimanoczy's report of an action learning intervention in Thailand has interesting potential for practitioners in that country. Readers will have to make up their own minds on the trademarked ARL (Action Learning Reflection) as an improvement on action learning. ARL claims to have inserted 'awareness of what happened in the action phase' between action and learning saying that the latter cannot occur without 'challenging questions' bringing out this awareness. For myself, I can't quite see the departure from orthodox action learning.

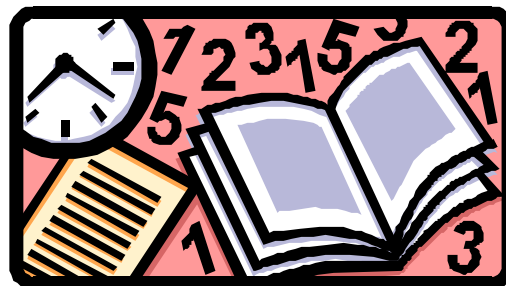
Richard Kwok's application of action learning in a Singapore engineering organisation is concerned with action research outcomes and describes four phases or 'Action Learning Cycles' over four years. A practitioner might be forgiven for head scratching, as the author does not go into any detail of action learning, and we are left to wonder that 'action learning' took place. We know that the nature of action learning is multifarious and case studies with an action learning promise should make some reference to perhaps, insightful questions and satisfy professional curiosity. There is no doubt though, as to Richard's enthusiastic reporting of successful action research outcomes and his conviction in action learning.

Similarly, Shankar Sankaran and Sng Hee Meng report on a four year exercise in a high tech company again in Singapore. The report seems to be abstracted from Sankaran's PhD thesis, and the successes and limitations of action learning are clearer here as the action research objectives are achieved with the help of action learning but the process 'fades' owing to a restructuring and the dispersal of set members who are to remain dormant until they assume positions of power and re-apply action learning from a position of influence or power.

Grumbles: for an anthology which will probably be well thumbed, the printers might have done a better job. My pristine copy quickly came apart at the spine. American spelling creeps in and is likely that some contributors' pieces got through without correction (examples on pp. 52 and 87). A dozen pages go by until numbering begins; why not have used roman numerals for these?)

Overall, just over a quarter of this book's pages are given over to action learning, and action learners should be interested in expanding their knowledge of action research to get the maximum from it. There is low value in approaching this book looking for what you fancy as there is strange fare before you get to the familiar. One of the best features is the emphasis on non-Western cultures, especially in Applications. This reviewer has experience in organisational learning in Asia, and observes that it is no accident that the book suggests that it is application that interests the 'Asian' mind and not theory. For many years, I heard this refrain from managers in Asia: 'we won't understand if you don't give us examples' or, unsaid, 'we can't visualise getting something done merely from principles or theory'. This book confirms not only that experience but also action learning's power to cross the vast and divisive water-borders of Asia-Pacific.

Chris Yates



Books...Books...Books

Just published by the Training Zone: The second in a series of in-depth reports and analysis on the state of the training market, highlighting the key developments as viewed by TrainingZONE in the second half of 2002.

Price: £ 10.00 GBP ex VAT (£ 11.75 GBP inc VAT)

Publication date: 28 Nov 2002 Licence period: 365 days

Introduction

After the first half of the year we noted that, in the training sector as in the economy as a whole, no one was sure whether an overall recession had hit or not. It's fair to say that, in spite of some very difficult conditions in some subsectors, this uncertainty has largely continued. Certainly the withdrawal of training budgets has not been as severe as has happened across the economy in previous slow-downs, but nor is there any evident enthusiasm to invest in major development programmes. And after stock market falls, house price rises, downgraded economic projections and a hike in public borrowing, we still don't really know about the recession.

This atmosphere of moderate stability without definite confidence has exacerbated existing trends. Unsurprisingly, in training these revolve around doing more with less, focusing budgets ever more exactly, and justifying expenditure. The industry is ever more concerned with topping and tailoring training so it can be measured and applied with precision to produce demonstrable results. Assessment, accreditation, evaluation, just-in-time provision, custom repackaging and tracking of training are the prevailing themes.

This year, the annual training shows and exhibitions shows have taken the pulse of training, as they do, the CIPD annual event in Harrogate in particular. Exhibitors providers were on the whole quieter and less given to showy marketing than previously, but were still well represented across the varieties of training. The technological novelty has shifted from e-learning to technological solutions for other aspects of HR, but new products for managing learners have continued to appear.

In terms of subjects recurring on TrainingZONE, e-learning still attracts the most interest, and below we track its passage into the mainstream. We look at its acceptance as part of mixed solutions rather than as a panacea, the increasingly urgent need to know how to put it into action, and the players moving out of or into the sector. Coaching was a growth area in training in the first half of the year, but the marketing activity for it has died down. Many providers are still building up their coaching products, but "coaching" covers such a range of areas that some more specific definitions are going to have to come into use.

We also look over some other crucial issues in training. This review examines:

E-learning and blended learning

IT Training

Adding value

Public policy

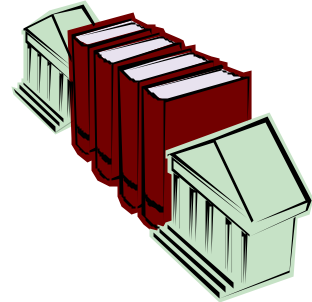
Management Development

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The logo for the IFAL Library, featuring the text "IFAL LIBRARY" in a bold, serif font, enclosed within a decorative border of small, dark diamond shapes.

IFAL LIBRARY

The IFAL library is a unique collection of over 1000 articles and books on Action Learning. For minimal charge, the Lancaster office will supply hard copies of the complete list of items and a short list of particularly important practice-related publications (£5) and copies of articles (£1.25). We believe that this is a valuable resource for practitioners, researchers and others interested in Action Learning.



Please send copies of any articles or reports on action learning you have written for inclusion in the library.

Trix Webber

*Copies and details of publications should be sent to Trix Webber, CMD,
University of Brighton, Mithras House Lewes Rd,
Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 4AT, Tel 01273 642845, Fax 01273 642980,
e-mail t.e.webber@bton.ac.uk*

*Requests for a listing of publications and/or copies of articles should be
addressed to Pam Wright IFAL Administrator,
Dept of Management Learning, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YX,
email p.wright@lancaster.ac.uk*





THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ACTION LEARNING

THE WORK OF THE CHARITY AND THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The International Foundation for Action Learning is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, set up to promote action learning. This is a process for improving management in which people learn together by direct involvement in the identification, analysis and treatment of their own real problems and opportunities. It is a form of learning by doing.

Action learning is used in many industries, businesses and services in this and other countries. Examples are:

1. managing director groups;
2. helping the unemployed to start their own business;
3. developing skilled managers as they take on new responsibilities;
4. improving productivity in retailing and manufacturing companies;
5. bringing about operational change in large organisations;
6. improving services in health and education.

Action learning has demonstrated that it can help individuals and organisations to adapt in a fast changing world

Since 1977 when it was set up ALT/IFAL has become well-known and respected as a source of information and support for those who practice or are interested in action learning. IFAL encourages the use of action learning by:

1. Information - On request, responding to requests and promoting discussion by phone or letter.

2. Library - IFAL has a substantial library (over 1000 items) of writings about action learning, many of which are not available elsewhere. Copies of items may usually be purchased for the cost of photocopying and distribution. Some of the most useful are unpublished discussion papers.

3. Newsletter - A regular newsletter provides the opportunity for members to share their ideas and experience, it is used to spread news and views about the process of action learning and its development. It includes book reviews and reports of conferences, and promotes discussion through correspondence and articles.

4. Meetings/Conferences/Workshops - IFAL arranges meetings around the country for the purposes of exchanging information and to highlight problems in the application and use of action learning. Conferences are held regularly and occasional regional meetings provide a local forum for debate and learning.

The design of these meetings is always participative following the principle of action learning that people learn best from people who are also learning.

5. Network of individuals and organisations - Through its international membership, IFAL constructs a network of people who can support one another in their diverse experiences of action learning throughout the world in private, public and voluntary sectors.

In summary: IFAL exists to identify and encourage a network of enthusiasts who will support and develop the work of action learning worldwide. It is an educational charity and in order to do its work properly it appeals for financial and practical support from those who believe in the value of action learning

IFAL'S REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER IS: 273242