

## **The Effectiveness of Semi-Autonomous Learning Approaches for Cross-Cultural Classrooms in Business Management Programs.**

Adriana Koulouris\* & Margaret Heffernan OAM\*\*

*The operating norms around educational processes which have developed in tertiary institutions have not always supported a learning environment conducive to the notion of 'students as partners'. The challenge to produce self-directed learning skills requires an androgogical paradigm and effectively encourages adult learners to be self-initiators of, and independent partners in, the learning/teaching process.*

*Although many Business Management programs espouse a rhetoric of commitment to student-centered learning approaches, they often display very little substance. Specific assumptions need to be incorporated into a program's philosophy for the implementation of effective self-directed learning methodology in order to verify their veracity. This 'learning within context' needs to be a joint activity with other organisational protagonists, to emphasise how managers have to position themselves in specific contexts. The challenge of implementation of learning modes among diverse cross-cultural student cohorts is to establish a foundation for personal and collective self-transformation by collaborating with others voluntarily, and often within conditions of increased uncertainty. The outcome of this approach justifies the maintenance of the primacy of self-directed learning when applying the concepts of collaborative learning to the educational needs of managers.*

**Field of Research:** Management; Business Education; Organisation Behaviour; Strategic Management; Managing People and Organisations

### **1. Introduction**

The fundamental premise of undergraduate management education is that if a student is to learn 'management', it should happen in an organisational setting, where the learner has the opportunity to learn 'to manage', rather than just learn 'about Management'. Management education has been debated in academic institutions over the decades, centering on the significance of learning and teaching methodologies on managerial learning and ultimately, organisational effectiveness (Kayes 2002; Giacalone 2004; Mintzberg 2005). Traditional business management education methodologies have been largely based on a teacher-directed orientation where the managerial phenomena under examination is through contextually defined units which are underpinned by empirical research, quantification and the measurement of specified variables. Accordingly, this has led to a proliferation of generalised abstract models of management that have been constructed on the explanation of cause and effect.

---

\*Adriana Koulouris, Lecturer, School of Management, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia  
Email: [adriana.koulouris@rmit.edu.au](mailto:adriana.koulouris@rmit.edu.au)

\*\*Margaret Heffernan OAM, Lecturer, School of Management, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia  
Email: [margaret.heffernan@rmit.edu.au](mailto:margaret.heffernan@rmit.edu.au)

## **Koulouris & OAM**

The pedagogical process of teaching and learning involved in Management education can be conceptualised as a bi-polar dichotomy. Situated at one pole of the process are the teachers, or repositories of knowledge, where knowledge is imparted didactically to the opposite pole where the learners or students are located, and who are often observed as being compliant and often passive.

However, an androgogical teaching approach, which encourages adults to become self-initiators of, and ultimately independent partners in, the learning and teaching process better serve the unique needs of the adult learner (Knowles, 1980; Robotham, 1995). Delahaye (2005) distinguishes adult learners from younger learners through their very desire to control what they consider they need to learn and how meaning is constructed. The traditions and operating norms which have evolved in tertiary institutions have not always enabled a supportive learning environment that is conducive to adult learners being perceived as partners in their educational processes (Mintzberg, 2005; Gulati, 2007; Clinebell & Clinebell, 2008).

Self-directed learning, when adapted to groups of students with diverse socio and psychographic characteristics, utilises a variety of methodologies, which can increase their organisation-readiness skills over time. Whilst didactic learning activities such as lectures, case studies, role plays and research projects in the education of business management students serve a purpose, self-directed strategies like problem based learning; contract learning and action learning also have a legitimate and necessary place (Schmidt, 1971; Morgan and Ramirez, 1983; Revans, 1983; Prideaux, 1992). The effective implementation of self-directed learning requires academic staff capable of implementing collaborative learning in the classroom, and who value and draw on the diverse knowledge, skills and work of the student cohort.

This paper examines both the relevance of self-directed learning methodologies and the role of action-learning in respect to the education of business management students. The paper considers the literature on the merits of semi-autonomous approaches in teaching and learning, and reports on the author's initiatives and findings in integrating such approaches into tertiary undergraduate cross-cultural classrooms in business management courses 'Introduction to Organisational Behaviour' and 'Managing Change'.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Business Management Education & Self- Directed Learning**

Introducing undergraduate business students to the theories and concepts of management has been recognised and encouraged by business and government in most countries since the early 1980's. The development of self-directed learning skills in students with minimal work experience, so that they can apply such skills to business management studies, can be challenging for academic staff. For many students the closest to attaining the requisite skills has been predominantly through research projects and simulated case studies conducted in host organisations. Despite the merit of such learning endeavours, these activities are often embedded within larger

## Koulouris & OAM

programs that feature an over-arching philosophical stance that reflects a teacher-directed orientation and it is this misalignment, or point of tension, that can undermine the potential for the student's preparation for life-long learning and the ability to perform effectively upon graduation in the dynamic and complex aspects of organisational life (Mintzberg, 2005).

Three main modes of learning relevant to managers and to individuals aspiring to positions of management include instrumental learning (*learning to do*); systemic learning (*learning to be*); and meta-learning (*learning to learn*). Learning programs for business management studies ideally should encompass all three modes particularly where there is an emphasis on both the need for the learners to interact with their environment within conditions of increased uncertainty (Matthews, 1995). Self-direction in learning is concerned with meta-learning, taking responsibility for learning how to learn (Houle 1961; Matthews 1995). The associated stresses of self-directed learning approaches require for some learners, the development of coping strategies for what can be a completely new paradigm of learning. Whilst meta-learning can be confronting and alien, the process of self-directed learning is primarily linear and involves the learner's ability to diagnose their own specific learning need, establish goals and objectives, locate and secure resources, develop learning strategies and evaluate the outcome of their learning (Tough 1979; Knowles 1980).

Alternatively, self-directed learning is perceived as not so much a planned, sequential process that is founded on a prescriptive set of guidelines but a haphazard, ill-defined process that is triggered by sudden and unexpected changes in an individual's current life circumstances (Berger, 1990). Such changes to the learner's status-quo are considered to motivate the learner to seek out and explore the necessary structures, methods and resources they may require in responding effectively to their altered circumstances (Danis and Tremblay 1988; Spear 1988).

Candy (1991) attempts to clarify and resolve the notion of self-direction by juxtaposing the theoretical meaning of the term to its practical application, and postulates self directed learning can be explained on the dimensions of process and product. In particular, four distinct yet related phenomena are associated with self-directed learning:

- i. personal attributes or autonomy;
- ii. the willingness and capacity to self-manage one's learning;
- iii. as a mode to control one's learning; and
- iv. as a personal pursuit of a learning opportunity in the natural societal setting.

Further to Candy's (1991) work self-direction has been widely conceptualised as a set of personal attributes that are possessed by the learner (Tough 1979; Brookfield 1987; Caffarella and O'Donnell 1989; Brockett and Hiemstra 1991). Ravid (1987) in particular, identifies the self-directed learner as an individual who is flexible in perspective, an independent thinker, curious, and persistent. Additionally, the adult learner possesses a level of commitment to learning that is not necessarily dependant upon tangible outcomes such as grade performance but is more specifically, led by an intrinsic desire to acquire and develop knowledge (Cross 1981). Furthermore, the learner's persistence

## **Koulouris & OAM**

in learning, extent of learning enjoyment, curiosity and goal orientation are among the conditions necessary for self-directed learning readiness (Guglielmino 1997).

Brookfield (1986) highlights that self-directed learners are inclined to view the significance of the learning process in more personal terms so are, accordingly, more involved and committed to the development of the entire process. It is through this ability of the self-directed learner to control and guide the learning environment and interactions that personal investment and motivation to engage in life-long learning are enhanced (Knowles, 1972; Kolb, 2005). The extent to which an individual's disposition towards self-directed learning is culturally derived or manifested as a result of one's personality or preferences remains obscure (Brookfield 1995). Influences that affect the individual's decision and commitment to learn through self-directed means, such as an individual's life experiences, belief systems (such as political, religious or cultural) and the very nature of the learning task, has not been sufficiently assessed.

Although many management programs espouse a commitment to student-centered learning approaches, they often display very little substance (Farrington, 1991). If an effective self-directed learning methodology is to be implemented, Keane (1985) suggests the following assumptions need to form the foundation of a program's learning philosophy:

- i. the primary responsibility for learning lies with the learner;
- ii. learning has intellectual, emotional and physical dimensions which interact simultaneously;
- iii. knowledge is more personally meaningful when it evolves from reflection by the individual on their own experiences;
- iv. greater control over the learning process leads to higher readiness and motivation to learn (Urwiler and Frolick, 2008);
- v. individuals need to be free to identify and pursue their own specific areas of learning which are most relevant for them.

### **2.2 Business Management Education & Action Learning**

Action Learning is an approach to the development of individuals that places particular emphasis on learning from and through experience by working on actual problems or projects (Wenger, 1998; Marsick & Kuhn, 2005), and develops the capacity of the individuals and systems to learn how to learn (Marsick & O'Neil, 1999). Learners generally work in small groups to examine and take action on a specified problem and ultimately learn how to learn from that action. A learning coach or facilitator is commonly designated to the group to assist the participants to learn how to both balance and differentiate between task achievements and actual learning (Yorks, O'Neil & Marsick, 1999).

Business education as a whole, has been gravitating to a more experiential, problem-based, action learning model where students learn by doing (Daly 2001; Kolb and Kolb 2005; McCarthy and McCarthy 2006). The relevance of action learning to Business Management students is particularly substantiated in the context of promoting

## Koulouris & OAM

leadership growth in the critical areas of communication, set building and conflict management (Willis, 2000). The benefits of action learning include shared organisational learning, increased self-awareness and self-confidence; and perhaps more importantly to organisational performance, the enhanced ability to ask questions and to learn from reflection (Marquardt 1999). Moreover, action learning can develop competency in the areas of cross-cultural awareness and boundary-crossing skills (Marquardt 1998; Dotlich and Noel 1998). This is of particular relevance to the diverse student cohorts across Australian universities that display cultural diversity and diverse socio-demographic characteristics, associated life/work experiences, and differing learning preferences. In more recent times, action learning has presented as an appropriate methodology to the so-called 'net-generation' of students who are seeking both experiential and participatory classroom experiences. This particular group is often profiled as digitally literate, always connected, desiring an immediate response and craving interactivity (Kvavik & Caruso, 2005; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005).

Action learning is generally focused on real world challenges and opportunities rather than artificially presented cases or simulations (Revens, 1978). The incorporation of real work projects and/or problems distinguishes action learning from other types of experience based learning, such as outdoor experiential activities, role playing and simulations which in essence aim to highlight poignant lessons in the course of the learning activity for later application in other contexts. Smith (200, p 36) distinguishes action learning by suggesting "action learning has a framework designed to capture and build on what is, rather than operate in a pure, detached, analytical and rational world of what should be".

The process of action learning in business management courses generally commences with a specific business challenge or set of problems. The selection of a significant issue is a critical cornerstone of action learning as "an urgent and complex problem provides the stimulus for individuals and groups to increase their readiness for the problem-solving process" (Yeo & Nation, 2010, p 185). The problem selection is of foremost importance and accordingly, should meet certain parameters in order to qualify as such (Marquardt 1999); especially as a worthwhile endeavour that will ultimately yield purposeful solutions to those involved. In addition, the problem under scrutiny should present as feasible inasmuch that it falls within the learner's capacity to firstly comprehend the problem at hand, and then decipher possible responses to the issue. Ideally, the problem should not have an existing solution but rather a range of solutions that could equally be applied to the problem; and on a broader basis, the problem-solving experience should lead to opportunities for learning that can be applied to other situations.

The facilitators (or academic as coach) in the action learning process then develop a plans or paths for bringing students together for a range of learning situations. The facilitator initially guides the process and then as the individual members develop greater degrees of confidence and competency then the facilitator gradually crafts a situation where the set is itself facilitating the process (Weinstein, 2002). One of the central aims of the authors' course development initiatives has been to integrate and offer action learning opportunities which recognise the value of the diverse attributes

## Koulouris & OAM

that students bring with them into their study and use these attributes as the starting point for further manager development (Prideaux, 1992; Smith, 1995). Students and the associated academic staff have been encouraged to be open to conflicting values, uncertainty, change and continuous learning as a collaborative learning experience within learning groups or sets (McKenna and Campbell-Williams, 1995; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000). This approach is intended to reflect the belief that if a student is to learn '*management*', it should happen in an organisational setting, where the learner has the opportunity to learn '*to manage*', rather than just learn '*about management*'. Learners need to be able to actively experiment with the concepts they are introduced to and encounter in their studies in order to verify their veracity (Bradbery and Allen, 1994; Conger & Toegel, 2003).

### 3. Implementing a Self-Directed Learning Methodology

The theoretical frameworks of self-directed learning and action learning as espoused by Brookfield (1986) and Revans (1978) have informed and guided the development of the courses discussed in this paper. The authors' personal narrative of the experiences, reflections and problems as instructors of undergraduate business management courses have aided in the evolution and development of business management courses that the authors have co-ordinated over the past three years. Specifically, these courses, offered at opposite stages of the degree program in Australia and South East Asia, are 'Introduction to Organisational Behaviour' (first year study) and 'Managing Change' (final year study).

Throughout the many iterative cycles of course development the authors have held the conviction that the contribution and involvement of both the students and academic staff in the development of the courses is paramount. Course experience surveys, general anecdotal and focus group evidence obtained from students and academic staff involved in these courses has served as an important platform for contemplation in the implementation of the teaching and learning initiatives across multiple environments with diverse needs and expectations.

### 4. Results/Analysis

Whilst there have been a number of various assessment tasks and learning activities that have been developed and implemented in the 'Introduction to Organisational Behaviour' and 'Managing Change' courses the following discussion centers on the enduring cornerstone methodologies regarded as essential to the establishment and maintenance of a learning philosophy that supports self-directed learning.

The methodologies employed aim to build a learning community of learning and practice through semi-autonomous learning groups, learning contracts, and the integration of purposeful challenge by setting learning tasks that are based on real life organisational issues that require attention and action. It is under these conditions that students gain action-based learning from their peers, industry representatives and contacts, and from performing the actual tasks required.

## Koulouris & OAM

### 4.1 Fostering a Community of Learning and Practice

When managers work well together, engage in knowledge sharing, and are able to challenge, explore and test the relevance of ideas, as well as find applications for them in their management situations, then an effective learning community will have been established. These community participants will take responsibility for identifying and achieving their managerial development needs, and take an active role in assisting other group members to do the same (Prideaux, 1992). In trying to develop such a sense of community students are provided with the structure and opportunities to become more closely acquainted with each other, develop group norms in collaborating, and share personal and work-life related issues which are relevant to their current and future career pursuits. This concept of collaborative learning requires members to become aware of how their particular way of seeing and understanding management issues need to be measured against the way others see the same issues, and be cognisant of such alternatives, regardless of whether or not they become converted to such other viewpoints (Bowden and Marton, 1998).

Students of the course 'Introduction to Organisational Behaviour' are required to form semi-autonomous work groups where each group undertakes responsibility for decisions such as time management, some aspects of the content and processes of the program, and the choice of the specific learning objectives for each contract, and how to achieve them. In some instances, to engender self-management skills, groups are required to devise a policy to help manage the group work, but also the equitable contribution of individuals within the group. Groups engage in conversations that will help determine the guiding principles for issues that are anticipated to arise during the course:

- i. What are the diverse characteristics of the group members?
- ii. What level of attendance will your group try to attain?
- iii. What will be the consequences to the final result for a student in the group who has contributed equally to the tasks?
- iv. How can you ensure that all people contribute fairly to the final product, and to an agreed standard of work?
- v. What are the responsibilities of the work group to coach and support members who are struggling?
- vi. How will conflict be resolved within the group?

The authors have found that through the integration of these guidelines the appropriate level of consultation, participation and delegation expected to occur between managers in any well-managed organisation is mirrored within the learning group. Informal feedback from students has consistently indicated across the various cohorts that the group aspect of the course and in particular, the autonomy of the groups in working through and resolving the above issues produces an authentic learning experience

## **Koulouris & OAM**

### **4.2 Developing Learning Groups**

The use of learning groups for managers has been a central aspect of the action learning, and group members are expected to provide peer support, undertake collaborative learning, and develop team skills. However, merely configuring students together into small groups will not necessarily guarantee that the group will become an effective learning vehicle. Student groups have been utilised in both courses for various projects and assignments ranging from organisational analyses through to portfolio work that focuses on specific issues and topics. In all cases, as a key ingredient in the effectiveness of the group's learning experience is the academic-student support by experienced academic staff in facilitating group.

The inclusion of group work in course learning activities is intended to provide opportunity for the building of relationship-intelligence skills, crucial to future employment. Competency in the management of diversity, giving and receiving of feedback, communication, understanding group dynamics and decision making, negotiation and conflict management, are seen as integral to the development of business management students. Learning activities such as 'reflective practice', learning diaries and group evaluations are designed to enable evaluation for personal development over the duration of the semester. Inquiry-based learning is encouraged through formal and informal assessment tasks, in particular the ability to effectively question can lead to the generation of 'reflective practice' that enables both the motivation and emotion in individuals and groups required in independent study (Sofa, Yeo and Villafane, 2010).

The structure of student groups and associated and learning and assessment tasks have been designed to enhance and support individual learning through self-development, group work and opportunities for empowerment to the learners involved (Beattie and McDougall, 1995). Course experience surveys have indicated that students consistently referred to their experiences within their respective groups as a significant source of personal and professional learning and development; and more directly relevant to their individual development needs than that which occurred in the more structured learning contexts such as lectures.

### **4.3 The Group Facilitator**

The academic lecturer or tutor to undertake the role of group facilitator has two distinct responsibilities of the facilitation of group processes, and in maintaining academic standards. Their major role is to act as a catalyst of the group learning process primarily through the creation of a supportive and safe learning environment. The facilitator is expected to achieve this through:

- i. role modeling facilitation skills;
- ii. promoting and supporting honest and open communication and feedback among members of diverse cultures (Fenwick & Parsons, 2000);
- iii. giving regular feedback to the group concerning its processes;



## **Koulouris & OAM**

- iv. encouraging regular monitoring of performance by the group;
- v. providing advice and guidance to the group when needed;
- vi. supporting and encouraging reticent students.

The recruitment of qualified group facilitators for both courses has been particularly challenging in this case as the role demands both competency in a range of facilitation skills along with the specific knowledge and experience of the course content area. The role of the group facilitator in general, requires a willingness and desire to operate in a less traditional manner that is more student-centered. This is especially critical as many students in their feedback indicated the guidance and counsel of their group facilitator as a major factor in helping them to be able to direct their own learning initiatives and activities. This was identified as highly important in the earlier stages of the course, when students were becoming familiar with the processes of the course and the concept of self-directed learning through semi-autonomous work groups.

### **4.4 Contract Learning**

Contract learning has been the primary vehicle for establishing personal responsibility in student learning choices and activities. Contracts in some cases, have required the learner to determine the nature of the learning to be undertaken, how the learning will in fact take place and how the learning will be evaluated (Tracey, 1994). This methodology is essentially an adaptation of the Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle and is considered by some authors as instrumental in exploring issues pertaining to adult education, student centered learning and both curriculum faculty development (Krista, 2001; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Akella, 2010).

During the learning contract process, students move backwards and forwards between the activities of reflection, application, experience and abstract conceptualisation before reaching either an acceptable contract proposal or finished contract within their learning group. This adaptation is congruent with and parallels the concept that learning for managers should be considered as a dynamic process in which Kolb's sequential model (of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) is viewed as different yet connected aspects of the same process (Holman et al, 1997).

One major theme that has emerged in the student feedback in both courses is the self-directed learning philosophy of the course. This aspect of the course has been identified by students both formally through course surveys and anecdotally as pivotal in facilitating and enhancing their learning. Students have expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to learn according to their own perceived developmental needs and levels and how the contracting process of the courses has accommodated for these individual differences.

## **5. Conclusion and Limitation**

Collaborative learning, where activities such as the building and nurturing of communities of learning and practice; the establishment of learning groups; learning

## Koulouris & OAM

contracts; and the incorporation of real-life organisational issues that require resolution; are hallmarks of programs which provide scope for self-directed learning processes and allow for context specific learning. The outcome of the student surveys supports this assertion, and helps to justify the maintenance of the primacy of student-centered and self-directed learning when applying the concepts of collaborative learning to the educational needs of business management students. In particular, undergraduate students of two courses have indicated the use of semi-autonomous groups as a valuable mechanism that provides a genuine learning experience. Similarly, the contribution of staff expertise as group facilitators has also been highlighted by students as an invaluable feature of the group structure and processes. The individual learning needs of students have been acknowledged through the contract learning process and students have placed significant value to this approach in their development.

The challenge of self-directed learning as part of the learning and teaching strategy for business management undergraduate study is to set a basis for not only personal but moreover, collective self-transformation where students act as agents of change by collaborating with others. Student-centered and self-directed learning approaches present as positive impacting methodologies to the educational needs of business management students in achieving such a transformation. Scope to further research the effectiveness of self-directed learning and teaching methodologies in business management undergraduate programs and the impact to industry does exist. This presents as a basis for further research and the development of studies of inquiry which may provide greater insight into the relevance of self-directed and action learning for business management undergraduate students.

## References

- Adair, J 1986, *Effective set building*, Pan, Sydney.
- Akella, D 2010, 'Learning together: Kolb's experiential theory and its application', *Journal of Management & Organization*, vol.16, pp. 100-112.
- Bandura, A 1962, 'Social Learning through Imitation', in Jones, MR (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska, pp. 26-38.
- Beattie, RS & McDougall, M 1995, 'Empowering Learners through Learning Groups', *Proceedings of the December 1995 Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference*, Townsville, Queensland, pp. 146-153.
- Bowden, J & Marton F 1998, *The university of learning*, Kogan Page, Sydney.
- Boyatzis, R 1982, *The competent manager*, Wiley, New York.
- Bradbery, P & Allen, C 1994, 'Managed Learning or Learning Management?', *Proceedings of the December Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference*, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 243-252.
- Burgoyne, JG and Stuart, R 1978, 'Managerial Skills', *Burgoyne, J & Stuart, R (eds.), Management development: context and strategies*, Gower Press, Westmead, pp. 51-73.
- Burns, R 1993, *Managing people in changing times*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Clinebell S & Clinebell J 2008, 'The tension in business education between academic rigor and real-world relevance: The role of executive professors', *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 99-107.

## Koulouris & OAM

- Delahaye, B 2005, *Human resource development: adult learning and knowledge management*, Wiley, Milton.
- Eunson, B 1987, *Behaving: managing yourself and others*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney.
- Farrington, I 1991, 'Student-centred Learning: Rhetoric and Reality?' *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, vol. 15, pp. 16-21.
- Giacalone, R 2004, 'A transcendent business education for the 21st Century', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, vol. 3, no 4, pp. 415-420.
- Holman, D, Pavia, K & Thorpe, R 1997, 'Rethinking Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning in Management Education', *Management Learning*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 135-148.
- Kayes, D 2002, 'Experiential learning and its critics: preserving the role of experience in management learning and education', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 137-149.
- Keane, R 1985, 'A Case Study in Learning Partnerships', Robinson, J, Saberton, S & Griffin, V (eds.), *Learning partnerships: interdependent learning in adult education*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, pp. 25-32.
- Knowles, M 1980, *The modern practice of adult education*, Associated Press, New York.
- Kolb, D 1984, *Experiential learning: experience as a source of learning and development*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Kolb, DA & Kolb, AY 2005, 'Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 193-212.
- Krista, JR 2001, 'Going around the circle again: Exploring Kolb's theory of growth and development', *National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges*, pp. 2-24.
- Kvavik, RB & Caruso, JB 2005, 'ECAR study of students and information technology', *Convenience, connection, control, and learning*, vol. 6, EDUCAUSE, Boulder.
- Marquardt, M 1998, 'Using action learning with multicultural groups', *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 113-128.
- Marquardt, MJ 1999, *Action learning in action: transforming problems and people for world-class organizational learning*, Davies-Black, Palo Alto.
- Marsick, VJ & Kuhn, JS 2005, Action learning, *International encyclopedia of adult education*, pp. 11-19, Palgrave MacMillan, New York.
- Matthews, JH 1995, 'Management learning: learning in a turbulent context', *Proceedings of the December Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference*, Townsville, Queensland, pp. 215-223.
- McKenna, RJ & Campbell-Williams, M 1995, 'Paradigm and approaches to learning', *Proceedings of the December Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management Conference*, Townsville, Queensland, pp.113-122.
- Mintzberg, H 2005, *Managers Not MBAs: A hard look at the soft practice of managing and management development*, Berrett Koehler, San Francisco.
- Morgan, G & Ramirez, R 1983, 'Action Learning: A Holographic Metaphor for Guiding Social Change', *Human Relations*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 1-28.
- Oblinger, DG & Oblinger J 2005, *Educating the Net Generation*, EDUCAUSE, Boulder.
- O'Neil, J & Marsick, VJ 2007, *Understanding action learning*, New York, AMACOM.
- Prideaux, G 1992, 'Making Action Learning More Effective', *Training and Management Development Methods*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 9-16.

## Koulouris & OAM

- Revans, RW 1983, *The ABC of action learning*, Chartell-Bratt, Bromley.
- Robotham, D 1995, 'Self-directed Learning: The Ultimate Learning Style', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, vol. 19, no. 7, pp. 3-7.
- Schein, EH 1990, *Career anchors: discovering your real values*, University Associates, San Diego.
- Schmidt, W 1971, *Transforming knowledge into impact: The teaching / learning process: optimizing Human Resources*, Addison Wesley, Reading.
- Sofa, F, Yeo, RK & Villafane, J 2010, 'Optimizing the learning in action learning: Reflective questions, levels of learning, and coaching', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 205-224.
- Smith, A 1995, 'Learning without Lectures: The Case of the Construction Industry Managers', *Twelfth International Conference on Case Method Research and Application*, Leysin, Switzerland, pp. 282-295.
- Tracey, AJ 1994, 'Contract Learning in Management Programs', *Third International Organisational Behaviour Teaching Conference*, Dunedin, New Zealand, pp. 234-245.
- Urwiler, R & Frolick, M 2008, "The IT value hierarchy: Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a metaphor for gauging the maturity level of information technology use within competitive organizations", *Information Systems Management*, vol. 25, no.1, pp. 83-88.
- Weinstein, K 1997, 'Action learning: An afterthought', *Journal of Workplace Learning*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 92-104.
- Willis, VJ 2000, 'Searching for meaning in complex action learning data: What environments, acts and words reveal', *Proceedings of the 2000 Academy of Human Resource Development Conference*, Academy of Human Resource Development, pp. 3-10, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.
- Yeo, RK & Nation, UE 2010, 'Optimizing the action in action learning: Urgent problems, diversified group membership, and commitment to action', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 181-204.
- Yorks, L, O'Neil, J & Marsick, VJ 1999, 'Action learning: Theoretical bases and varieties of practice, in Yorks, L, O'Neil, J & Marsick, VJ (eds.), *Action learning: Successful strategies for individual, team and organizational development*, *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, No. 2, pp. 1-18, Berrett Koehler, San Francisco.
- Zander, A 1982, *Making groups effective*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.